

## UGLY RUN: ON KEEPING SPORTS CLEAN

**Sport is beautiful only when it is clean, and athletes compete in safe and fair ways**

A year ago, her story moved many. When Gomathi Marimuthu spoke about her struggle following the death of her father and coach in succession, the 800m gold she won then at the Asian Championships in Doha appeared to have a lot of sparkle. But all that changed when reports emerged a month later about the middle distance runner from Tiruchirappalli testing positive for a banned substance twice, both at Doha and the Federation Cup in Patiala, an event prior to the Asian Championships. The latest verdict from the International Disciplinary Tribunal which has punished the 31-year-old with probably a career-ending four-year ban, will also strip her of the Asian gold. It should not come as a surprise as four of her urine samples had the presence of 19 Norandrosterone (19-NA), a metabolite of nandrolone, which is prohibited at all times. However, what remains strange is the two-month delay by the National Dope Testing Laboratory, which is now suspended by the World Anti-Doping Agency, and the National Anti-Doping Agency in bringing out the results of Gomathi's sample taken during the Federation Cup. Had it come earlier, she would not have gone to Doha and it would have saved the country a lot of embarrassment. Meanwhile, Gomathi has claimed innocence and suggested that the steroid may have been accidentally imbibed through some non-vegetarian food she had consumed.

Sport is beautiful only when clean athletes compete. However poor an athlete is, a sprint loses its charm when a dubious candidate walks away with the gold. It is also unfair to clean athletes and their years of sacrifice. Every time a big fish is caught, it spreads awareness about the perils of taking illegal drugs and goes a small way in cleaning up sport. The temptations to cheat, especially in India, are many, with government jobs, promotions and heavy cash prizes on offer for medallists in major Games. During these COVID-19 times, with many national camps closing their doors to outsiders, there is a feeling that it will be tough to test athletes and the next two years are crucial with events such as the Olympics, World Championships, Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games lined up. But WADA and NADA have brought out guidelines for testing during this phase. Sebastian Coe, the president of World Athletics, emphatically said: "There is monitoring going on all the time by major national anti-doping agencies, AIU (Athletics Integrity Unit) and WADA. The days of adding up a number of tests is long gone. Intelligent testing and intelligent analysis are more important now than they have ever been." Clearly, NADA has to do more so that India is not tainted with drug violations and Gomathi's case is the latest wake-up call.

### Meanings of Difficult Words :

- ❖ **move** (verb) – affect, touch, impress, have an impact on.
- ❖ **in succession** (phrase) – successively, in sequence, consecutively.
- ❖ **sparkle** (noun) – vitality, buoyancy, high spirits.
- ❖ **probably** (adverb) – most likely, in all likelihood, all things considered, perhaps.
- ❖ **strip of** (verb) – dispossess, deprive, deny/remove, take away from (rank, power, etc.,).
- ❖ **come as a surprise** (phrase) – to be unexpected, to make someone feel surprised.
- ❖ **metabolite** (noun) – In biochemistry, a metabolite is an intermediate or end product of metabolism. The term metabolite is usually used for small molecules.
- ❖ **nandrolone** (noun) – It is also known as 19-nortestosterone, is an androgen (male hormones) and anabolic (muscle-building steroid (used to increase muscle mass and strength).
- ❖ **at all times** (phrase) – always.
- ❖ **embarrassment** (noun) – shame, humiliation, awkwardness, uneasiness, discomfort.
- ❖ **innocence** (noun) – blamelessness, faultlessness, in-culpability, clean hands.
- ❖ **steroid** (noun) – a type of chemical substance (hormones) found in our body. Steroids can be artificially introduced into our bodies to improve our strength.
- ❖ **accidentally** (adverb) – unintentionally, unknowingly, unconsciously, mistakenly.
- ❖ **imbibe** (verb) – absorb, take in, acquire.

- ❖ **sprint** (noun) – a short distance (fast) race (400m or less than that).
- ❖ **dubious** (adjective) – suspicious, questionable, doubtful.
- ❖ **walk away with** (phrasal verb) – win easily.
- ❖ **a big fish** (phrase) – an important/powerful person.
- ❖ **perils** (noun) – dangers, difficulties.
- ❖ **clean up** (phrasal verb) – make things clean, restore something.
- ❖ **temptation** (noun) – desire, urge, impulse/inclination.
- ❖ **on offer** (phrase) – available.
- ❖ **line up** (phrasal verb) – schedule, arrange, organize, plan.
- ❖ **emphatically** (adverb) – clearly, distinctly, obviously.
- ❖ **add up** (phrasal verb) – increase, rise.
- ❖ **long gone** (adjective) – relating to something that is dead/not in practice; having ended/disappeared a long time ago.
- ❖ **taint** (verb) – tarnish, damage, spoil, ruin, vitiate.
- ❖ **wake-up call** (noun) – something which alerts a person to a problem and makes him/her to do some remedial action.

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## **NAMES AND PLACES: ON ENGLISH SPELLING OF TAMIL NADU PLACE NAMES**

### **Uniformity in place names in English and the local language should not create confusion**

Spelling and pronunciation are not “first cousins” in English. This holds good for other languages, including Tamil, a surviving ancient language. Perhaps, this aspect has not been fully taken into account by the Tamil Nadu government in its decision to change the spelling of names of 1,018 cities, towns and localities in the State. The gazette notification of April 1, 2020, which was made available only recently, is an outcome of two years of labour put in by District Collectors and a committee headed by Minister for Tamil Official Language and Culture K. Pandiarajan. It is now for the Revenue and Disaster Management Department, which handles land records in the State, and the respective rural and urban local bodies to take the notification forward. The idea is to make the anglicised names sound closer to the root of the original Tamil names. As a matter of principle, this is welcome, but it is also advisable to discover the root of the name. This does not mean that other factors such as confusion among the public and cultural or social sentiments, can be ignored. Also, without making it look like change being made for the sake of change, the exercise should be based on logic and convention.

No one would object to “Sivaganga”, a constituency that had sent former Union Minister P. Chidambaram several times to the Lok Sabha, being called “Sivagangai” or “Tirumalai”, a village in the Sivagangai taluk, as “Thirumalai”. But, the process of de-anglicisation should not be taken to an illogical extreme. For instance, when “Coimbatore” becomes “Koyampuththoor” or “Vellore” turns into “Veelloor”, it defies both convention and logic and can cause much confusion. Likewise, Srirangam and Srivilliputtur, centres of religious importance, have been changed into “Thiruvaramangam” and “Thiruvillipuththur”. Tamil purists may argue that “Thiru” is the equivalent term for “Sri” but what should not be overlooked is that it is because of religious sensibilities that neighbouring Andhra Pradesh has seldom attempted to give Telugu flavour to “Tirupati”, which is a Tamil name. Apart from the initial confusion over the new spellings, people in the areas concerned have started becoming anxious about getting crucial documents of identification changed once the gazette notification is implemented. It is not the first time that name changes have happened in Tamil Nadu. In fact, the State was known by the name of its capital — Madras — till January 1969, and the capital’s name was changed to Chennai 27 years later. But, the need for pragmatism was not lost on the governments in the past. Despite being called “Thiruperumbudur” in Tamil, the spelling of the town in English was retained as “Sriperumbudur” in official documents. After all, the term, Tamil Nadu itself is an anglicised name. Changes to the name or spelling of places should not disrupt public equilibrium during a difficult time.

### **Meanings of Difficult Words :**

- ❖ **uniformity** (noun) – sameness, similarity, identicalness.
- ❖ **cousin** (noun) – a thing related to another.
- ❖ **hold good/hold true** (phrase) – remain true; remain valid.
- ❖ **perhaps** (adverb) – maybe, possibly.

- ❖ **take into account** (phrase) – consider, note, bear in mind.
- ❖ **(government) gazette** (noun) – official publication, official bulletin, official journal.
- ❖ **outcome** (noun) – consequence, result, aftermath, effect.
- ❖ **labour** (noun) – hard work, effort, exertion, strain.
- ❖ **take forward** (phrasal verb) – manage, sort out, deal with, take responsibility for (a task).
- ❖ **anglicised** (adjective) – modifying foreign words, names, and phrases in order to make them easier to spell, pronounce, or understand in English.
- ❖ **root** (noun) – source, origin.
- ❖ **a matter of principle** (phrase) – a situation that demands something to be carried out in a particular method for the reason that one thinks it is the only right method; in principle, on principle, in general, as a rule.
- ❖ **sake** (noun) – purpose, cause, reason.
- ❖ **convention** (noun) – norm, standard, criterion, rule.
- ❖ **constituency** (noun) – an area of a country that elects a representative to a legislative body.
- ❖ **de-anglicization** (noun) – The process of removing English characteristics or influence from foreign words, names & phrases.
- ❖ **illogical** (adjective) – irrational, unreasonable, groundless.
- ❖ **instance** (noun) – example, case in point.
- ❖ **purist** (noun) – traditionalist, perfectionist, doctrinaire, a person who follows tradition and only tradition.
- ❖ **overlook** (verb) – miss, fail to notice; disregard, neglect/ignore.
- ❖ **seldom** (adverb) – hardly, rarely, almost never.
- ❖ **anxious** (adjective) – worried, concerned, distressed, bothered.
- ❖ **pragmatism** (noun) – realism, common sense, matter-of-factness.
- ❖ **equilibrium** (noun) – balance; composure, calmness.

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## **DESERT CLOUDS: ON RAJASTHAN POLITICAL CRISIS**

### **Unsettling of a govt. by engineering defections during a pandemic should not be allowed**

A political upheaval appears to be in the making in Rajasthan. The ruling Congress has accused the opposition BJP of trying to unsettle the Ashok Gehlot government. The BJP State President has denied the allegations, and said the accusation was an outcome of an internal tussle in the Congress and an attempt by Mr. Gehlot to spruce himself up as a battle hero. The Congress has 107 MLAs in the 200-strong State Assembly, and the support of at least a dozen independent MLAs. The BJP has 76. The Congress and the BJP both are snarled up in internal tussles. State Congress chief and Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot always believed that the top post was unfairly denied to him when the party won the State in 2018; Mr. Gehlot has the support of more party MLAs and wants Mr. Pilot to wait for his turn. In the BJP, the current central leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah do not share much common ground with Vasundhara Raje, the former CM. The BJP has turned up the heat in the State by fielding a second candidate for elections to three Rajya Sabha seats on June 19 of which it can win only one with its current strength. The BJP has used Rajya Sabha elections to engineer defections from other parties in other States, and its second candidate is more than just political signalling.

The recent history of the BJP's behaviour in comparable situations does not inspire confidence in its claim that it has no plans to usurp power in Rajasthan through engineered defections. Within the last year the BJP wrested power in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, States that it did not win in elections, through a now familiar pattern of engineering resignations of MLAs. The only reasonable explanation for such mass resignations of legislators is that they were either lured or threatened. Earlier, the BJP gate-crashed its way to power in Goa and Manipur, through questionable means. Every party has its share of disenchantment within its ranks, but using that as a facade to dismantle a popular mandate is not in the spirit of democracy. The upending of the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh in the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak, in March, was an ugly humiliation of democracy. If the BJP has plans to traverse the same path in Rajasthan, it would be a clear statement of its priorities for a second time in three

months. Political instability contributed to Madhya Pradesh's chaotic response to the pandemic. Rajasthan is badly affected. The State's response has been reasonably robust so far but political uncertainty at this moment could spin the pandemic out of control. There is no good time to seize power through unethical means, but this is a particularly inopportune moment.

### Meanings of Difficult Words :

- ❖ **cloud** (verb) – mess up, spoil, ruin, vitiate.
- ❖ **cloud** (noun) – trouble, problem, worry; menace/ threat, gloom.
- ❖ **engineer** (verb) – bring about, cause, arrange (something skillfully); mastermind, choreograph, orchestrate, manipulate.
- ❖ **defection** (noun) – desertion, absconding, decamping.
- ❖ **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
- ❖ **upheaval** (noun) – disruption, disorder, turmoil.
- ❖ **in the making** (phrase) – burgeoning, developing, growing, up and coming.
- ❖ **unsettle** (verb) – upset, disturb, dismay.
- ❖ **allegation** (noun) – charge, accusation, complaint.
- ❖ **outcome** (noun) – consequence, result, aftermath, effect.
- ❖ **tussle** (noun) – scuffle, fight, clash; quarrel, disagreement.
- ❖ **spruce up** (verb) – make smarter/neater, clean up, put in order; beautify oneself.
- ❖ **snarl up** (verb) – entangle, muddle, jumble, embroil, complicate/confuse.
- ❖ **common ground** (phrase) – shared opinions, beliefs (or interests).
- ❖ **turn up** (phrasal verb) – increase, raise, intensify.
- ❖ **the heat** (noun) – pressure.
- ❖ **turn up the heat** (phrase) – to pressurize; to put pressure on someone/something; tighten the screw.
- ❖ **signalling** (noun) – the idea that one party convincingly conveys some political information (ideologies) to another (only to show off selfishly, instead of making better society).
- ❖ **comparable** (adjective) – similar, equivalent, parallel, related.
- ❖ **inspire confidence** (phrase) – to make someone (people) feel confident.
- ❖ **usurp** (verb) – take over, appropriate, seize.
- ❖ **wrest** (verb) – seize, grab, take something (power/control) from someone by force/difficulty.
- ❖ **lure** (verb) – tempt, persuade, attract, coax, win over.
- ❖ **gate-crash** (verb) – encroach, trespass, intrude, infringe.
- ❖ **means** (noun) – method, way, procedure.
- ❖ **disenchantment** (noun) – disappointment, dissatisfaction, discontent.
- ❖ **ranks** (noun) – the people belonging to a group.
- ❖ **facade** (noun) – outward appearance, false display, posture, pretence.
- ❖ **dismantle** (verb) – demolish, knock down, destroy.
- ❖ **spirit** (noun) – ethos/morale, principles, standards, ethics, real/true meaning, true intention.
- ❖ **upend** (verb) – overturn, upset, topple over, overthrow.
- ❖ **outbreak** (noun) – sudden appearance/ occurrence, outburst, flare-up.
- ❖ **humiliation** (noun) – embarrassment, shame, indignity/dishonour, insult, offence.
- ❖ **traverse** (verb) – go across, cut across, pass over, negotiate.
- ❖ **instability** (noun) – uncertainty, unpredictability, lack of stability.
- ❖ **chaotic** (adjective) – confused, disrupted, messy/disorganized.
- ❖ **robust** (adjective) – strong, powerful.
- ❖ **uncertainty** (noun) – unpredictability, unreliability, riskiness/precariousness.
- ❖ **spin out of control** (phrase) – move in an uncontrolled way.
- ❖ **inopportune** (adjective) – inappropriate, inconvenient, unsuitable, ill-chosen.