

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | WEDNESDAY 23 | SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 36°C
Min: 27°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Purattasi 7
Tithi: Saphami
Star: Kettai
Rahukalam:
12 noon to 1.30 pm
Yamagandam:
7.30 am to 9 am
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.48 am
Zohar: 12.07 pm
Asar: 3.20 pm
Maghrib: 6.05 pm
Isha: 7.16 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.04 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 11.40 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 11.20 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+60,520)	(+647)
56,20,640	89,612

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,337)
TN: 5,52,674 8,947

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

3,16,31,147

DEATHS

9,71,830

COUNTRIES
AREAS WITH
CASES 213

TN man accused of raping British national escapes from Goa jail

Panaji: A 32-year-old man accused of raping a British woman escaped from the Central Jail in Goa on Tuesday, police said.
Ramchandran Chennadayellappa, a native of Tamil Nadu, was facing trial for allegedly raping the woman at Canacona in South Goa district in December 2018. He escaped from the Central Jail, located around 15 km from here in Colvale, in the early hours of Tuesday, a senior police official said, adding that search was on to nab him. The accused had earlier also escaped from the prison in July 2019 and was rearrested by the police in Tamil Nadu, he said. He is facing trial before South Goa district judge in the rape case and before Judicial Magistrate First Class, Pernem (North Goa) for escaping from judicial custody. — PTI

COUNTER

POINT



No need to rush... all your party MPs have been suspended!

US death toll from coronavirus hits 2 lakh

Washington, Sept. 22: The U.S. death toll from the coronavirus topped 200,000 Tuesday, a figure unimaginable eight months ago when the scourge first reached the world's richest nation with its sparkling laboratories, top-flight scientists and stockpiles of medicines and emergency supplies. "It is completely unfathomable that we've reached this point," said Jennifer Nuzzo, a Johns Hopkins University public health researcher. The bleak milestone, by far the highest confirmed death

● **The bleak milestone, by far the highest confirmed death toll from the virus in the world, was reported by Johns Hopkins, based on figures supplied by state health authorities**

toll from the virus in the world, was reported by Johns Hopkins, based on figures supplied by state health authorities. But the real toll is thought to be much higher, in part because many Covid-19 deaths were probably ascribed to other causes, especially early on, before widespread testing. The number of dead in the U.S. is equivalent to a 9/11

attack every day for 67 days. It is roughly equal to the population of Salt Lake City or Huntsville, Alabama. And it is still climbing. Deaths are running at close to 770 a day on average, and a widely cited model from the University of Washington predicts the U.S. toll will double to 400,000 by the end of the year as schools and colleges reopen and cold weather sets

in. A vaccine is unlikely to become widely available until 2021. "The idea of 2.00,000 deaths is really very sobering, in some respects stunning," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-disease expert, said on CNN.

The U.S. hit the threshold six weeks before a presidential election that is certain to be in part a referendum on President Donald Trump's handling of the crisis. In an interview Tuesday with a Detroit TV station, Trump boasted of doing an "amazing" and "incredible"

job, adding: "The only thing we've done a bad job in is public relations because we haven't been able to convince people — which is basically the fake news — what a great job we've done."

And in a pre-recorded speech at a virtual meeting of the U.N. General Assembly, Trump lashed out at Beijing over what he called "the China virus" and demanded that it be held accountable for having "unleashed this plague onto the world." China's ambassador rejected the accusations as baseless. — AP



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Stalin writes to PM on Mekedatu



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If Biden wins, China wins: Don

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Ambani plans ₹4K phone



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CHINA WON'T BUDGE

No breakthrough in talks, troops in for long winter

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 22

India and China said in a joint statement Tuesday that during the sixth round of the corps commanders' talks, both sides agreed to stop sending more troops to the frontline, refrain from unilaterally changing the ground situation and avoid taking any action that may complicate the situation.

"They agreed to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, strengthen communications on the ground, avoid misunderstandings," said the joint statement.

It said the two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on stabilising the situation along the LAC in the India-China border areas. "The two sides also agreed to hold the seventh round of military commander-level talks as soon as possible, take practical measures to properly solve problems on the ground, and jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in the bor-

● **"They agreed to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, strengthen communication on the ground, avoid misunderstandings," said the joint statement**

der areas," said the statement.

The sixth corps commanders' meeting was held after foreign ministers of both nations met in Moscow and agreed on a five-point agenda. Sources said, however, that at the sixth round of corps commanders' talks, no breakthrough could be achieved on disengagement.

This means that despite the joint statement, the 30,000-40,000 more troops which India rushed to Ladakh after the Chinese transgression in early May will remain at the forward posts during winter when sub-zero temperatures and bone-chilling winds at extreme heights make survival difficult and continuing logistics supplies to these points is a nightmare. The corps commanders' meeting, that started around 9.30 am Monday at

Moldo, on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control, went on till beyond 11 pm.

The Indian delegation was headed by 14 Corps commander Lt. Gen. Harinder Singh. Lt. Gen. P.G.K. Menon, who is likely to replace Lt. Gen. Singh next month, was also present. For the first time, a representative from the external affairs ministry, joint secretary (East Asia) Naveen Srivastava, took part in the corps commanders' meeting. The Indian officials who attended Tuesday's meeting debriefed their senior officials.

There is a lot of concern that if the Chinese troops don't move out soon or are not pushed out from the places where they have transgressed, they may permanently change the alignment of the LAC.

Man slits his throat inside court premises in Alandur

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 22

A 26-year-old man slit his throat inside the court premises in Alandur on Tuesday, after he was taken by the police to be produced before the magistrate in connection with a case.

The convict, identified as Johnpaul, slit his throat with a blade he was carrying with him. He also swallowed the blade, before the police could stop him.

Johnpaul was shifted to the Stanley Medical col-



Convict Johnpaul with policemen inside an autorickshaw after slitting his throat in Chennai on Tuesday. — DC

lege and hospital and said it be in critical condition.

A resident of Mangadu, Johnpaul was arrested by

the Meenambakkam police in connection with a robbery case and lodged at Puzhal prison.

NCP SUPREMO

Pawar gets I-T notice over poll affidavits

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
with agency inputs
MUMBAI, SEPT. 22

The income-tax department has issued a notice to NCP supremo Sharad Pawar seeking a clarification on his poll affidavits submitted to the Election Commission. He took a dig at the Centre, saying the notice was sent to him because the government "loves us".

The veteran Maharashtra leader on Tuesday confirmed he has received a notice from the Centre asking for a "clarification and explanation" on his election affidavits. "I got the notice yesterday. We

are happy that they (Centre) have a special love for us (Pawar family) among all members. The notice was served by the I-T department after the Election Commission asked (it) to... We will reply to the notice," he said.

The notice was in reference to the affidavits submitted in 2009-10, 2014 as well as 2020.

Mr Pawar said the department was seeking some information and clarifications related to the last three elections, and similar notices were also sent to his daughter Supriya Sule, a Lok Sabha MP, Mr Pawar said.

Backed agri bills as farmers will benefit: CM

Ramanathapuram/Madurai, Sept. 22: The AIADMK extended support to the three farm bills as they benefited the farmers. But, DMK chief MK Stalin, though he could not pick holes even with a magnifying glass, has still announced a protest against it, Chief Minister K. Palaniswami said on Tuesday.

Palaniswami, who visited Ramanathapuram to inaugurate new projects and distribute government welfare assistance to beneficiaries, said his party's aim is to safeguard the interests of farmers.

"Since the three bills benefited the farmers, we supported it. We will support any initiative aimed at benefiting the farmers and at the same time oppose any scheme that would affect them and this



is our stand and we have made this clear," he told reporters at Ramanathapuram.

Several schemes aimed at the welfare of farmers including the water resources rejuvenation 'Kudimaramathu' and construction of a slew of check dams have been implemented only because he was a farmer, the Chief Minister said answering a question on DMK chief MK Stalin criticising him for calling himself a farmer

● **"I am a farmer. To this day I am doing farming and I take pride in calling myself a farmer. Stalin does not know anything about agriculture," the Chief Minister said**

and supporting the farm bills.

"I am a farmer. To this day I am doing farming and I take pride in calling myself a farmer. Stalin does not know anything about agriculture," he said, adding, since the DMK president could not find fault with the government, he was making unfounded allegations.

Stalin was talking "without knowing" about the bills that have been adopted in Parliament,

Palaniswami told reporters at Madurai. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 was in sync with a 2019 Tamil Nadu law, he said.

Farmers are also protected from price fall besides other advantages. "If Stalin can explain what is wrong in these provisions it will be good. Farmers will not be affected, these benefit them and that is why we have supported."

Tamil Nadu has already taken steps to help farmers sell their produce anywhere freely and only this framework has now been extended across the nation through the Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, he said. — PTI ■ P3

BUILDING COLLAPSE

Death toll rises to 25

Thane: The death toll in the Bhiwandi building collapse in Maharashtra rose to 25 on Tuesday, with the recovery of a dozen more bodies overnight, police said. The number of those rescued has gone up to 25, with five more persons being pulled alive out from the debris since Monday night, police said. The dead include 11 children, aged between two to 15 years, an official said. Those rescued are being treated at hospitals in Bhiwandi and Thane, he added. Search and rescue personnel are still at the site, trying to pull out a few more persons still feared trapped, he said.



RR BEAT CSK BY 16 RUNS

Sanju Samson's blistering knock of 74 (32 balls) helped Rajasthan Royals beat Chennai Super Kings by 16 runs in an IPL game at Sharjah on Tuesday. ■ **Report on P8** — BCCI

OTHER STORY

Plea to set up police complaints authority

A. ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 22

A Madurai-based NGO has demanded the government to set up police complaints authority in the state to end custodial torture and death. Citing the death of trader Jayaraj and his son Bennix in Sathankulam police station, Thoothukudi in June, executive director of People's Watch Henri Tiphagne hoped that district/state police complaints authorities may ensure a mechanism specialized in handling a wide ambit of complaints against the police, including the most serious, was readily available to the public at large and change in policing culture.

Tiphagne said that after the death of Jayaraj and Bennicks many similar gruesome incidents took place in several police stations. He said the government must collect details regarding the cops facing cases before either the NHRC or the SHRC or any criminal trials in the criminal courts along with relevant details including disciplinary actions initiated against such police officers. Based on this the government may take a decision whether cops should fit to continue.

Biometric POS machine at ration shops

DC CORRESPONDENT
CUDDALORE, SEPT. 22

The district collector launched biometric authenticated public distribution system (PDS) in Cuddalore district on Tuesday. The food and civil supplies department and cooperative department introduced the gadget to ensure hassle-free supply of ration items to all eligible cardholders, a release stated.

Collector Chandrasekhar Sakhamuri handed over the devices to officials manning the PDS outlets in the coastal district. The biometric fingerprint POS machine would be installed in all PDS outlets in the district by September 30.

The fingerprint scanners are used to read and verify thumb impressions of family members of ration cardholders at fair price shops when they draw commodities eligible to them. Any family member listed in smart cards can draw the rations after biometric authentication on a device kept at ration shops.

The collector has directed the salesmen/women to sanitize the machine and maintain social distancing in the shops.

Collector Chandrasekhar Sakhamuri handed over the devices to officials manning the PDS outlets in the coastal district. The biometric fingerprint POS machine would be installed in all PDS outlets in the district by September 30



SIGHT TO BEHOLD

Nanmangalam lake brimming with water brings good tidings to residents of Chennai suburban areas.

— DC

Grant building permission as per rules in Ooty: HC

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 22

A person who has been running from pillar to post to get building permission for construction of a building in Ooty for over a year, got reprieve with the Madras high court directing the Udhagamandalam municipality to process his application strictly in accordance with the development control rules prepared, sanctioned and notified along with the revised master plan and also the review approved master plan and pass necessary orders within 8 weeks.

Justice N.Anand Venkatesh gave the directive while disposing of a petition filed by L.Loganathan.

The judge said Abudukumar Rajarathinam, counsel for the petitioner, submitted that the master plans 1997 and 2011 as well as the development control rules permit the usage of the petitioner's land as a primary residential use zone (economically weaker section). The provisions of the Tamil Nadu District Municipalities (Hill Station) Buildings Rules, 1993, should be followed only with respect of minimum extent of land, width



of plot, plot coverage and set-back requirements in view of the fact that the 1993 rules, issued by the municipal administration and water supply department was reviewed by a list of 21 heads of departments including the board of revenue, director of agriculture, director of town and country planning, chief conservator of forests and also inspector of municipalities. He brought to the notice of this court all these authorities involved in the notification of the 1993 rules as well as the authorities who have to give the NOC for putting up the construction were the same. Abudukumar submitted that the application submitted by the petitioner was kept pending since the authorities was under the impression that the appli-

cation submitted by the petitioner was against Rule 7 (2) of the Tamil Nadu District Municipalities (Hill Station) Building Rules, 1993. He submitted that once the master plan 1997 and 2011 and also the development control rules for Udhagamandalam local planning area has declared the subject property as a primary residential use zone (economically weaker section) and the same was in force, the building plan approval sought for by the petitioner will have to be considered only in line with the master plan and the rules, the judge added.

The judge said a careful perusal of the master plan 1997 and 2011 shows that the survey number within which the subject property was situated falls within the category of primary residential use zone (economically weaker section). In view of the above, once an application satisfies the requirements under the development control rules, which were sanctioned and notified along with the master plan, the authorities will have to process the application and give necessary sanction/permission for construction of the building, the judge added.



WAITING FOR INAUGURATION

After seven long years, Korattur railway subway work is nearing completion. Residents and motorists hope it will be opened to public soon.

— DC

BJP protests against DMK over wall space

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 22

Demanding action against the DMK cadre involved in the skirmish over painting slogans on the surface of a compound wall at Nanganallur on Monday, the Tamil Nadu BJP organised protests at seven places in Chennai, led by various party functionaries, on Tuesday.

At the protest in Nanganallur, a 67-year-old intruder who suddenly raised a discordant slogan demanding the promised Rs 15 lakh from the BJP government at the Centre, was beaten up by the party men.

Police rescued the man who was standing amidst the BJP slogan shouters and took him to the Palavanthangal police station, where the man, identified as Durai, said that he did not belong to any political party and just wanted to know what happened to the election promise of paying ₹ 15 lakh into the account of everyone in the country

Police rescued the man who was standing amidst the BJP slogan shouters and took him to the Palavanthangal police station, where the man, identified as Durai, said that he did not belong to any political party and just wanted to know what happened to the election promise of paying ₹ 15 lakh into the account of everyone in the country



BJP stages a protest against the DMK at Nanganallur on Tuesday seeking action against Opposition party members who had allegedly beaten a woman cadre following a dispute over using a wall for graffiti.

— DC

know what happened to the election promise of paying ₹15 lakh into the account of everyone in the country.

In Peravallur, the protestors, led by Sumathi Venkatesan, were taken into police custody and later released. The other venues for the protests were

Ambattur, Saidapet, Chennai Collector's Office, Anna Nagar Arch and Tondaiarpet.

On Monday, BJP members had fought with DMK cadre when both the groups used the same wall to paint slogans. It is alleged that the DMK had painted its slogan over the messages painted

by the BJP in connection with the Prime Minister's birthday.

So members of the BJP, men and women, gathered there to whitewash the DMK's slogans on the wall which led to the fight. Police personnel had a tough time separating the two warring groups.

Over 100 MDMA pills from France seized at airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 22

Chennai air customs seized MDMA tablets worth ₹4 lakh that arrived from France via parcel.

According to the official press release from the department, on intelligence, Chennai air customs detained a postal parcel suspected to contain narcotics substance, which arrived from France at Foreign Post Office.

On examination, the parcel contained a plastic pouch. On opening it was found to have pink colour tablets suspected to be MDMA, a narcotics substance. These tablets known as 'ACAB Pig' were in the shape of a pig. ACAB is an acronym and is used as a slogan and written catchphrase in graffiti, tattoos and other imagery. These tablets contain around 250 mg of MDMA which is a very high dose.

A total 130 MDMA pills valued at Rs 4 lakh were



recovered and seized under the NDPS Act, 1985.

The parcel arrived from Poulainville, a town in North France, and was consigned to a Chennai city address. A team went for search at the consignee

address but on reaching, the apartment was found to be locked.

On enquiries it was found that nobody was residing there since lockdown. Further investigation is on.

Pondy CM visiting Delhi to seek Central aid for Covid-19

Puducherry, Sept. 22:

Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy will be on a two-day visit to New Delhi starting September 22, to urge the central government to release 'sufficient' funds to manage the Covid-19 situation in the union territory.

Addressing a virtual press conference on Tuesday, Health Minister

Krishna Rao, who will be accompanying the CM during the visit, said, "we will urge the Home and Health Ministries to ensure that Puducherry is sanctioned sufficient funds to tackle the current Covid-19 situation in the Union Territory."

Rao said, "although the Chief Minister had been persuading the Prime Minister since last five months

to come to the rescue of the territorial government with sufficient grant of funds to deal with the current pandemic situation, the Centre had earmarked only ₹4 crores."

He further said the CM had also written to the Prime Minister for more funds, but nothing cut any ice.

Claiming that the government was in a

fiscally critical condition, he said, "We will persuade, during our two day visit to Delhi, the Union Health and Home Ministers to respond to our plea for sufficient funds."

Puducherry posted 493 fresh cases of coronavirus and six related fatalities on Tuesday, taking the overall tally of infections to 23,684.

— PTI

Senior citizen asked to pay property tax again

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 22

During pandemic times, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has sent a property tax shocker to a senior citizen at Motilal Street near T. Nagar here, resulting in a dispute over remittance.

A row has erupted between the Motilal Street Welfare Association and Kodambakkam (Zone X) officials after GCC sent SMSes to Indira Ganesh, 75, asking her to pay the pending taxes in 2014-15 which she has already paid.

VS Jayaraman, secretary, Motilal Street Welfare Association, said on September 5 the authorities asked the woman to pay the property tax of 2014-15. "We were shocked as there were no dues till September 5.

A row has erupted between the Motilal Street Welfare Association and Kodambakkam (Zone X) officials after GCC sent SMSes to Indira Ganesh, 75, asking her to pay the pending taxes in 2014-15 which she has already paid

Even when she paid taxes for 2015-16 and 2018-19, the dues for 2014-15 had not come up. The sudden appearance of tax dues after five years is a mystery. The senior citizen on April 8, 2014, had obtained a receipt for the same. When this was pointed out, the officials wanted the resident to produce the receipt issued by the GCC and the debit of the amount in the bank pass book. They said if the lady cannot produce

the documents, she has to pay again. The point is how could the GCC omit the receipt of the payment? The GCC should correct its system to reflect true picture of the dues by the residents," he said.

K. Anna Durai, assistant revenue officer at T. Nagar, said the confusion arose as they did not find her payment details of 2014-15 in the records. The issue will be sorted out if she produces the bank details, he said.

Asked why the GCC sends SMS to the residents despite the three-member committee appointed by the government last year to study about the property tax revision has not come up with a report, he clarified that the reminders were sent only to those who have tax dues.

IIT-M faculty develop AI models to process Indian languages

DC CORRESPONDENT,
CHENNAI, SEPT. 22

Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) faculty have developed Artificial Intelligence (AI) models and datasets to process texts in 11 Indian regional languages.

Dr. Mitesh M. Khapra, assistant professor, department of computer science and engineering, said he task was taken up jointly with AI4Bharat, a platform for building AI solutions for problems of relevance to India.

The multilingual AI models and datasets will provide the essential building blocks to students, faculty, start-ups and industry to work on Indian language

IIT-M's joint project gets award

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 22

A project done jointly by US-based RICOVR Healthcare Inc., a rapid diagnostics platform company, and IIT-Madras (IIT-M) has won the 'Ignition Grants' Award instituted by the US India Science and Technology Endowment

tools and push the frontiers of technology. It is available in the languages including Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada, Punjabi, Bengali, Odia, and Assamese.

The faculty have made

Fund (USISTEF).

USISTEF, a joint fund established by the US and India to promote innovation through science and technology, announced the award recently after a bi-national review process of over 400 proposals. The RICOVR -IIT-M team was selected for its idea on Covid-19 antigen test that

can provide results in five minutes using saliva.

RICOVR Healthcare's patented biosensor platform uses a small drop of saliva to provide high-quality, cost-effective results in approximately five minutes. IIT-M is collaborating with RICOVR to bring this novel antigen test to the market.

these resources completely free of cost, which can be accessed by anyone. These models are freely available and can be downloaded from a Github repository (<https://indianai4bharat.org/>).

An accompanying research paper describing the research methodologies and evaluation has been accepted at EMNLP-Findings (a companion publication at one of the top Natural Language

Processing conferences).

If a learner posts a question on an e-learning platform in Tamil or Hindi or any other numerous Indian regional languages, there is a need for tools that can automatically process such questions written in Indian languages and classify them into specific topics.

"While such tools are available for English and other foreign languages, there are hardly any tools for Indian languages and this is the critical gap that we are trying to address through this initiative. These models are available free of cost as we want the entire country to benefit from them," said Dr. Khapra.

SHORT TAKES

'IB' men tried to question me, says DMK MP

New Delhi, Sept. 22: DMK member D. M. Kathir Anand in Lok Sabha on Tuesday alleged that two persons, who claimed to be from the IB, barged into his room at Old Tamil Nadu House here and sought to know from him about issues to be raised by the party in Parliament. Anand claimed that the two persons also wanted to know what would be the party's strategy and about some local issues of Tamil Nadu. "They tried to interrogate me," he claimed, amidst protests by DMK leader Baalu and others. At this, the Lok Sabha speaker said the two persons could be frauds. "Please don't level unsubstantiated allegations. Unless you have any proof, this is not correct. If you give me in writing, I will examine it and if necessary will order an inquiry," Birla said. The speaker told Baalu and Anand that safety and security of every member is his responsibility. "You give me in writing, I will examine," he said. — PTI

Public thrash two chain-snatchers

DC CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE, SEPT. 22

Two persons were caught red handed and thrashed by the public when they tried to snatch the gold chain of a woman in broad daylight near Peri-ya-naickenpalayam on the outskirts of Coimbatore on Tuesday. According to police, while Rathinam 40, a resident of Periyanaickenpalayam, was heading to a grocery shop at Press Colony Shanthi Medu around 9 am, two persons on a bike followed her. While crossing a deserted stretch the pillion rider got down from the bike and attempted to snatch the two sovereign gold chain of Rathinam along with the mangalsutra. Rathinam fought with the youth, raised an alarm and pushed them down. Hearing the alarm of Rathinam, motorists rushed in and caught the duo before they could escape. They were tied to an electrical post and thrashed by the public. On receiving the information, Periyanaickenpalayam police rushed to the spot, rescued the youths and gave them first-aid. Further probe is on.



Two children Adarsh Aditya and Gowtham Rahul of Sathambakkam village hand over ₹15,000 to Ranipet collector S. Dhiviyadarshini towards PM relief fund, CM relief fund and Collector's relief fund for Covid prevention measures. — K. Senthil Nathan

'Fund embezzlement' in PM crop insurance scheme?

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI SEPT. 22

Farmers complained of corruption in the Pradhan mantri crop insurance scheme as non-cultivators in several villages of Thoothukudi district allegedly benefited from the scheme in connivance with revenue department officials.

Though farmers' associations have been blowing the whistle at the monthly farmers' grievance meetings about the corrupt practices in the crop insurance scheme, the officials did not look into the issue, said Tamil Farmers Association president Narayansamy. He added that a misappropriation of around Rs 15 lakh under the crop insurance scheme has been brought to light by the farmers at Lakshmipuram village in Vilathikulam taluk in Thoothukudi district.

The local village administrative officer (VAO),

Caught redhanded, VAO Chellamariappan sought forgiveness from the villagers and agreed to give back the misappropriated insurance amount

The malpractice came to light after the publication of the list of beneficiaries under the crop insurance scheme in the taluk during 2018-2019

Chellamariappan, was accused of adding four non-farmers, Palraj, Leelavathy, a ration shop employee, Murugesan and

CM: Stalin can't find fault with bills even with magnifying glass

From P1

"This law is already there in Tamil Nadu. The Centre has brought this Bill since other states do not have it."

Similarly, after explaining the features of the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, he said all the three passed bills have absolutely no adverse impact for farmers and on the contrary the provisions are good for them and the people.

The farmers market (Uzhavar Sandhai) would continue to function in Tamil Nadu and opposition parties were spreading rumours that these would be affected, he said.

Farmers in states like Punjab were agitated due to spread of rumours that there would be no Minimum Support Price and government procurement but the Centre has categorically made it clear that MSP and procurement would continue, he said.

"We don't understand why he (Stalin) opposes the farm bills. What is wrong in these laws. He searched with a magnifying glass and could not find any fault (with farm bills). Still, he has announced a protest

Murugesan's wife, Avudaital by producing fake documents that they had farm fields in Lakshmipuram village and cultivated maize.

"These four beneficiaries do not have any farm land in Lakshmipuram village," said the farmers who

against the bills," Palaniswami said. The "historic" ₹14,000 crore worth Cauvery Gundaru river linking project would be inaugurated before the end of January next year, he said.

Unlike the DMK regime, which entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with a private entity for coal bed methane extraction in the fertile Cauvery delta region affecting the farmers interests, it was the AIADMK government which declared it as a protected zone for agriculture, Palaniswami said.

"Can Stalin deny that he was responsible for the project," he asked, adding this aspect cannot be hidden and farmers would not forget that the leader of opposition was responsible for that project during the DMK led rule years ago.

To a question on his party's Rajya Sabha MP, S R Balasubramoniyar's criticism on some provisions of the farm bills, Palaniswami said: "we will seek an explanation from him. He has said that he has only put on record his opinion. Still we will ask him to explain."

Earlier, at a review meeting at the Ramanathapu-

ram Collectorate, Palaniswami said all steps for implementing the Cauvery Gundaru project has been initiated and through the initiative one lakh acre would get irrigation facilities in Ramanathapuram district.

The scheme, part of proposals envisaged under the Peninsular Rivers Development component of the National Perspective Plan, aims at diverting surplus water from Mettur dam to water deficit regions. On Sunday, the Rajya Sabha passed the Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020 that seeks to remove commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, onion, and potatoes from the list of essential commodities and will do away with the imposition of stock holding limits, was adopted on Tuesday in the upper house. These three bills have already been passed by the Lok Sabha.

— PTI

forgiveness from the villagers and agreed to give back the misappropriated insurance amount.

The malpractice came to light after the publication of the list of beneficiaries under the crop insurance scheme in the taluk during 2018-2019.

"We found four names repeated in the list of beneficiaries and the crop they mentioned to have cultivated was not included for insurance in the particular year," said farmer Rengasamy, who demanded an inquiry into the issue by the Thoothukudi district collector to bring to light similar misappropriations of insurance funds.

Vilathikulam tahsildar Rajkumar, when contacted, said he too had received complaints and initiated an inquiry.

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CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami hands over the job order of junior assistant to Vanathi Devi, wife of martyred soldier Palani on the Chinese-Ladakh border, in Rameswaram on Tuesday.

— DC <<<<<<

Price fall, rains put farmers in a spot



The steep fall in market price of paddy across Tamil Nadu and unseasonal rainfall have put the farmers of Tiruvallur district in dire straits.

A sack (78 kilos) that usually cost ₹1,260 has fallen to ₹ 700, says B. Balaji, a farmer at Karigilavakkam.

Farmers are not even getting the money they have invested. "I have spent around ₹22,000 for an acre and got less than ₹15,000 in return. I could harvest only 22 sacks per acre," says Balaji.

The crop was affected by pests and non-procurement of fertilisers due to logistic issues during the pandemic. "We usually get 300 sacks of produce per acre. It has been reduced to 220 sacks this time," Balaji added.

To avoid huge losses, farmers are planning to sell their produce to the government procurement centres. The government processes the paddy in these centres in a conducive temperature and sells it. "We are drying the produce to sell it to the procurement centres. We sell a kilo for ₹19," says Prema, another farmer. — N. Sampath



Stalin writes to PM on Mekedatu

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 22

DMK president M. K. Stalin has urged Prime Minister, Narendra Modi not to approve the detailed project report Karnataka for the construction of a reservoir at Mekedatu against the orders of the Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal and Supreme Court of India.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, which was personally handed over to him

in Delhi by DMK MPs T. R. Baalu, Kanimozhi, A. Raja, Tiruchy Siva and Dayanidhi Maran on Tuesday, Stalin said, "I am disappointed that the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka during his meeting with you demanded for early approvals and clearances for irrigation and drinking water projects including Mekedatu."

Pointing out that Tamil Nadu had expressed 'strongest opposition' for the projects, he said the

proposed Mekedatu reservoir was in total violation of the final order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal dated February 5, 2007 as well as the judgment of the Supreme Court of India dated February 16, 2018.

The farmers and people of Tamil Nadu had been consistently and persistently opposing the reservoir and the state Assembly had passed unanimous resolutions disapproving the project, he said, adding

that the civil appeal filed by the state of Tamil Nadu seeking a restraint order was pending before the Supreme Court, making the subject matter sub judice.

"The proposed Mekedatu reservoir under the guise of drinking water purpose would irreparably and irreversibly affect the flow of water from river Cauvery to the lower riparian states particularly Tamil Nadu and also threatens the very existence of many com-

bined water supply schemes catering to the needs of lakhs of people. Very importantly, it would drastically disturb and affect the distribution of water to Tamilnadu as per the allocation of water in the final order notified in the gazette," the letter said.

Stalin requested the Prime Minister to instruct the Central ministries concerned not to give approval for the detailed project report and the construction of the reservoir.



Rain adds to Covid woes in Nilgiris

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, SEPT. 22

Even as rains and nippy weather conditions played spoil-sport with autumn tourism in the Nilgiris, the rising Corona positive count in the last one week has brought a scary scenario in the hills. The Covid-19 positive cases crossed the 3,000-mark in the hills.

During the past three days alone, the hills witnessed around 340 positive cases. The health officials have a tough job on hand to identify and isolate the Corona positive cases, especially in the rural limits here which had seen a rapid rise in Covid-19 cases

During the past three days alone, the hills witnessed around 340 positive cases. The health officials have a tough job on hand to identify and isolate the Corona positive cases, especially in the rural limits here which had seen a rapid rise in Covid-19 cases recently

recently.

Sources said the heavy rains over the past two weeks across the Nilgiris has seen a rise in seasonal flu cases, which is adding to misery as flu, common cold and Covid-19 have common symptoms.

The total number of positive cases in Nilgiris stood at 3,178. While 2,447 had been discharged till date,

there are 710 active cases who are undergoing treatment. The Nilgiris witnessed 21 deaths due to Covid-19 till date.

The district administration of Nilgiris has appealed to the hill residents to comply with the social distancing norms and other prescribed norms to keep the corona spread at bay.

Man held for sexually abusing 4-yr-old girl

DC CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE, SEPT. 22

A 25-year-old construction worker was arrested under the Pocco Act for sexually abusing a 4-year-old girl near Masakalipalayam in Coimbatore.

According to police, Dinesh, a native of Chinna-Salem in Kallakurichi district, came to a relative's house at Masakalipalayam a few days ago. There he sexually abused the neighbour's child while her parents left the girl to play with Dinesh.

The child cried in pain after returning home and immediately her parents took her to the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital.

After examining the girl, the doctors found she was sexually abused.

The parents lodged a

complaint at Singanallur police station. The police nabbed Dinesh, who admitted to abusing the child. Further investigation revealed that Dinesh was already involved in a sexual harassment case in Tirupur for which he was put behind the bars and had come out in bail recently.

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FINAL TOUCHES



Chennai Central suburban railway station will soon sport paintings of freedom fighters and national leaders. — DC

SHORT TAKES

BE FUTURE
READY, PM TELLS
IIT-G STUDENTSMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, SEPT. 22

Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Tuesday urged the youth to be future ready and future fit, and said that its their dreams and aspirations which would shape the future of India.

Addressing the 22nd convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati through video-conferencing, the Prime Minister said, “I firmly believe that the future of a nation is what its youth thinks today, your dreams are going to shape the reality of India. This time is to be future-ready.”

Lauding the efforts of the IITs in contributing towards making the country self-reliant in spite of the difficulty in conducting academic sessions and continuing research work, during this pandemic, the Prime Minister said that the National Education Policy 2020 is meant for the needs of the 21st century and to make India a global leader in science and technology.

Modi pointed out that the NEP 2020 has been made multi-disciplinary and offers flexibility of choosing various courses and allows multiple entry and exit points.

He asserted that the NEP also proposes a National Research Foundation for better coordination with all funding agencies regarding research funding and provide funds for all disciplines, be it science or humanities.

CENTRE SPENT
₹393 CR ON BETI
PADHAO SCHEME

New Delhi, Sept. 22: The Centre has spent ₹393 crore since 2014 for advertising the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme that aims to improve child sex ratio, the Ministry of Women and Child Development told Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

According to data provided by Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani in the Upper House in reply to a query, ₹96.71 lakh has been spent till September 17 in the financial year 2020-21 on advertisement or media advocacy of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme.

In 2019-20 fiscal, ₹23.67 crore has been spent for the purpose. The government spent ₹18.91 crore in 2014-15, ₹24.54 crore in 2015-16, ₹29.79 crore in 2016-17 and ₹135.71 crore in 2017-18 and ₹160 crore in 2018-19, according to the data.

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme addresses issues relating to declining child sex ratio and aims to change the mindset of people to make them appreciate the value of girl child, Irani said.

It is a tri-ministerial, convergent effort of the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, and Education, she added.

NIA TAKES OVER
PROBE INTO
B'LURU VIOLENCE

New Delhi, Sept. 22: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over the probe in the August violence in Bengaluru, which was triggered by a derogatory Facebook post on Prophet Muhammad allegedly by the nephew of a Congress MLA, officials said on Tuesday.

The central agency has re-registered two separate first information reports under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Indian Penal Code sections related to arson, violence and destruction of public property. The case was earlier being probed by the Bengaluru Police, they said.

The Union Home Ministry has handed over the case to the NIA, the officials said.

The agency has dispatched a team under an inspector general-rank officer to probe the violence case and it is in Bengaluru.

An NIA spokesperson said, “A brief background of the incidents is that on August 11, 2020, around 8:00 pm, more than 1,000 people gathered in front of the house of Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivas Murthy (Pulakeshi Nagar constituency) at Kaval-byrasandra, Bengaluru city.”

“The mob was protesting against the derogatory social media (Facebook) post about Prophet Muhammad made on August 11, 2020, around 4 pm by Naveen, the nephew of the MLA, allegedly insulting the religious sentiments of Muslims,” the official said.



A metro train during a trial run ahead of resumption of services with certain restrictions during Unlock 4, at Badi Chaupar station in Jaipur, Tuesday. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is expected to virtually inaugurate the newly constructed underground Chandpole-Badi Chaupar corridor on Wednesday.

— PTI

India records major decline
in new Covid cases in 24hrs

Centre says the decline in fresh cases has nothing to do with lesser testing

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 22

A major decline in fresh cases of Coronavirus was recorded in the last 24 hours as newly detected cases came down to 75,083. It is the fifth consecutive day when cases were found to be reducing from 97,894 on September 17.

Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that the decline in fresh cases has nothing to do with lesser testing. This coincided with over 1 lakh recoveries in one day for the first time taking the country's Recovery Rate to 80.86 per cent. The total number of recovered patients is almost 45 lakh while India's case fatality rate is 1.60 per cent.

“On September 19, we had conducted 8.81 lakh tests and detected 93,337 cases. On September 20, we conducted over 12 lakh tests and found 92,605 cases, on September 21, we tested 7.31 lakh people and got 86,961 positive cases while on September 22 we tested 9.33 lakh sam-

ples and found 75,083 positive. So, testing is not less and the number of positive cases are not determined by tests. We are monitoring this data on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to keep a track of the trend of Covid-19,” Bhushan said.

On Tuesday, a substantial decline in new cases was noted in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be chairing a meeting with Chief Ministers and health ministers of seven high-burden states —Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Punjab — on Wednesday to review the situation.

These seven states have recorded 63 per cent of the total active cases, 65.5 per cent of all cases and 77 per cent of the total deaths in the country are concentrated.

AP NUMBERS DECLINE
Vijayawada: The spree of Corona cases started decreasing for the past one week with the regis-

tration of positive cases between 8,000 to 9,500 per day and further decreased on Tuesday with the registration of 7553 Covid-19 positive cases in the past 24 hours giving a ray of hope to contain Corona spread. Further the recovery rate also increased as 10,555 patients recovered in the past 24 hours against new Corona infection of 7553 in one day. The total positive cases reached 639302 on Tuesday in which 562376 were recovered.

2L CASES IN B'LURU
Bengaluru: Karnataka on Tuesday reported 6,974 new Covid-19 cases and 83 related fatalities, taking the total number of infections to 5,33,850 and death toll to 8,228, the Health department said. The number of recoveries outnumbered new infections, with 9,073 patients getting discharged. Out of 6,974 fresh cases reported on Tuesday, 3,082 cases were from Bengaluru Urban, where the total number of infections breached the two lakh mark.

SITUATION IN
KERALA CAPITAL
GRAVE: CMDC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPT. 22

Kerala on Tuesday recorded 4,125 new cases of Covid-19 even as 3,007 persons recovered from the infection. The total recoveries in the state also crossed the 1-lakh mark. Of the new cases 3,453 contracted the disease through contact, source of infection among 412 persons is yet to be traced, 33 infected persons came from abroad, 122 from other states and 87 health workers also tested positive for the virus.

At Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the situation in Thiruvananthapuram district was grave. Of the total deaths in the state, 38 per cent have happened in Thiruvananthapuram district. Of the total active cases 18 per cent are in the district.

TS INCREASES
HOSPITAL, BED
NUMBERSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 22

The government has increased the number of state-run hospitals offering Covid-19 services, as well as the number of beds for patients, even as the state logged yet another day of more than 2,000 fresh Covid-19 cases.

As many as 2166 cases were found in the 24-hour period ending at 8 pm, on Monday while 10 more deaths were reported. This takes the total cases to 1,74,774 and the deaths to 1,052.

The 8,093 beds in 45 government hospitals has been increased to 8,821 in 62 hospitals. Meanwhile, 222 private hospitals with 10,484 beds between them continue to provide services to the patients.

COURT ALLOWS
KANGANA TO
ADD RAUT AS
PARTY IN CASESHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 22

The Bombay High court on Tuesday allowed Shiv Sena chief spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut to be added a party to the proceedings in Kangana Ranaut's petition challenging her office demolition.

While hearing the petition filed by Kangana Ranaut, a division bench of Justice Shahrukh J. Kathawalla and Justice Riyaz I. Chagla had observed that since the actor submitted a DVD of statements made by Raut, he should get an opportunity to be heard, and BMC officer too should respond to the allegations levelled by the petitioner.

Referring to the DVD of Raut's statement, Justice Kathawalla sought to know whether she wanted to make Raut a party to the plea.

“You do not want to show the ‘*Ukhaad diya*’ caption (from DVD)? You will have to implead Raut,” Justice Kathawalla told the actor.

Her lawyer sought time and was reluctant to make Raut a party to the case, saying he would instead argue on the aspect of ‘malice in law’ by BMC. However, after the Bench insisted that Raut should be given the opportunity to be heard, advocate Saraf accepted it.

Release IGST due
of ₹2,641 crore, TS
FM tells CentreDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 22

Telangana state finance minister T. Harish Rao on Tuesday demanded that the Centre immediately release the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) dues of ₹2,641 crore to the state before the next meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on October 5.

Participating in the group of ministers (GoM) meeting presided over by Sushil Kumar Modi, GST Council convener and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister, through videoconference on the IGST settlement, Harish Rao said the money was needed to fight Covid-19.

The minister said the release of funds from the Centre will come as a major relief to the states that are battling financial problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Stressing the importance of recommendations being approved before the GST Council meeting, Harish Rao said “If that fails, we will have to wait for three

months for the release of IGST funds.” Responding to the argument, Sushil Modi assured Harish Rao that the group will meet again on October 1, in advance of the GST Council meeting.

Harish Rao said that Telangana state and 16 other states were supposed to receive IGST payments to the tune of ₹25,058 crore. He suggested that the ₹1,015 crore from the Consolidated Fund of India to be collected from the states can be adjusted against future payments.

Harish Rao said the GST Council had calculated that Telangana state should receive ₹2,638 crore in IGST payments but the figure should be ₹2,641 crore. State officials will consult with Delhi regarding the missing ₹3 crore from the IGST payments.

“We are not really worried about that small discrepancy, but the group of ministers must recommend full IGST payment to all states before the next GST Council meeting,” the finance minister said.

Work-from-home
works well: IT cosKANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 22

Very large and large information technology companies have informed their employees that they will work from home (WFH) till March 31, 2021. Medium-sized and small enterprises have said that their WFH period will extend till December.

This has been evaluated based on the performance of employees in the WFH setup. A survey by the Hyderabad Software Exporters Association (Hysea) found that 95 per cent of the 300 companies in the survey stated that they are going to continue with the WFH strategy till the Covid-19 cases come down or there is a vaccine for the disease.

In terms of productivity, small and medium companies have reported more than 75 per cent and large and very large companies at 90 per cent in the WFH mode. Large and very large companies are looking at 70 per cent WFH options and small and medium size companies 30 per cent once the number of Covid-19 cases reduce.

The survey found that 31 per cent employers wanted 70 to 89 per cent of their employees to work from home till March 2021. The employers found that in the six months since from the lockdown in March, there was now a proper WFH strategy and many employees were settled in their respective profiles when compared to the risk factors of travel, asymptomatic carriers and the stress of getting exposed.

It is the large and very large companies that have

seen a major benefit in the WFH mode as they expect to opt for 25 per cent less office space than pre-pandemic times, when people start returning to office.

Large and very large companies have hired freshers in the last six months and 50 per cent of the companies are looking at returning to campus hiring in 2021-22. Campus hiring will be of pre-pandemic levels, according to the survey, which is a sign that the business is doing fine. Large and very large companies are involved in lateral hiring for the current financial year.

The downsides of WFH were power cuts, broadband disruptions and the working atmosphere at home having a lot of obstacles. Due to these reasons, morale was reported to be low by 34 per cent of the employers.

The negative effects of the pandemic were noted in the manufacturing and retail sector while IT industry, healthcare and education have noted a positive impact.

Work from United States of America and Europe has also seen a major impact for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Bharani Kumar Aroll, HYSEA president and CEO of Infopeers Solutions, explained, “In the last six months, a higher percentage of large companies have their workforce at home compared to small and mid-sized companies. The driving factor to come back to office is only when cases reduce or there is an available vaccine. Till then, the industry will prefer to continue with the work-from-home mode.”

Nepal shelves book
with disputed map

Kathmandu, Sept. 22: Nepal has stopped the distribution of a new textbook that includes the country's revised political map showing three strategically-important Indian areas as part of its territory, saying there were a number of factual errors in it, according to a media report on Tuesday.

India has already termed as untenable the “artificial enlargement” of the territorial claims by Nepal after its Parliament unanimously approved the new political map of the country featuring Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura areas which India maintains belongs to it.

A Cabinet meeting on Tuesday instructed the Ministry of Education not to distribute and print any more copies of the text book meant for class IXth to XIIth as there were some reservations from the Ministry of Land Management and Cooperatives and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Kathmandu Post* reported. The Ministry of

Education does not have the authority to change Nepal's geographical area and there are faults in the book, said spokesperson for the Ministry of Land Reform and Cooperatives Janak Raj Joshi.

The body is yet to officially declare the revised geographical area of the country.

The Department of Survey, which is the official agency that declares the total area of the country, however, hasn't made any decision on the area, Joshi said. Education Minister Giriraj Mani Pokharel on September 15 released the 110-page book titled, *Self Study Material on Nepal's Territory and Border* which dwells around historical facts about the country's territory and its border dispute mainly with India.

The book states Nepal's new area to be 147,641.28 square kilometers including the 460.28 sq km area of the Kalapani area which was included in Nepal's political map on May 20 by the Cabinet.

Shivraj showers sops on farmers

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, SEPT. 22

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday showered sops on farmers ahead of crucial by-elections in 28 Assembly constituencies in the state, likely to be held by October end.

Chouhan announced that the beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Samman Nidhi Yojana, a scheme launched by the Centre guaranteeing minimum income support for the farmers, in the state would get additional ₹4,000 annually, in addition to ₹6,000 provided under it.

● **THE CM** announced that the beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Samman Nidhi Yojana in the state will get additional ₹4,000 annually, in addition to ₹6,000 provided under it.

The farmers in the state, henceforth, would receive ₹10,000 annually under the scheme launched by the Union government in 2019.

“This is the first phase of the new Chief Minister's farmers' welfare scheme,” he said, indicating more sops for the farmers in the pipeline by his government.

He was launching the farm loan (at zero per cent interest) and farmers credit card distribution programmes here.

He also announced that zero per cent interest farm loans would be re-launched in the state. Chouhan had launched the scheme during his previous terms as Chief Minister.

“All the farmers welfare schemes like crop damage relief, PM Samman Nidhi, zero per cent interest loans, crop insurance and others would be implemented through a comprehensive package. The first phase of CM's farmers welfare scheme is in the

direction”, he said.

By-elections in 28 Assembly constituencies in the state, necessitated following resignation of 25 Congress MLAs from the Assembly and death of three legislators, may decide fate of Shivraj Singh Chouhan government.

As many as 22 former Congress MLAs, supporters of Jyotiraditya Scindia, resigned from the Assembly as well as from the party in March this year leading to the fall of 15-month-old Kamal Nath government. They later joined BJP after Scindia switched over to the saffron party from Congress.

IN BRIEF

John Lennon killer says sorry

New York: Mark Chapman, the man who killed John Lennon, has apologised to the late Beatle's widow, Yoko Ono, 40 years after his death. Chapman shot Lennon four times outside his New York Manhattan apartment as Ono looked on, in 1980. He was denied parole for the eleventh time following a hearing last month. During the hearing, Chapman said he killed the 40-year-old rock star for "glory" and that he deserved the death penalty. He added that he thinks about the "despicable act" all the time, and accepts he may spend the rest of his life in prison. "I just want to reiterate that I'm sorry for my crime," Chapman told the parole board at the Wende Correctional Facility in New York.

Finland bans neo-Nazi group

Helsinki: Finland's Supreme Court on Tuesday banned a neo-Nazi group on the grounds that its activities are "significantly contrary to law." Finland's national police had sought to dissolve the right-wing Nordic Resistance Movement, known for being violent and openly racist, and two lower courts of law confirmed the ruling. Finland's highest court ruled that the group's activities "did not enjoy freedom of expression or freedom of association, as the association's activities by their nature entailed an abuse of these rights." National Police Chief Inspector Heikki Lausmaa told Finnish broadcaster YLE that the Supreme Court ruling is "a clear statement that an organisation that is violent and uses speech deemed racist or otherwise violating human dignity should not have a place in Finnish society."

Nasa moon return to cost \$28b

Washington: Nasa on Monday revealed its latest plan to return astronauts to the Moon in 2024, and estimated the cost of meeting that deadline at \$28 billion, \$16 billion of which would be spent on the lunar landing module. Congress, which faces elections on November 3, will have to sign off on the financing for a project that has been set by President Donald Trump as a top priority. The \$28 billion would cover the budgetary years of 2021-25. In a phone briefing with journalists on Monday on the Artemis mission to return human beings to the Moon, Nasa administrator Jim Bridenstine noted that "political risks" were often the biggest threat to Nasa's work, especially before such a crucial election. Barack Obama cancelled plans for a manned Mars mission, after his predecessor spent billions of dollars on the project.

MET ARMY CHIEF BEFORE APC: SHEHBAZ

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 22

Pakistan Muslim League (Naz) President Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday confirmed meeting Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa ahead of All Parties Conference (APC) on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters outside the Lahore High Court (LHC), the PML-N leader said discussion on Gilgit Baltistan matters was held during the meeting with the army chief. All the parliamentary leaders were also present, he added.

Shehbaz, the Opposition Leader in National Assembly, said the incumbent government led by the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) was trying to oppress PML-N. The decisions taken during APC will be implemented at any cost, he said.

On September 20, 2020, the 11-party opposition's APC hosted by Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had demanded resignation of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The 26-point resolution passed by the APC stated that the opposition had decided to form a national alliance in the name of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM).

The APC had also decided to hold a long march against the government in January 2021.

The government, it said, had ruined the common man's life with rising inflation, unemployment, and taxes, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said in joint news conference after the APC.

The "selected" government was responsible for the fall of Kashmir, the APC members stated.

Spanish medics stage protest

Medical Residents protest against their working conditions on the second day of a strike called by the collective in Barcelona, on September Tuesday, amid a Covid surge in the country. Spain is struggling to contain a second wave of the virus, which has infected over 670,000 people and claimed over 30,000 lives, one of Europe's highest. — AFP

Sikh taxi driver assaulted, called 'Taliban' in Britain

London, Sept. 22: An India-born Sikh taxi driver was subjected to verbal and physical abuse by passengers he drove from a casino in the city of Reading in south-east England, prompting a United Kingdom police force to launch an investigation.

Vaneet Singh, 41, said that a group of four men slapped and shoved him, and asked "are you Taliban" after he received them from the Grosvenor Casino in Reading, Berkshire, in the early hours of Sunday.

One of the four also tried to remove his turban. "It was horrible, really frightening, I will never work the nightshift again. I'm

still very scared," he said. Thames Valley Police are appealing for witnesses as they investigate the report of an assault.

Singh, who worked as a music teacher at a school in Slough, Berkshire, turned to taxi driving after his teaching job was stalled during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The musician, who lives in Tilehurst with his wife and three children, said he has been left shaken up by the assault and will be avoiding night shifts.

"It's very bad experience. It's my religion so I respect my turban," he said. One of the four passengers, all described as white, pulled at his turban as he was driving and

slapped him on the head, while others kicked and punched the back of the driver's seat.

He says he tried to explain the religious significance of the turban to them and asked them not to touch it.

He recalled the passengers being well behaved at the start of the journey but "totally changed" as it went on. Singh, who is suffering from aches and pains since the incident, is convinced the attack was of a racist nature and believes he was a victim of hate crime.

Thames Valley Police are yet to confirm their line of inquiry in the assault case. — PTI

STOP PLAYING BREXIT 'GAMES', EU TELLS UK

Brussels, Sept. 22: The European Union is pleading with Britain to stop playing "games" as time is running out to clinch a free trade deal over the next month.

The sides committed to a new meeting to discuss Britain's plans to disregard part of the withdrawal agreement it had signed with the 27-nation EU amid acrimony that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson would even contemplate to break an agreement he himself signed.

EU countries' ministers for European affairs met in Brussels on Tuesday and German chairman Michael Roth said the British plan was "extremely" worrisome since it "violates the guiding principle of the withdrawal agreement," which officially allowed the United Kingdom to leave the bloc last Jan. 31.

A transition period now runs until Dec 31, during which time both sides are negotiating a trade agreement to replace the open and unfettered economic relations that are currently in place.

The EU has repeatedly expressed its exasperation at what it sees as British stubbornness and refusal to compromise on some key points. Without a deal on future trade relations, chaos is expected at the borders on Jan. 1. — AP

Charlie Hebdo HR manager moved from home in the wake of threats

Paris, Sept. 22: Police have moved the head of human resources at French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* from her home following death threats received last week, she told a French magazine.

Marika Bret, who has been living under police protection for nearly five years in the aftermath of the deadly assault on *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, said the threats were "sufficiently concrete to be taken seriously".

Bret said she would not be returning. "I had 10 minutes to

Taiwan: China must back off

Taipei, Sept. 22: Taiwan on Tuesday demanded that China "back off" and accused it of threatening peace, after a Beijing official rejected a largely respected marine boundary following recent incursions.

Foreign minister Joseph Wu urged Beijing to "return to the civilised international standards" after a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said there was no so-called median line in the Taiwan Strait "as Taiwan is an inseparable part of Chinese territory".

Wu told reporters: "The median line has been a symbol of preventing military conflicts and maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait for many years. The Chinese foreign ministry's comment is equivalent of destroying the status quo."

"I call on the international community to condemn the CCP for its dangerous and provocative words and deeds threatening peace... China must back off," he added in a tweet.

China considers Taiwan part of its territory to be absorbed into the mainland, by force if necessary, even though it has been self-ruled for more than seven decades.

Beijing has ratcheted up pressure on the democratic island since the 2016 election of President Tsai Ing-wen, who rejects its view that Taiwan is part of "one China".

Last year, Taiwan accused China of violating a long-held tacit agreement after its fighter jets — for the first time in years — crossed the medi-

Spying allegations against NYC cop fiction, says Beijing

Beijing, Sept. 22: China on Tuesday said allegations against a New York City police officer charged with being an "intelligence asset" for the Chinese government are a "pure fabrication" and part of a US plot to smear Chinese diplomats in the United States.

Baimadajie Angwang, a naturalised US citizen from Tibet, allegedly agreed to spy on US supporters of the Tibetan independence movement since 2018 as an agent for China in its effort to suppress the movement, according to a criminal complaint filed in Brooklyn federal court.

It says he secretly worked for unnamed handlers from the Chinese Consulate in New York. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin on Tuesday said the indictment against Angwang was full of hedging terms such as "seems" and "possibly," giving the appearance that prosecutors were straining to make their case.

"The relevant accusations made by the US side

are pure fabrication," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

"The US plot to discredit the Chinese Consulate and personnel in the United States will not succeed." — AP

JINPING CRITIC GETS 18 YEARS IN GRAFT CASE

Beijing, Sept. 22: The former chairman of a Chinese state-owned real estate company who publicly criticised President Xi Jinping's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic was sentenced to 18 years in prison on Tuesday in a corruption case, the government announced. Ren Zhiqiang, who had become known for speaking up about censorship and other sensitive topics, disappeared from public view in March after publishing an essay online that accused Xi of mishandling the outbreak. — AP

are pure fabrication," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

"The US plot to discredit the Chinese Consulate and personnel in the United States will not succeed." — AP

flashpoint with Beijing, as the United States and China clash over a range of trade and security issues, as well as the Coronavirus pandemic.

If Biden wins, China wins: Don

Washington, Sept. 22: Former US vice president Joe Biden has enormously harmed the US economy in his five decades as a politician, President Donald Trump has said, adding that if the Democratic leader wins the November 3 polls it would be a win for China. Biden, 77, and his running mate Kamala Harris are challenging incumbents President Trump, 74, and Vice President Mike Pence in the presidential election.

"Joe Biden spent the last 47 years shipping your jobs to China and foreign countries. You know that. I've spent the last four years bringing the jobs back to our country and back to Ohio," Trump said at a rally in Dayton, Ohio on Monday. — PTI

South East Central Railway**TENDER NOTICE FOR SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS**

E-Tender Notice No: NIT/14/20/35
Dated: 16.09.2020
South East Central Railway has implemented an e-system. On the behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Material Manager, South East Central Railway invites e-tenders for supply of the following items. Advertised tenders will be dealt through e-procurement system only. No manual offer will be entertained. These tenders can be accessed under the link www.ireps.gov.in.
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Sd/- VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR

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Police release footage after officers shoot 13-year-old boy

Salt Lake City, Sept. 22: A 13-year-old Utah boy with autism was shot by police after his mother asked for help getting him hospital mental-health treatment and officers agreed to talk with him, police footage released Monday showed.

The videos show Salt Lake City officers chasing him down an alley after they arrive at his home, then yelling at him to get on the ground. The boy collapses after a series of shots ring out, moaning. "I don't feel good. I don't feel good."

He survived but suffered broken bones and pierced organs, the family's attorney has said. His mother, Golda Barton, had warned police that her son said earlier that day, September 4, that he had a gun and had threatened to shoot her male coworker and break windows in the house, the video showed. But she told officers she thought it was a BB gun or pellet gun.

There were no indications he was armed. She wanted him to be hospitalised for help with his mental health issues. Officers said they would have to proceed as though the boy did have access to a real gun, the videos show.

Barton told officers the boy was "triggered" by se-

Kansas shooting: Child killed, 2 hurt

Kansas City, Sept. 22: A boy under the age of 5 died and two adults were injured when someone opened fire on their vehicle Monday afternoon, Kansas City police said.

After the shooting that was reported just before 3 pm, the driver of the car pulled up to a local fire station to ask for help, according to authorities.

Fire and EMS personnel tended to the unidentified man, woman and child, police said, adding that they were taken to a hospital where the boy later died.

The preliminary investigation shows that the vehicle was stopped in front of a home when someone fired numerous shots into the vehicle from outside, striking three people,

according to authorities.

A police spokesman on the scene said there was another adult in car who was not struck by gunfire. In a tweet, the city's police department said they were "stunned at this callousness and violence" and that they would not rest until finding out who was responsible for the shooting.

The child's death is the 148th homicide this year in Kansas City. At this time last year, 114 homicides had been recorded. "My heart breaks again," said Mayor Quinton Lucas, who was also present at the scene. Both the mayor and police officials asked for anyone with any information on the shooting to contact detectives. — AP

Surfboard drifts 8,000 km from Hawaii to Philippines

This undated handout photo shows Filipino teacher Giovanne Branzuela (L) posing with his surfboard, once owned by big wave surfer Doug Falter who lost it while surfing in Hawaii, along with his villagers on Sarangani island in the Philippines. — AFP

was happy to give it back to him.

"When I saw the picture of it, I couldn't believe it, I thought it was a joke almost," Falter, 35, said via Zoom. "I was certain that

the board would never be found again." Branzuela, who bought the badly weathered surfboard from his neighbour a couple of months ago for 2,000 pesos (\$40), said fishermen had

found it floating in the sea in August 2018 — six months after Falter lost sight of it.

They thought it may have fallen off a passing yacht and sold it to Branzuela's neighbour for a few dollars. Despite months drifting across the Pacific Ocean, the name of the board's shaper, Hawaii-based Lyle Carlson, was still visible on the now-yellowish surface.

Curious, Branzuela looked him up on Facebook and sent him a photo of the board. Carlson shared the picture on Instagram, tagging Falter. "It turned out it's a surfboard from Hawaii. I

couldn't believe it myself," Branzuela, 38, said via telephone. "It's been my dream to learn to surf and ride the big waves here," he added. "For now I can use his surfboard. I told him I will take good care of it."

The pair have been chatting on Facebook and Falter plans to visit the small island to retrieve his board after Coronavirus travel restrictions are lifted.

"That board meant so much to me because of my accomplishments on it," said Falter, a commercial photographer who took up surfing about 15 years ago in Florida before moving to Hawaii. — AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

23 SEPTEMBER 2020

As India reopens, we need more tests, infra

As coronavirus figures skyrocket in India amid reports of a second wave sweeping much of mainland Europe, comes renewed confirmation of bad news that SARS-CoV-2 reinfections are real. The official caseload, meanwhile, has surpassed the 5.5 million mark. A vaccine, while it is only going to be seasonal, is still several months away and, by all estimates, will take longer to reach every ordinary citizen.

But the economy, which has taken the worst hit in recorded history, must now be opened at all costs. It will take a minimum of two months to restore it to its pre-Covid health, a report by a committee headed by former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor C. Rangarajan, advising the Tamil Nadu government on medium-term measures, has suggested, and the Centre is certainly seen implementing what it has somewhat cheekily dubbed Unlock 4.0 with older students returning to school in parts of the country, international flights beginning to operate in air bubble arrangements and Taj Mahal accepting visitors. The ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament, however, has been unfortunately curtailed by several days, jeopardising important legislative decisions.

Autumn's lower temperatures plus the reopening will undoubtedly bring on the second wave of coronavirus in India. The crisis seems to be unfolding here in a worse manner than we could have imagined, with the virus having reached the rural heartlands.

Experts suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic will peak at different rates in different regions of the country. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh currently have the most infections; of these the last three states experienced late surges. Hence, a renewed urgency for health infrastructure, doctors, drugs, ventilators and a prompter and more localised administrative response coordinated by state governments and effectively bolstered by central funds and support is the absolute need of the hour. Of these, drug manufacture is our area of strength and we have done some good work on the count of expanding laboratory and testing infrastructure.

The Delhi high court on Tuesday stayed the Delhi government's September 13 order making it mandatory for 33 private hospitals in the city to reserve 80 per cent of their Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds as prima facie violative of fundamental rights. It is a welcome ruling. Most coronavirus patients improve with administration of palliatives and home isolation is sufficient to contain the disease. That is indeed a silver lining. India has topped the world both in the daily infection rate as well as number of recoveries. Health workers have put their shoulder to the wheel and are working heroically against odds.

If only these odds were fewer in number. The governments — state and Centre — have no choice but to perform or face electoral ire.

Regulate, don't strangle NGOs

There are certain hallmarks for most of the doings of the Narendra Modi government: a popular, presentable reason that can be easily sold to the public to achieve certain motives outside and a half-boiled, unworkable plan that will put a lot of people to inconvenience inside. Demonetisation, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the bills to rework the functioning of Indian farming are the classic examples. The latest to join the league is the amendment to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020, that Parliament has passed now.

The government is sure the piece of legislation is a must to control the waywardness of non-governmental organisations, including the religious ones. The main feature of the new bill is that it makes it mandatory for all the key people of the organisations to present their Aadhaar numbers to the authorities for getting the registration. The government, which got the Aadhaar Act passed in Parliament as money bill, had assured the Supreme Court that Aadhaar numbers will be made mandatory only when a person receives government largesse. It will be interesting to note how the government will defend this provision in the bill, should it be challenged in court. It defies logic when the government mandates the recipient organisation to open an account at a particular bank in the national capital at a time when banking has become a mobile application and the regulators get real time information on any transaction of agencies on their watch if they wanted. The bill empowers the government to make the organisations use the fund after a summary inquiry, whereas the existing law allows such an action only if the organisation concerned is found guilty of violating the law. The bill has many such crippling provisions. Regulating a sector is part of governance, but strangulating it is not. The government must realise it.

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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Restructuring of Railways: Most officers are unhappy

Modi sarkar is pushing ahead with restructuring of the Indian Railways board and services. The Cabinet recently greenlit the revamping of the powerful railway board that governs the railways. The board will now have five members. The present chairman of the board, V.K. Yadav, will be the first CEO of the Board. The board will also have independent members in non-executive roles. The Cabinet also decided to merge all central railway service cadres into a single Indian Railways Management Service (IRMS). While Mr Yadav is now chairman and CEO, Pradeep Kumar has been appointed member, infrastructure, P.C. Sharma has been appointed member, traction and rolling stock, P.S. Mishra has been made member, operations and business development. Manjula Rangarajan has been appointed member, finance. In the new structure, the chairman shall be the cadre controlling officer responsi-

ble for human resources (HR) with assistance from a director general level officer. Three apex level posts shall be surrendered from railway board, and all the remaining posts of the railway board shall be open to all officers regardless of the service to which they belonged.

The government says that the reform will end "inter-departmental rivalries" that, many say, have been hampering growth and efficiency of the railways for decades. But not all railway babus are pleased with the decision. Their first objection is to the proposed merger of cadres, which they claim is "unscientific and against established norms" since the government is proposing to merge "fundamentally dissimilar" entities. Instead, they argue for two distinct services instead of one - separating the civil services and the engineering wings.

NEW HEFT TO PMO
The appointment of three IAS offi-

cers to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) will add heft to the already most powerful PMO ever. The officers are Raghuraj Rajendran of the Madhya Pradesh cadre as director, Amrapali Kata of the Andhra Pradesh cadre as deputy secretary and Mangesh Ghildiyal of the Uttarakhand cadre as under-secretary.

Mr Rajendran was earlier serving as private secretary to the minister for steel and petroleum and natural gas Dharmendra Pradhan. Amrapali Kata is an officer of the 2010 batch was deputy secretary in the cabinet secretariat (intelligence). Mr Ghildiyal was working with the Uttarakhand government.

The appointments make these three officers seem like "high-fliers" in babudom. They have clearly been chosen for their track record. In the presidential-style Modi PMO they are now expected to be team players who must focus on tough decisions and showing results.

UP'S DUBIOUS CRACKDOWN
Though public perception belies it, the Uttar Pradesh government claims it has a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption. And it backs it up with data. According to sources, since coming to power three years ago, chief minister Yogi Adityanath has cracked the whip on around 800 state government officials. Just recently the state government suspended two IPS officers, Abhishek Dikshit, SSP of Prayagraj, and Manilal Patidar, SP of Mahoba, for their involvement in corrupt practices and "lax policing".

The state data claims that it has acted against more than 775 officials so far, including some retired officials who were found complicit in malpractices. The government has forcibly retired 325 officials and suspended and demoted over 450 babus.

But, sources say, despite the Yogi government's crackdown on corrupt babus, some suspended

officers seem to have wiggled back into the administration on plum postings. J.B. Singh, the Gonda DM, was suspended in June 2018, along with Kumar Prashant, the DM of Fatehpur, and faced disciplinary action over irregularities in the procurement of wheat. But Mr Singh's bureaucratic wilderness was short-lived. In 2019 he was appointed the DM of Etawah. Kumar Prashant, too, found himself back in favour. Last year he became the DM of Badaun, a more important district than Fatehpur. There are other instances, say sources, where after a brief period of lying low, suspended officials find themselves back in the saddle.

According to sources, murmurs of protest are rising, and railway unions are planning a series of protests against the move.

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

Subhani



To rule India, history of our geography vital tool

Abhijit Bhattacharyya

Does geography have a history? Yes, it does. It's political geography: of maps and atlases, covering the globe. Political geography maps, accurately drawn in meticulous detail, depicts the world we live in. Naming and numbering all countries, islands, oceans, seas, mountains, the physical topography, and the rulers and the ruled in each of those pages, along with economic figures. It shows the evolution of geography of demography through the ages. Hence, it's important for aspiring, or established, leaders to have fair idea of the history of the geography that they represent, rule or reign.

In the context of the vast demography of South Asia, the learning process is all the more important for potential leaders because India has always been volatile, susceptible to internal discord and violence, thereby resulting in frequent changes of political geography maps. So much so that it's a reality of the history of South Asian geography that the Indian ruling class traditionally proved utterly myopic, being unable to see beyond their noses, thus resulting in their chronic failure to unite the vast, diverse elements of the countryside. The history of Indian geography thus, as seen from the changed/changed maps, stands as a mute, yet profound, testimony to this sordid scenario. The ruling class has always liked to fight among its own spectrum and colour. Little wonder that this collective band of the disparate ruling class inevitably ended up facing, and invariably fading, before foreign invaders. The tradition goes on, as can be found from the 21st century aggression by the Communist Party of China (CPC), on whom some Indians still seem to

have abiding trust, faith and confidence to mutually turn the "Line of Actual Control" into a "border area" resolution, from foreign soil, as was catastrophically done, at the behest of a third party arbiter, in 1966 at the high table of Tashkent.

One would like to suggest that the reader go through the 376 pages of "A Historical Atlas of South Asia", published in 1978! To understand better; as to how fragile and fractious has been the map or geography of India, through the vicissitudes of history. Should it not, therefore, be obligatory for each and every aspiring Indian ruler, from all corners of the country, irrespective of his or her political colour, to learn a lesson or two, and study the atlas of the history of India's geography along with the Constitution of India? Today, for example, Delhi's geography is at the crossroads. Isn't the ominous signature on the horizon visible?

Indeed, five critical geographical areas, which this writer perceives as the "red zones" of India, are fast emerging under the Chinese Communist Party's active short to mid-term action plan. All indications point to its deep thought, firm belief and definite action plan. From the Belt and Road Initiative, to the CPEC, through Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. The CPC think tanks are focused on breaking/destroying India through the creation of a new geography of "Greater" countries, cutting through India's topography.

To reiterate what I have written earlier in these columns, I firmly believe that India's entire political class and its diplomats cannot match the cunning, deception and deceit of the Han Chinese in the international arena. Hence, the Chinese have

managed to go rogue globally, undoubtedly helped by the lack of ideology of the post-Mao People's Republic. Given the congenital blunders made by New Delhi and its failure to tackle the Dragon for the past 70-plus years; there is nothing to indicate that the contemporary mandarins of Lutyens' Delhi will be able to out-match or reverse the evil designs of the Dragon any better than their predecessors or anytime soon. I sincerely hope that I am proved wrong about this.

To start with, India needs to start preparing to face the worst, with an ultra-defensive mechanism: first identify the areas which the CPC is targeting, and study and analyse its past record of action. As they say, to be "forewarned is forearmed".

There are five "Greater" geographical zones where the Chinese are planning to target India — and the action on the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh is just the start. The five emerging areas are: Greater Pakistan; Greater Nepal; Greater Burma; Greater Bangladesh and "Greater China": with Beijing hoping to turn Bhutan into another Xinjiang owing to its tiny size and dearth of demography! These five might become reality mainly through indirect, invisible and divisive CPC machinations. Not necessarily through the visible CPC-controlled PLA militia, but through unethical operations undertaken, at times reluctantly or under duress, by some of India's neighbours.

The tell-tale signs are already visible. Can't most of India see the Dragon-inspired defiance by Nepal, making bizarre

claim over India's territory? Has anyone gone through some of the claims being articulated by mass-circulating Nepalese media, with Dehradun and Nainital being openly claimed by some elements in Kathmandu. The "Greater Nepal" campaign is already on. What will be claimed next — from Himachal Pradesh to Sikkim?

Nepal is neither a Muslim-majority nor a Christian-majority country. It's an overwhelmingly Hindu nation, which earlier used to be the world's only Hindu kingdom, before the monarchy was abolished. Now Beijing has managed to turn this landlocked nation against Hindu-majority India.

Look at India's West Bengal state. The Communist influence there was once all-pervasive, with China's Chairman Mao an icon to many. The first salvo was fired on May 24, 1967 across three police stations — Naxalbari, Kharibari, Phansidewa? It took an Indira Gandhi to tackle the CPC's "malevolence and perfidy", douse the Naxalite fire and save India. The CPC learnt its lesson, and didn't mess around with India's iron lady, more so after her triumph in the 1971 Bangladesh war.

"Greater" Pakistan has taken shape, with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir already in place, and "Greater" Bangladesh and "Greater" Myanmar will automatically follow if the "Greater" Nepal movement turns into a hydra-headed monster that will impact Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Geography will automatically navigate the foreign demography to cut down India's topography. Make no mistake, most of India's Northeast will be targeted by a "Greater" China, with some adjacent irredentist areas marked for Dhaka and Rangoon. Will India wake up in time to see through the Dragon's designs?

The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College. Views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

KEEP SCHOOLS CLOSED

It is heartening to note the Covid-19 recovery rate improving despite there being no vaccine yet for the virus (Covid-19 recovery rate improves as schools re-open in many states, Sept. 22).

Meanwhile, reopening of schools might put the students and the parents alike on tenterhooks.

Come what may, children and teachers can't be taken for a ride just because the recovery rate is progressive, as it is nothing short of crossing the Rubicon to keep the students under constant surveillance. With the academic year having a maximum of 4 to 5 months, all the respective state governments can continue online classes with a reduction of syllabus and conduct the annual examinations online. The universities switching over to online exam make a case in point.

E.S.Chandrasekaran,
Chennai

MOBILE FAIR PRICE SHOPS

CHIEF MINISTER Edappadi K. Palaniswami has to be congratulated for having launched 3,501 Amma mobile fair price shops for the benefit of more than 5.37 lakh ration cardholders in the state. The general public wholeheartedly welcomes this novel scheme, as it is more convenient and they can purchase all essential commodities with correct weight at their doorstep and malpractice of any form also can be avoided. The salespersons may kindly maintain the quality and quantity of the ration materials and provide with utmost care and service and earn good name to the government.

R. Balasubramanian,
Sakkangudi

A GREAT PRIDE

IT IS a matter of great pride that Lt. Kumudini Tyagi and Lt. Riti Singh will become the first women officers who will be deployed on Indian Navy warships as part of the ship's crew. Though Indian Navy does employ several women officers in its ranks, women have not so far embarked on warships for lengthy duration for various reasons, including lack of privacy in crew quarters. The entry of these two officers will pave the way for more women to be deployed on frontline warships. The development comes on a day when IAF has also shortlisted a woman fighter pilot for the newly acquired Rafale fighter jets.

R.. Sivakumar,
Chennai

SHORT TAKES

Original 9 in line for Tennis Hall

Newport: Billie Jean King and the other members of the Original 9 who laid the groundwork for the women's professional tennis tour are the first group nominated together for the International Tennis Hall of Fame. They join Jonas Bjorkman, Sergi Bruguera, Juan Carlos Ferrero, Lleyton Hewitt, Lisa Raymond and the late Dennis Van der Meer on the ballot announced on Monday for the Hall's Class of 2021. Wednesday is the 50th anniversary of when King, elected to the Hall in 1987 for her accomplishments on the court, and eight other players Peaches Bartkowicz, Rosie Casals, Judy Dalton, Julie Heldman, Kerry Melville Reid, Kristy Pigeon, Nancy Richey and Valerie Ziegenfuss signed 1 contracts to participate in the first women-only tennis tournament, taking a stand against the disparity in prize money between men and women at the time.

— AP

Ankita advances, Ramkumar out

Paris: India's Ankita Raina progressed to the second round of the French Open qualifiers with a hard-fought win over Jovana Jovic on Tuesday but Ramkumar Ramanathan's bid to qualify for his maiden Grand Slam singles main draw fell flat. In a marathon two-hour 47 minute contest, Ankita prevailed 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 against the Serbian. The 27-year-old Indian won 106 points to 100 of her rival. It was first meeting between the two players since 2014 when Ankita had lost to Jovic in Anning on clay courts. Ankita will next take on Japan's Kurumi Nara, seeded 22nd. In the men's singles, Ramkumar bowed out after a straight set defeat against French wild card Tristan Lamasine. The Indian Davis Cupper, ranked 198, lost 5-7 2-6 to lower-ranked Lamasine in one hour and 27 minutes. — PTI

Suarez in Italian language test row

Rome: Authorities are investigating whether Barcelona striker Luis Suarez was illegally helped to pass an Italian language exam last week in order to receive a European passport that could help him transfer to a new club. While Suarez is not under investigation, the director and general director of the Perugia university where the Uruguay forward took the exam are being investigated for allegedly helping him pass the test, Italian reports said Tuesday. Su rez had been linked with a possible move to Italian champion Juventus. Suarez's test grade was allegedly fixed before he took the test. — AP

Tour team under dope scanner

Paris: French judicial authorities have opened a preliminary investigation into suspected doping during the Tour de France targeting the Arkea-Samsic team, the French outfit confirmed. Following reports in the French press that two persons close to the squad led by Colombian rider Nairo Quintana a former Giro d'Italia and Spanish Vuelta champion were being held for questioning, cycling governing body the UCI later said it has been in touch with a special public health unit (OCLAESP) as part of the operation carried out by French authorities. — AP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Kolkata Knight Riders vs Mumbai Indians from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

England Women vs West Indies Women: Second T20 from 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

ATP Hamburg European Open: Third day's action from 2 pm on Sony Six, HD

WWE NXT

Bouts from 5.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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ROYAL HIGHNESS

Both teams score 200 but Rajasthan beat Super Kings

Sharjah, Sept. 22: Rajasthan Royals beat Chennai Super Kings by 16 runs in an IPL game on Tuesday riding on brilliant performances from Sanju Samson (74 off 32 balls), Steve Smith (69 off 47 balls) and Jofra Archer (27 off 8 balls, 1/26).

Batting first Royals scored 216/7 with the help of 17 sixes hit by their batsmen and nine by Samson alone.

In reply, CSK could manage 200/6 with Faf du Plessis scoring 72 off 37 ball with the help of seven sixes. Mahendra Singh Dhoni scored 29 off 17 balls but it was Rahul Tewatia's leg breaks that caused a lot of damage to top order. Tewatia took 3/37 in his four overs while Archer bowled a brilliant 19th over to seal the match.

Sent into bat, Rajasthan lost young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal (6) in the third over but then Samson joined hands with Smith as the duo played sensibly initially before the Kerala wicket-keeper batsman went hammer and tongs at opposition spinners.

Samson (74 off 32) looked in great nick, while Smith, returning to competitive cricket after recovering from concussion suffered before the ODI series against England, made 67 off 49 balls to lay the base for Rajasthan's total.

In the final over, Jofra Archer (27 off 8 balls) hit four sixes off Lungi Ngidi as Royals got 30 runs to take the score past 215.

In all, Royals hit 17 sixes with Samson accounting for nine of them and Smith and Archer having four each in their kitties.

While Smith played the second fiddle initially, Samson took the CSK spin duo of Ravindra Jadeja and Piyush Chawla to task



Steve Smith of the Rajasthan Royals plays a shot on way to his half-century against Chennai Super Kings in their IPL match at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday. — BCCI

Scorecard

Rajasthan Royals: Yashasvi Jaiswal c & b Chahar 6, Steve Smith c Jadhav b Curran 69, Sanju Samson c Chahar b Ngidi 74, David Miller run out (Gaikwad/Jadhav) 0, Robin Uthappa c du Plessis b Chawla 5, Rahul Tewatia lbw b Curran 10, Riyan Parag c Dhoni b Curran 6, Tom Curran (not out) 10, Jofra Archer (not out) 27. **Extras: (b-1, nb-3, w-5) 9. Total: (for 7 wkts, in 20 overs) 216.** **FoW:** 1-11, 2-132, 3-134, 4-149, 5-167, 6-173, 7-178.

Bowling: Deepak Chahar 4-0-31-1, Sam Curran 4-0-33-3, Lungi Ngidi 4-0-56-1, Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-40-0, Piyush Chawla 4-0-55-1.

Chennai Super Kings: Murali Vijay c Tom Curran b Shreyas Gopal 21, Shane Watson b Rahul Tewatia 33, Faf du Plessis c Sanju Samson b Jofra Archer 72, Sam Curran st Sanju Samson b Rahul Tewatia 17, Ruturaj Gaikwad st Sanju Samson b Rahul Tewatia 0, Kedar Jadhav c Sanju Samson b Curran 22, Mahendra Singh Dhoni not out 29, Ravindra Jadeja not out 1. **Extras: (lb-1, nb-1, w-3) 5. Total: (in 20 overs) 200/6.** **FoW:** 1-56, 2-58, 3-77, 4-77, 5-114, 6-179.

Bowling: Jaydev Unadkat 4-0-44-0, Jofra Archer 4-0-26-1, Shreyas Gopal 4-0-38-1, Tom Curran 4-0-54-1, Rahul Tewatia 4-0-37-3.

Kohli goes gaga over Chahal

Dubai, Sept. 22: Crediting Yuzvendra Chahal's three-wicket burst for his side's 10-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in their IPL opener, Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli said the wrist spinner proved that he can get purchase on any wicket.

Chahal (3/18) removed in-form Englishman Jonny Bairstow (61) and Vijay Shankar in successive balls in the 16th over to tilt the game decisively in RCB's favour. He had earlier gotten rid of Manish Pandey (34) in the 12th over.

"It's amazing to be honest. Last year, we were on the other side of the result, 6-nil to start. It is nice to be 1-nil. We kept our composure tonight," Kohli said at the post-match presentation on Monday.

"Yuzi (Chahal) comes in and completely changed the game for us. Not many spinners got much out of the pitch, but tonight he showed that you can turn it if you have it in your wrists. He showed he can get purchase on any wicket. The

PADIKKAL IMPRESSES ON DEBUT

Dubai, Sept. 22: Considered a future India star, Devdutt Padikkal made an impressive IPL debut with a scintillating fifty but the young Kerala batsman says he was nervous when his place in the playing XI was confirmed to him.

Displaying a range of shots and confidence in striking the ball hard and clean, the 20-year-old scored a 42-ball 56 to help Royal Challengers Bangalore post 163 for 5 against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"I was very nervous upon hearing the news of making my debut. But when I came to bat I settled down after playing a few balls," Padikkal told Chahal during an inter-

view. "I was very nervous upon hearing the news of making my debut. But when I came to bat I settled down after playing a few balls," Padikkal told Chahal during an inter-

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RCB's Devdutt Padikkal receives the Power Player of the match award on Monday. — BCCI

action after the match.

Padikkal said he has learnt a lot from RCB and India skipper Virat Kohli. "The last one month that we practiced, I learnt a lot from Virat

bhaiya. I kept asking him questions whenever I was around him. Even today, when I was playing with Finch, he showed a lot of confidence in me." — PTI

Finchy as well. AB batting in the last three overs helped us push it past 160."

Player of the match Chahal said, "When I bowled my first over, I realised I need to bowl

stump-to-stump line and backed myself.

"At one point they were batting well and I was trying to bowl loopy ones and wide of the reach which helped in building pressure." — PTI

MARSH MAY BE RULED OUT OF IPL

Dubai, Sept. 22: Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh is likely to be ruled out of the remainder of the IPL as the ankle injury he suffered during the game against RCB has turned out to be "serious", team sources said on Tuesday.

Playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad, Marsh was handed the ball by skipper David Warner to bowl the fifth over but he could bowl only four deliveries.

Marsh, whose career has been marred by a series of injuries, twisted his ankle in the second ball while trying to stop a drive by Aaron Finch in his follow through but managed to bowl two more balls before hobbling out.

He later, courageously, came out to bat at number 10 in SRH's chase but it was evident that he was finding it even difficult to stand. "It seems a serious injury. I am not sure if he be able to compete in any of the matches," a team source said. — PTI

Mumbai look to bounce back

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 22: Grace and strength will be on one side while poise and killer instinct on the other when a revamped Kolkata Knight Riders take on Mumbai Indians, who have once again faltered in the beginning of the IPL, on Wednesday.

Since 2013, MI have never won an opening game and the script didn't change against Chennai Super Kings, who took control of the match during the last 10 overs of the first innings.

They will be keen to bounce back while KKR would look for a perfect beginning as it will be a battle between big hitters on both sides on a sluggish Abu Dhabi track.

It will be Shubman Gill's third IPL, the one where he would like to own the stage with his languid grace and effortless hitting, which he is so capable of. He can hit sixes over extra cover with grace and caress the ball through covers too.

These are exactly the traits that made Rohit Sharma, the great white ball exponent that he is. Seasoned Rohit versus young Shubman is one for the keeps and makes this battle enticing. But it's not just grace which makes T20 so appealing. The brute masculinity of power that sends the ball soaring into the orbit is what makes it so special.

Hardik Pandya, who is back with a chiselled body.

● **Since 2013, MI have never won an opening game and the script didn't change against Chennai Super Kings, who took control of the match during the last 10 overs of the first innings.**

There is no doubt that he can unleash his firepower against Sunil Narine and Kuldeep Yadav as well as KKR's highest paid multi million dollar recruit Pat Cummins. The second pacer could be between Prasidh Krishana and Kamlesh Nagarkoti. But Hardik will find his match in Andre Russell, easily the most destructive hitter in current T20 cricket.

Russell had openly criticised the team management last year for sending him down the order. He had hit 52 sixes during one of KKR's worst editions.

But this time, he has been promised a promotion to number three slot and this could spell doom for any opposition.

"If it benefits the team and helps us win games, why not. If that meant Russell comes in at three and bats 60 balls, he might actually make a double hundred. Anything can happen with Dre Russ," KKR mentor David Hussey had said recently. — PTI

NUMBERS GAME — MI vs KKR

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 25
- Mumbai won: 19
- Kolkata won: 6

MEETING IN 2019

- Kolkata Knight Riders beat Mumbai Indians by 34 runs in Kolkata
- Mumbai Indians beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 9 wickets in Mumbai

FOR THE RECORD

- Andre Russell's strike

rate is the best in IPL. He made 1342 runs off 711 balls in 48 innings of 57 runs at a strike rate of 188.74.

● Kieron Pollard will become the 14th player to appear in 150 or more matches in IPL. The West Indian all rounder played all 149 matches for Mumbai Indians in IPL since 2010.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.800
Royal Challengers Bangalore	1	1	0	0	2	+0.500
Delhi Capitals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.000
Chennai Super Kings	2	1	1	0	2	-0.145
Kings XI Punjab	1	0	1	0	0	+0.000
Kolkata Knight Riders	0	0	0	0	0	+0.000
Mumbai Indians	1	0	1	0	0	-0.486
Sunrisers Hyderabad	1	0	1	0	0	-0.500

Tabulated as Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points, Net Run Rate

Wadia calls for better umpiring standards

New Delhi, Sept. 22: Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia wants the BCCI to ensure better umpiring standards and optimum use of technology in the IPL, following an umpiring howler which cost his team a match against Delhi Capitals.

Wadia expressed his views after KXIP appealed against on-field umpire Nitin Menon's controversial 'short run' call at a crunch time of the game held on Sunday in Dubai.

"It is exceedingly unfortunate that today with tremendous use of technology, we still do not use technology to ensure the total fairness and transparency in cricket game," Wadia said.

"I would request BCCI to ensure better umpiring and to ensure henceforth that technology is used to the maximum so as to ensure fairness and transparency in a game which is used across the best leagues in the world." — PTI

IBRAHIMOVIC'S BRACE GIVES AC COOL START

Milan, Sept. 22: Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored twice as AC Milan got their Serie A campaign up and running with a 2-0 win over Bologna on Monday.

Ibrahimovic, who turns 39 next month, showed he has lost none of his goalscoring skills having also netted last week against Irish side Shamrock Rovers in the Europa League.

"If I had been 20 years old I would have scored two more goals. I'm like Benjamin Button, born old, but I'll die young. Seriously, the team has worked well: you can see we're not at 100 per cent yet, but it was

important to start well," said the Swede.

Ibrahimovic grabbed the opener in the 35th minute, rising higher than Danilo to get his head to a Theo Hernandez cross, and celebrated in front of the 1,000 spectators allowed into the San Siro for the first time since the pandemic — mostly invited front-line health workers who had toiled during the worst of the crisis.

The Swede missed a chance for a second shortly after when he was denied by a sliding tackle from Brazilian defender Danilo. But six minutes after the break he added a second from the penalty spot. — AFP

‘Incredible’ Foden keeps Wolves at bay



Manchester City's Phil Foden (right) is congratulated by teammate Raheem Sterling after he scored against Wolverhampton Wanderers in their Premier League match in Wolverhampton on Monday. — AP

Wolverhampton, Sept. 22: Pep Guardiola labelled Phil Foden as "incredible" after Manchester City survived a scare to start their Premier League title challenge with a 3-1 win against Wolves on Monday.

City's delayed start to the campaign — due to their involvement in last season's Champions League — had allowed Liverpool to build a six-point lead over them before they had even kicked a ball.

Guardiola's side could not afford to slip up at Molineux if they wanted to keep pace with the champions and they raced into a two-goal lead before half-time thanks to Kevin De Bruyne's penalty and Foden's cool finish.

City's swaggering first half gave way to an anxious spell as Wolves dominated after the interval and they

THE RESULTS

Aston Villa (Konsa 63)	1
Sheffield United	0
Wolves (Jimenez 78)	1
Manchester City (De Bruyne 20-pen, Foden 32, Jesus 90)	3

had to cling on after Raul Jimenez got one back before Gabriel Jesus sealed the points in stoppage time.

Foden's goal was a welcome morale boost in his first match since the midfielder was sent home in disgrace, along with Manchester United's Mason Greenwood, after the pair invited local women into the England team's hotel. The breach of coronavirus protocols after England's Nations League

match in Iceland was publicly condemned by City, but the 20-year-old retains Wolves' trust.

"For the goal and in the second half Foden played incredibly well, he helped us keep the ball," Guardiola said.

While City equalled Aston Villa's record of winning 10 consecutive opening fixtures to a season, there is little doubt Liverpool remain the League's pre-eminent force for now.

But Guardiola was delighted to open with a victory given the shorter than usual pre-season. "We could not run much because we are tired in our legs but in general we did a good game," he said.

It feels like a crucial season for City and Guardiola as they look to regain the title they won in 2018 and 2019. — AFP