

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | FRIDAY 22 | JANUARY 2021

## WEATHER



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

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Thai 9  
**Tithi:** Navami  
**Star:** Bharani  
**Rahukalam:** 10.30 am to 12 noon  
**Yamagandam:** 3 pm to 4.30 pm

### PRAYERS

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

**SUNSET TODAY 6.05 PM**

**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.36 AM**

**MOONRISE TODAY 12.53 PM**

**MOONSET TOMORROW 1.45 AM**

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+12,974)	(+122)
1,06,24,702	1,53,028

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+596)  
**TN:** 8,33,011 12,299

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

9,75,91,354

### DEATHS

20,90,247

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES  
**219**

worldometers.info

## Maha MPs should meet PM on Karnataka border, quota issues: Uddhav

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra MPs should meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and raise the issues of incorporating into the state areas in Karnataka where Marathi-speaking people are in majority and also the Maratha quota, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said on Thursday. Thackeray made the suggestions to all-party MPs during a meeting he held here ahead of Parliaments budget session which begins on January 29.

## India gifts over 2 million Covid vaccine doses to Bangladesh

**Dhaka:** India on Thursday officially handed over 2 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine as a gift to Bangladesh. The vaccines were provided to Bangladesh at a crucial time when the number of coronavirus cases in this country was rising.

## COUNTER

## POINT



**Not farmers' protest, it is the Sensex!**

# Army chief Naravane hits out at defence procurement process

**PAWAN BALI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 21

Indian army chief Gen MM Naravane on Thursday hit out at the bureaucratic procurement process holding defence modernization a “hostage” and called for a “revolution” in bureaucratic affairs (RBA) to realize the vision of “self-reliance”.

Army chief pointed out that the new weapon acquisition

policy Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 which came into force around four months back has 681 pages against the earlier policy Defence Procurement Procedure 2016 which had just 450 pages. He said that the former defence minister Manohar Parrikar had once remarked that our entire procurement process is based on distrust.

“We are not being able to

fast-track the process of acquisition. It is because we have tried to cater for every contingency and every loophole. This results in acquisition process getting tied up in knots. To that end what has happened is that the process and procedures, rather than the product, have become paramount and these are holding hostage the defence modernization,” said Gen Naravane.

A nondescript village, Chinnappampatti wore a different look to celebrate its son of the soil on Thursday. T. Natarajan, one of the architects of India's historic Test series triumph in Australia, returned to a hero's welcome with thousands of villagers lining up the streets. After landing in Bengaluru on Thursday morning, the pace bowler reached his village in a swanky SUV and was then

escorted to his home in a two-horse chariot.

As the road show moved at a snail's pace with a troupe of drummers leading the procession, a proud Natarajan with a huge garland around his neck acknowledged the rapturous crowd by waving hands. As he reached home, the 29-year-old was almost in tears when he saw his newborn daughter.

At Brisbane last week, Natarajan became the first player to make a debut in all formats in the same series.



Thousands of people give a grand reception to cricketer T. Natarajan in his native village Chinnappampatti village in Salem district on Thursday. — DC

## CITY | 2

**HC rejects plea on PCA amendment**



## NATION | 3

**PM to take vaccine in second round**

## SPORT | 5

**Rajasthan trade Robin to Chennai**



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## COVISHIELD MANUFACTURING FACILITIES NOT AFFECTED

# Five dead in fire at building in Pune's Serum Institute

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC**  
MUMBAI, JAN. 21

Five people -- four men and a woman -- died on Friday in a massive fire which broke out in Pune's Serum Institute of India. The fire broke out in an under-construction building. Six people were rescued by fire brigade personnel. However, the production of the Covid vaccine Covishield will not be affected. Maharashtra's public health minister Rajesh Tope said the fire was now under control. Five charred bodies were found after the blaze was doused.

Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said as per preliminary information, the fire broke out due to an electric fault during ongoing construction work. He will visit the institute on Friday.

Speaking in this newspaper, Pune police commissioner Amitabh Gupta, who visited the spot, said: “The dead bodies are yet to be identified.”

A senior disaster management unit official, seeking anonymity, said: “The fire erupted suddenly at around 1 pm on the fourth and fifth floors of a building at the SII complex in Gopal Patti. Prima facie it appears that the cause of the fire was a short-circuit.”

Speaking with reporters, Mr Tope said the fire had broken out at a newly constructed building, where work related to rotavirus plant installation was under way. The fire was noticed at around 2 pm.



Workers of Serum Institute of India come out of the building after fire broke out in it, in Pune, on Thursday. — PTI

# Govt on big drive to convince health workers on vaccine

**VINEETA PANDEY | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 21

With hesitancy slowing down the progress of Covid-19 vaccination drive in India, the Central government on Thursday launched a major drive to convince healthcare workers and others to come forward and take the shot. In the last six days, close to 10 lakh persons have been vaccinated across India at

18,159 session sites. On Thursday itself over 1.92 lakh people were vaccinated, with no deaths due to Adverse Effect from Immunisation (AEFI) reported.

However, it is felt that the progress is slow and given this pace of vaccination, it will take much longer than expected to achieve the target of 3 crore beneficiaries in the first phase and may delay

the second phase when people above 50 years are to be vaccinated.

The President, Prime Minister, Union ministers, chief ministers, MPs, MLAs, and judges will be among those who will get the jab in the second phase.

Despite advocacy from the highest level, healthcare workers are not very enthusiastic in several places.

## Kerala assembly rejects resolution to remove Speaker

**Thiruvananthapuram, Jan. 21:** The Kerala Assembly on Thursday rejected a resolution moved by the Opposition UDF seeking removal of Speaker P. Sreeramakrishnan over allegations against him in the dollarsmugglingcase and ‘irregularities’ in modifications undertaken in the legislature complex.

After a stormy debate on the resolution, the Congress-led United Democratic Front members walked out dissatisfied with Sreeramakrishnan's reply dismissing the charges.

This was the first time in last 17 years a resolution for removal of the Speaker was moved in the state assembly. In the past, such resolutions had been moved against AC Jose and Vakkom Purushothaman, both of UDF.

On the penultimate day of the 14th assembly session, the last before the elections likely in next few months, the House witnessed heated exchanges as the discussion on the resolution extended for nearly four hours with ruling and opposition benches exchanging barbs. — PTI

# Four TN fishermen dead as Sri Lankan Navy rams fishing boat

■ **Chief Minister announces ₹10 lakh solatium**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced a relief of ₹10 lakh each to the families of the four fishermen who were killed by the Sri Lankan Navy when they were fishing in the area around Katchatheevu.

The fishermen, Mesia, Nagaraj, Sam and Senthilkumar, had set sailed in a boat belonging to Arokiya Jesu of Thangachimadam from the Kottapattinam fishing harbor in Pudukkottai district on January 18, the Chief Minister said in a statement on Thursday.

Since the boat did not return to the coast on January 19, as per schedule, a search operation was ordered and subsequently it was learnt through other fishermen that the four had perished on the high seas following an attack by the Sri Lankan Navy.

The Chief Minister also promised compensation for the boat that was sunk in the attack as per norms and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take up the issue with the Sri Lankan government.

DMK President MK Stalin demanded that the Centre paid a compensation of ₹5 crore to each of the fishermen killed.

In a statement, he said it was tragic that the BJP government was not taking action against the Sri Lankan government.

Thoothukudi MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi wrote to the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to take up the matter through the diplomatic channels.

## Black flags hoisted in protest against Lankan navy attack

**SP LOGANATHAN | DC**  
RAMANATHAPURAM, JAN. 21

Rameswaram fishermen launched a black flag protest against the Sri Lankan naval vessel allegedly dashed a fishing boat from Kottapattinam and drowned the four fishermen onboard near Neduntheevu (Delft Island) in the Palk Strait. The incident said to have been deliberately caused by the Sri Lankan navy. Condemning the brutality

unleashed by Sri Lankan navy on Indian fishermen in mid sea, Rameswaram fishermen launched a black flag protest on Thursday. Black flags were hoisted on all anchored boats and on the rooftops of the houses of fishermen.

The Federation of Traditional fishermen of Rameswaram has filed a habeas corpus petition in the Madurai bench of Madras High Court on Thursday, according to Chinnathambi, coordinator of the Federation.

## India lodges strong protest with Lanka over death of fishermen

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 21

A “shocked” India on Thursday lodged a “strong protest” with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena in Colombo and also issued a “strong demarche” to the Sri Lankan Acting High Commissioner in New Delhi following the death of Indian fishermen and a Sri Lankan national in a “collision” between their vessel and a Sri Lankan naval craft. New Delhi also said it emphasised to Colombo the “need to deal with issues pertaining to fishermen in a humanitarian manner” and adherence to the “existing understandings between the

● **“Expressing our deep anguish at the loss of lives, we emphasised the need to deal with issues pertaining to fishermen in a humanitarian manner,” the ministry of external affairs said**

two Governments” in this regard, adding that “utmost efforts should be made (by Sri Lanka) to ensure that there is no recurrence” of such an incident.

The tragic incident reportedly took place three days ago after which the Sri Lankan Navy on Thursday recovered the bodies of the four deceased.

## SHIFTED TO ICU



## Sasikala tests coronavirus positive

**Bengaluru:** Expelled AIADMK leader VK Sasikala has tested positive for the coronavirus and shifted to a Covid-19 intensive care unit, doctors treating the 63-year-old jailed aide of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalitha said on Thursday.

Ms Sasikala, who had earlier tested negative for Covid-19, was stable but she will be undergo various tests and monitored for now, they had said. diabetes management on Tuesday.



## SHORT TAKES

## Gov cancels 'at home' reception

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

The customary 'At Home' reception, organized by the Governor at the Raj Bhavan on the occasion of Republic Day, would not be held this year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Governor Banwarilal Purohit had decided not to host the event, a notification from Raj Bhavan said on Thursday.

The 'At Home' reception is traditionally hosted by the Governor at the Raj Bhavan premises to celebrate Independence Day and Republic Day.

Last year's reception on Independence Day was also not held in view of the pandemic that was at its peak then with some persons in Raj Bhavan testing positive for coronavirus.

## Covid vaccination launched at Saveetha hosp

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

Covid-19 vaccination programme was launched at Saveetha Medical College and Hospital on Thursday. On the first day, 100 healthcare workers were vaccinated which included heads of departments, senior doctors, nurses, support staff and sanitation workers.

The first vaccine was administered to Dr. N. M. Veeraiyan, chancellor, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, followed by Dr Saveetha V, director of medical college and hospital.

The inauguration function was attended by Dr. Palani, deputy director of health services, Kancheepuram district, and other district health officers.

## Prince of Arcot congratulates Biden, Kamala

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

The Prince of Arcot, Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali, has congratulated Mr. Joe Biden, who was sworn in as the 46th US President, through the US Consulate General in Chennai. "Yours has been a long and exceptional journey to the American presidency," the prince said in a statement.

He also congratulated Ms. Kamala Harris, on her being sworn in as the US Vice-President and said he was delighted as her mother hailed from India and was a Tamil.

## 1.5 tonnes of gutka seized, two held

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

A total of 1.5 tonnes of banned gutka products were seized from two mini lorries and a house in Guduvanchery in the early hours of Thursday.

Guduvanchery police, based on a tip-off about gutka being smuggled and sold, searched two mini lorries parked on Mahalakshmi Nagar in Guduvanchery, and found boxes of gutka products.

The officials caught two men who attempted to flee the spot. Based on their input, the team inspected a house in the area and seized more contraband. In total, police seized 1.5 tonnes of gutka worth at least ₹10 lakh. After a preliminary investigation, police said that the contraband was smuggled from Karnataka and stored at a house in Guduvanchery for sales. While the gang were loading the lorries with gutka to transport it to other areas, the police team caught them.



Firemen hold placards at Teynampet signal to promote newly designed 'Thee' app for the public to reach out Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Service in cases of fire, flood, mishaps and gas leaks.

— DC

## Barely two months into marriage, 19-year-old woman ends life

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

A 19-year-old newly married woman on Wednesday ended her life at her maternal house in Karunakaracheri near Sriperumbudur.

The deceased, identified as Monisha of Vengadu village, reportedly killed herself by consuming poison on Wednesday night. She was rushed to a hospital, where she died later.

According to police, Monisha, a second year Bsc student was forced to

drop out of college and then married to Karunagaracheri, a lift operator. The couple got married on December 4 and Monisha was unhappy with the marriage life, sources alleged.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday night, the woman took the extreme step when she was alone in a room. She then allegedly complained of chest pain and vomited, before collapsing.

Monisha was rushed to the Sriperumbudur gov-

ernment hospital, however she passed away later.

The local police were alerted about the incident. Somangalam Police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem.

Sriperumbudur Regional Divisional Officer (RDO) also initiated an investigation into the case.

An RDO investigation is done when a married woman, who has been married for seven or less, dies suspiciously.

Further investigations are on.

## Two on bike hit by car on GST road

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

Two men on a motorbike were severely injured after a car knocked down the duo on GST road on Wednesday night. The injured have been identified as Anandhan (25) and Javid (26). Police said both were Indigo airlines staff staying in Tambaram. On

Wednesday night, they were travelling towards Tambaram after duty on a two-wheeler.

When the duo was making a turn to proceed on the GST road, a speeding car heading from Chromepet knocked down the vehicle. The duo was thrown off the vehicle and suffered severe injuries.

Saisaran (20), a college

student was traveling in the car when the accident occurred and he sustained minor injuries.

Anandhan and Javid are undergoing treatment in Chromepet government hospital.

The St.Thomas mount Traffic Investigation police registered a case and booked Saisaran for rash driving.

## Tobacco retailers seek rollback of amendments

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

The Federation of Retailer Association of India (FRAI), an umbrella body of 34 micro, small and medium retailers associations, has demanded rollback of the proposed amendments in the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) which threaten the livelihood of retailers selling tobacco and related products across the country.

The amendments, proposed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, disallow retail sale of loose sticks of cigarettes, prohibits sale of tobacco products to persons below 21 years, puts controls on in-shop advertising and promotion amongst others.

The FRAI Tamil Nadu chapter staged a protest on Thursday demanding rollback. They urged Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to save the interests and livelihoods of around 4 lakh micro retailers and their 20 lakh dependants in the state.

## Compensation to be paid to rain-hit farmers

G. SRINIVASAN | DC  
THANJAVUR, JAN. 21

The district officials have been asked to complete the enumeration of crop damage, due to unseasonal rain during Pongal, before January 29, said Gagandeep Singh Bedi, principal secretary and agriculture production commissioner, on Thursday.

"After enumeration is completed and compiling the reports from districts, a detailed report will be given by the director of agriculture and director of horticulture to the government. The government will decide the relief to be

C. Chelladurai, member, FRAI and president, Puzhal Vattara Vybarigal Sangam-Chennai said they organised the protest seeking the intervention of the Prime Minister to immediately roll back the proposed COTPA amendments which are extreme-

provided to the farmers", Bedi told the media at Ponnapur near Thanjavur. He inspected the enumeration work at Punavasal in Peravurani panchayat union.

He later inspected the damaged crops at Raramuthirakkottai in Ammapettai panchayat union, Valamarkottai in Thanjavur panchayat union, Ponnapur in Orathanadu panchayat union, Kavalipatti in Thiruvonam panchayat union and Punavasal in Peravurani panchayat union.

He also inspected the paddy drier kept at Ponnapur. He said the teams of revenue, agricul-

ture and horticulture departments are in the field enumerating the damage. Emphasising that Tamil Nadu government is committed to helping the farmers, Bedi said that with respect to crop insurance, officials and crop insurance companies have been asked to advance the crop-cutting experiment (normally done in February and March).

"Now they will be done immediately, so that reports can be sent to insurance companies early and compensation can be paid to the affected farmers. Crops in 30 lakh acres have been insured by farmers in the state." "I

## Centre mulling quota for govt students in Pondy med seats

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

The Union government has informed the Madras high court that the proposal for granting horizontal reservation to students from government schools in state quota seats in admission to MBBS and other medical courses in Puducherry, has been under active consideration of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Ravi Ranjan, Deputy Commandant in Ministry of Home Affairs, stated this in his reply affidavit filed in response to a petition filed by one Minor Subbulakshmi, which sought a direction to the Union government to approve the scheme of introduction of 10 percent horizontal reservations for student from government schools within Union Territory of Puducherry for admission to MBBS/BDS courses.

In his affidavit, Ravi Ranjan said in view of it being an important policy matter and due to difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Minister of Puducherry, the matter was referred for inter-ministerial consultation, to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Personnel and Training for their considered advice.

Denying the averment that the reference has been kept pending indefinitely, he said the Ministry has acted promptly on the reference of LG and CM, and sought inter-ministerial consultations for taking an informed decision.

He said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare while disagreeing with the proposal for granting horizontal reservation to students from government schools in state quota seats in admission to MBBS and other medical courses had conveyed certain comments/points. Now, the Ministry has solicited the advice of

## HC bins PIL, seeking to control variant of Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

The Madras high court has declined to entertain a Public Interest Litigation, which sought a direction to the authorities to take appropriate action to control the variant of Covid-19. The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice M.M.Sundresh dismissed the PIL filed by K.K.Ramesh.

The bench said the petitioner, who is in the habit of filing numerous public interest litigations, has come forward to file the present one seeking a direction to the authorities to take appropriate action to control the variant of Covid-19.

"We are not inclined to entertain this writ petition. It is for the State administration to take appropriate action. The Special Government Pleader appearing for the State submitted that action already initiated is being continued. In such view of the matter, the present writ petition filed based on a newspaper report, cannot be entertained," the bench added.

In his PIL, Ramesh sought a direction to the authorities to take stringent action to control the Covid-19 type-2 diseases in a war footing manner, to control the Covid-19 type-2 disease, the government should not allow assembling of 10 persons in all

## HC rejects plea on PCA amendment

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

The Madras high court has rejected a plea, which sought a direction to the Union government to suitably amend the Prevention of Corruption Act by incorporating maximum punishment of life imprisonment and even death sentence.

Declining to entertain a Public Interest Litigation filed by R.Parthiben, the First Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice M.M.Sundresh said it is left open to the petitioner to move the political field for appropriate action in accordance with law.

The bench said the petitioner seeks to espouse a public cause by suggesting that the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, ought to be suitably amended by incorporating maximum punishment of life imprisonment

gent action to control the Covid-19 type-2 diseases in a war footing manner, to control the Covid-19 type-2 disease, the government should not allow assembling of 10 persons in all

the people and the constitution and putting spokes to the decision of the popularly elected government. Since 2016 no students studied in government schools got admission in government medical colleges in Puducherry and the admission rate was zero. The scheme will help government students to get admission in government medical college and the



and even death sentence. "We do not know if the petitioner's sentiment reflects the public perception to corruption in public office in general. We hope it does not. At any rate, it is for the appropriate legislature to look into matters of policy, including prescribing punishment for offences and no writ of mandamus may issue for a constitutional court to command any legislature to enact a particular statute or to prescribe a particular form of punishment or the like. The writ petition is not entertained and it is left open to the petitioner to move the political field for appropriate action in accordance with law", the bench added.

## Poll ready AIADMK, DMK organise party meetings

From P1

Even then, it has become clear from the manner in which the campaign now goes on that the fight for the Chief Minister's post is only between Palaniswami and Stalin though Haasan and Naam Tamilar Katchi's Seeman are also aspirants.

While the smaller parties like the Congress, BJP and others are also holding public meetings at various places, they are yet to start a systematic campaign like Stalin and Palaniswami

(grama sabai) meetings on the theme 'Reject AIADMK' telling people that the changes the DMK would usher in once the elections were over. According to a resolution passed at the DMK's district secretaries meeting on Thursday, 21,500 villages and wards have already been reached through the grama sabai meetings and that 1.05 crore people had already endorsed the 'Reject AIADMK' slogan.

Palaniswami on his part, speaking at a meeting at Thirupurur in Chengalpattu district, attacks Stalin by accusing him of grooming a woman to level unfair charges against the Deputy Chief Minister.

O Panneerselvam at his constituency of Theni at a grama sabai meeting. He calls Stalin's trick as

cheap and even challenges him to come directly for a fight and not use women as cover.

Panneerselvam has also geared up to hit the campaign trail in a few days and is expected to make speeches against DMK and Stalin. In the DMK camp, the party's youth wing secretary

Udhayanidhi Stalin and Women's Wing secretary Kanimozhi Karunanidhi have already started their campaigns.

Also both the DMK and AIADMK have been holding party conclaves to brief functionaries on the ways to go about preparing for the elections. The DMK held a district secretaries meeting on Thursday and the AIADMK's meeting with functionaries is to follow.

Besides, the two major parties have also convened meetings of their booth committees, which play the most crucial role during polls. Both the parties have booth committees in all the polling booths of the State, whose numbers may go up this time in view of new norms due to the pandemic.

## Jab we met: Address vax hesitancy, share safety and efficacy data

B. Vijayalakshmi

## Viewpoint

With the pandemic curve under control, it is time the government dispelled doubts over Covid vaccines and ensured that the inoculation drive picks up momentum. The Centre has urged the state governments to address vaccine hesitancy prevalent in several parts of the country.

Healthcare workers and other frontline staff must realize that since they are

the most vulnerable to virus exposure, vaccines have been offered first to them as a mark of gratitude for their selfless service.

With the Covid situation reassuring, public figures and netas must volunteer to get the jab without hesitation. The restrictions given to vaccine recipients underline the need for transparency in revealing the efficacy of phase 3 trial results of Covaxin, thereby clearing doubts over vaccine preference.

With over eight lakh healthcare workers vaccinated in the country till this morning, and PM and CMs gearing up for the jab during the second phase of vaccination, the safety and effi-

cacy of vaccines matters most. Efforts must be made to end vested campaigns of misinformation.

CoWin has helped in planning of vaccination sessions, tracking beneficiaries and vaccination sites. With glitches reported in some sites, the software's new feature — 'allot beneficiary' in 'ongoing session' — allows maximum number of beneficiaries in each session. A person's name can be searched in the database by cellphone number. Besides, provisional certificate will be given after first dose and final certificate after the second dose. Immunisation officers and district magistrates have been told to organise daily



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The Southern Railway on Thursday launched the Covid-19 vaccination campaign at its headquarters hospital, Perambur. Dr. C.V.N. Murthy, medical director, Perambur railway hospital, received the first dose. John Thomas, general manager, Southern Railway, inaugurated the drive in the presence of B.G. Mallaya, additional general manager, Dr V. Nirmala Devi, principal chief medical director, and other staff. The vaccination centre is fully equipped to administer vaccines for 100 beneficiaries on a daily basis. — DC

review meetings with the session site and cold chain point with feedback to plan the schedule.

Meanwhile, India has begun delivering Covishield vaccine to neighbouring nations like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal. The state and Central governments must coordinate to instill confi-

dence in people, understand the reasons for vaccine hesitancy and handle the challenges.

Reassuring people on jab safety and updating and sharing efficacy data at regular intervals will put the vaccination drive on fast track. Also it will help states to reach a level of herd immunity.



## IN BRIEF



## SC GRANTS BAIL TO KANNADA ACTRESS RAGINI

PARMOD KUMAR | DC  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 21

The Supreme Court on Thursday granted bail to Kannada film actress Ragini Dwivedi who is in custody since September 4 last along with others in a drugs racket case.

A bench of Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman, Justice Navin Sinha and Justice K.M Joseph set aside the November 3, 2020, order of the Karnataka High Court, refusing bail to Dwivedi and others in the case registered under various provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

The court had heard the matter at length on Wednesday, the order was pronounced on Thursday.

The court noted that Ragini is entitled to get the bail since the maximum punishment for the crime alleged against her is only one year imprisonment.

She was in the Bengaluru prison for the past four months in the arrest affected after a raid on her house in the city on September 4.

Her lawyer noted that the officials did not recover any drugs from her house in the raid on September 4 and yet she was arrested on the charge of conspiracy.

# CWC to discuss roadmap for new Cong prez polls

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 21

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) will be meeting on Friday to take stock of the political situation prevailing in the country. The meeting is also expected to draw up a schedule for the long-pending organisational elections that could also pick a new party chief.

In the August meeting of the CWC, interim President Mrs. Sonia Gandhi had asked the CWC to

relieve her of her duties and pick a new party chief. The process of internal elections started in September with electoral roles of the party being revised.

Insiders say that an AICC session along with a 'Chintan Shivir' is expected to be called after the budget session of Parliament to look for a new President.

Several leaders have come out in the open and demanded that Mr. Rahul Gandhi once again take up

the reins of the party.

Several leaders had written a letter to Mrs. Sonia Gandhi in August last year demanding sweeping changes in the functioning of the party. They also pressed for internal elections for electing the President and CWC members.

Last month Mrs. Gandhi had met some of these letter writers in a bid to assuage their feelings and to initiate the free flow of ideas. Back room parleys have also been held with

these leaders. The party does not want any embarrassment if a situation arises when elections are not being held.

The CWC is also expected to release a strongly worded resolution in favour of the farmers and against the farm laws. The issue of alleged Chinese incursions is also expected to be taken up. The issue of national security that came up post the purported chats of Arnab Goswami may find a mention.

## STREET IN DELHI TO BE NAMED AFTER SUSHANT

New Delhi: A stretch of road in Andrews Ganj in south Delhi will soon be named after the late actor Sushant Singh Rajput as the area's civic body has cleared a proposal for it, officials said on Thursday.

Sushant, who would have turned 35 on Thursday, was found dead at his Bandra residence in Mumbai on June 14 last year.

His fans and admirers took to social media to remember the actor whose untimely demise was followed by a high-profile investigation.

SDMC's Congress councillor Abhishek Dutt in September 2020 had moved the proposal to name the road after the actor.

# Forgotten WB's Nandigram divided between Didi, Dada

Nandigram (WB), Jan. 21: Two large cut-outs of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her protégé-turned-rival Suwendu Adhikari adorning opposite sides of the street in Tengua bazar of Nandigram sum up the prevailing political mood of the area which is hogging national limelight following the former's announcement of her candidature from here.

The obscure Nandigram village that shook the base of mighty Left regime and became a bastion of the Trinamul Congress 14 years ago, now stands divided between its favourite "Didi and Dada" amid speculations of Banerjee taking on her trusted lieutenant in the anti-land acquisition movement, Suwendu Adhikari. Though, the BJP is yet to take a call on fielding Suwendu from

Nandigram which he represented in the assembly before quitting after joining BJP, the dashing leader has expressed willingness to take on the challenge and defeat Banerjee in the polls.

Many locals in the cradle of change, Nandigram, were feeling 'disenchanted and forgotten' and yearning for another change till a few months back.

But, with the announcement of Banerjee's candidature and Adhikari, a political heavyweight of the region, who had switched over to the BJP vowing to defeat her, has put the entire East Midnapore district, especially Nandigram, on edge. "The people of Nandigram are not very happy with the TMC and also have grievances against Mamata di as she hardly visits Nandigram. Had there been any other

candidate of the TMC, the defeat would have been imminent."

But, there is a section of the people who have a soft corner for the TMC chief.

"We can't forget the tough days of the movement when she and Suwendu da were our only saviours," Anisur Mondal, a sharecropper who was part of the Bhumu Uchedh Pratirodh Committee (BUPC), said.

Mondal's views were echoed by local BJP leader Sabuj Pradhan, who agreed that Banerjee's poll announcement is likely to change the social-political equations on the ground level. "Till last month the situation in Nandigram was not in favour of the TMC. It will be a divided house if both Mamata Banerjee and Suwendu Adhikari contest from Nandigram assembly.

— PTI

# Army jawan killed in sniper attack

DC CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, JAN. 21

An Army jawan was killed in a sniper rifle attack from across the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Thursday.

The Army and police sources said that Havaldar Nirmal Singh from 10 JAK Rifles was deployed at a forward Indian Army post in Mankote area of the LoC when targeted either by the Pakistani troops or militants. He received a bullet injury in right side of the chest and was immediately evacuated to the Army command hospital in garrison town of Udhampur in a helicopter. However, before doctors could attend on him, he succumbed, the sources said.

The sources added that the soldier's corpse was flown back to Poonch and that it would be handed over to the family for last rites after completion of autopsy at the govern-

ment-run sub-district hospital at Mendhar.

However, a defence spokesman said in Jammu that the soldier was critically injured in unprovoked ceasefire violation by the Pakistani troops in Krishna Ghati sector of the LoC and later died while being evacuated to hospital. He added that the Indian Army responded "strongly" to the Pakistani firing. "Havaldar Nirmal Singh was a brave, highly motivated and a sincere soldier. The nation will always remain indebted to him for his supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty," the spokesman said.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Army had claimed that it foiled yet another Infiltration bid along the LoC's Akhnor sector by killing three militants. Four Army jawans were injured in the clash, it said.

The Army alleged that the Pakistan Army had tried to facilitate the infiltration by providing firing cover to the militants.

# Sonu Sood's plea rejected by HC

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, JAN. 21

The Bombay High Court on Thursday dismissed a petition filed by Bollywood actor Sonu Sood challenging the demolition notice issued by the Mumbai municipal corporation. The civic body has alleged that Mr Sood has conducted unauthorised construction and

converted a residential structure into a hotel.

Mr Sood, who shot to fame for helping thousands of migrant workers reach their home from Mumbai during the lockdown, had approached the court seeking interim relief against the notice.

The actor had approached the high court after a City Civil court rejected his plea.

# PM TO TAKE VACCINE IN SECOND ROUND

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 21

With hesitancy slowing down the progress of Covid-19 vaccination drive, the central government on Thursday launched a major drive to convince healthcare workers and others to come forward and take the shot. In the last six days, over 10.4 lakh persons have been vaccinated across India at 18,161 session sites. On Thursday itself over 2.33 lakh beneficiaries were vaccinated, with no deaths due to Adverse Effect from Immunisation reported.

In the last six days, close to 10 lakh persons have been vaccinated across India at 18,159 session sites.

On Thursday itself over 1.92 lakh beneficiaries were vaccinated, with no deaths due to Adverse Effect from Immunisation reported.

However, it is felt that the progress is slow and given this pace of vaccination, it will take much longer time than expected to reach the target of 3 crore beneficiaries in the first phase and may delay the second phase when people above 50 years are to be vaccinated.

The President, Prime Minister, union ministers, chief ministers, MPs, MLAs, and judges will be among those who will get the jab in the second phase.

India on Thursday registered 15, 223 fresh cases of Covid-19 and 151 new deaths. So far, 145 persons have been found positive with the mutated UK strain of the virus.

# WORLD

# US rejoins climate accord, Muslim travel ban lifted, masks mandatory

Washington, Jan. 21: US President Joe Biden signed a series of executive orders to launch his administration Wednesday, including a decision to rejoin the Paris climate accord and a mask mandate for all federal buildings.

The orders included keeping the United States in the World Health Organization, ending the ban on entries from mostly Muslim-majority countries, bolstering environmental protections and strengthening the fight against Covid-19.

Also among the directives was a halt to construction of the wall on the US-Mexico border, and efforts to expand diversity and equality for minority groups in the federal government.

The orders were aimed at reversing decisions by his

predecessor Donald Trump and setting a clear policy path for Biden's new administration, just hours after he was sworn in as president.

"Some of things we are going to be doing are going to be bold," he said in the Oval Office.

"We are going to combat climate change in a way we have not done so far," Biden said of returning to the Paris agreement, a treaty signed by most nations in 2016 to limit global warming.

He said his actions on the Covid-19 pandemic, which has claimed 400,000 American lives, would help change the course of the crisis.

His return to the Paris Agreement, which the United States joined Barack Obama was president and Biden vice president, was lauded by

other leaders.

"Welcome back," said French President Emmanuel Macron.

"We are together. We will be stronger to face the challenges of our time. Stronger to build our future. Stronger to protect our planet," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also welcomed the move, saying it was a large step for the leading producers of global carbon pollution.

"But there is a very long way to go," he said in a statement.

"We look forward to the leadership of United States in accelerating global efforts towards net zero" emissions, he said, calling for "ambitious" new targets for 2030 and expanded climate finance.

— AFP

# Even in dark times, we not only dream, we do: Harris

Washington, Jan. 21: In her first remarks to the nation as US Vice President, Kamala Harris has highlighted "American aspiration" and underlined that President Joe Biden has summoned the people to look beyond crisis and aspire to unite. Harris, 56, made history on Wednesday when she was sworn in as the first female, first PoC and first Asian-American US vice-president. The former senator was sworn in just before Biden took

the oath of office to become the 46th US President.

"In many ways this moment embodies our character as a nation. It demonstrates who we are, even in dark times. We, do, not only dream, we do. We not only see what has been, we see what can be."

"We shoot for the moon, and then we plant our flag on it. We are bold, fearless and ambitious. We are undaunted, in our belief that we shall over-

come, that we will rise up. This is American aspiration," Harris said outside the Lincoln Memorial.

She cited the accomplishments of President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, who "saw a better future and built it with land grant colleges, and the transcontinental railroad."

She also highlighted how Martin Luther King Jr fought for racial and economic justice.

— PTI

# Harris' success inspires students

Montreal, Jan. 21: Students at a high school in Canada were glued Wednesday to coverage of former student Kamala Harris's inauguration as US vice president, saying her achievements would drive them to reach new goals. Harris, then aged 12, moved to Montreal with her sis-

ter Maya in 1976 when their divorced mother relocated the family to pursue her career as a cancer researcher.

From 1978 to 1981 Harris attended Westmount High, which also counts singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen among its alumni. "I find it so crazy that a woman from

this school, my own high school, went and became such a great woman, and now she is the vice president of the USA," a student named Brenda said. Harris was an extroverted American teenager who identified as African-American, former classmates said.

— AFP

# CLINTON, BUSH, OBAMA RECORD JOINT VIDEO

Washington, Jan. 21: Former US presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama have recorded a rare joint video through which they sent their wishes to President Joe Biden while rooting for his success in leading the country out of the challenges faced by it.

In the video, which was aired on Wednesday night, the three former commanders-in-chief talk about the peaceful transition of power while standing in the amphitheatre at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia where they accompanied the newly installed 46th President of the United States to a ceremony where he paid his respects at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

# Trudeau first foreign leader to meet Biden

Washington, Jan. 21: President Joe Biden's first call to a foreign leader will be to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Wednesday. "His first foreign leader call will be on Friday with Prime Minister Trudeau," Psaki told reporters at her first White House briefing.

— AFP

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1.	Third party consultants for Monitoring and Supervising of various types of Smart City Projects (Phase II - 17 Projects) in Thanjavur City Municipal Corporation under Smart City Scheme	Rs. 5,00,000/-	Refer Tender Documents
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CPWD/38/Tender/2021 Commissioner, Thanjavur City Municipal Corporation

**INDIAN RAILWAYS**

**"PUBLIC NOTIFICATION"**

**Proforma 10-1**

Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines and premises situated on the completed section of the under noted section of the Northern Railway that the 25 kV, 50 Hz, AC overhead traction wires will be energized on or after the date specified against the section. On and from the same date the overhead traction line shall be treated as live at all time and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said overhead line.

Section	RKM (Date)
"Energisation of 25KV Single phase AC newly electrified section of DN Main Line from Bartara from location 7/12 (Ch: 7/271.50) to Location 11/14 (Ch: 11/263.00) including Bartara yard & UP Main Line from Unchaulia from location 11/13 (Ch: 11/263.00) to Location 24/32 (Ch: 24/687.00) including UCH Yard, JBG yard with associated Turn outs, x-overs, AT's, modification in existing lines and up-gradation of existing SSP at UCH with feeder lines in RAC-SPC Doubling section of Moradabad Division, Northern Railway."	17.273 (22.01.2021)

**Proforma 10-2**

**INDIAN RAILWAYS**

**INTRODUCTION OF AC 25 KV TRACTION**

**"WARNING TO ROAD USERS"**

It is notified for information of the Public that in connection with introduction of 25KV AC electric traction over "Energisation of 25KV Single phase AC newly electrified section of DN Main Line from Bartara from location 7/12 (Ch: 7/271.50) to Location 11/14 (Ch: 11/263.00) including Bartara yard & UP Main Line from Unchaulia from location 11/13 (Ch: 11/263.00) to Location 24/32 (Ch: 24/687.00) including UCH Yard, JBG yard with associated Turn outs, x-overs, AT's, modification in existing lines and up-gradation of existing SSP at UCH with feeder lines in RAC-SPC Doubling section of Moradabad Division, Northern Railway," height gauges have been erected at all the level crossings with clear maximum height 4.78m above road level with a view to prevent loads of excessive height from coming into contact or dangerous proximity to live traction wire.

Public are hereby notified to observe the height specified above for the purpose of loading vehicles and to see that the load carried in road vehicles do not infringe the height gauges under any circumstances.

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- Danger to the height gauge and consequent obstruction to the road as well as the railway line.
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# DECCAN Chronicle

22 JANUARY 2021

## A return to decency in US will be good for the world

Young American poet Amanda Gorman may have stolen the show at the inauguration of the new US President with her words in verse: “And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us, but what stands before us.” In a sense, the poetic line summarises Joseph Robinette Biden Jr’s fundamentally reassuring message that the United States can heal while it recovers and rebuilds even as he attempts to reconcile and rectify the stark differences brought to the fore in four years of the Donald Trump era. The sense of calm resolve that Mr Biden, America’s 46th President, conveyed amid rhetoric and realism in bringing up “white supremacy” and “domestic terrorism” might have been just what was required after the tumultuous events of just two weeks ago when the same US Capitol, a pillar of democracy, was under siege.

Mr Biden’s ability to find the right words as he plays the healer who can stitch together the seemingly unbridgeable divide was the highlight. His talk of “American aspiration”, as opposed to the “America First” that his predecessor had emphasised at his 2017 inaugural, was tempered by post-pandemic humility after the US has been scarred more than any other nation with 400,000 deaths and millions more sick. The advent of the new presidency is not so much a transition as a sea change from the rule of his predecessor who showed scant regard for basic science and who upended news cycles with untruths distributed on social media platforms. In the face of crass challenges to democratic traditions, Mr Biden’s call for public comity was comforting: “Let’s begin to listen to one another again, hear one another, see one another.”

“Without unity there is no peace, only bitterness and fury, no progress, only exhausting outrage,” helped echo the ringing truth of old maxims on unity amid diversity that the world seems to have forgotten, thanks to the cascade of crises carried by the virus including the disruption of large parts of the global economy. In a welter of executive action, Mr Biden is bringing the United States back into the Paris agreement on climate change and into the World Health Organisation, besides stopping the construction of the “Mexican Wall” and addressing immigration issues thrown up by a racist and insular predecessor. The liberal revival promises more towards repairing hurt allies and equitable trade deals, obviating the need for tariff or sanctions-ridden confrontations that Mr Trump’s Washington had so preferred.

The dazzling optics of fireworks lighting up Capitol Hill was in keeping with the celebration of the inauguration while celebrity entertainers ushered in sobriety in view of the Covid-riddled times we are living in. There were messages to be read too in the ascension of vice-president Kamala Devi Harris, the first Black American and first person of Indian descent who was sworn in with her hand on two Bibles. The absence of the outgoing President Trump seemed inconspicuous, though he had the decency to leave a “generous letter” for his successor. In the end, the oldest democracy did survive the threat even as the “Proud Boys”, who were eulogised by Mr Trump, began mocking him as “a total failure”. One can only hope the return to decency and truth in America might ease the path to a global revival too.

## Is Lone playing BJP games?

The recent decision of Sajjad Lone, the founder-leader of the small Kashmir valley party, the People’s Conference, to leave the People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) not long after the PAGD parties performed well in the recent District Development Council (DDC) election cannot but cause surprise.

The impression it is likely to leave in Kashmir is that Mr Lone didn’t have the stomach for the fight ahead. The PAGD was created to struggle peacefully — using all democratic means — for the restoration of Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave constitutional autonomy to J&K and was squelched by the Centre in August 2019.

Since the PC has pulled out of what is an anti-BJP alliance, the surmise apt to be drawn in the valley is that the PC leader has been brought to his knees by the Centre, possibly through a deft mix of incentives and intimidation — the sorry fate of many in the country.

Mr Lone’s PC is limited to a corner of north Kashmir. Since the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the scene six years ago, the PC leader became the first valley politician to cozy up to the PM and the BJP. But in the environment created when the BJP scuttled its own alliance government with the People’s Democratic Party in J&K (in which Mr Lone was a minister), the latter joined the Gupkar Alliance founded by National Conference and PDP a day before Article 370 was read down and hundreds of valley politicians pushed into jail.

By breaking from the Gupkar group, Mr Lone would appear to have gone back to his position of affinity with BJP. Splitting away from PAGD carries the optics of the weakening of the anti-BJP forces in J&K. But in Kashmir valley such optics are likely to be derided in the present atmosphere. Mr Lone chose a lame explanation for his departure, saying PAGD parties had put up proxy candidates against official PAGD candidates in the DDC polls. This is true enough, but the remedy would seem to lie in taking steps to politically invigorate PAGD, not flit away from it. This is why the sense in the Valley is that Mr

Subhani



# Transparency needed to remove all vaccine fears



Karan Thapar

As I See It

I’m used to school-boys squabbling, hacks quarrelling and, even, fish-wives shouting like alley cats but doctors and scientists lunging at each other’s throats came as a complete surprise. Unfortunately, that’s what we have witnessed as differences of opinion, particularly over Bharat Biotech’s Covaxin vaccine, transformed into vicious disputes and nasty divisions. The fact that this is not edifying is the least of my concerns. More important, I fear it is fuelling vaccine hesitancy, not just among the uninformed general population but also among those who are well aware of the need for vaccination.

In its main front-page story, Tuesday’s *Hindustan Times* reported that the average turnout was “less than 50 per cent” for the first three days of vaccination. Out of 7,704 sessions, where 100 people per session should have been vaccinated, only 381,305 people have taken the jab. What makes this low turnout worse is that at this stage it is health workers who are getting vaccinated. These are the people who understand the importance of vaccination. Normally, they don’t need to be convinced. So, if they’re backing off, that would suggest a possibly bigger problem.

It’s this problem that I want to focus on today. At its heart, I would say, is the controversy over the efficacy of Covaxin which, in turn, has been made considerably worse by an inexplicable attack by 49 doctors and scientists on the experts who were the first to raise legitimate questions about the vaccine. Far from allaying the concerns, which are

legitimate and need answering, these 49 gentlemen seem to suggest it is anti-national to raise valid doubts and it is our patriotic duty to grit our teeth and take the vaccine. Well, that is an attitude almost calculated to rile people. And it certainly had that effect on doctors, nurses, ward boys and other health workers.

To understand my point, let’s come to the perceived problem with Covaxin and then turn to the inflammatory critique it has unnecessarily provoked.

The problem arises from the fact Covaxin has been cleared “for restricted use in emergency situations ... in clinical trial mode” although its efficacy data from Phase 3 trials is not available. Two of India’s top virologists, Gagandeep Kang and Shahid Jameel, have questioned this. Their reasons for doing so are simple. Though safe, we still don’t know how efficacious it is. As they have explained, without

credibly established efficacy data we don’t know if Covaxin works or how well it works. It’s being given in the belief that it will but if that turns out to be the case not only will that seriously damage trust in vaccination, but it could also mean many recipients, who think they are protected and inevitably drop their guard, could end up getting needlessly infected. If this happens, it can only add to our problems.

However, the case against using Covaxin goes further. Experts also say the argument it is an acceptable shortcut in a pandemic doesn’t hold. First of all, both cases and deaths are a fraction of what they were when they peaked in September. So, there’s no emergency now.

Second, we have other vaccines with credibly established efficacy that we could use. And they’re available in sufficient quantity. So, as Dr Kang told me in a recent interview: “I would ask why would you want to give a vaccine without efficacy emergency-use authorisation in these circumstances?”

Now the government’s doctors have advanced a third reason for prematurely pushing Covaxin. They claim it could be better at tackling new strains of the virus. The problem is that there’s absolutely no data to support this. Both Dr Kang and Dr Jameel say it is simply “an hypothesis”. This time Krishna Ella, chairman of Bharat Biotech, which has made Covaxin, agrees. On January 4, he publicly admitted that “it’s only an hypothesis right now”. Isn’t it odd that the government should think otherwise?

In fact, on January 4, Dr Krishna Ella went one step further. Most people have forgotten about this additional point which is why it’s worth recalling. “Just give me one week’s time (and) I’ll give confirmatory data”, he said. Two weeks and more have passed but he hasn’t done so. Instead, he’s gone silent on the subject.

It was in the face of such well-established concerns that 49 doctors and scientists decided to vindictively pounce on those who initially raised them. In a statement released on January 14 and within hours tweeted by the health ministry, they attacked what they

**It’s both bizarre and deplorable to frame differences over the efficacy of Covaxin as issues of national pride or as an attempt to run down Indian achievements. Yet that is what the 49 did.**

called “irresponsible statements by vested interests ... defaming (the) Indian scientific community and casting aspersions upon its integrity by making politicised statements about the recent research in the field of Covid-19 vaccines”. Referring to doubts about Covaxin as “reprehensible utterances”, the 49 sought to wrap themselves in the flag by asserting they have “a vision to make India a global leader in scientific research” and “a name to reckon with”. And, presumably for Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s benefit, they added they are “*atma nirbhar*”.

Frankly, it’s not just bizarre but deplorable to frame differences over the efficacy of Covaxin as issues of national pride or as an attempt to run down Indian achievements. Yet that is what the 49 did. No doubt the sound of the patriotic drum they tried to beat was music to their ears, but it turned out to be a discordant and disturbing note for the doctors, nurses and assorted health workers who they imagined would be reassured. It seems to have put them off in very sizeable numbers. As I said earlier, they’ve probably made matters much worse.

So, if we are going to ensure that Indians in their hundreds of millions get willingly vaccinated, we must be fully transparent about the vaccines we are using and their efficacy and not attack as “anti-national” all those who raise legitimate concerns. But if that doesn’t suffice to resolve the spreading doubts, we might have to consider temporarily withdrawing Covaxin till its efficacy is sufficiently and credibly established. Remember, the important goal is to get the largest number of people vaccinated. Which vaccine is used should be a mere detail.

*The writer is a television commentator and anchor*

## LETTERS

### TURNING THE PAGE

The newly sworn-in US President Joe Biden is a very capable leader. He has the human touch and personal experience of the sufferings and sorrows of life. He believes in the essential goodness of human nature. He has risen to the occasion and is sure to rise to the challenges, both domestic and global. He will certainly try to do his job and meet expectations to the best of his ability. His passionate and powerfully emotive inauguration speech has encapsulated his philosophy of life and his worldview and outlined what his administration plans to do a sort of blueprint in broad terms. The flurry of executive orders Biden signed on the first day in office making mask wearing mandatory, rejoining the Paris climate change accord and the WHO, lifting the travel ban on several Muslim majority countries and halting the construction of wall on US-Mexican border among others were a clear repudiation of the Trump era policies.

**G. David Milton,**  
*Maruthancode*

### AN IRREPARABLE LOSS

THE PASSING away of the veteran oncologist Dr V. Shanta is an irreparable loss to the field of medicine. A pioneer in cancer care, Dr Shanta was a strong woman, full of compassion and wisdom. The Padma Vibhushan recipient, whose passion for care was evident both in her words and actions, was a phenomenon that happened to India’s medical fraternity when cancer care seemed a distant dream. She steered the illustrious Adyar Cancer Institute to global fame and was solely responsible in making state-of-the-art treatment for cancer accessible and affordable to one and all.

**R. Sivakumar,** *Chennai*

### A SHOT IN THE ARM

“CRICKET WAS invented by the English but mastered by the Indians”, goes the saying and true to it, the comprehensive win of the Indian team over the Aussies that too in Australia bears testimony to it. The editorial’s (*When Team India staged mother of all comebacks*, Jan.21) timely endorsing of Rahane donning the role of captain deserves accolades. As the swan song of the editorial opined, old order changes yielding way to new and the aggressive and demonstrative Kohli’s absence did not cause any damage to India’s winning streak. Let Team India bring many more such glories with the young talented ones, taking this win as a shot in the arm.

**E.S.Chandrasekaran,** *Chennai*

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Rafia Zakaria



## How Big Tech giants finally dealt crushing blow to Trump

Donald J. Trump spent the last days of his presidency sulking in the White House residence, isolating himself from nearly everyone and busying himself in making an enemies list, which included his own vice-president. One of the few people seen visiting him was a man who made a small fortune selling pillows on television and is a consumer of the most bizarre conspiracy theories possible.

Washington D.C. was a ghost town peopled only by National Guardsmen called up to defend the Capitol against the angry mobs unleashed by the President’s caustic vitriol. Even these men weren’t quite trustworthy; they were being vetted again to ensure they weren’t secret Trump supporters who would compromise the new President’s security.

Of all the humiliations Donald Trump has been subjected to, however, the worst hadn’t come from his political opponents. It came not on the day of the Capitol insurrection or even the impeachment that followed, but on the day that Twitter suspended his account. In an instant, the President who had goaded his supporters to fight

hard, feeding them a steady diet of lies, conspiracy theories and deceit for years, had no means to get in touch with them.

Mr Trump himself was likely stunned when this finally happened. For years, his detractors were hounding social media giants Twitter and Facebook to boot him out from their platforms. None of their entreaties worked; Mr Trump kept lying, riling up supporters, destroying careers, firing high-level Cabinet members, threatening politicians, instigating his supporters to deliver death threats, and his accounts were untouched. Even as he was actively spreading lies before and after the election, lies about mail-in voting, lies about who had won, and lies about rigging, Twitter and Facebook did nothing.

That changed after the Capitol Hill insurrection. Facebook and Twitter finally jettisoned Mr Trump. When an irate President tried to access the official POTUS account and started to tweet from there, that account was also suspended. In a belated purge, the two platforms began to delete pages and other accounts that were pushing for further attacks on the Capitol.

Extreme right-wing Trump supporters, members of militia groups like the Boogaloo Boys or neo-Nazi groups like The Proud Boys and many others immediately cried foul. Twitter and Facebook were engaging in censorship, they claimed, trying to quash speech on the right even as they let left-oriented groups operate without restrictions. The argument reflected just how far Trump supporters are from the one-time conservatives who used to make up the Republican Party. The latter group, with many who have long turned away from Donald Trump, would know, for instance, that freedom of speech and censorship rights do not apply to private companies but to governments. Free enterprise, a cherished conservative principle, stands for the freedom of Twitter and Facebook, both private companies, to kick out whomever they wish.

Annoyed at being booted out, Mr Trump’s MAGA supporters turned to a different quasi-Twitter service called Parler that was geared towards just those conservatives who were against Twitter’s rules of content and moderation. Parler doesn’t moderate any of its

content, allowing anything and everything to be said and shared on the site. In the minds of Mr Trump’s staunchest supporters, this was the ideal free-speech zone, where the harm words can cause was simply no consideration at all. Mr Trump’s faithful, many of whom already had Parler accounts, trooped off. If the liberals in charge of Twitter and Facebook would kick them out, Parler was there to welcome them.

The tentacles of Big Tech, however, could reach longer and deeper than they imagined. Parler may have been a separate service that didn’t moderate its content, but it used Amazon Web Servers to host content, and the app was distributed via the Apple App Store and Google Play. These made it subject to the rules of service of Apple, Amazon, Google, etc. These other tech giants stepped in. If Parler wouldn’t moderate its content, they would refuse to host the site or allow the app to be sold. Ultimatums were handed down; they couldn’t be met, and so the week after the Capitol insurrection Parler went dark. The conservatives who funded it vowed the site would be back, but without web server hosting it appeared this would be a tall order.

Big Tech’s role in first pushing and then ultimately (belatedly) removing Mr Trump will be debated for decades to come. It’s hard not to wonder about how many people would still be alive if Twitter and Facebook had done what they did this January a year ago; they would have denied Mr Trump a platform to spread lies about Covid-19 and the election. A study completed by the *Washington Post* found that in the two weeks since Mr Trump was suspended from Twitter, misinformation on the election and the events that followed had been reduced by a whopping 72 per cent.

Donald Trump, who tweeted hundreds of times a day on some days and whose tweets are now a part of history, will never have access to a Twitter account again. His is a lifetime ban applied not to a particular account but to him as a person regardless of which account he uses. The story of Mr Trump’s end is in this sense as much a tale of how giant tech companies now have the power to make or break governments, even in the most powerful country in the world.

*By arrangement with Dawn*



## SHORT TAKES

## Chennaiyin go down to ATK

**Goa:** ATK Mohun Bagan had to wait until the 90th minute to score past a stubborn Chennaiyin FC defence as the Mariners registered a hard-fought and crucial 1-0 win in the Indian Super League at the Fatorda Stadium, on Thursday. Second-half substitute David Williams headed in a dramatic match-winner to help ATKMB move to 24 points, just two points behind leaders Mumbai City FC. Both sides made a couple of changes coming into the game. Chennaiyin's Deepak Tangri and Thoi Singh started in place of Anirudh Thapa and Edwin Vanspaul while Javier Hernandez and Manvir Singh were preferred over David Williams and Prabir Das by Habas.

The first half was evenly contested as both defences were at their best. Though there were few chances created, ATKMB was marginally the better team.

## Sindhu, Sameer into quarters

**Bangkok:** Indian shuttlers P. V. Sindhu and Sameer Verma stormed into the quarterfinals of the Toyota Thailand Open after registering straight-game wins but HS Prannoy bowed out of Super 1000 tournament on Tuesday. Sindhu expectedly outclassed Malaysia's world No. 92 Kisona Selvadurai 21-10, 21-12 in a lop-sided second-round contest that lasted just 35 minutes.

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# Warm welcome for warriors

## Nation's pride Rahane and victorious Indian team back home

**Mumbai/ New Delhi, Jan. 21:** Chants of 'aala re aala Ajinkya aala' headlined a red carpet welcome for Ajinkya Rahane as the stand-in captain, along with coach Ravi Shastri and some other members of the team, returned to the country on Thursday after India's epic triumph in Australia. The chants (meaning here comes our Ajinkya) were heard amid the beating of the traditional dhol tasha and showering of flower petals at Rahane's residential complex.

Besides Rahane and Shastri, also arriving in Mumbai were star bats-

man Rohit Sharma, pacer Shardul Thakur and opener Prithvi Shaw, while Brisbane Test hero Rishabh Pant landed in the national capital early this morning.

T. Natarajan, who was originally picked as a net bowler but became the first Indian cricketer to make his international debut across all three formats during the same tour, landed in Bengaluru and then took off for his village in Tamil Nadu's Salem.

The players from Chennai, including veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, rookie

Washington Sundar and bowling coach Bharat Arun are currently in Dubai and are expected to reach the country early morning on Friday.

On arrival in Mumbai, Rahane, Shastri, Rohit, Shardul and Shaw were felicitated by Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) officials, including President Vijay Patil and Apex Council members Ajinkya Naik, Amit Dani and Umesh Khanvilka.

Rahane also cut a cake to celebrate the team's win.

However, more surprises awaited the reticent batsman after he drove straight to his housing

society in suburban Matunga, where residents had made elaborate preparations to accord their hero a royal welcome.

Rahane was welcomed with the beats of dhol, while others showered the cricketer with flower petals. Rahane was also joined by his wife and two-year-old daughter in the celebration.

Soaking in the carnival-like atmosphere, Rahane acknowledged the love and adulation showered on him by the people of the city, many of whom waited for his team at the airport wearing masks amid the Covid-19 pan-

demic. In his society, residents and videographers jostled to capture the moments and the unassuming batsman posed happily for them.

Rahane was then greeted in a traditional manner as he walked towards the entrance of the building.

Dhol tasha is usually played to celebrate special achievements and during joyous occasions.

An injury-ravaged India beat Australia by three wickets in the series-deciding fourth Test in Brisbane on Tuesday to clinch the Border Gavaskar Trophy 2-1.

— PTI

# Siraj goes from Gabba to abba

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 21

An emotional Mohammed Siraj drove straight from the airport to the graveyard and paid his last respects to his father on his return to Hyderabad on Thursday from a successful tour of Australia with the national cricket team.

Mohammed Ghouse, who had wanted to see his son play at the highest level for India, had died on November 20 last year about a week after the fast bowler landed in Australia with the Indian team. Siraj was advised by family members to stay back and play on, as his father would have wanted.

He did, and played a key role in India's historic series win, taking 13 wickets (most by an Indian bowler) in three Tests, including a five-wicket haul in the fourth and final game in Brisbane.

Siraj laid flowers at his father's grave and offered prayers before heading home. "I want to dedicate my performance to my Dad. I miss

him a lot... at times I almost reached out to my phone to call him but realised he is no more," he said.

Siraj also recalled help from all around. Senior pace partner Jasprit "Bumrah *bhai*" supported me a lot and kept giving me constant tips with regard to bowling as well as mental framework during the series," he said.

Then there was "Virat Kohli *bhai*" who backed me while I was playing white ball cricket. As you know the chances for bowlers are rare in T20s and the 2018 IPL was a bad season for me, but he kept encouraging me. At the IPL last year, I got to learn quite a bit from Dale Steyn (RCB's pacer)," he said.

Speaking about competition at the highest level, Siraj said: "There was pressure but I just wanted to go out and give my best. It's time to relax now, only a bit though. I will continue to work hard, keep playing for the country as long as I can and bowl my heart."

# Rajasthan trade Robin to Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21



Veteran India batsman Robin Uthappa has been traded to Chennai Super Kings in an all-cash deal, IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals said on Thursday.

The 35-year-old right-hander from Karnataka had scored just 196 runs in 12 matches in the last IPL in UAE after being picked up by Rajasthan Royals at the last IPL auctions.

"I really enjoyed my year at the Royals and had a great time being part of this franchise. I am now excited for the next part of my cricketing journey joining CSK for IPL 2021," Uthappa said in a release.

Rajasthan Royals had released eight players, including star Australia batsman Steve Smith, after the team finished at the bottom of the table in the 2020 edition.

Rajasthan Royals COO Jake Lush McCrum said: "We'd like to thank Robbie for his contribution during his time with us. He pro-

vided significant value building into the season in our camps in Guwahati and Nagpur, and his speech during our World Cup winners session during the season was one of the most powerful we have heard.

"We do have depth with regards to openers in our squad, therefore when the offer came from CSK, we thought it was a good opportunity for all parties involved. We'd like to wish Robbie all the best for this season at CSK and his future beyond that."

Young wicket-keeper batsman Sanju Samson was named as Rajasthan Royals captain on Wednesday, replacing Smith.

# FORMER TNTA PRESIDENT NARAYANAN PASSES AWAY

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 21

V. Narayanan, the former president of Tamil Nadu Tennis Association, passed away on Thursday. He was 83.

A former Madras University player Narayanan made a name for himself as an administrator. He played a key role in organising the ATP Chennai Open.

He was a member of the prestigious Queen's Club in England, which he regularly visited to witness the international grass court held there prior to Wimbledon.

Vijay Amritraj, the current TNTA president said: "It is truly a sad day for Tamil Nadu and Indian Tennis. I knew Nari for a long period of time and his love for the game of tennis was immense. I worked closely with him after bringing Chennai Open to our city. He was an avid tennis player. In addition to that he had unique management skills which enhanced the image of Tamil Nadu Tennis Association to be the foremost in promoting tennis in India. He will be truly missed. I convey my heartfelt condolences to the family."

# COFFEE-BREAK

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



**Aries:** There will be two loves vying for your affection and you will try to sort out the dilemma. Confident about yourself, you love to put your foot down in the face of any opposition.



**Taurus:** This period is not very good as your close associates, friends and family members may appear distant. Don't let stress affect your health.



**Gemini:** Your work will achieve success and service conditions will improve. Your friends and associates will support you. You might enter into some profitable deals.



**Cancer:** Don't adopt undesirable means for quick monetary gains. Quarrel with friends or colleagues is possible. It is better to be methodical in your approach at work.



**Leo:** There may be opportunities for new investments if you are alert and take action. You may have to use your diplomatic skills to defuse tensions at home.



**Virgo:** You may be introspective about certain personal issues. Be patient if certain developments are not going as planned; this period of confusion will soon pass. Find creative ways to work around delays.

## You share your b'day with

**Bhuvan Bam, an Indian comedian, writer, singer, songwriter, and YouTube personality. He is known for his YouTube comedy channel BB Ki Vines.**



**Libra:** Some of you may be thinking of joining a charitable organisation. You are not likely to be benefited by expanding your business now.



**Scorpio:** Spend quality time with your partner. Travel could be hectic and stressful. Take things slowly and try and work quietly to achieve your goals.



**Sagittarius:** Hectic activity at work combined with unexpected changes can create a challenging environment. But you will find ways to work around it and thrive.



**Capricorn:** Be subtle and discreet in your interactions with seniors or business associates. Patiently hear out well meaning colleagues but make your decisions independently. Take care of your finances.

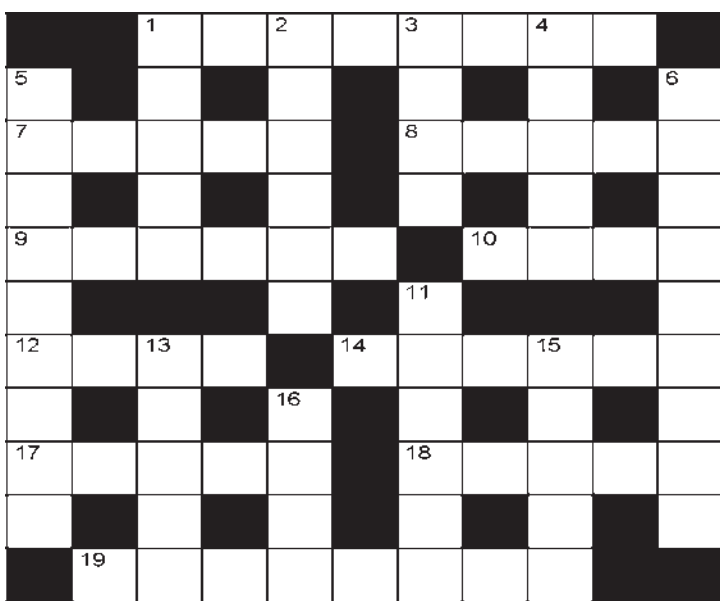


**Aquarius:** You will have to work harder to get your ideas on the agenda. Don't lose your temper if you face opposition, take some time to rework your strategy and try to co-operate with colleagues.



**Pisces:** Stressful situations in a work or business relationship should be viewed with objectivity, don't make any rash moves. Domestic issues will be highlighted and you may want to spend some time sorting it out.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



### Across

1. Move to a new place (8)
7. Animal jall (5)
8. Glossy fabric (5)
9. Diminish (6)
10. Accurate (4)
12. Sleeve end (4)
14. Ceremonious (6)
17. Health professional (5)
18. One seemingly indifferent to emotions (5)
19. Ore-extracting place (8)

### down

1. Defeats decisively (5)
2. Account book (6)
3. Lawsuit (4)
5. Private teacher (5)
6. Weave (9)
11. Miniaturised tree (6)
13. Abstain from, give up (5)
15. Elk (5)
16. Go first (4)

### YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

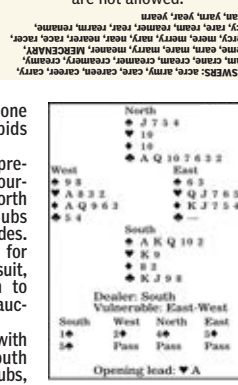
Across: 1. Shrunken, 6. Odds, 7. Tattoo, 9. Final, 11. Brand, 12. Alarm, 13. Plain, 16. Employ, 18. Stun, 19. Construe.  
Down: 1. Snowflake, 2. Rodin, 3. Kite, 4. Natural, 5. Goo, 8. Ordinance, 10. Acrylic, 14. After, 15. Hymn, 17. Met.

## Word Mine

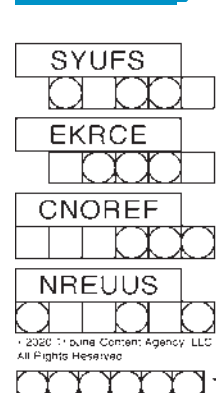
R  
A  
M  
E  
C  
R  
E  
Y  
N

TODAY'S RATINGS: 30 AVERAGE: 33  
GOOD: 37 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.



## jumble



Yesterday's Jumbles: ROBIN CHANK AHUM LOUBID  
Answer: The ice skater hadn't quite mastered a figure eight yet but she was on the — "BURR-RINK"

bidding five spades will be clear-cut. The drawback, of course, is that if you advertise a double fit, the opponents will know that they have one also and will bid higher. How did the play go in five spades? West led the heart ace, under which East played the four as a suit-preference signal for clubs. This surprised West, but, trusting her partner, she shifted to a club. East ruffed and

returned a diamond. West gave her partner a second club ruff for down two. How does West do in diamonds? She makes all 13 tricks unless North leads a spade; then West takes 11 tricks. The par contract is six clubs doubled, going down one.

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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

## DO NOT BE SHY WITH A GOOD FIT

I was hunting for a quotation including the word "fit" when I came upon one from Shannon L. Alder, so how could I not use it? The inspirational author wrote: "Being a good person doesn't mean you fit the life of every person you meet." That is so true, but if at the bridge table you have a good fit with your partner, tell him. Even better, try to reveal a double fit. In today's deal, what do you think of the auction? What is

the par contract, the one where, if either pair bids higher, it will do worse? The auction started predictably, but I like a four-club fit-jump with the North hand, showing long clubs and four or more spades. Yes, that makes it easy for East to bid four of a red suit, but it will allow South to judge better later in the auction. After East competes with five diamonds, if South knows that North has clubs,





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