

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | SUNDAY 24 | JANUARY 2021

## WEATHER



**Max:** 30°C  
**Min:** 20°C  
**Rainfall:** Nil

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Thai 11  
**Tithi:** Ekadashi  
**Star:** Rohini  
**Rahukalam:**  
4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**Yamagandam:**  
12 noon to 1.30 pm

### PRAYERS

**Fajar:** 5.22 am  
**Zohar:** 12.26 pm  
**Asar:** 3.39 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.06 pm  
**Isha:** 7.20 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 6.06 PM**

**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.36 AM**

**MOONRISE TODAY 2.17 PM**

**MOONSET TOMORROW 3.27 AM**

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+14,198)	(+144)
1,06,54,744	1,53,365

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+586)  
TN: 8,34,171 12,309

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

9,90,06,475

### DEATHS

21,22,651

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES  
219

worldometers.info

## Inter-state dacoits held; 25 kgs of gold ornaments recovered

**Hyderabad:** An inter-state gang of dacoits, which allegedly struck at a finance company in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu, has been arrested here and gold ornaments weighing about 25 kgs have been recovered, police said on Saturday. The armed gang threatened the employees and decamped with the booty on Friday, according to a Cyberabad police press release here.

After being informed by the Krishnagiri district police and representatives of the firm about the dacoity, all police stations on inter-state borders were alerted, the release said. — *PTI*

## Lalu Prasad admitted to AIIMS-Delhi

**Delhi/ Ranchi:** Jailed RJD chief Lalu Prasad was admitted to AIIMS-Delhi on Saturday night after his health condition deteriorated while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Ranchi, officials said. "He has been admitted in the coronary care unit (CCU) of the cardiothoracic centre of the AIIMS," an official in Delhi said.

## COUNTER POINT



**This pop-up appears before we post anything!**

# Bolsonaro thanks India for sending vaccine

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 23

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

The Prime Minister replied that the "honour is

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

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

also set to receive these.

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

Sri Lanka and Afghanistan will also receive vaccines as

grant assistance once regulatory approvals are received from these two countries.

Observers point out that India's vaccine supplies especially as grant assistance to neighbouring countries has been a huge success of Indian foreign policy and has generated much overseas goodwill for New Delhi.



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**'Political decision' on quota to be taken by PMK tomorrow**



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**Murray pulls out of Oz Open**



## Crowds chant 'Jai Sriram' in presence of PM Modi Sloganeering at Netaji event has Mamata stop her speech

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
*with agency inputs*  
KOLKATA, JAN. 23

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday reacted sharply to the sloganeering 'Jai Sriram' at the function organised to celebrate the 125 birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and said she would not speak as she considered it an insult.

That Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on the dais with her did not deter the firebrand politician from saying that such "insult" was unacceptable. Ms Banerjee had not started her speech when the slogan was raised by a section of the crowd at the Victoria Memorial event, organised by the Union government.

"This is a government programme and not a political programme," she said. "There has to be dignity. It doesn't behave anybody to invite people and insult. I won't speak. Jai Bangla, Jai Hind," she said, wrapping up. Ms Banerjee later urged the Union government to declare January 23 as a national holiday.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and state Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, at Victoria Memorial in Kolkata, on Saturday.

— *PTI*

## India follows Netaji policy from LoC to LAC, claims Modi

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

Bose would have also been proud that the government he dreamt of is fighting a pandemic with vaccines developed by it, and gave a befitting reply whenever its sovereignty was challenged, Mr Modi said on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji being celebrated by the Centre as "Parakram Diwas". "I sometimes wonder how Netaji would have felt if he had seen how a new and strong India is taking shape," he said at a programme held in the Victoria Memorial Hall here. "Netaji had dreamt of strong India, from LAC to LOC we are following his footsteps," he said. — *PTI*

## Trump impeachment trial in Senate to begin on February 8

**Washington, Jan. 23:** The United States Senate will begin the impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump on February 8, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said. "The January 6th insurrection at the Capitol, incited by Donald J Trump was a day none of us will ever forget. We all want to put this awful chapter in our nation's history behind us. But healing and unity will only come if there is truth and accountability. And that is what this trial will provide," Schumer said on the senate floor. Both the Republican and the Democratic Party now have 50 seats each in the 100 member Senate. — *PTI*

## Somnath Bharti sentenced to 2 yrs for assaulting AIIMS staff

**New Delhi, Jan. 23:** Aam Aadmi Party MLA and former Delhi minister Somnath Bharti was on Saturday sentenced to two years in jail by a court here in a 2016 case related to assaulting AIIMS security staff and causing damage to hospital property. The mindset to cause damage to public property and infrastructure was an attack on the common man, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ravindra Kumar Pandey said, as he rejected Bharti's plea to release him on probation but granted him bail to enable filing of an appeal in a higher court. — *PTI*

# Rahul mum on alliance as DMK talks tough on seats

**G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 23

Cracks in the DMK-Congress alliance became more visible on Saturday with the DMK openly vowing to retrieve Royapuram constituency from fisheries minister D. Jayakumar's hold and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi carrying on with his campaign in the state without canvassing votes for the DMK-led coalition. Addressing local DMK functionaries, the party's organising secretary R.S. Bharathi regretted allocating Royapuram to its ally, the Congress, in the elections in 2011 and 2016.

Mr Bharathi said the DMK would contest from Royapuram in the coming elections and put an end to the reign of Mr Jayakumar, which was apparently a message to the Congress that it was no longer needed as an ally.



Asked about the purpose of Mr Gandhi's three-day visit to the state, TNCC president K.S. Alagiri, who was part of the whirlwind tour, said the campaign was to defeat the AIADMK government in the state and to take on the BJP at the Centre. He refrained from saying

that it was to bring the DMK to power and install M.K. Stalin as chief minister as the party had been saying till recently.

Mr Gandhi, too, spoke in general and told the crowds that had gathered in large numbers that he had come down to ensure that the state was ruled by the party that the people wanted. He, too, did not mention the name of DMK.

It is learnt that Mr Gandhi was miffed over the DMK's offer of an extremely low number of seats, that too, with the precondition on who should be fielded. Getting very low seats, say like the 20 or so offered by the DMK now, would spoil the party's image at the national level, Mr Gandhi feels. ■ **P3**

# 14 lakh take vaccine against Covid-19: Centre

**New Delhi, Jan. 23:** Nearly 14 lakh beneficiaries have been vaccinated against Covid-19 in the country, including 3,47,058 in the last 24 hours, the health ministry said on Saturday.

According to data released by the ministry, the highest number of 1,84,699 vaccinations in the country has been

reported from Karnataka, followed by Andhra Pradesh (1,33,298), Odisha (1,30,007) and Uttar Pradesh (1,23,761).

As many as 1,10,031 beneficiaries were inoculated in Telangana, 74,960 in Maharashtra, 63,620 in Bihar, 62,142 in Haryana, 47,293 in Kerala and 38,278 in Madhya Pradesh.

The ministry said in the

last 24 hours, 3,47,058 people were vaccinated in 6,241 sessions and 24,408 such sessions have been conducted across the country so far.

"As on January 23, 2021, till 8 AM, nearly 14 lakh (13,90,592) beneficiaries have received the vaccination under the country-wide Covid-19 vaccination exercise," it said. — *PTI*

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## SHORT TAKES

## NDMA to launch 'Aapda Mitra' scheme in TN

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THOOTHUKUDI, JAN. 23

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) of India is to launch its 'Aapda Mitra' scheme in Tamil Nadu next month.

Stating this here on Saturday after a meeting on the implementation of the programme in the district, which is one of the 16 districts identified in the state for 'Aapda Mitra' scheme, joint secretary, NDMA, Ramesh Kumar Hota, said that the objective of the scheme was to train at least 6,000 volunteers in the 16 selected districts that included 12 coastal districts and four inner districts located at the foothills of the Western Ghats.

Under the scheme, volunteers would be provided life saving skill training so that they could respond effectively to the requirement of the affected, in the aftermath of any disaster, said Ramesh Kumar Hota, adding that the volunteers would be involved in basic relief and rescue task along with the state machinery in times of flood or earthquakes or land-slides.

Youths from NCC, NSS, Nehru Yuvakendra and from the public, can volunteer for the training under this scheme, said Ramesh. Around 200 persons have already been imparted the life saving skills in Chennai, where the pilot project of 'Aapda Mitra' scheme was implemented till December 31 last year.

## Seeman: Retrieve Katchatheevu, save our fishermen

ARULOLI M | DC  
TIRUNELVELI, JAN. 23

"Retrieval of Katchatheevu, where Tamil Nadu fishermen's traditional fishing rights are violated by the Sri Lankan side, is possible only by force," said Seeman, chief coordinator, Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK).

Speaking to media persons here on Saturday after releasing a tentative list of candidates for the 21 assembly constituencies in the four southern districts of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Tenkasi and Kanyakumari, and a candidate for the by-election for the vacant Kanyakumari parliamentary constituency, Seeman said that the continuing murderous attacks on our fishermen by the Sri Lankan navy in the Palk Strait, could be stopped only by taking back Katchatheevu given to Sri Lanka by a bilateral agreement by the Indira Gandhi government in the 1970s without the agreement being ratified by the Indian Parliament.

Seeman said, "The Supreme Court of India cannot pass orders on the issue, as the issue concerns two nations. The issue can neither be settled by the International court of Justice, as Indian rulers themselves are not in favour of Tamil Nadu's demand of retrieving Katchatheevu. India being a major market for many developed countries with whom India has strong commercial ties, the international community also would not support our (Tamil) demand on the issue."

"Hence, Katchatheevu can be taken back only by force, for which the people of Tamil Nadu should unite and unanimously force the Indian government. The 'Naam Tamilar Katchi' is working towards achieving that goal," added Seeman.

## Chennai man booked for impregnating minor girl

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 23

A 31-year-old man was held under Pocco Act for raping and impregnating a 15-year-old girl.

According to the police, Ramachandran (31) raped the niece of his friend when the girl was alone at home. Police sources said that a few months back when the girl was alone at the house, he slipped drugs into the girl's soft drink and made the girl unconscious before raping her. When her parents came to know about her pregnancy, they took her to the Egmore Government Hospital to abort the pregnancy.

However, the Chennai Egmore Government Hospital's officials reported the incident to Sriperumbudur police. Sriperumbudur All-Women police filed the case based on the hospital's complaint.

Ramachandran initially refused it but eventually agreed to commit the crime. Sriperumbudur All-Women police arrested Ramachandran under POCO Act and remanded him in judicial custody.



Members from Tamil Nadu Farmers Association protest against farm laws in support of ryots in Delhi on Saturday.

—DC

## 23-year-old driver killed, 5 hurt in multiple collision

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 23

A 23-year-old driver died and as many as five persons were injured in a multiple collision that took place on Chennai-Trichy National Highway on the night intervening Friday and Saturday.

The incident happened around 12.30 am near Thimmavaram, according to the police.

Sources said, a tanker lorry heading from Trichy towards Chennai on the National Highway, allegedly lost control and hit the centre median. In the impact, the tanker lorry ploughed into the other side of the road and hit two lorries travelling in the opposite direction.

According to the police, the tanker lorry first rammed against a truck transporting cables rolls from Chennai to Trichy and then hit another truck carrying medical wastes to Madurantakam in Chengalpet district.

During the collision, Sohail, (23), the driver of the cable truck, died on the spot and five others were severely injured. People from the locality

Sources said, a tanker lorry heading from Trichy towards Chennai on the National Highway, allegedly lost control and hit the centre median. In the impact, the tanker lorry ploughed into the other side of the road and hit two lorries travelling in the opposite direction.

alerted the local police regarding the accident. Chengalpet town police, Highway Patrol and personnel from fire and services rushed to the spot. They shifted the injured to the Chengalpet government hospital for treatment. The deceased body has also been sent for post-mortem.

Traffic came to standstill on Chennai-Trichy National Highway for three hours due to the accident. Traffic policemen diverted the vehicles towards Chengalpet bus stand till the situation turned normal. Cranes and earthmovers were pressed into service and the trucks were removed from the road. By around 3:30 am, the road was cleared.

Chengalpet Town police

registered a case and began an investigation.

In an unrelated accident, three 18-year-olds riding triples on a motorbike on Friday night near Mathoor, rammed against a van attempting to overtake it.

Police said two persons died on the spot, while another one was injured and undergoing treatment.

According to the police, Kanthan (18), Parthiban (18) and Balaji (18), all residents of Oragadam were riding triples from Vallakottai to Oragadam on Friday night. When they were nearing Mathoor, Kanthan, who was riding the bike, attempted to overtake a van. However, he hit the vehicle and fell on the road. They were run over by the van, police said.

Kathan and Parthiban died on the spot, while Balaji suffered injuries. Police said he is undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Tambaram.

Oragadam police registered a case and launched a search for the van driver who fled the spot after the accident. Investigations are underway.

## ₹120cr cash, gold seized at Jesus Calls

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 23

The income tax department seized gold weighing 4.5 kilograms and unaccounted income to the tune of ₹120 crore from the raids it had conducted at the premises of Christian preacher Paul Dhinakaran.

According to the IT sources, the gold was found and seized from Paul Dhinakaran's residence. The officers are also looking into his companies and trusts that are situated across 12 countries, sources said.

The income tax sleuths on January 20, began searches at the offices and other properties belonging to Paul Dhinakaran including Karunya

According to the IT sources, the gold was found and seized from Paul Dhinakaran's residence. The officers are also looking into his companies and trusts that are situated across 12 countries, sources said.

Institute of Technology and Science, at which Paul Dhinakaran is the Chancellor.

JesusCalls Ministries and Karunya groups were founded by Paul Dhinakaran's father DGS Dhinakaran. Paul Dhinakaran took over the organisation after his father passed away in 2008. The Jesus Calls ministry collects donations under various schemes and plans that it promotes on its website.

## Fall in number of fever clinics in Greater Chennai

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, JAN. 23

With the rain taking a break after over a month-long on and off showering, the city witnessed a low number of fever clinics being conducted by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) across the 15 zones for early detection of Covid-19 infection.

The award-winning programme, which helped to check the spread of Covid-19 in the city to a great extent, has been credited with the decline in the city's Corona-related deaths. According to the GCC data, 355 fever clinics were conducted in the city on Friday and 18,563 people attended them, identifying 194 symptomatic patients for Covid test.

This comes at a time when the GCC was con-

**The award-winning programme, which helped to check the spread of Covid-19 in the city to a great extent, has been credited with the decline in the city's Corona-related deaths**

ducting an average of 379 fever clinics daily across the city in the past three months. The daily number of clinics is: January 14 (199), January 15 (266) January 16 (286) January 17 (283) January 18 (345) January 19 (373) January 20 (356) January 21 (345).

A total of 14,463 people attended the clinics and 582 symptomatic patients tested for Covid-19 and others were given medicines for minor ailments

on Friday.

According to the data, 96,005 fever clinics were conducted in Chennai from May 8 till January 22. As many as 46,07,996 people attended the clinics and 2,11,914 symptomatic patients were identified and tested for Covid-19.

The Teynampet zone hosted the highest number of clinics (10,377), followed by Anna Nagar (9,236) and Tondiarpet (8,919). Manali had the least number of clinics (1,338).

According to GCC officials, the number of clinics varies due to the low number of patients at the designated clinics. The city is recording a low number of fresh cases for the last few weeks. This also affected the conduct of clinics. Now we have intensified the camps as it can prevent spread of the

virus', said an official.

The fever clinics were introduced after the GCC administration came to the conclusion that at least 20 percent of Covid-19 deaths in the city took place due to the failure of the residents in revealing symptoms to health workers who visited their homes as part of surveys.

The serological surveys conducted in October had also found that one-third of the city population has been exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 infection and developed antibodies.

According to health experts, the decline in the number of Covid19 cases is expected to reduce in the coming days. 'More people in Chennai might have been able to develop the antibodies now than the number had provided by the serological survey', they claim.

## Customs seizes ₹4.30 crore worth gold

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 23

Customs officials at the Chennai airport seized 8.45 kg gold worth ₹4.30 crore and arrested nine flyers.

Chennai Air Customs, based on the information, intercepted Seventeen passengers including four ladies who had arrived from Dubai by Fly Dubai flight FZ8515 and Emirates flight EK 542 on the suspicion of carrying gold on Friday.

On their search, 48 bundles of gold paste weighing 9.03 kg were recovered from the rectum. On extraction 7.72 kgs of gold worth ₹3.93 crores were recovered.

Further searching them, 12 gold cut bits weighing 386 grams and 1 gold chain weighing 74 grams were also recovered from their pant pockets and handbags. Total 8.18 kgs of gold worth ₹4.16 crore was recovered and seized under the Customs Act. Nine people were arrested.

In another case, Kalandar Ilyas (28) of Ramanathapuram who arrived from Sharjah by Indigo flight 6E 8245 was intercepted at the exit. On personal search, three bundles of gold paste weighing 310 grams were recovered from the rectum. On extraction 271 grams of gold worth ₹14 lakhs was recovered and seized under the Customs Act.

Total 8.45 kg gold worth ₹4.30 crores seized by Chennai Air Customs in 18 cases and nine including a woman passenger were arrested. Further investigation is under progress.

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Coimbatore district collector K. Rajamani inaugurates and flags off all women police 25th road safety awareness rally in Coimbatore.

— DC

## Jallikattu winner faces fraud charges

DC CORRESPONDENT  
MADURAI, JAN. 23

Best bull tamer, Kannan, who got the Chief Minister-sponsored car at the famous Alanganallur jallikattu held here on January 16, is facing charges of impersonation, as he is said to have entered the game mid-way wearing the T-shirt of another registered player.

Bull tamer, Karupannan, who came second in the sport at Alanganallur, raked up the issue, based on which Collector T Anbalagan has ordered for an RDO enquiry.

According to Karupannan, Kannan of Virattipathu, did not register himself to participate in the game as bull tamer, and hence, did not undergo fitness test, which is mandatory for any player. Kannan is said to have come to the event as a visitor, and had entered the arena wearing a T-shirt bearing the registration number 33 of one of his friends, Harikrishnan, in the middle of the game

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one of his friends, Harikrishnan, in the middle of the game. Before giving his t-shirt to Kannan, Harikrishnan is also said to have tamed five bulls and Kannan tamed seven, to make the total 12 and won the first prize, said Mani, who runs a training centre for bull tamers.

Harikrishnan is a registered player. He also has accepted that he had given his T-shirt to Kannan. "I came

out of the arena as the local village players were rude to me and pushed me back, to prevent me from taming more bulls. At that time, Kannan asked for my T-shirt and I gave it to him," said Harikrishnan.

Many are said to have indulged in such malpractices, but this year it became an issue because the impersonator became the winner. "Malpractices of this kind can be prevented to a great extent had the village Jallikattu committee organised the event," said Rajasekar of Jallikattu Peravai. Government officials organising the event can identify players only by the numbers printed on their T-shirts, giving room for such violations, added Rajasekar, who wanted that at least in the coming years, the local jallikattu committee members should be given the responsibility of coordinating the event to maintain the dignity of the traditional sport.

## Who's afraid of Sasikala?



G. Babu Jayakumar

## Just spamming

For the past few days, nay weeks, V K Sasikala, a convict serving her jail term in Parappana Agrahara in Bengaluru, has been making news. Social media is awash with memes, trolls and posts and news outlets obsessively follow her. Be it her impending release on January 27 or sudden hospitalization, she grabs headlines creating an impression that her arrival on the political scene could turn things upside down, whatever that might be. Jailbirds of colourful plumes make news while fluttering out of the wrought iron gates even otherwise. In Tamil

Nadu, such historic moments have even called for celebrations and welcome receptions. But the threadbare analysis in media and political forums in the run up to the upcoming release prompts the question: Who's afraid of Sasikala?

But before delving into that, it is imperative to know who Sasikala is? Well, she was convicted in a case in which former Chief Minister and former AIADMK head, Jayalalithaa, was the first accused. Which means the court has confirmed that Sasikala knew everything about the illegalities indulged in by

Jayalalithaa – the charge against the first accused was appropriating wealth disproportionate to her known sources of income.

So it can be safely presumed that Sasikala, whose official address was the same as that of Jayalalithaa, was also privy to the other activities of the AIADMK head honcho with regard to party affairs, too.

In the party that prides itself of having 1.5 crore members, every decision, during the days of Jayalalithaa, was taken inside the closed gates of Veda Nilayam, the sprawling mansion in Poes Garden that would have been converted into a memorial when Sasikala returns. Insiders confirm that most of the decisions were taken by Sasikala herself and were only ratified by Jayalalithaa. However Sasikala remained behind the curtains and never interacted with party workers, creat-

ing a certain indiscernible mystique about her.

If she is known for her aloofness, why are certain sections of the AIADMK eagerly await her return and others dread the prospect of her staking claims to leadership roles? The mystique notwithstanding, people knew that Sasikala chose the candidates to fight the elections for the AIADMK. Forget Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami openly claiming that he was chosen to head the government by fellow MLAs and not Sasikala – let us not needlessly recount here the under the table reach out captured in video at Koovathur – the undeniable fact is that all of them became MLAs only because her.

Since Jayalalithaa was not doing well in terms of health in 2016, Sasikala would have cherry picked the candidates and among those who made it to the State Assembly many

could be grateful to her for her kind gesture – in AIADMK no one was allowed to feel that they can work their way up. And that explains the flutter over her impending return. Even if the present AIADMK honchos have covered their bases by expelling her from the party and also stripping her of the general secretary post that she took for herself and put their foot down in asserting that she was nowhere in the picture as far as the party was concerned, there is a fear.

It is that loyalty, a virtue in politics, and gratitude could possibly swing the scales in her favour if she were to step in before the next elections and demand her pound of flesh. It is not just some MLAs who could show their gratitude by aligning with her if at all she asks them to make a choice between her and Palaniswami but also those party leaders who are in oblivion now, badly

requiring rehabilitation. Yet such a situation is unlikely to arise for various reasons. One, as of now there seems to be a delay in her returning to the political turf due to her hospitalization. Two, even she may not be willing to split the AIADMK on the eve of the elections as it would do her no good.

Still there is every reason for top leaders in AIADMK, who would have interacted with her, to be afraid of her for they know how tough a lady she is. Unlike AIADMK cadre, leaders of political parties that had struck alliances with the AIADMK for elections and those who had called on Jayalalithaa at Veda Nilayam for whatever purpose, would have heard Sasikala 'talking' and have had a taste of her toughness. Of course, the common man had a feel of it when she hit the Samadhi of Jayalalithaa thrice with her palms, in medieval style, before leav-

ing for Bengaluru. That was typically a vow for revenge that people in rural areas Sasikala comes from Mannargudi in Tiruvallur district – take at the resting places of loved ones to avenge enemies.

Whomever Sasikala avenges on her return, it would only be a blot on democracy if she could come to active politics – of course the law ensures that she cannot contest elections and hold offices for another four years. For she is a product of the abhorrent practice of extreme cronyism that has set in public life like a canker.

By just endearing herself to a politician, if an unscrupulous person can make so much money and also become enduringly powerful to change the political dynamics of a State, as it is feared by some, it will be a shame on the State. Hope she just fades away.



## SHORT TAKES

## Special pooja for Sasikala by auto driver

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC  
TIRUCHY, JAN. 23

A Tiruchy-based auto rickshaw driver pierced his tongue with a miniature spear (alagu kuthikondu) and performed a special pooja at Sri Vazhividu Velmurugan temple at Tiruchy on Saturday, for the speedy recovery of Ms. Sasikala, an aide of late Chief Minister J.Jayalithaa, who is admitted at a hospital in Bengaluru.

It might be recalled that Ms. Sasikala, who was lodged in the Parappana Agrahara prison, Bengaluru, after conviction in a wealth amassing case, is scheduled to be released from the prison on January 27. She was admitted in a hospital in Bengaluru with Covid-19. The members of the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam is performing special pujas in various temples across the state for her speedy recovery.

Auto driver Othakkadai Senthil told the media that his prayer was for the speedy recovery of "Madam" and also her release from the prison as scheduled.

## No plan for Rahul to meet DMK leaders

From P1

Since the party had contested 40 seats in 2016 and 63 seats in 2011 under the DMK alliance, accepting a low number of seats now would send across the message that the Congress has become weak, the leaders feel.

Besides, Mr Gandhi had no plans of meeting DMK leaders during while he would be campaigning in the state. From Coimbatore he would go to Madurai and board a plane to Delhi on January 25.

Though a series of events have been scheduled for him, nowhere has any local or top level DMK leader been invited by the organisers, sending across the message that would rather plough a lonely furrow rather than giving up on their dignity.

Talking about DMK's plan to wresting Royapuram, the minister responded by welcoming the DMK to field its candidate in his citadel. He even challenged the party to field Mr Stalin against him. Exuding confidence of winning the seat once again, Mr Jayakumar said that he had won in 1991, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016 and that he still enjoyed popularity among the people in view of his good work for the constituency.

● Though a series of events have been scheduled for Rahul, nowhere has any local or top level DMK leader been invited by the organisers, sending across the message that would rather plough a lonely furrow rather than giving up on their dignity.

## 'Political decision' on quota to be taken by PMK Monday

G.BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC  
CHENNAI, JAN. 23

The PMK has decided to take a 'political decision' on Monday, January 25, when the party's managing committee members would meet through a video conference at 11 am and discuss the demand for exclusive reservation for the Vanniyar community in jobs and education.

The call for the emergency meeting triggered speculations that PMK might decide on snapping ties with the AIADMK for the elections as the ruling party has refused to give any assurance on implementing the exclusive reservation as a pre-condition for confirming the alliance.

While exactly what happens would be known only

on Monday, the notification from the party headquarters said that PMK president G K Mani would preside over the meeting that would be attended by party founder S Ramadoss and youth wing president Anbumani Ramadoss and others.

Apart from calling for the meeting, Ramadoss has called upon Vanniyar youth – he addresses them as Kshatriya youngsters – to draw inspiration from the Sikhs who have laid a siege of Delhi in their struggle for exclusive reservation.

The next phase of the PMK's agitation for 20 per cent reservation would see protests in front of all the 38 Collector's Offices in the State on January 29. 'When it comes to a protest, our Kshatriya youngsters are in no way inferior to the

Sikhs and it has been proved in the past,' he said in the Facebook page.

Ramadoss has urged every Kshatriya family to send one member for the protest and every one of them to bring along one more person for the protest and called up the people to prove their strength.

On Friday, he posted a message asking every Pattali youngster as to what he was planning to do for getting reservation for Vanniyars. He asked them to draw inspiration from Gujarat and Maharashtra. It was the massive assembling of Patels in Gujarat under the leadership of a young man Hardik Patel in 2015 that paved the way for the 10 per cent reservation for Economically Weaker Sections brought in by the Centre, he said.

He also cited the 2016 protests by Marathas demanding reservation for the community, which even spread to places outside the country. That led to the Marathas getting 16 per cent reservation in 2018, he said, adding that Gujjars and Jats too got reservation for their respective communities through agitations.

Responding to the post of Ramadoss, many of his Facebook followers said that they were waiting for his call. Some others appreciated the post itself and some others wished the agitation all success.

However there were also some comments that questioned the wisdom of whipping caste feelings and a few others attacked him personally. But in general many supported him on his page.

## 16 persons injured in jallikattu

DC CORRESPONDENT  
PUDUKKOTTAI, JAN. 23

As many as 16 persons were injured, one seriously, in a jallikattu event at Vanniyar Viduthi in Pudukkottai district on Saturday. It was inaugurated by Health Minister Dr. C.Vijaya Baskar along with Pudukkottai collector B.Uma Maheswari.

As many as 400 bulls and 250 bull tamers from different parts of the state took part in the event. All the injured were treated at the health centre located at the event site and one of them was referred to the government medical college hospital in Pudukkottai.

A bull owned by one Arul of Kuppampatti collapsed and died on the spot after his successful participation in the event.

## Darasuram market to reopen tomorrow

G. SRINIVASAN | DC  
THANJAVUR, JAN. 23

Darasuram vegetable market at Kumbakonam, which remained closed for the past six months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will start functioning from January 25, said Mr. Govinda Rao, Thanjavur district collector, at Kumbakonam on Saturday.

He inspected the market place and said that as the pandemic cases are on the decline now and vegetable traders assured to follow preventive measures like wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, it has been decided to reopen the market on Monday.

He said that corona tests have been conducted on 3,70,000 persons in the district. A total of 17,595 persons tested positive for corona. Out of them, 17,230 got cured. At present 121 are under

● Mr. Govinda Rao, Thanjavur district collector inspected the market place and said that as the pandemic cases are on the decline now and vegetable traders assured to follow preventive measures like wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, it has been decided to reopen the market on Monday.

treatment, the collector said.

He said that roads dug for underground drainage in Kumbakonam town will be re-laid in the same manner as they existed earlier.

Regarding harvest of samba and thaladi crops, the collector said that 400 harvesters are now in use in the district for harvesting paddy. More will be made available to farmers depending upon the need.

## Plastic-free Nilgiris now eyes organic farming

B RAVICHANDRAN | DC  
OOTY, JAN. 23

Following its commendable efforts in plastic control to save the hill ecology, the Nilgiris district administration under the stewardship of Collector J. Innocent Divya, is all set to take the next giant leap towards converting Nilgiris into a total organic farming district as those of the olden days, and to rejuvenate and retain the soil health in a natural way.

When the district celebrated its 150th anniversary of its formation in 2018, a resolution was passed that the Nilgiris would be converted into a fully organic farming district in a phased manner. Keeping this motto in mind, strenuous efforts have been taken towards 'Organic Nilgiris' by the district administration in coordination with various government departments.

As a first step, a core committee was formed headed by the collector with all government departments and farmer associations as its members, to discuss and decide upon organic conversion strategies. A monthly meet was held regularly to formulate strategies towards this goal.

Collector Divya said, as an important initiative, the department of horticulture, took a team of 50 farmers to Sikkim which is a fully organic state in the country, to practically have a glimpse of the organic farming activities carried out there. On return from Sikkim, the organic farmers association named 'The Nilgiris Organic Horticulture Farmers



Nilgiris Collector J. Innocent Divya.

Association' was formed. Further, to motivate farmers to adopt organic farming, several seminars, training and exhibitions are being regularly held by the horticulture department, she noted.

"To provide complete knowledge to farmers about organic cultivation of hill vegetables, the 'Organic Cultivation - Package of Practices' was received from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, specifically for hill vegetables, and the same was distributed to the farmers. To stop the use of toxic chemicals in farming which would deteriorate soil fertility and cause health hazards to people, a team of scientists from TNAU visited the Nilgiris, collected and analyzed samples of soil, water and products from various parts of the district for chemical residues. Based on their results, action is being taken by the district administration to ban toxic chemicals to protect our soil," she added.

Apart from these initiatives, various schemes are being implemented by the horticulture department towards organic farming. Under the 'Special Area



Development Programm', farmers of four villages were educated to go in for organic farming, and bio-inputs were distributed

to them at subsidized cost. Through the strenuous efforts taken by the Nilgiris district administration and horticulture department for the past two years, now organic vegetable cultivation has been started in an area of 2,370 hectares in the Nilgiris. Further, complete 'Organic Tea Cultivation' is already being taken up in an area of 2,865 hectares. Also, vegetables, coffee and other hill crops are being grown organically in an area of 560 hectares. The combined efforts of district administration and various government departments and cooperation from the farming community, will not only help us to achieve our motto of 'Organic Nilgiris', but it will also aid farmers to get better price in the market, improve their livelihood and create a safe and healthy environment for the future generation," Divya added.

## Cyber tools, bio inputs to promote organic farming

B RAVICHANDRAN | DC  
OOTY, JAN 23

In its efforts towards total organic farming in the district, as a first of its kind in Tamil Nadu, the department of horticulture here has enrolled 48 farmer-producer groups comprising of 4,800 farmers formed under 'Collective Farming Scheme' for 'Organic Farming Certification' with the Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department.

Joint director, Horticulture, the Nilgiris, Sivasubramanian Samraj, said that farmers were issued necessary certificates for the first year of conversion towards organic farming. During the year 2019-20, under the 'Mission for development of horticulture', subsidies for setting up of 50 vermicompost units were given to farmers as an organic farming initiative. This will aid farmers to produce ma-



The vermicompost plant set up at organic farming field in Erumad village in western Nilgiris.

nure in their own farms, thereby considerably reducing the amount spent on chemical fertilizers.

Further, in order to maintain regular supply of bio inputs to the farmers, production of bio-control agent like Trichoderma viridi, vermicompost and bio inputs like 'panchagavya' and 'dasagavya' is being taken up in the state horticulture farms across

the Nilgiris. The state horticulture farm at Nanjanad village is being converted into a model organic farm and organic farming activities are being taken up there to exhibit its benefits to farmers.

For easy and better understanding of organic farming practices by farmers, a mobile application named 'Organic Nilgiris' has been developed by the

horticulture department. Using this app, farmers can access organic production of hill vegetables, preparation of various bio inputs at the farm level, organic certification procedures and many more. Any farmer using a smartphone with an android operating system can download this application from Google play store and use it, added Samraj.

## Master revives box-office and theatre business in south film industry

ANUPAMA  
SUBRAMANIAN | DC  
CHENNAI, JAN. 23

Since the rise of Covid-19 and the ensuing lockdown in March 2020, the cinema industry as a whole and Kollywood in particular had commercially come to a standstill. No theatres and no popcorns meant there wasn't any money being made, and producers had to scamper towards OTT platforms to release their pipeline movies. But a bunch of tight-budgeted OTT profits was never going to cut it.

While despair reigned in the film industry, the commercial success of Vijay's Pongal fare *Master* has jolted the industry back to life. Master has given the much-needed hope for heading to the rest of 2021, despite the fact that theatres were allowed to operate only with 50 percent occupancy. Master not only revived the theatre business in Tamil Nadu but also is reportedly raking in the moolah in all southern states including Andhra Pradesh -Telangana and Kerala. Master, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, features Vijay and Vijay Sethupathi in the lead and music is scored by Anirudh.

The film amassed approximately Rs 200 crores at the worldwide box office in the nine-day opening weekend and has become the number one movie to achieve this feat globally during the pandemic.

However, producer Xavier Britto who bankrolled Master in his home banner XB Film



Producer Xavier Britto

Creators clarified. "We won't be able to tell you the exact collections now. It may take one more week for us to know the exact figures as the film is released under an extraordinary condition and for the first time with 50% occupancy," quips Britto who started his life as a master -teaching human operational behaviour science at a popular college in the city.

"Yes, that helped me to relate to the script of Master when Lokesh narrated it, where Vijay essays a professor who teaches personality development. It's a big budget flick and I did this film because of one factor called 'Vijay', he asserts.

Trade circles feel happy as it revitalised the theatre business, which was in doldrums for the last several months. Comment. "The success has given confidence to the film community, not only for the upcoming films, but also cine artists, theatre and allied workers who are associated with the industry. It has given

a tremendous opportunity for the people to come and watch in the theatres and create a confidence during these turbulent times. When I heard the story, I knew this is going to make a different kind of impact. Despite the delay, we did not panic and thanks to Vijay who insisted that Master should be released only in theatres and not digitally. Also, to my co-producer Lalith, who also patiently waited. It has given a new lease of life to the theatre business."

While XB Film Creators is committed to giving quality good films with biggies, his yet another company Esthell Entertainers will encourage young talents with small and medium budget films. The maker is soon launching his son-in-law Akash Murali (son of late actor Murali) who has married his daughter Sneha Britto as the lead hero.



## TOP PRODUCERS SPEAK

The prolific producer who is gearing up with his 90th venture Kalathil Sandhippam says that Master has given him the much needed confidence. "Though I got good offers from digital platforms, I waited patiently for Master's release and response. Now, I am releasing KS on January 28 in good number of screens" —RB Choudary

I believe that *Master* will cross *Bigil's* lifetime gross by this weekend. "The response in theaters have been phenomenal," he says. — Tirupur Subramanian (Theater Owners Association head and distributor)

A mass entertainer with massy heroes was the need of the hour to pull audiences to the theater, which was fulfilled by Master. After all, nothing can replace a theater watching experience. —Trade analyst Vetri

I thank Vijay and his team for patiently waiting and releasing it in theaters. This has given me hopes and I am releasing my film Kabadadaari in marquees on 28 January. —Dhananjayan

Ten days before, we had a lot of questions like will people visit theaters? Will the film industry return to normalcy? But Master has given new energy to the Tamil film industry. The film is performing well from the release day to till date that we are now discussing the release plans of our upcoming films. —Siva

## LIST OF FILMS WHO GAVE A MISS TO OTT AND AWAITING THEIR RELEASES IN THE THEATERS IN THE COMING WEEKS

- Karthi's Sultan
- Vishal's Chakra
- Dhanush's Jagame Thandhiram
- Sivakarthekeyan's Doctor
- Sasikumar's MGR Magan and Raja Vamsam
- Vijay Sethupathi's Laabam and Maamanithan
- Santhanam's Paris Jayaraj and Dikkiloona
- Samudrakani's Vellai Yaanai

(Affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi)

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Website : www.cvs.ac.in ; www.chettinadvidyashram.org

ADMISSION 2021-2022		
PRE-KG	- 2 years as on 31.03.2021	Application forms available at school office between 10:00 a.m. and 03:00 p.m.
L.K.G	- 3 years as on 31.03.2021	
Montessori I - 2½ years as on 31.03.2021		

Dr. Meena Muthiah  
Kumararani of Chettinad  
Secretary & Correspondent



DECCAN  
Chronicle

24 JANUARY 2021



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

Trump, and the  
art of leaving

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

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

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

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

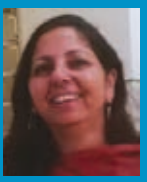
Is that what Donald Trump's been doing since his election defeat? Like a spurned lover, does he want to destroy America, if America won't have him? The Capitol riot on January 6 when Trump supporters stormed the House of Representatives has been cast as many things; from a righteous protest by its right-wing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

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

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

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

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

Anita Katyal  
Political  
Gup-ShupKharge or  
Sharma: Who  
will succeed  
Azad in LS?

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

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

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

opportune moment to do so.

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

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

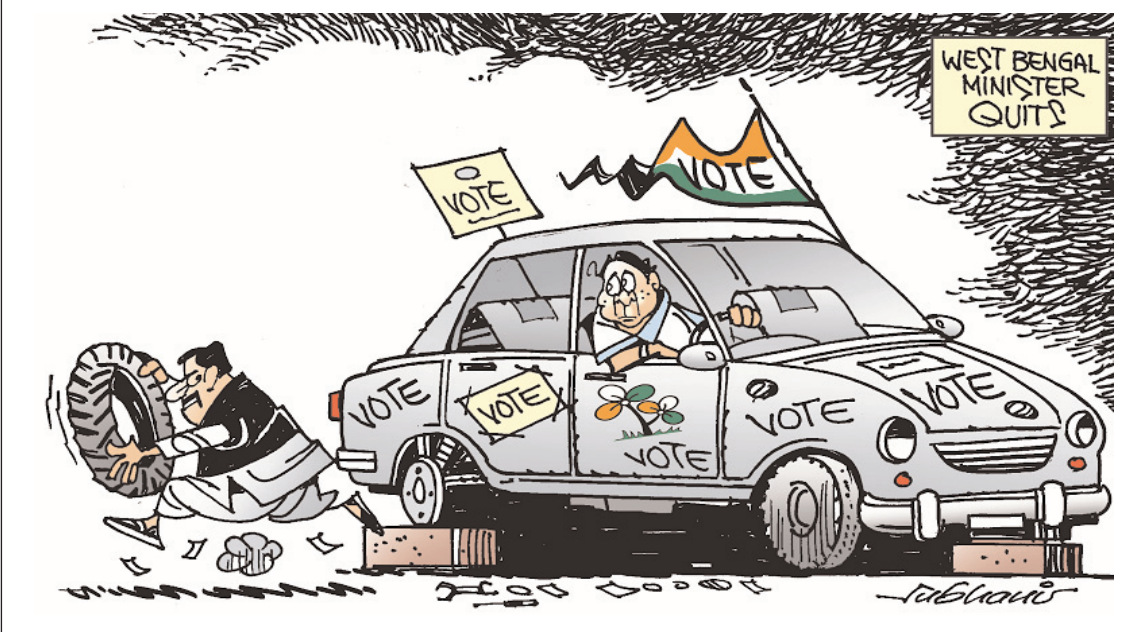
Ever since home minister Amit Shah visited Delhi Police headquarters for a review meeting last week, speculation has been rife that the force will finally get a full-fledged commissioner. According to the grapevine, S.M. Sahai, a 1987 IPS officer, presently serving in the PMO, is the frontrunner for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

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

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

**Anita Katyal** is a Delhi-based journalist

Subhani

Resist new usurpers of  
Hindu's eternal legacy

Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LETTERS

## IMMUNITY AGAINST CORONA

I agree with Shobhaa De that people in India have developed a kind of immune protection against viruses (*Vaccine hai to hum hai: Get ready for the vaxxie*, Jan. 23). While trying to find a vaccine against smallpox Dr Edward Jenner noticed that milkmaids were free from smallpox as they had all been infected by a virus that affects cows. The doctor took some pus from cow-pox blister and rubbed it on the wound of a small boy who volunteered for the experiment. He then exposed the boy to smallpox and found that the boy was immune to it. Dr Jenner's idea was to kick-start the body's immune system and produce the desired antibiotics for fighting the virus. If India has seen a marked decline in Covid-19 cases despite its huge population it may well be due to the immunity people have already developed against the virus. And the vaccines produced thus far may not be entirely necessary after all.

**Kangayam R. Narasimhan, Chennai**

## PROSECUTE SL NAVY MEN

**THE KILLING** of Tamil Nadu fishermen by the Sri Lankan navy can be construed to be an act of extreme cruelty and wanton disregard for human lives. The killings happened in the aftermath of the Indian foreign affairs minister Jayashankar's visit to Sri Lanka manifests the Sinhala authorities' scant respect for India. The Government of India is duty bound to record its utmost condemnation for the killings of the fishermen besides demanding heavy compensation from that government for the unfriendly act. The patrolling in both Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean by the Indian Navy should be strengthened. A demand for criminal prosecution of the Sri Lankan Navy men should also be placed with the Prime Minister Rajapaksa.

**S. Nagarajan Iyer, Coimbatore**

## A RETURN TO DECENCY IN U.S.

**PROPOS YOUR** editorial *A return to decency in US will be good for the world* (Jan. 22). The editorial highlights indirectly how Mr Trump in his four-year stint ruled in an indecent manner inimical to its democratic traditions. All the time he yelled fake news, fake media and fired anyone who differed with him. In fact he did not give much importance to the Covid-19 pandemic despite Mr Anthony Fauci's advice and warnings but the hydra-headed Trump sang 'hydroxychloroquine' which had proved ineffective and hence lakhs of deaths and millions getting infected. He never cared nor respected the institutions but deliberately lied, misled the public and indulged in rhetoric without any remorse. What baffles is he pardoned more than 140 colleagues who had committed criminal acts and admitted their guilt too. The credit goes to the intelligence agencies, the FBI and the National Guards who prevented the much feared violence in Washington and other state capitals and facilitated peaceful transition. God help Mr Joe Biden to revamp America as the greatest democracy.

**A. Seshagiri Rao, Chennai**

**Mail your letters to editor@deccanmail.com**



## IN BRIEF

## MAHA TO START JAIL TOURISM FROM JAN 26

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

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

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

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

## U.P.: SEER MURDERED

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

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

## BSF DETECTS UNDERGROUND TUNNEL ALONG IB IN KATHUA

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

This is the second such structure found in 10 days.

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

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

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

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

## Lalu's health deteriorates



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

## FM launches app on budget papers

Traditional halwa ceremony on but there will be no printing of documents this time

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

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

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

This will be the first time since the presentation of independent India's first budget on November 26, 1947, that the documents containing income and expenditure statement of the Union government along with the finance bill, detailing new taxes and other measures for the new financial year, will not be physically printed.

"In an unprecedented initiative, Union Budget 2021-22 will be delivered in paperless form for the first time. The Union Budget 2021-22 is to be presented on February 1, 2021," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

On the occasion, the Finance Minister also launched the 'Union Budget Mobile App' for hassle-free access of Budget documents by Members of Parliament

## India should have 4 capitals: Mamata

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, JAN. 23

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

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

Ms Banerjee told a rally at Red Road, "The central government is yet to

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

declare Netaji's birthday as a national holiday. We are sad about it. In protest, we demand that Netaji's birthday has to be declared as a national holiday, either today or tomorrow. We also do not know how he had died. This should be revealed through an inquiry. Netaji, according to us, was eliminated because his freedom struggle had scared many."

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

(MPs) and the general public using the simplest form of digital convenience.

The mobile App facilitates complete access to 14 Union Budget documents,

including the Annual Financial Statement (commonly known as Budget), Demand for Grants (DG), Finance Bill etc. as prescribed by the Constitution, it said. - PTI

## WORLD

## Trump impeachment trial in Senate to begin on Feb. 8

VP Harris' crucial vote as Senate chairman gives Democrats a majority

Washington, Jan. 23: The United States Senate would begin the impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump on February 8, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said. "The January 6th insurrection at the Capitol, incited by Donald J. Trump was a day none of us will ever

## Heads of America-funded global broadcasters resign

Washington, Jan. 23: The heads of three federally-funded international

broadcasters were abruptly fired late Friday as the Biden administration

THE CHANGES came a day after VoA director and his deputy were removed and the chief of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting stepped down. It followed the forced resignation of ex-Prez Donald Trump's handpicked choice to lead USAGM only two hours after Joe Biden took office.

chief of the USAGM summarily dismissed the directors of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks just a month after they had been named to the posts. — AP

## BIDEN CALLS UP TRUDEAU, LÓPEZ OBRADOR

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

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

## Hong Kong in strict lockdown

Hong Kong, Jan. 23: Thousands of Hong Kong residents were locked down on Saturday in an unprecedented move to contain a worsening outbreak in the city, authorities said.

Hong Kong has been grappling to contain a fresh wave of the coronavirus since November. Over 4,300 cases have been recorded in the last two months, making up nearly 40 per cent of the city's total.

Coronavirus cases in Hong Kong's Yau Tsim Mong district — a working-class neighbourhood with old buildings and subdivided flats — made up about half of the infections in the past week. Sewage testing in the area picked up more concentrated traces of the Covid-19 virus, prompting concerns that poorly built plumbing systems and a lack of ventilation in subdivided units may present a possible path for the virus to spread.

Authorities said in a statement Saturday that an area comprising 16 buildings in Yau Tsim Mong will be locked down until all residents have undergone tests. Residents will not be allowed to leave their homes until they have received their test results to prevent cross-infection. "Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained," the government said in a statement. — AF

## Hospitals fill up fast in Portugal

Lisbon, Jan. 23: Ambulances waiting to deliver Covid-19 patients queued outside hospital emergency departments Friday as Portugal's Covid-19 surge continued unabated, adding a new record of daily deaths for the fifth day in a row.

The number of Covid-19 hospitalisations and patients in intensive care also reached new highs over the previous 24 hours, placing the public health system under severe strain, health authorities said.

Authorities reported 234 deaths, bringing the total in the country of 10,3 million to 9,920. Hospitals added another 149

EU TRAVELLERS MUST TEST NEGATIVE TO ENTER FRANCE

Paris, Jan. 23: France will require a negative Coronavirus test from travellers arriving from other European Union countries starting Sunday.

The mandatory PCR test must be carried out no later than 72 hours before departure.

The government says specific controls will be carried out in airports and ports. Truck drivers and cross border workers are exempt from the measure. — AP

Covid-19 patients to their wards, with another 13 in ICUs. — AP

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## US to revisit its deal with Taliban

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

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

The Trump administration had signed the peace deal with Taliban in February last in Doha. — PTI

**SALEM CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
ROC No. 484/SS2/2021/Part-II INVITATIONS FOR BIDS Date : 22.01.2021

I	1.	Providing interlink connection between inner premises of president and chamber for house service connection 870 Nos. Ward covered: 39(P) in Salem City Municipal Corporation (Part-II) Estimate Cost Rs. 99.00 Lakhs
II		Bid document and other information available at <a href="http://www.tntenders.gov.in">www.tntenders.gov.in</a> , <a href="http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in">www.tenders.tn.gov.in</a> , <a href="http://www.salemcorporation.gov.in">www.salemcorporation.gov.in</a> Tender document can be downloaded from the above website.
III		Date, time and Venue for Tender Procedures. Submission of bids - 11.02.2021 upto 3.00 P.M. Opening of bids - 11.02.2021 at 3.30 P.M.

DIPR/ 492 /TENDER/2021 Commissioner, Salem Corporation

**மதுரை மாநகராட்சி**  
மின்னணு ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி அறிவிக்கை எண். 94/ 2021  
A/1013898/2017-18  
மதுரை மாநகராட்சி கீழ்க் குறிப்பிட்ட பணிகளுக்கு ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி தகுதி வாய்ந்த ஒப்பந்ததாரர்களைப் பிருந்து ஆணையாளர் அவர்களால் வரவேற்கப்படுகின்றன.

பணியின் பெயர்	மதிப்பீடு தொகை (இலட்சத்தில்) (GST உட்பட)	ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளிகள் வரப்பெறும் நாள்	ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளிகள் திறக்கப்படும் நாள்
A/1013898/2017-18 Supply of 16 Nos. of Computer operator in Education Section, For Primary, Middle, High and Higher Secondary Schools of Madurai Corporation for 365 Days.	59.20	25.01.2021 to 08.02.2021 3.00 PM	08.02.2021 3.30 PM

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## SHORT TAKES

## Murray pulls out of Oz Open

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

## Hockey women slump to 1st loss

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

## Neeraj tense over 'uncertain' Games

**New Delhi:** Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Saturday admitted that the uncertainty over the staging of the postponed Olympics due to coronavirus creates anxiety but said he is proceeding with his preparations thinking that the Games will happen and he will give his 100 per cent. There has been intense speculation over the staging of Tokyo Olympics in July-August with some reports suggesting that the Games may be scrapped. "There is some anxiety for sure. If Olympics is happening, the target is clear, I have to give my 100 per cent in Olympics. But by chance if Olympics is not held, I may plan differently. "There are sometimes this thought in mind that we are training so hard but Olympics may not happen," said the 23-year-old reigning Asian Games and Commonwealth Games gold medalist. — PTI

## Clippers score sixth win in row

**Los Angeles:** Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points, Paul George added 29 and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 120-106 for their sixth straight win. Serge Ibaka had 17 points and 11 rebounds to help the Clippers improve to 12-4. — AP

## Live on TV

## BADMINTON

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

## CRICKET

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

## FOOTBALL

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

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

## UFC

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

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## NO PAIN NO GAIN

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

**New Delhi, Jan. 23:** A groin strain prevented India pacer Navdeep Saini from giving his best in the Brisbane Test but fearing that he may not get such a big stage again, he remained at the beck and call of his captain and ended up bowling five overs despite injury.

The 28-year-old, who finally made his Test debut in the Australia series after years of wait, said he risked aggravating his injury by bowling in the second innings but given what was at stake, "it was a no brainer".

"Ajinkya *bhaiya* asked me if I would be able to bowl with the injury, I just had to say yes," Saini, who was in the middle when Rishabh Pant hit the winning runs at the Gabba, said.

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

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

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

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

"I just wished if could keep going with that injury and support my team. I knew I might not get a stage like that again. Captain asked me if I could do it. I was in pain but said I would do with whatever I could.

"I am recovering now



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

and should be fit soon," said the lanky fast bowler from Karnal who was fast-tracked into first-class cricket by former India opener Gautam Gambhir and received his maiden Test call-up in back in 2018. Saini is not part of India's squad for the first two home Tests against England starting February 5 in Chennai.

**'SIRAJ AMONG MY BEST MATES'**  
Mohammed Siraj, the

find of Australia tour in coach Ravi Shastri's words, was seen counselling Saini consistently in the latter's maiden Test. It helped the Delhi pacer immensely as he and Siraj go back a long way.

"He is one of my best mates. We have played a lot together (for India A). We talk a lot about bowling. He was always there for me in the first game. Pace is important but he was telling me to also

focus on line and length to be effective.

"Siraj is a very different bowler. He showed a lot of courage by staying back after his father's death. What he achieved was very crucial for the team and showed his character."

Talking about his extraordinary journey, Saini, son of a bus driver, said he never planned to be a professional cricketer; it was only fate at play. — PTI

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

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

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

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

Anderson, who replaced Stuart Broad in the team for this Test, bowled 29 overs with 13 maidens before Sri Lanka were bowled out in an extended second session with Dilruwan Perera scoring a defiant 67.

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

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

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

## BRIEF SCORES

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

## FA CUP | FOURTH ROUND

## Wolves survive Chorley scare

**Chorley (England), Jan. 23:** Separated from Chorley by 109 places in the English football pyramid, Wolverhampton didn't only manage a single goal in their 1-0 win.

The Premier League millionaires also only managed a single shot the goal against the part-timers from the sixth tier.

Vitinha's 35-yard, swerving strike in the 12th-minute moved Nuno Espirito Santo's side into the round of 16 in the FA Cup on Friday night. It was spectacular but actually a rare moment of quality from the visitors to this tiny stadium in a former mill town in northern England.

Contrast that with the attacking threat from the minnows. Incredibly, John Ruddy from Wolves was the busier of the two goalkeepers facing five shots on target, including tipping over a header from Andy Halls, who is a personal trainer in his day job.

And it was Wolves having to hang on to avoid being forced into extra time by a disciplined Chorley side that belied its lowly status.

No wonder manager Jamie Vermiglio wasn't just savouring his chance to take on a Premier League side. A primary school headmaster in his day job, Vermiglio felt far from outclassed by his Wolves counterpart.

THE RESULT	
<b>Chorley</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>(Vitinha 12)</i>	

"I thought we were fantastic I feel really proud, of course I do," Vermiglio said.

"But I feel disappointed as well and I never thought I would come off the field feeling the way I feel. It's a strange emotion because I feel we have just taken a Premier League team all the way. We were in a game right until the last minute," he added.

It says a lot about the breadth of English football that the last non-league side remaining in the FA Cup could prove more than a match to a Wolves side that reached the Europa League last-16 last season.

"Credit to Chorley. They are in the lower divisions but they were organized and had a good striker that fights," Nuno said. — AP



Vitinha (centre) of the Wolverhampton Wanderers celebrates scoring against Chorley in their England FA Cup fourth round match at the Victoria Park Stadium in Chorley, Lancashire, on Friday. — AFP

## Roma handed loss for impermissible 6th sub

**Milan, Jan. 23:** An impermissible sixth substitution prompted the Italian league judge to inflict Roma with a 0-3 loss to Spezia in the Italian Cup on Friday.

Nine-man Roma had already lost Tuesday's round of 16 match 4-2.

In extra time, Roma sent on Daniel Fuzato for Bryan Cristante and Ibanez for Pedro even though it had already made four changes.

Five substitutions are permitted under new rules introduced amid the coronavirus pandemic. The changes can be made during a maximum of three inter-

ruptions during the first 90 minutes and during one more stoppage in extra time.

The substitutions occurred during a chaotic finish after Roma defender Gianluca Mancini and goalkeeper Pau Lopez were sent off within 30 seconds of each other in extra time. Former Roma winger Daniele Verde and Riccardo Saponara then scored for Spezia.

Spezia face Napoli in the quarterfinals.

It's been a miserable spell for Roma, who were beaten by rivals Lazio 3-0 in the capital derby last week in Serie A. — AP

## Indian doubles pairs fizzle out in semifinal

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

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

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

Satwik and Ashwini,

● **Satwik and Ashwini showed great skills and temperament to script a strong fightback after losing the opening game, but could not punch through.**

who spent most of the last year away from the court in two different cities and could only practice together for a few weeks, on Friday became the first Indian mixed doubles pair to reach the semifinals of a BWF World Tour Super 1000 event.

Earlier, the impressive run of Satwik and Chirag Shetty also came to an end after a close semifinal defeat in men's doubles.

The Indian pair, ranked 10th in the world, lost 18-21, 18-21 to world number nine Malaysian combination of Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in a 35-minute match.

## MARIN CLINCHES SPOT IN FINAL

Spain's fifth seed and former world number one Carolina Marin breezed into the final, beating South Korea's An Se-young 21-19, 21-15.

She came out on top last week against top-seeded Tai Tzu-ying, and continued her winning streak Saturday, maintaining her signature aggressive play against seventh-seeded An.

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



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

## Shastri's contribution in Oz win can't be undermined



Ayaz Memon  
Over The Top

Accolades have been profuse — and from all quarters — for India's cricketers that beat Australia to win the recent Test series. There is not an iota of exaggeration or hyperbole, which usually accompanies success, in this. Every word of praise has been richly deserved.

The hard-fought 2-1 triumph will be forever remembered, in fact gain even more lustre with time. Beating Australia in their backyard is considered the toughest assign-

ment in international cricket. India did this against such heavy odds as to make the result mind-boggling, beyond belief.

The hardships endured — both physical and psychological — by the team finds few parallels, not just in Indian cricket history, but in the sport itself. Heroes emerged in each daunting situation — senior pros, those with the experience of just 2-3 Tests, some even debutants — debutants, taking a cue from each other to lead the team to the incredible

series win.

In hindsight, it wasn't calibre which won the series for India. In fact, skills wise, Australia may have been marginally ahead, as statistics suggest.

Top scorer and highest wicket-taker in the series were both Aussies.

Where India scored was in grit, courage, self-belief, application, ambition, and not the least, judicious use of attrition or aggression to outplay the opponents. What this reflects better planning, proactive strategising, time and meaningful communication with players.

This redounds to the credit of chief coach Ravi Shastri, and his support staff. B. Arun, Vikram Rathour and R. Sridhar. The efforts of the players,

their resilience and der-ring-do, cannot be diluted even a whit. But Shastri's contribution in the victory can't be undermined either.

His strong influence comes through clearly in the entertaining and insightful conversation between R. Ashwin and fielding coach Sridhar after the series which the off-spinner has put on social media, followed by what bowling coach B. Arun had to say in a press conference on Friday.

What I've gleaned from the Ashwin-Sridhar *tete-a-tete* and Arun's press conference, these are the areas where Shastri's planning was crucial:

a) Bowling strategy against Smith, Labuschagne etc started in July, almost five months

before the tour, along with Kohli and Sridhar. This entailed detailed studying of the Aussie batting during the hard lockdown period. The strong on side field to Smith, shutting up his off side run scoring opportunities paid off to a large extent. Shastri also asked Rahane to use Ashwin within the first 10 overs after Australia chose to bat first at Melbourne. The off-spinner got the master batsman cheaply.

b) Not reacting adversely when the team got bowled out for 36 at Adelaide. From what Sridhar says, Shastri in fact says the players should wear it as a badge, take lessons from the debacle so that it inspires them to success. This was crucial in keeping the morale of the team

intact despite the freakish yet massive setback, and showed fine understanding of human nature.

c) Changing tactics after the first Test, confabulating with Kohli (before he left) and stand-in captain Rahane to play five bowlers, show more aggression against the Australians who appeared to be trying too hard to exacts revenge for the 2018 loss.

d) Not sending members of the ODI and T20 squads, plus the net bowlers like Shardul, Washington and Natarajan, back to India. His apprehension that some players might get injured came true when more than half a dozen got injured. These three did the star turn in the final

Test.

e) Tackling each player's failures/shortcomings (deploying other coaches in this too), with a mix of compassion and firmness to get the best out of them

Shastri's booming, often bombastic approach has frequently made him the butt of criticism in mainstream media, memes and scorn on social media. But he's stuck his neck out, in picking players (remember Jasprit Bumrah being given a Test place against all advice) or not (Rahane, Pujara, Ashwin have been dropped), taking the jibes and barbs on the chin when the plays fell, all the while expressing confidence that the Indian team would deliver big time.

I think Shastri deserves a hat tip.