THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | FRIDAY 18 | SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER Max: 34°C

Min: 26°C Rainfall: 2 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Purattasi 2 **Tithi:** Prathamai **Star**: Uthiram/ Hastham Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon Yamagandam:

3 pm to 4.30 pm **PRAYERS Fajar:** 4.47 am Jumma: 12.10 pm **Asar:** 3.21 pm

Maghrib: 6.11 pm

Isha: 7.22 pm **SUNSET TODAY 6.08 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM MOONRISE TODAY 6.39 AM MOONSET TOMORROW 7.08 PM**

CORONA C●UNT

(+96,729)

(+1,171)51,12,623 84,400

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+5,560)

8,618 TN: 5,25,420

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

3,02,46,777 9,48,442

worldometers.info

Amit Shah discharged from AIIMS

New Delhi: Union home minister Amit Shah, who recently recovadmitted to AIIMS for a complete medical checkup, was discharged on Thursday evening, officials said. He was admitted to the premier hospital on September 12. The home minister has been discharged from AIIMS, an offi-

45,222 kids treated

for Covid-19

Chennai: In government hospitals and government medical college hospitals all over the State, 45,222 children were successfully treated for Coronavirus even as treatment for other ailments continued uninterrupted, Health Minister C Viiaybaskar said. In a statement on

Thursday, he said 944 children were treated at the Egmore Children's Hospital and of that but for 455 who came with Covid-19 symptoms. COUNTER



What can I do? It's an act of God!

STATE | 4 CM inaugurates Vandalur, Pallavaram flyovers

DC CORRESPONDENT

Union defence minister

Rajnath Singh asserted in

Rajya Sabha on Thursday

that no power on earth can stop the Indian Army

"Patrolling patterns are traditional and well-defined. No force on

earth can stop our sol-diers from patrolling and our soldiers have sacri-

ficed their lives for that.

There will be no change

in the patrolling pat-tern," Mr Singh said in

response to a question

from former defence min-

ister A.K. Antony about

the dispute with China at

the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

Indian government's net-

of those hackers target vic-

time and sell the fruits of

happened

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

from patrolling.



No force can stop Indian Army

on August 29/30

in an attempt to

change the status

auo on the south

Pangong Lake in

Ladakh region at

a time when the

two sides were

engaged in mili-

ic talks to de-

escalate ten-

sions," the

tary and diplomat-

defence minister said

interrupted," he said, adding that he cannot

share more details due to

operational sensitivities.

5 China citizens hacking

bank area of

from patrolling: Defence minister

"China "provocative military manoeuvre"

WORLD | 7 Obama's memoir 'Promised land' to be released in Nov.

SPORT | 8 Rohit says Malinga will be missed in MI



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66 lakh white

DURING LOCKDOWN

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Modi@70: B'day wishes pour in for PM

Moscow/London, Sept. 17: Russian President Vladimir Putin, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and German Chancellor Angela Merkel were among the world leaders who extended greetings to Prime greetings Minister Narendra Modi on his 70th birthday on Thursday and lauded his personal contribution to the strengthening of ties

with their countries.
Prime Minister Modi, born on September 17 in 1950, turned 70 on Thursday. In a letter to Modi, Putin praised him and said his activity as India's head of the government has earned him the welldeserved respect of compa-triots and high international prestige.

RCB players to honour Covid heroes by wearing tribute jersey through IPL

Dubai, Sept 17: Royal Challengers Bangalore players will sport the jerseys with the "My COVID Heroes" written on them all through the IPL to pay tribute to all those on the front-line in the battle against the pandemic.

The slogan honouring the "COVID Heroes" will be printed on the back of the playing as well as the training jerseys, the team announced on Thursday. "RCB will also be supporting GiveIndia Foundation by donating the proceeds from the auction of the jerseys that players wear dur-ing season's first RCB match," read the statement. The virtual launch was attended by RCB chairman Sanjeev Churiwala, skipper Virat Kohli, Parthiy Patel and young opener Devdutt Paddikal.

"Royal Bangalore has always stood for playing bold in the face of adversities, and we believe that right now these Covid Heroes are embodying this purpose by relentlessly fighting for the greater good. "Humanity is going to be grateful to them for many generations to come and through this campaign, we wanted to be among the first to pay tribute to their challenger spirit both on and off the field,' said Churiwala. —PT

HC seeks Centre's stand on Rakul's plea against media

New Delhi, Sept. 17: The Delhi high court Thursday sought the Centre's reply on actor Rakul Preet Singh's plea to stop media reports from connecting her with the Rhea Chakraborty drug case and said leaks to the media need to be investigated as "someone's reputation is totally destroyed

Indian networks charged Washington, Sept. 17: The US Justice Department The victims ranged from software develhas charged five Chinese opment, computer citizens with hacking over a hardware, telecom-100 companies and institu-tions in America and munication, social including the abroad,

works, and stealing valuable software data and business intelligence. Deputy US Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen on announced Wednesday three indictments have been unsealed in the matter that collectively charge five Chinese nationals with computer hacking and charge two Malaysian nationals for helping some

media and video game companies their crime.

The Malaysian nationals were arrested on Sunday and the Chinese nationals have been declared fugitive, according to a Justice Department statement. Rosen severely criticised the Chinese government. The Department of Justice

has used every tool available to disrupt the illegal computer intrusions and

ably, the Chinese Communist Party has chosen a different path — of making China safe for cyber-criminals so long as they attack computers outside China and steal intellectual property help-ful to China," the deputy attorney general said.

"In about 2019, the conspir-ators compromised

Noting that there is a

mismatch between what

China says and does, Mr Singh said, "Unki

kathani aur karni alag

Government of India websites, as well as virtual private networks and database servers supporting the Government of India. The conspirators used VPS PROVIDER servers to connect to an Open VPN network owned by the Government of India," the

BLACK FLAG PROTEST Anti-NEP

hai (Their actions are at variance with their

China, the defence min-

ister said, made "provoca-

tive military manoeuvre" on August 29/30 in an attempt to change the sta-

tus quo on the south bank

area of Pangong Lake in

Ladakh region at a time

when the two sides were engaged in military and diplomatic talks to de-

He also apprised the House that China contin-

ues to be in illegal occupa-

tion of about 38,000 square kms of Ladakh. Besides, it

also holds 5,180 sq km of

Pakistan-occupied

Kashmir that Pakistan

had illegally ceded in

Indian territory

escalate tensions.

demos in 1,000 places

Chennai: Representatives of several organisations from across the state have come together as a single platform under the name of oppressed people's collective, held protests across TN against the New Education policy on Thursday, on the 142 nd birth

anniversary of Thanthai Periyar. The members from Dalits and Ambedkariate movements, Periyarist movement and mass organisation of CPIM held demonstrations in more than 1,000 places across Tamil Nadu wearing black batches and holding black flags, against the New education policy. ■ P2

collar jobs lost

SANGEETHA G | DC

CHENNAI, SEPT. 17 Around 6.6 million whitecollar professionals lost their jobs post lockdown, washing away all the gains made in their employment since 2016. Among the salaried class, industrial workers lost 5 million jobs. as per the data from private think tank CMIE. The government has not yet come out with any data on Covid-

19 induced job losses across

As per the analysis of pri-

sectors.

vate think tank Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) based on the data from its 20th wave of Consumer Pyramids Household Survey, among the salaried class, white-collar professional employees witnessed the biggest loss in terms of jobs. These include engineers including software engineers, physicians, teachers, accountants and analysts, who are professionally qualified and are employed in some private or government organisation. However, this does not include the similarly professionally qualified people who run their own practice as these are classified as 'Qualified self-employed professional employed professional entrepreneurs'.

Employment in the category of white collar professional employees and other employees has been rising steadily since 2016 when the survey began tracking them. An estimated 12.5 million white-collar professional employees were employed during the sur-vey of January-April 2016. A year ago, during the survey of May-August 2019, their employment peaked at 18.8 million. It remained

Among the salaried class. industrial workers lost 5 million iobs. as per the data from

Employment of professionally qualified white collar workers fell steeply to 12.2 million during the survey of May-August 2020

in the next survey of September-December 2019 and then fell to 18.1 million during the survey of January-April 2020. This survey contained a partial impact of the Covid-19 induced lockdown. Employment of these pro-

fessionally qualified white collar workers fell steeply to 12.2 million during the survey of May-August 2020. This is the lowest employment of these professionals since 2016. All the gains made in their employment over the past four years were washed away during the lockdown.

Another group to have suffered big job loss among salaried class is industrial workers. Around 5 million industrial workers lost their jobs post lockdown, translating into a 26 per cent fall in employment in the group over a year. The decline in employment of industrial workers is likely to be largely in the smaller industrial units. This job loss also reflects the distress in the micro, small and medium industrial units in recent times.

The government has been evasive to the queries by members of Parliament about the post-Covid job

Harsimrat Kaur Badal 3 Hizb militants, woman

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

In a major embarrassment to the NDA govern-ment at Centre, Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal resigned from the Cabinet over two contentious farm Bills passed in the Lok Sabĥa on

"I have resigned from Industries tweeted.

from the Union **Cabinet in protest** against anti-farmer ordinances and legislation. Proud to stand with farmers as their daughter and sister," Kaur tweeted

She also wrote that she before, during and after the promulgation of the three Ordinances she had tried her best to persuade the Cabinet to take the actual stake holders of this decision, the farmers. on board and remove their apprehensions and concerns. "All this while, I was given the impression that since an Ordinance is only a temporary arrangement. mv concerns and pleas would be addressed while legislating on the issue in the Parliament," she said.

killed, CRPF officer hurt in Srinagar gunfight

Three Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militants and a 45-year-old woman resident were killed and a CRPF officer was injured in a predawn gunfight in Srinagar's Batamallo quarter on

The house in which gunmen had been holed up was damaged in the final assault of the security forces during which small and medium weapons were used, the police

The slain militants have been identified as Zakir Ahmad Paul, Ubair Mushtaq Bhat and Adil Hussain Bhat-all local Kashmiris from militan- $\begin{array}{ll} \text{cy-infested} & \text{southern} \\ \text{K u l g a m - S h o p i a n -} \\ \text{Pulwama districts.} & \text{The} \end{array}$ police claimed that they were involved in several attacks in Srinagar City and South Kashmir.

resigns from Cabinet DC CORRESPONDENTS "I have resigned

Union Cabinet in protest against anti-farmer ordinances and legislation. Proud to stand with farmers as their daughter and sister," Mrs Badal, who held the Food Processing portfolio,

In her four page letter to the PM, she wrote 'My decision symbolizes my party's vision, its glorious legacy and its commitment to go to any extent to safeguard the interests of the farmers" and asked the PM to accept her resignation.

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, SEPT. 17

Thursday.

sources and witness said.

Women, kids advised to move to safer places along LAC

VIKRAM SHARMA I DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

As India and China continue to be locked in a stand-off along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh and a 'war-like" intent being displayed by China, massive deployment of forces and increased supplies of arms and ammunition are not the only preparations underway

In a clear indication of the tense situation prevailing between the two countries, residents, particularly women and children, of at residents, least five border villages

rakhand have been advised to go to safer locations — a first since the 1962 war with China. For the villages in Dharchula of Pithoragarh district in the hill state, not one but two enemies are at their doorstep — China and Nepal. Sources in Dharchula disclosed to Deccan Chronicle that the local administration had recently issued an advisory to the gram pradhans, or village heads, of the border villages of Kuti, Nabhi, Raung Kong, Napalachchu and Gunji, advising them to

move the women and chil-

dren from the respective vil-

along the LAC in Utta-

lages due to the grave situation along the border.

The move comes even as the Army and ITBP soldiers are being deployed ahead of these villages in large numbers. The villages, located at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, are not very far away from Mount Kailash, close to where the People's Liberation Army of China is said to have deployed surface-to-air missiles.

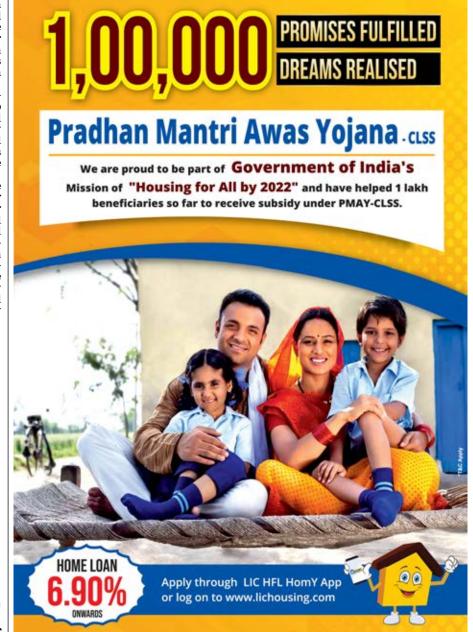
People belonging to these villages live there for about six months, between May and November. Once the winter gets harsh when temperatures fall below minus-20°

Celsius, they move to the lower reaches in Dharchula town by November or December. The five villages are located a few kilometres from the tri-junction between India, China and Nepal.

'The villagers have been informed about the advisory and some of them are packing up and will leave soon. We have requested that women and children be sent down as early as possible. In case the situation takes a turn for the worse, most men have decided to stay back and assist the Army and the ITBP," one of the village heads told this newspaper.



A view of Mount Kailash as seen from the India-Tibet border, a few kilometres ahead of Gunji village in Pittoragarh Uttarakhand.





OTHER STORY

913 Indians reach Chennai in last two days

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

As many as 913 Indians stranded abroad due to the coronavirus lockdown reached Chennai in 10 repatriation flights under the Vande Bharat mission on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Indian nationals arrived from the United Singapore, Kuwait, Sharjah, Riyadh, Oman, Dubai,

According to the sources at the Chennai Airport, of the 913 passengers, at least 700 passengers produced negative RT-PCR test report on arrival at the air-

After the completion of customs and immigration procedures, they were allowed to undergo 14 days of home quarantine, unlike earlier where they were put into institutional quarantine either free or paid.

The remaining passengers underwent a medical checkup at the Chennai airport by the health teams deployed there. They were later sent to home quaran-

Similarly, 629 left Chennai in Six flights in the last two days. Indian passengers boarded flights to America, Paris, Dubai, Abu Dhabi from the Chennai interna-



Devotees queuing before Kapaleeswarar temple tank in the city on Mahalaya Amavasya, considered auspicious for remembering ancestors, offering prayers

Alandur residents fear property survey a precursor to tax hike

T. SUDHEESH LDC CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

The ongoing property survey by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) in Alandur area has caused heartburn among residents over an imminent tax revi-

Municipal administration minister S.P. Velumani had announced withholding of property tax hike in November last year.

V. Rama Rao, secretary, Awareness Association, Nanganallur, said the zonal officials were conducting a property survey in at least 100 resi dences per day in the area

"We are still paying the tax rate revised in 2008 by the then Alandur municipal administration which was merged with GCC in 2011. When the authorities revised the tax in 2013, the civic officials did not include us in the new tax regime. Instead they continued 2008 tax for us. It led ed for newly-merged subto a difference between tax rates in the old city residents and newly added areas. When we protested, the government appointed a three-member committee headed by the principal secretary (finance) to study the matter last year. The committee has not submitted its report so far. As long as the

tabled, the property survey by the GCC officials is unnecessary and unilateral as the house owners are already reeling under exorbitant taxes and pandemic blues. We expect the committee will go into all issues and a new affordable tax regime will be recommend-

urbs like Alandur," he said. "Comparing us with posh localities of Chennai on taxes is unjustifiable. The Chennai corporation is adopting dual standards on taxes, one for Alandur and another for old corporation areas. Even after nine years of annexation, the GCC failed to end the discrimination," he alleged.

He added that property tax in several areas under municipalities Valasaravakkam had been revised in 1998, 2003 and

"The civic body should have revised the property tax from 2013, as residents were already paying a higher property tax.

According to him, the Nanganallur residents pay Rs 2.46 per sq ft while households in Mylapore and Alwarpet give less than Rs 2 per sq ft. A zonal level official told DC that the survey was going on and details in this regard were available with the revenue department.

Mass protests against NEP across TN

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

Representatives of several organisations from across the state have come together as a single platform under the name Oppressed People's Collective and conducted protests across Tamil Nadu against the New Education Policy(NEP) on Thursday, the 142nd

birth anniversary of

Thanthai Periyar. The members from Dalits and Ambedkariate

movements, Periyarist movement and the CPI (M) held demonstrations in more than 1,000 places wearing black batches and holding black flags. The protestors demanded that the NEP draft emphasizing education as a commodity should be withdrawn immediately.
The protestors alleged

that NEP is against the oppressed communities and minorities. The motive behind the policy is to cripple the oppressed classes by denying them education.

They said the new draft policy will convert educa-tion into a commodity and deprive the socially and economically backward students of educa-

tion. India exam for to any course.

slogans against Union Government for trying to impose Hindi on non-Hindi states, terming it highly condemnable and against the federal structure of

the nation. They also insisted that the present 10, 12 patterns in the school system should continue and there should be no all-India exam for admission

HC: File status report on Chitlapakkam lake encroachments

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

committee report is not

The Madras high court has directed the authorities to file the updated status report along with site photographs within 4 weeks showing some definite action taken against the encroachers of water bodies in Chitlapakkam vil-Tambaram taluk, Kancheepuram district.

"If such a comprehensive report with the relevant evidence is not filed, the

district collector concerned shall remain present in this court on the next date of hearing. Such a report shall be filed in this court after serving a copy of the same to the counsel for the petitioner, two days in

advance", said a division bench comprising Justices

Krishnan Ramasamy. The bench gave the direc-

tive while posting to October 8, 2020, further hearing of the PIL filed by advocate S. Vaidyanathan, which sought a direction to the authorities to repossess the government lands forming part of the Chitlapakkam lake from the illegal occupants, and restore the lake and its tail end areas to its original extent and size and main-

Puducherry adds 323 fresh Covid-19 cases; 13 deaths take toll to 431

Puducherry, Sept. 17: Puducherry on Thursday logged 323 fresh coronavirus cases while 13 related fatalities pushed the death toll in the union territory to 431. The 323 new cases were identified after examination of 4.867 samples during the last 24 hours while 330 patients were discharged from hospitals, Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release. He said the overall tally of Covid-19 cases in Puducherry stood at 21,428 (after transfer of six cases to TN) The active cases stood at 4,744 while the number of patients who had recovered and were discharged was 16,253. He said the fatality rate touched 2.01 per cent, adding this was the first time it had reached such a level in Puducherry and recovery rate was 75.85 per cent.

Online classes: Help soothe frayed nerves of children

B. Vijayalakshmi

ith schools remaining shut and lockdowns continuing in varying degrees, children are unable to put up

Viewpoint

with the prolonged state of physical isolation from their friends, classmates, teachers, other family members and society. This week, a 15-year-old smart and bright girl from Sivagangai district ended her life owing to pressure of online classes. Her parents were devastated. It is reported that the teen became more withdrawn from her family as she struggled to understand

her class 10 subjects online. Similarly, a class 9 student of Chennai committed suicide after failing to cope with the pressure of remote Four students have taken their lives in the last two months over difficulties in learning through online classes.

Most of the parents have

and shifted to WFH model. Besides, they have to manage children, household chores and deal with pandemic fears. Parents, grappling with the new normal, are turning helpless and letting their children do whatever they want. Children have begun spending more time alone or are glued to screens. And the transition

from classroom mode to

online learning has made them withdrawn or get into a conflict with parents.

The educational institutions in the state are likely to reopen only when conditions are safe and Covid spread is reduced. Several factors like smart phone/computer availabili-ty, internet connectivity and understanding of classes and environment in houses cause depression, health conditions in children. It is imperative that the state government directs all schools to get their counsellors help students to calm down, manage their anxiety and regain a At the same time, parents should also be patient, understanding and help their wards adjust to this

anxiety and other mental

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has graciously consented to deliver the online convocation address



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OTHER STORIES Competition for college students in TN

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

The Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), Chennai Chapter, is organising a State Level virtual competition for college students in Tamil Nadu with a view to promoting their varied

The competitions would be in writing, photography and posters. Three winners in each category will be awarded cash prize of ₹5,000, ₹3,000 and ₹1,000 each, apart from a citation.

The topics for the competition are as follows: Poster: Positives from Covid-19, Photography: Make the World a Better Place and Essay: Impact of Online School Education in

India (300 words in English) Students in the age group of 18 to 15 can upload their work on https://forms.gle/omtq CXmeDmStpV4e9

Relief for roadside vendors

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

The Chennai corporation has asked registered roadside vendors who had not yet received the ₹1000 relief announced by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to furnish the necessary details with the zonal offices and avail of the benefit.

In a press release, corporation commissioner G. Prakash said of the total 27,195 registered roadside vendors, 14,633 of them had been paid the relief of ₹1,000 twice. The amount had been credited to their bank accounts, he said. Those who had not yet availed of the benefit could provide a Xerox copy of the identity card issued to them by the Corporation, mobile phone number and bank account details to the zonal offices, he said.

Free power connections **under Tatkal**

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

Electricity minister Thangamani announced a Tatkal scheme for farmers seeking free electricity connection to their pump sets, under which farmers who are in the waiting list can pay the specified amount depending on the power of their motors and get the connections. An official press release said that the amount to be paid was ₹2.5 lakh for five horsepower (HP) motors, ₹2.75 lakh for 7.5 HP, ₹3 lakh for 10 HP and ₹4 lakh for 15 HP.

Lankan gangster died of heart attack: CBCID

Coimbatore, Sept. 17: The death of Sri Lankan gangster, Angoda Lokka, was due to heart attack and no foul play was involved, findings of the postmortem, chemical examination and histopathology reports have revealed, according to CBCID sources. Lokka died here on July 3 in a private hospital, following chest pain and the body after autopsy was shifted to Madurai and cremated the next day. Suspecting foul play, three people were arrested on charges of getting Lokka an Aadhaar card in the name of Pradeep Singh. After taking over the case, CBCID concentrated on two aspects whether the deceased was really the gangster and how documents were forged to get the Aadhaar card for him by the trio. The examination reports, including histopathology, received from Chennai, revealed that there was no finding of poisoning or anything indicating unnatural death and the death was natural one and due to heart attack, CBCID sources said. With suspected foul play ruled out, the investigating agency will now focus on the next case of forging documents to get the Aadhaar card and harbouring the fugitive-gangster, the sources added.

Gov leads the state in greeting Modi

CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

Governor Banwarilal Purohit, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam and leader of the Opposition M K Stalin were among the leaders in the state who extended their greetings to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his birthday Thursday.

While wishing long life to the Prime Minister, the Governor stated that "India is making rapid strides under your vision- administration have laid a ary leadership and taking strong foundation for

Elephant statues put up to greet the CM near Vandalur.

Pallavaram flyovers

DC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Minister Edappadi

K. Palaniswami on Thursday inaugurated the

The flyovers, one at the Vandalur-Kelambakkam-

Pallavaram GST Market

road-Kundrathur junction

To avoid traffic conges-

tion at the Vandalur-

Kelambakkam junction,

then Chief Minister J.

Jayalalithaa gave orders

for construction of a fly-

Vandalur flyover and the

one at Pallavaram began

DC CORRESPONDENT

Fisheries minister D

Jayakumar said on Thursday that the release

of V K Sasikala from jail

would not affect the func-

tioning of the AIADMK

in any way. It was the media that

was making a fuss over

her impending release, he

said when the media

sought his views on vari-

ous developments even as

he was leaving after paying floral tributes to

Periyar E V Ramasamy,

whose birth anniversary

was observed as a govern-

ment function, at Anna

CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

were completed recently.

junction

other

work for the

Sasikala's return will be

inconsequential: Min

CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

and Pallavaram.

Mambakkam

CM inaugurates Vandalur,

Vandalur flyover (₹ 55 crore) has six-way paths

on either side. The Pallavaram flyover (₹82.66

crore) has three-way

The 1.53-kilometre-long flyover on GST Road at the

intends to ease traffic and

enable safe travelling for

The Pallavaram flyover was scheduled to open in

May 2018, while the one at

Vandalur was to be over

by June 2019. But various

factors delayed construc-

tion before the outbreak of

Covid-19 pandemic led to the exodus of guest work-

On Thursday, the Chief

Minister also inaugurated

groundwork for two U-

Asked if any alliance partner of the AIADMK would leave when the

time came for the next

elections, Jayakumar

said no party would leave

the alliance and there

were only chances of more parties joining

a party of contradictions,

he said when the earlier

session of the Assembly

was in progress, they

wanted it to be adjourned

and now when the short

session was convened

they wanted it to be

extended to more number

Describing the DMK as

Pallavaram

700-meter-long

junction

On the joyous occasion of your birthday, I would like to convey my warm wishes to you for a wonderful year ahead. I pray that the Almightv may grant you many more years of good health and strength to serve our nation: Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali, Prince of Arcot

its rightful place in the comity of nations. Your leadership along with dedication and pragmatic approach in serving the nation and innovations in

India to emerge as a global leader. May God the Almighty bless you with happiness, good health and many more years of dedicated service to the

"On the joyous occasion of your birthday, I would like to convey my warm wishes to you for a won-derful year ahead. I pray that the Almighty may grant you many more years of good health and strength to serve our nation," said the Chief Minister.

Panneerselvam wished the Prime Minister good health and success in his goal of taking the nation

shaped flyovers to come

up at Tidel Park junction and Indra Nagar junc-

tions on the OMR road. A

sum of ₹108.13 crores have

been set aside for this.

Talking about the progress of other projects,

the Chief Minister said

the Koyambedu junction

flyover, being constructed

on a budget of Rs 93.50

crore, is in progress with

plans to open it for public

He also informed that

the Medavakkam flyover

Keelkattalai flyover (Rs 64

Ponneri-Panjatti flyover

way (₹19.75 crore) are in

different stages of com-

Farmer's

G-day meet

Thanjavur: The farm-

ers grievances day meet

will be held via video-

conferencing here on Friday. Collector M Govinda Rao will inter-

act with the farmers who would attend it

from the offices of the

respective assistant directors, agriculture,

from various places in the district. "All

arrangements have been

made for the meeting,

and farmers can partici-

pate in compliance to

corona prevention meas-

ures like wearing face

social distancing and

washing hands with

sanitisers," the collector

maintaining

crore) Tambaram Arial walk-

Thiruvottiyur-

use by December 2020.

(₹146.41

crore),

to unprecedented heights. "May you have a long life with good health and continue your service to the nation," Stalin said.

"I wish him, many more years of good health, hap-piness and strength to do wonders in his public life and also to successfully serve our people & nation in the years to come," said PMK founder, Dr S Ramdoss in his tweet. Makkal Needhi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan wished the Prime Minister the best of wished health, happiness and strength to pull the nation through these tough

Patient saved from post-Covid respiratory failure

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

A 58-year-old patient from Chennai who was detected with post-Covid respiratory failure was successfully treated at the Gleneagles Global Health City through ECMO (Extracorporeal Me-

mbrane Oxygenation). A press release from the hospital said the patient developed fever and breathing difficulty in the month of July and underwent treatment for severe Covid in a neighbourhood hospital for 14

He was discharged with RTPCR negative and after a couple of weeks his blood oxygen levels continued to drop below a critical level and he was referred to Gleneagles Global Health City for progressive respira-tory failure and severe lung injury.

Due to persistent low oxygen levels despite conventional methods, the clinical team put the patient on ECMO support for 16 days. On the 18th day the patient was weaned from ECMO and the 20th day was weaned off ventilator support.

The team of medical experts spearheaded by Dr Govini Balasubra-manian, Dr Subrama-nian Swaminathan, Dr Rajavel. Dr Sivasailam & Dr Suresh aided in the incredible recovery of

Diverse views on Stalin's Neet claims

State BJP president L. Murugan cut a 70kg cake at T Nagar.

ARULOLI M | DC TIRUNELVELI, SEPT. 17

Happy birthday PM

DMK president M K Stalin's promise to do away with the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Neet) if the DMK cantures power is likely to captures power, is likely to help him politically in the Tamil Nadu 2021 assembly elections, but is alleged to be an impossible task. Though the DMK argues

that the state has the power to make laws on matters enumerated in the concurrent list of the seventh schedule of the Indian Constitution, according to Article 246, a d v o c a t e Girinivasaprasad, says that the state-enacted legislation if fully inconsistent to the Central Act enacted by the parliament on the same subject, would become null and void in view of the repugnancy according to Article 254(1) of the

Constitution.
It is under this point that the Tamil Nadu admission to MBBS and BDS courses bill, unanimously passed by the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly in 2017, exempting medical aspirants from Tamil Nadu from taking Neet was not given president's assent,

Girinivasaprasad. He also pointed out a similar ruling by the Supreme Court in the M Karunanidhi versus Union of India case in to a Central Act.

advocate Another Kamaraj, also deputy State law to prevail under obtain President's assent president of OBC wing, certain special circumfor an anti-Neet legisla-Tamil Nadu Congress stances despite the doctor.

Stalin rebuts CM's charge in Assembly

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

State BJP unit celebrates Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 70th birthday on Thursday.

Two days after the Chief Minister and the health minister openly accused the DMK of being the root cause for the introduction of Neet in the Assembly, the DMK president came out with a statement on Thursday to prove that the DMK had been opposing Neet right from the beginning.

Listing seven allega-tions leveled by the Chief Minister and others on the floor of the House, Stalin debunked each one of them point by point, giving the details of the incidents with dates.

One of the answers is for the question, which was also raised on the floor directly to Stalin, as to how he would get exemption for Tamil Nadu from Neet. Though

committee, however, opined that DMK president M K Stalin's claim need not be brushed aside as an impossible task, as the Constitution of India also has provided exemption to retain State legislation even it is inconsistent

his support, which allows

Listing seven allegations leveled by the Chief Minister and others on the floor of the House, Stalin debunked each one of them point by point, giving the details of the incidents with dates

Stalin had given a reply in the House, his statement on Thursday had a more detailed strategy.
Through the replies to

the questions, Stalin sought to prove that it was the AIADMK that was instrumental for the introduction of Neet, par-ticularly with its MPs in both the Houses of Parliament not voting against it.The statement said that the ruling had hurled false allegations against the DMK and it was dis-proving all of them.

trine of repugnancy if the President of India gives his assent to the law, Kamaraj said that being the president of the biggest and traditional Dravidian movement, M. K. Stalin must have plans for a mass upsurge against Neet, and thereby, Quoting Article 254(2) in create a political compul-

GST raids on brick kilns in Thadagam valley

COIMBATORE, SEPT. 17

Officials from the GST wing raided brick kilns here on Thursday and those that are functioning at the foothills of Western Ghats near Thadagam valley here. Sources said, over 100 brick kilns are now functioning illegally in various parts of Thadagam Valley and Veerapandi villages, close to the foothills of Western Ghats.

The raid which started on Thursday noon extendand continued at 25 spots Thadagam

The brick kiln owners are continuously involved in sand smuggling with the support of politicians despite a series of protests by activists and greens. Even after damaging the valley's landscape to the core, sand smuggling continues round-the-clock, creating craters over 50 feet deep, damaging the environment.

The impact of the man-made changes in landscape near the Western

added the source.

behavioural changes of wild elephants, since they migratory path, resulting in frequent man-elephant conflicts.

The collector being the head of the Hill Area Conservation Authority (HACA), has so far turned a blind eye against the sand smuggling mafia, under alleged pressure from politicians, allowing more damage to the ter-

A few months back, the TNEB department raided the brick kilns in the val-

units functioning without a legal EB connection, and hence, imposed fines. Over 100 brick kilns

allegedly functioning at the foothills supply bricks across the state and to neighbouring including Karnataka and Kerala.

Meanwhile, a team of officials from the GST wing raided the house of brick kiln owners and brick kilns on Thursday that were functioning allegedly without paying

Siblings die in accident

Tiruvarur: A 26-year-old youth and his 21-year-old sister were fatally knocked down along with their two-wheeler by a speeding lorry at Vadapathy village near Mannargudi, on Thursday. The deceased were identified as S Anandaraj and his sister Abinaya of Olimathi.

ICT will help improve quality of agri produce: Nabard chief

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

There is an urgent need to bridge the gap between agriculture research and farmers, stressed Dr G R Chintala, Chairman, NABARD. While speaking on an occasion organised by National Agro
Foundation (NAF) at
Chennai, he suggested
that Information and
C o m m u n i c a t i o n Technologies (ICT) such as blockchain technologies could be effectively used not only to improve the quality of agri produce but also to promote export. He emphasised that agencies like NAF with a nationalistic outlook should play key roles in bridging the research extension gap and see to that the farmer gets bene-

fited with adequate infor-



mation, linkages and support as a package. In order to ensure sustainable food security, focus must be on development of environmentally sensitive cultivars and management practices, and market driven production systems, he added.

A presentation on KAN-CHI (Kisan Advancement through CasHless Innovation), an innovative digital platform for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) developed by NAF was made to him. He also advised that innovations

like KANCHI needs to be scaled up while visiting the Comprehensive Soil Health Diagnostic Center and Food Safety and Quality lab of NAF at Taramani. Mr S Selvaraj, Chief General Manager, General

NABARD, Chennai said

NABARD has been working closely with agencies like NAF on watershed and FPOs for the past 15 years and said that this not only needs to be continued but also to be expanded to newer geographies. Mr S S Rajsekar, Managing Rajsekar, Managing Trustee, NAF recalled the evolution of Green Revolution in India spearheaded by NAF Founder Shri C Subramaniam and added that NAF will continue to serve the farming community for addressing emerging challenges faced

Periyar remembered on his birth anniversary

of davs

R VALAYAPATHY/ G. SRNIVASAN | DC

TIRUCHY/THANJAVUR, SEPT. 17

Leaders of various political parties garlanded the statue of Periyar EVR statue at Tiruchy, Karur, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Pudukkottai, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts on Thursday to commemorate the leader's 142 nd birth anniversary. In some places in the central districts, floral tributes were paid to the late leader's por-

In Tiruchy, DMK principal secretary KN Nehru and a group of partymen garlanded the EVR Periyar statue near the Central bus stand. Later, talking to newmen, Nehru accused the Centre of threatening the people like actor Suriya with income tax department raids, merely because they had made

anti-NEET remarks.

As far as Neet is concerned, Nehru said, "The Tamil peoples' ideology way (Kolkai Vazhi) will win and added that it was incorrect to state that the then DMK government had permitted holding of NEET. Those who blame the DMK in this regard, never speak about the permission granted for Sterlite at Tuticorin by the Jayalalithaa-led AIADMK

government." Referring to the PM's Kisan Samman scheme scam, Nehru said the DMK wants the entire scandal amount to be recovered and dis-

tributed to genuine farmers. Meanwhile, students, teachers and staff of Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science and Technologyto be university (PMIST), in Thanjavur, garlanded the statues of EVR

the new bus stand and Vallam, to observe the 142nd birth anniversary of the leader. PMIST dean P V Srividya and Research head Ďr Kumaran led the students and teachers in garlanding the EVR statue near the old bus stand. DMK members led by Thiruvaiyaru MLA landed the Periyar and Anna statues at the old bus stand.

Periyar at the old bus stand,

SHORT TAKES

2 BOYS BEAT MOTHER TO DEATH IN ODISHA

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 17

Two minor boys, apparently fed up with continuous torture, beat their mother to death in an apartment at Sundarpada under Airfield bolice station here on Wednesday night. The deceased was identified as Binodini Mishra.

An altercation reportedly broke out between the mother and her sons late Wednesday night over some family issue.

In a fit of rage, the two minor boys aged 12 and 15 years started beating Binodini, 40, with an iron rod killing her on

Later, they kept the body in the bathroom and went outside after locking the flat. On Thursday morning, the security guard of the apartment called up Airfield police, who reached the spot and found the

body lying in the bathroom.

The police seized the body and sent it for post-mortem.

The cops also detained the

two accused for interrogation. Police sources, quoting the boys, said the deceased had been torturing her children under the influence of liquor. Fed up with this, the two children beat their mother to death. The deceased's husband, an employee posted in Rourkela, was informed about

BSY IN DELHI TO DISCUSS CABINET EXPANSION

New Delhi, Sept. 17: Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa arrived in the national capital on Thursday to discuss cabinet expansion in the state with the BJP top

During his two-day visit, the chief minister is scheduled to call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP national president J.P. Nadda as well as Union Ministers to discuss the

state's issues. "I have come to Delhi to discuss with several Union Ministers about developmental works of the state. At the same time, I will also discuss the cabinet expansion with the party leaders to ascertain their views," Yediyurappa told

reporters here. He is likely to meet Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday, and Modi, Nadda and other Union Ministers on Friday.

ne chief minister's son and BJP state vice-president BY Vijayendra is accompanying

Yediyurappa is under pressure to expand Karnataka's cabinet at the earliest to appease disgruntled legislators although he is not keen to make any such changes right

MP MANTRI THRASHES CONGRESSMAN

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, SEPT. 17

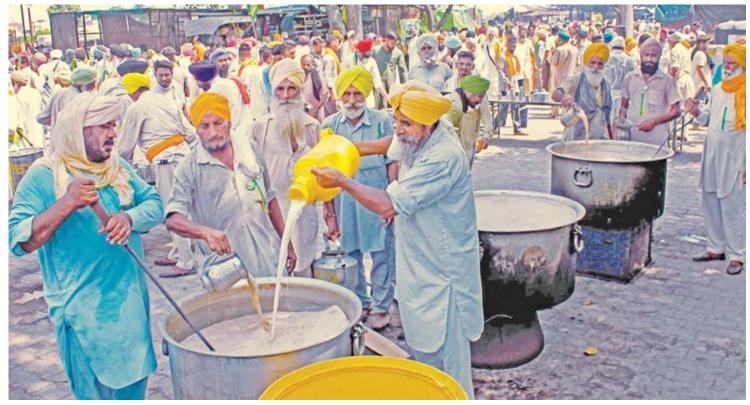
A video showing a senior minister in Shivraj cabinet thrashing a Congress worker in Gwalior on Thursday went viral causing huge embarrassment to the ruling BJP.

State energy minister Pradyumna Singh Tomar was caught on camera advancing menacingly towards a group of Congress workers who were shouting slogans against BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia at Phulbag square in Gwalior.

He was then seen in the video clip delivering punches on a Congress worker. The incident took place on Wednesday.

According to official sources, the Congress workers were staging a demonstration in Gwalior to protest against the move by Gwalior Municipal Corporation to remove hoardings featuring Congress veteran and former chief minister Kamal Nath erected at some places in the city.

The demonstrators stopped the minister's cavalcade and then started shouting slogans against Mr Scindia provoking Mr Tomar to disembark from his vehicle and confront the Congress workers. He first had heated exchanges with them and later gave blows to Mr Khan while snatching the Congress flag from him. Mr Tomar was known to be a staunch loyalist of Mr Scindia. He was among 22 former Congress MLAs who resigned from assembly as well as Congress in March to pull down the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government.



Members of various organizations prepare food for farmers, protesting against the central government over agriculture related ordinances, at Puda ground in Patiala, Thursday.

Old trick: PLA borrows leaf from 2,200 years old battle

Chinese troops play Punjabi songs on loudspeakers at the LAC

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17:

While Indians are amused over Chinese troops playing Punjabi songs on loud-speakers at Line of Actual Control (LAC) at Eastern Ladakh where for the first time in 45 years shots have been fired, its seems PLA is using the tactics employed by Chinese Han generals some 2,200 years

generals some 2,200 years ago during so called "Battle of Gaixia". In this battle, Han King Liu Bang beat his Chu rival Xiang Yu and estab-lished the Han Dynasty in

Chinese state run Global Times on Thursday talk-ing about Chinese army playing Punjabi songs at LAC said that the Indian army is in a situation of "hearing the Chu songs on

four sides."
The Global Times said that the move of playing Punjabi songs sends a message to India that the Indian army is isolated and besieged on all sides.

"Hearing the Chu songs on four sides" is a Chinese idiom, which is said to have originated from the supposed "Battle of Gaixia". After the fall of the Qin Dynasty, the state of Chu and the State of Han fought for control of China around 206 BC to

As per the legends around 202 BC, Chu king

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

Kerala higher education minister K.T. Jaleel appeared before the Nati-onal Investigation Agency

(NIA) at its Kochi office in

connection with the com-

plaints related to protocol

violation in receiving

diplomatic parcels con-

taining Quran even as

Opposition parties organ-

ised angry protests across

the state for the sixth con-

secutive day demanding

IT SEEMS foolish if PLA assumes that Punjabi songs played at the LAC will have the same impact on a professional and battle hardened Indian Army as what happened with Chu soldiers some thou-

sands of years back. Xiang Yu was trapped and surrounded by the rival Han forces in hills at Gai Xia. The legends say to weaken the morale of the Chu forces and King Xiang who was a ferocious fighter, Han soldiers started singing Chu songs from all

After listening to these songs, Chu soldiers thought that Han people had captured their homeland and brought Chu peo-

ple to the battlefield. As per these stories, Chu soldiers became worried about their family members, homesick and lost the will to fight.

Many Chu soldiers deserted. Even Chu King is said to have become desperate after listening to the Chu songs and is said to have cried. Xiang Yu committed suicide after his forces tried to break the trap. However, it seems foolish

if the PLA assumes that Punjabi songs played at the LAC will have the same impact on a professional and battle hardened Indian Army as what hap-

his resignation.
Jaleel was all smiles

when he came out of the

NIA office after ten hours.

The minister arrived at the NIA office in CPM leader's private vehicle as

early as 6 am. However, the

NIA team began taking his

statement only after 9 am

which was completed by

5.10 pm. "I have told whatever

was needed to be conveyed

agency. I am happy and

feel lighter," a regional

channel quoted him after

investigation

Men have decided to stay back and assist the Army

These villages used to be pit stops for trekkers, tourists and those travelling to Adi Kailash; they would be offered homes-tays by the locals. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the people have been hit hard. Most of them sell various products including herbs which they painstakingly collect from mountains at the annual trade between India and China but even that did not take place this year. "Our main earnings are through the trade every year. When we return from China, we buy some products which we sell when we go down to the town. This time around, we do not know how to survive," said a local.

The villagers are worried that if tensions continue to rise between India and China, they will permanently lose their source of income and in the worst scenario, even their

pened with Chu soldiers some thousands of years Only last week Indian army's

Kerala minister questioned by NIA for eight hours

the questioning.
Besides protocol viola-

tion, the NIA is reportedly

looking into complaints of

violation of Foreign Contribution (Regulation)

Act, 2010 (accepting foreign aid without Centre's

permission). The probe agency is believed to have

received complaints about

gold smuggling case accused using Quran bag-

gage for their clandestine

Though there is no evi-

dence of the minister's

links with the gold smug-

operations.

in Dharchula of Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand, Kuti has a population of about 365 people living in

houses. NABHI HAS 78 people and 32 houses, Raung Kong about 120 living in 35 houses, Napalachchu 74 in 25

Gunji about 335 in 194 houses. • LOCATED AT an elevation of about 10,000 feet, locals stay there for

six months every year and then migrate to the plains ALL THE villages are few kilometres away

from the tri-junction between India, China and Nepal • CHINA HAS deployed surface-to-air missile near

Mount Kailash - not very far away from the villages ABOUT 975 people including 395 females reside across the five border villages, leading tough lives.

gling case accused or their for Jaleel's resignation,

houses. About 975 people gave our rations to them including 395 females and transported their reside across the five boreauth for equipment, arms and der villages, leading tough lives . "During the 1962 war, our ancestors assisted the Indian Army and stood by them in the most difficult times. We even village, said.

Regiment observed the 123rd Saragarhi Day where 22 soldiers of 4 Sikh Sikh in a famous 'last-stand'

operations, the investiga-

tion agencies are examin-

ing whether any shady

activities took place with-

Meanwhile, when asked

about the Jaleel issue at

the daily press conference,

Chief Minister Pinarayi

Vijayan said the NIA

might have sought some clarification from the min-

ister. "It is already clear

that there is no case

against him. Let me get

On Opposition's demand

more details," he said.

out Jaleel's knowledge.

ammunition on our backs We will do the same even now if there is a repeat of 1962," Virendra Singh Nabiyal, a local of Nabi

fought thousands of Pathans in North West Frontier Province on

the Chief Minister said,

"There is no need for him

to resign on moral grou-

nds. He didn't demand copies of Quran or Zakat

from the UAE consulate. It

was the other way round.

Copies of the Quran were

not brought into the state

clandestinely. It came thr-

ough the normal route in

the airport and were clear-

ed. The consulate sought

Jaleel's help in the distri-

bution of the Quran beca-

use he is the minister for

welfare of minorities.

3 Hizbul militants, woman killed in Srinagar encounter

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC

Three Hizbul-Mujahideen militants and a 45-year-old woman resident were killed and a CRPF officer was injured in a predawn gunfight in Srinagar's Batamallo quarter on

Thursday. The house in which gun-men had been holed up was damaged in the final assault of the security forces during which small and medium weapons were used, the police sources and witness said.

The slain militants have been identified as Zakir Ahmad Paul, Ubair Mushtaq Bhat and Adil Hussain Bhat — all local Kashmiris from militancy-infested southern Kulgam-Shopian-Pulwama districts.

The police claimed that they were involved in several attacks in Srinagar

and South Kashmir. Director General of Police, Dilbag Singh, said the local woman Kaunsar Jan was killed after she was hit in a barrage of militant gunfire. termed the killing of a civilian during the opera-

tion as "unfortunate". He said, "The operation was launched at 3 am and in the initial firing of terrorists a deputy commandant of the CRPF was injured and, unfortunately, a local woman was killed."

However, the woman's son Aquib Riyaz Sofi said she was hit in her head and died on the spot when the security forces fired upon their car in which the mother-son due was trying to move out of the area to escape

fighting. He said, "Our house is situated in Lane No. 9 (of Firdous Colony Batamaloo). My mother and I left home so that we could relocate to a safer loca-tion. When I reached near Lane No. 5, my mother, seeing huge deployment of security forces ahead, got so scared that she forced me to drive back to our home. It was when the security forces fired from behind and one after another bullet pierced the head of my mother sit-ting next to the driving spot death". The killing of three sus-

pected militants and sparked

youth clashed with the security forces. The latter fired dozens of teargas canisters to quell the stone-pelting mobs in the area, the witnesses said.

The DGP told reporters that the security forces combating a 31-year-old insurgency in J&K have killed 177 militants including 22 foreigners in 72 operations, so far, this

"All the 22 foreign terrorists were Pakistani nationals and it shows how deeply it (Pakistan) is involved in terrorism and violence being unleashed in J&K," he

said. A statement issued by the police here said that during the search operation in Batamaloo, the militants holed up in a residential house were given the opportunity to surrender.

They, however, indiscriminately fired upon the joint search party, which was retaliated leading to an encounter. Unfortunately in the initial indiscriminate firing by the terrorists, CRPF Deputy Commandant Rahul Mathur and a lady identified as Kaunsar Jan were seriously injured. She succumbed to her injuries on spot while the injured CRPF Officer was shifted to 92-Base Army Hospital for treatment," it said.

Mr. Singh said that militants from other districts of the Valley keep visiting Srinagar to carry out

attacks on security forces. "The J&K police and CRPF teams are alert and whenever they get a lead about presence of terrorists in Srinagar, efforts are immediately put in place to ensure zero collateral damage before neutralizing them," he said. He added, "Thursday's operation was seventh in Srinagar in the recent past, but biggest success was the killing of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Junaid Sehrai in the May 19 encounter.' Charu Sinha who took

as IG CRPF (Srinagar sector) recently at the press conference said that there was "a huge difference" between seat resulting in her on the situation in Naxal areas of the country and **xasıımı**r Srinagar.
"We will work profes-

protests in Batamalloo sionally in collaboration meighbourhood during with police and other which irate crowds of agencies," she said.

AFTER 407 DAYS OF DETENTION, PDP LEADER AKHTAR FREED

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, SEPT, 17

The authorities in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday Democratic (PDP) leader Naeem Akhtar and some other politicians from house detention. This comes days after

Minister of State (Home) G. Kishan Reddy, said in Lok Sabha that no leader in J&K is currently under house arrest. On Thursday morning,

Mr. Akhtar who served as a minister and chief spokesman of the PDP-

BJP government tweeted, "After 407 days of detention (I) am informed that I am free to move about Thank you rulers for small mercies while you inflict larger tragedies on our land." The PDP our land." The PDP sources said that two former party legislators Muhammad Yusuf Bhat and Aijaz Ahmed Mir were also allowed to leave their respective homes where they had remained "under detention" for past couple of months.

Mr. Akhtar said he would now go around and "check the limits of my freedom.

Chart your own course: What one can learn from Modi's life

SYED ZAFAR ISLAM



Lh a d young people come up to me to

advice for their lives. The common thing that I see is the stark confusion people have about what they wish to do going forward. There is always this dilemma that today's youth has in their minds. Should they follow what they feel like doing or should they follow popular trends? To those young citizens of our country, I always say that one should study the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and derive an important lesson must follow the path that

you truly believe in, and do not get distracted by the fashionable trends of the At a time and age in his

life when most people around him would have been thinking of securing prized government jobs or even looking to become lawyers, doctors or teachers, Narendra Modi decided to be his own man and work for society. While the methods may vary in today's day and age, what Narendra Modi did is today fashionably called a sabbatical. He paused to think of what he wanted to do in his life and the path that he wanted to traverse. One must therefore learn the important lesson to take away from this incident - clean the cobwebs of your mind so that you can think rationally and clearly. Pause, even take a break

if necessary, to figure out exactly what you want to do with your lives. Choose after detailed

deliberation the path that you can put your heart into, I repeatedly tell the youth of today. Mr. Modi's life teaches us a lot about this important aspect of One sees the sharpness

of mind and the intellect of the man and wonders what if the man had charted a different, perhaps more conventional trajectory in his life? Would we have witnessed him as India's Prime Minister today? It is clear by now that Mr. Modi is among the sharpest minds around, and that he could have been a successful person in any other field. And yet, he chose something that was very different from prevalent trends. He dared

to be different because he pursued something with passion and vigour, and today's youth can draw inspiration from this just as much. The path should be one that gives your heart joy and utmost satisfaction, just as Narendra Modi chose to serve the people of India for it satiates his soul to no end.

Life, like in politics, often sees people dragging you down. You will see people mocking your initiatives when it starts, only to realize their own follies later. However, that should not deter you from sticking to

Had Mr. Modi hesitated to pursue his goal of making India open defecation free or to roll out the world's largest financial inclusion program of the Jan Dhan Yojana, the successes we see today on the

two fronts would not have manifested themselves. Do not be swayed by the gimmickry of these naysayers in life; instead, view their gimmickry for what it is - a gimmick. Because they do not truly believe in anything that they say necessarily; they are instead seeking perceived momentary benefits without seeing the larger picture. Their myopic should not be allowed to overpower your ambition and desires ever. Let your work speak for itself, even as you may face opposition similar to what Mr. Modi has seen coming at him for believing and holding

Just like Mr. Modi, you may be called names, may be misrepresented deliberately and attacked as well. However, do not fear

things.

onto his way of doing

bravely, and see how the malevolent force crumbles by itself just as the opposition has scattered into the wind when faced resolutely by Mr. Modi. Doing your own thing

attacks and face them

can make you stand out of the crowd in life just as in politics, and people will try to imitate you. These days, some people have rediscovered their roots even in politics, and think they can benefit by being imitators. Some of them suddenly started visiting temples like Mr. Modi, while some others suddenly start chanting shlokas to show that they are perhaps bigger Hindus than Mr. Modi. Never forget though that imitation is the best form of flattery.

Take this copycat behaviour in your own stride as a compliment and brush

that such imitators bring along with them. Notice how Mr. Modi does not imitate anyone, and is his self always – be your true self just like that. We can go on and on

off the emotional baggage

about Mr. Modi's life as an example for the youth of New India. Being his own man comes naturally to Mr. Modi much like it is a feature of New India and its youth, a key reason why the two gravitate towards each other so naturally. To sum up though, Mr. Modi has only done what Frank Sinatra meant when he sang - I did it my

(The writer is a BJP's Rajya Sabha MP, its national spokesperson and former Managing Director, Deutsche Bank,



Chronicle

18 SEPTEMBER 2020

Covid shot: Cautious hope, but policy key

or a month now, India has been consistently recording the highest daily infection rate in the world for the coronavirus pandemic. Thursday's tally of 97,894 topped all such records and by an unfortunately thin margin, adding to the prevailing atmosphere of fear and anxiety. The death toll is 83,198. The virus has reached the heartlands and ICMR's recently released sero-survey results suggest that for every infection spotted India

Independent trackers are reporting a slightly higher death tally than the health ministry. According to Worldometer, India has 5,118,253 confirmed cases and 83,230 people have died due to Covid-19. This is in addition to an independent estimate of 906 people who lost their lives amid a poorly enforced lockdown. The government has denied data on this last count, even as families of these individuals in greatest distress pinned their hopes on relief arriving in the form of a financial compensation.

There will be no financial compensation. The economy has shrunk massively and the government is struggling to pay states GST compensation. West Bengal finance minister Amit Mitra alarmingly opined that the shrinkage is 32-33 per cent rather than 23.9 per cent as stated.

The only hope for citizens lies in the quick discovery and distribution of a coronavirus vaccine. On this account, Hyderabad-based drug maker Dr Reddy's Laboratories is ready for clinical trials of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine while AstraZeneca has resumed trials for the "Oxford vaccine" in India and the UK. In the US, it is Pfizer that has assumed the lead in the vaccine race, which is now nearing its finish line, even as numbers at home stack up overwhelmingly. Though experts believe a vaccine will at best have 40-50 per cent efficacy, it will lead to the building up of herd immunity, which has now emerged as the best bet for our hapless populations.

India needs a comprehensive coronavirus vaccine strategy that will mobilise its fairly successful pharmaceutical industry to mass produce shots so that their price — initially astronomical — comes down and they can be administered to the last man quickly and efficiently, after first covering the elderly and most vulnerable. With a crashing economy and a collapsing healthcare, this strategy will be tricky not only to formulate but also to implement. Advance planning can perhaps save the day, advises the Opposition, and the government must pay heed. It cannot afford to while away its time and needs must take its bitter lessons from its failure to build capacity during its very costly

Science and politics are being conflated in a sickeningly familiar manner in India as also elsewhere. It is hype and wordplay against fact and smart decision-making. A day after Union health minister Harsh Vardhan said a vaccine against the coronavirus disease would be ready by early next year, Adar Poonawalla of the Serum Institute which is participating in the AstraZeneca vaccine trials rightly warned that there won't be enough doses till 2024. Over in the US, an election-bound Donald Trump contradicted his own expert by declaring that a vaccine will reach his country's population by about the same time. But even if a vaccine for Covid-19 were released now, it would take six to nine months for enough people to receive it to create immunity, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director, Robert Redfield, has held.

Amid the gloom and doom, a tiny glimmer, that governments need to rally.

As Neros fiddle

o in another 21 months India will have a new Parliament? Well, not a new set of members but a modern building that will replace the over 90-year-old monumental circular edifice. Coming up at the cost of a whopping ₹861.9 crores, quite close to the existing 144-column structure, the new Parliament is indeed a grandiose plan of the present day government. When the country is going through a dark patch, economically and otherwise, if a government is keen on moving parliamentarians to a new House with mod-

ern amenities, it only reveals a mix up in priorities.

The ostentatious project, which will be given concrete shape by Tata Projects Ltd, also brings to memory stories of ancient monarchs who reveled in building fanciful structures even when their subjects suffered in penury and hunger. In recent times, too, democratically elected leaders had displayed such grandiosity, costing only the exchequer needlessly. The swanky state capital, envisaged at Amaravati, for Andhra Pradesh is one example of one chief minister's grand plan not getting the grants from the next, thus leaving the capital idea remaining an unrealized dream for six years.

It had been worse in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, where a resplendent highrise, designed with care by a chief minister to house the Secretariat and Assembly, was turned into a multi-specialty hospital, where Coronavirus patients are now being treated with care. That, however, was not the first new secretariat project in the state that went bust since successive Chief Ministers had been unsuccessfully trying to shift out of the historic Fort St

Hope such a fate doesn't befall the new Parliament that the Tata's would build in 21 months, perhaps before another government takes charge. We also hope that Parliamentary Democracy regains its lost vigour and verve in the new premises, ushering in better times for the country with parliamentarians protecting people's rights.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

ADITYA SINHA Editor

K. SUDHAKAR

R. MOHAN

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at: Chennai: SP 3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai 600032. Phones: (044) 22254747,

ZZZZJ1746 Coimbatore: 77 Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore 641009. Phone: (0422) 2231255, 2231256 **Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad 500 003. Phone: (040) 27803930-4. Fax: (040)

2/80/250.

Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Ft. Road, Koramangala, Bangalore-560095. Ph: 08043460500; Fax: 080-22960551/52/55

Visakhapatnam: Survey No. 1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017. Phones: (0891) 255233/2552334, Fax (0891) 2755285

Vijayawada: No. C 3 & 4, Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.). Phones: (0866) 2555284/ 2555287. Fax (0866) 2555234

Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry 533125. Phones: (0883) 2417208, 2417618 Anantapur: Thapovan Colony, Bangalore Bye-Pass Road, Anantapur 515004. Phones: (08554) 276903, Fax: 08554-276904

Fax: 08554-276904
Nellore: Survey No. 527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemudugunta Panchayat, Nellore. Phone: (0861) 2348581/82, Telefax (0861) 2348580
Karimnagar: Survey No. 1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar 505 001.
Phone: (0878) 2228908; Telefax (0878) 2220433
Kochi: No. 3-8, 7d Floor, DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Ernakulam,

Kozhikode: No 6/1002 E, First Floor City Mall, Opp. YMCA Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001

Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph Press Thycaud post, Cotton Hills, Thiruvananthapuram-14, Ph. 0471-2735105/6/7, Fax: 0471-4016112 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08ss



Kashmiris respond to Centre with 'Gupkar II'



Anand K. Sahav

Far & Near

August 5, Narendra Modi government embarked on a dangerous and destabilising course by tearing up the delicate arrangement Free India entered into with Maharaja Hari Singh on the morrow of Independence. The compact, in the shape of Article 370 of the Constitution, gave Kashmir considerable autonomy (as is now being negotiat-ed with the Nagas). On August 22 this year, just 12 months after constitutional havoc was wreaked, accompanied by unremitting repression, Kashmir announced its

riposte. The riposte was resoundingly peaceful. It was contained in a document that its authors called "Gupkar Declaration II". The manifesto, which holds the promise of a fightback by ordinary people in Kashmir, relymeans, if the parties that are signatory to it can hold their nerve in the face of both repression and allure, the twin instruments that go with the orchestration of tyranny.

Not to put too fine a point on it, the basis of the promise of Gupkar II is, as of now, no more than a piece of sophisticated political imagination. Its defining feature can be summed by a phrase in it: "nothing about us without us", which seems to constitute a direct chal-lenge to the militaristic, semi-fascistic, style of governance in Kashmir. On the practical side, Gupkar II underscores that all political activities to be undertaken by the six signatory parties will be "subservient" to the restoration of Kashmir's autonomy as captured in Article 370. At this stage. there is nothing specific about public participation in taking the Gupkar II message forward.

The fundamental rea-

son for this is the disdain for mainstream parties that has developed among ordinary people since the August 5, 2019 crack-down. These parties are now held guilty of having sided all these years with New Delhi which trifled with Kashmir's dignity—indeed, even putting mainline politicians themselves in jail in the same manner as the separatists and the extremists, as if to the BJP rulers they

were all the same. It is the irony of the situation that is sought to be underlined, and it is an irony which, subtly conveyed by interested actors, transmutes into disgust for New Delhi, which gets easily transferred to those who are seen as having represented it in the Valley.

For all that, however, a very negative mood against the BJP sweeps the Valley, and it is this that is likely to sway people's behavior when Assembly elections are held — whenever they are held, and especially if the authorities perversely go on delaying it.

The BJP was once a welcome name in Kashmir due to former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's solicitousness toward it. The goodwill was transferred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi until his party's true colours were revealed, ending in the stripping of J&K's autonomy and Kashmir's downright derogation and false depiction — for communal motives — as a land of Pakistan-inspired terrorists.

In the past three decades, Kashmir has seen extremist and terrorist violence, principally an aspect of Pakistan's covert and overt war against India, but also lately developing an indigenous component. But now, if Gupkar II can take off, New Delhi could face two very separate battlefields in Kashmir — one constituting the extremvariety and, in addition, the newly created second front comprising mainstream political parties. The latter campaigning

for the restoration of Article 370, and not only J&K's statehood, are likely to get to be quite a handful unless, in the weeks and coming coming weeks and months, they are forcibly prevented from cam-paigning. So there could be greater repression, helping the extremist cause psychologically and politically, and, indirectly, Pakistan, in the process infusing greater strategic uncertainty into a region already beset with hostile Chinese mili-

tary activity.
Should this materialise, few will miss locating its origins in the ideologyladen hubris which has been the hallmark of Modi, Shah & Associates, a partnership that has been so blind as not to see that the mainstream parties of Kashmir have been made victims of terrorist violence because they were seen as accomplices of Indian democracy, which has shown up in Kashmir in badly faded

Gupkar II was preceded by the original Gupkar Declaration of August 4, 2019 enunciated just a day before the constitutional stripping of J&K. Leaders of the mainline Valley parties, who intuitively knew that the omens were all bad, had assembled at the Gupkar residence National Conference chairman Farooq Abdullah, although they were regional rivals of the NC. They resolved, just before being imprisoned, that they would remain "united" to preserve Kashmir's constitutional status.

Gupkar II is a reaffirmation and a resolve for further action. But its distin-

A few days later, the CPI in Kashmir extended unqualified support. This makes Gupkar II not only a document of Kashmir but a document for the nation. This makes it unique in Kashmir's annals.

guishing feature is that in addition to the regional parties that had met in 2019, two national parties

— Congress and CPI(M)

also joined them at Dr Abdullah's residence on August 22 this year. A few days later, the CPI in Kashmir extended unqualified support. This makes Gupkar II not only a document of Kashmir but a document for the nation. This makes it in Kashmir's unique

It is instructive that its arch opponents are the BJP and the Narendra BJP and the Narendra Modi government, the suave professionals who spread the Jamaat-e-Islami narrative in the Kashmir Valley, and Pakistan's military estab-lishment if the signals are read right. This is an impressive array of foes for a group that espouses peaceful and constitutional means to return to the old normal.

Can history be re-injected? It is hard to say. But it is worth remembering that the official move to break Kashmir's spirit constitutionally was stoutly opposed in Parliament in August 2019 by the Congress leadership, the Left parties, the DMK, RJD, and Trinamul Congress. The BJP's important Bihar ally, the JD(U), also opposed it. Another BJP ally, Akali Dal, spoke against the bill but was obliged to vote with the government. This is an impressive

number of parties standing up with Kashmir in Parliament. In addition, the principal sections of the mainline media too disapproved of the government's action. Forum for Human Rights in Kashmir, comprising a retired Supreme Court judge, several retired high court judges, a retired home secretary, a retired foreign secretary, and retired military officers published a sharply critical report on the ending of Kashmir's autonomy and the government's subsequent actions in Kashmir. And vet, regrettably, there seems a concerted effort in some quarters in the Valley to spread the disinformation that India slept soundly through the process of Kashmir's belittling by the Modi government.

LAUDABLE ENHANCEMENT

The decision of the Tamil Nadu government to enhance the punishment for crimes against women and children under several sections of Indian Penal Code is laudable. But what is more important is speedy disposal of cases by courts. It has been reported that more than 10 per cent of the total crimes in Tamil Nadu is against women and out of this more than 49 per cent of the crime against women and children relate to Pocso cases. More allwomen police stations should be opened and stringent action initiated against offenders.

M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai

A WELCOME RULING
THIS REFERS to the editorial A welcome ruling. The Supreme Court of India has done the right thing by nectroining. Sudopubase tolering by of India has done the right thing by restraining Sudarshan television channel from airing a programme that allegedly sought to vilify Muslim communities by accusing them of a campaign to infiltrate bureaucracy. The perception that barring a few, television channels have revelled and continued to revel in an inclorious orgy of rumourin an inglorious orgy of rumourmongering, vilification and partisan deception cannot be faulted. But the question arises now whether the prior restraint as underlined by the Supreme Court in the Sudarshan television case sets a dangerous precedent at a time when blatant attempts are being by those in power to criminalise dissent needs a convincing answer. It is time the News Broadcasters Association, whose remit includes legal, ethical and regulatory concerns, pulls up its socks and ensures television news channels play by the rules book. M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

TIME-BOUND TRIAL

APROPOS REPORT Centre in SC favours time-bound trial (Sept. 17). The Supreme Court had asked umpteen times to constitute special courts to deal with corrupt law makers but successive governments have done nothing so far. If the NDA government does the same it should be welcomed. But when special courts are established, the accused corrupt politicians should not be allowed to dilly-dally seeking adjournments nor to appeal in lower courts or even in high courts. There should be a provision to appeal only to the Apex court. In fact, many CMs, MPs and MLAs are facing numerous corruption cases which are in limbo for decades due to lacunas in the laws or deliberate procrastination by the accused. And also their partners, the babus, are embezzling public money in hundreds of crores and so holding benami properties too should be brought under the ambit of special courts.

A. Seshagiri Rao, Chennai

M. Mohibul Haque



The curious case of Urdu in NEP 2020

the Union Cabinet approved the new National Education Policy 2020 (hereafter NEP 2020) on 29 July, which proposes drastic changes in the Indian education system. While there are several changes, reforms and policies that are being widely appreciated there are many ambiguities, gaps and contradictions that are creating apprehensions in the minds of many in general and linguistic and religious minorities in particular.

NEP 2020 has given birth to apprehensions in the minds of Urdu lovers due to its unique status. It should be borne in mind that Urdu is a pan-Indian language but it lacks the patronage of any state as official language. Strangely, Urdu has not been mentioned anywhere in the 66 pages NEP 2020 released by the Union government. This conspicuous absence of Urdu drew widespread criticism across the country.

The government tried to alley the apprehensions of Urdu-lovers and Secretary of Higher Education is reported to have said: "Para 4.12, 22.6 and 22.18 of NEP 2020 talk of all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which includes Urdu. Incidentally. what is being deliberately and mischievously suppressed is that these paras do not talk of Hindi also, rather all languages of the Eighth Schedule are mentioned". Despite clarifications by the government the controversy is not dying. It calls for analysis of the NEP 2020 from the perspective of the status of Urdu.

NEP 2020 declares that "wherever possible, the medium of instructions until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language". (para 4.11, p.13) This emphasis on the mother tongue arouses hopes that many languages of India facing the challenge of survival due to deliberate design of the colonial masters and later on the apathy of the successive governments may be saved from extinction.

Under the sub-heading, Multiling-ualism and the Power of Language, the government recognises the fact

that "young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts more quickly in home language/mother tongue". While emphasis on primary education in mother tongue is praiseworthy the determination of home-/local language will be problematic because the NEP 2020 does not mention what will be the unit of determination of local or home language. For example, what is the home language of the people living in cities like Lucknow, Delhi, Moradabad, Meerut or states like UP, Bihar, Telangana, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and so on is indeed very difficult to determine. Under these circumstances, the role of the central and state governments will become crucial in implementation of the three-language formula and Urdu in the absence of patronage and lacking job opportunities will certainly be marginalised. Another important dimension of

the language policy under NEP 2020 is the promise that "there will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula, and no language will be imposed on any state. The three

languages learned by children will be the choices of states, regions, and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India."(para 4.13, p.14) However, determination of a 'region' for the purpose of the implementation of the three-language formula needs clarification. Besides, three entities - states, regions and students — are created for exercising the freedom of choice in selection of three languages to be taught. The question is what will happen if there is a clash in choice between states and students. For instance, a group of Urdu speaking students want to study Urdu while state emphasizes on Hindi, Sanskrit, Bangla, Odia, etc.

The apprehensions of Urdu-lovers are not unfounded because NEP 2020 besides especially promoting Sanskrit makes reference to other classical languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali. Persian and Prakrit but Urdu is not mentioned as a classical language as it seems that only ancient and not

are recognised as classical under NEP 2020. While the allegation of deliberate

exclusion of Urdu is doing the rounds the government decided to introduce the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill 2020 in Parliament under which Urdu is set to lose its status of the sole official language of the erstwhile state of Jammu and

The anxiety can also be understood from the fact that according to Census of India 2011 Urdu is showing a steady decline as mother tongue since 1981(5.25), 1991(5.18), 2001 (5.01), and 2011(4.19). Unlike other languages of the Schedule 8 of Indian Constitution whose speakers enjoy strong regional or state backing, people who speak Urdu are spread all over the country and therefore, it needs special consideration by the government for its survival and

The writer is a professor of political science at Aligarh Muslim University

FRIDAY | 18 SEPTEMBER 2020 | CHENNAI

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,979.85	-0.82
Nifty 50	11,516.10	-0.76
S&P 500*	3,341.83	-1.29
Dollar (₹)	73.65	-0.16
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.38	-0.56
Euro (₹)	86.96	0.34
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,463 ▼ 608	1.15
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.35	1.13
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.033	0.041
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.663	-0.024
* As of 9:30 PM IST		

ALL bags large order from fuel distributor

Ashok Leyland said it has bagged orders for 1,400 intermediate commercial vehicles (ICVs) from a logistics start-up company, Procure Box. The ICVs will be utilised by Procure Box for its fuel distribution business across 750 districts in the country. The order encompasses Ashok Leyland's most successful product, the Ecomet, and will be executed in the next five-six months, the company said in a regulatory filing

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■ Irdai panel wants to cover MSMEs first

₹75K-cr pandemic pool suggested

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEPT. 17

A working group formed by the insurance regulator to study the feasibility of setting up a 'pandemic risk pool' to cover business losses arising due to pan-demics and epidemics has recommended setting up a Rs 75,000 crore pool with public-private partnership to cover the business losses of MSME workers in the first phase.

The reinsurer, GIC Re, which has experience of managing the Indian Terrorism Pool and Indian Nuclear Pool, would be an apt administrator for the proposed pandemic pool, the group has said.

Pointing to the need for a pandemic pool, the group said some estimates suggest that the current business interruption premiin some markets would need to be collected for over 100 years to cover two months of Covid-19related business interruption costs.

"The working group believes that for the pandemic pool to have an adequate purpose, it needs to cover at least 4-5 crores MSME workers in the first phase and to accomplish that, the assurance from the government to provide a backstop is necessary... the backstop triggers only at the event of pandemic striking and the total loss payouts are higher than the capacity garnered by the local insurance/rein-surance and international

market. Globally all pan-



proposals are heavily hinged on their national government's support in the form of similar back-stop and are at different stages of approval. The working group has proposed a government backstop of appx. Rs 75,000 crores at the initial stages," said the report.

"The quantum of loss

due to an epidemic/pandemic risk event is huge and hence is beyond the capacity of public and/ or private companies and/or government alone. Hence a risk pooling mechanism with public-private-government participation would be an appropriate resolution to address this similar concern in future," said the report.

The report said the participation shall be mandatory for the sectors which have been covered under the pool. "This can be with as a standalone product providing coverage for the event or as an add-on with

the existing products."

The pool shall provide coverage in a phased manner. As MSME and the unorganised sector are the worst affected segments of society during the current Covdi-19 pandemic in India, the first phase of the pool shall cover income losses due to non-damage interruption business resulting from a future pandemic event and subsequent lockdown.

Pandemic losses are covered under currently availproducts, hence the coverage for losses in the health segment caused due to a pandemic event, beyond a threshold, may be covered under the pool in the second phase. The coverage under the pool may be expanded to the life insurance segment also in the later phases, said the report.

The pool premium collection is proposed to be invested in government securities or specifically designed bonds by the government. The premiums accumulated over the years and the investment surplus would help in gradually reducing the government backstop.

Advance tax mop-up falls 25.5% in Q2

Mumbai, Sept 17: Advance tax collections fell 25.5 per cent to Rs 1,59,057 crore in the second quarter of the fiscal, an income tax official said on Thursday.

However, there was improvement over the first quarter ended June, when advance tax revenue had plunged 76 per cent to a tepid Rs 11,714 crore as the whole economy was under a stringent lockdown.

During the year-ago period to September 15, 2019, total advance tax collection had stood at Rs 2,12,889 crore, down from Rs 3,70,652 crore a year ago.

'Total advance tax collection in the second quarter fell by 25.5 per cent to Rs 1,59,057 crore from Rs 2,12,889 crore YoY. While corporates paid only Rs 1,29,619.6 crore in advance tax, down by 27.3 per cent in the reporting quarter, personal income tax collection stood at Rs 29,437.5 crore, down 15 per cent from Rs 34,632.9

"However, TDS (tax deducted at source) fared better at Rs 1,38,605.2 crore, down by 5.6 per cent from Rs 1,46,792.4 crore," the tax official from the Mumbai zone told PTI.

Advance corporate tax mop-up had plummeted by 79 per cent to Rs 8,286 crore in the June quarter, from Rs 39,405 crore in the June 2019 quarter. Advance personal income tax collection in Q1 had declined 64 per cent to Rs 3,428 crore from Rs 9,512 crore. —*PTI*

Civil aviation revenues dip 85%; over 18,000 jobs lost

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

Revenues of the civil aviation sector dropped by 85 per cent since the lockdown even as the sector lost more than 18,000 jobs.

The Covid-19-induced lockdown had reduced the air traffic to a fraction of what it was before. The regulatory restrictions on flight operations had led to severe curtailment in operations and sub-optimal aircraft utilisation. As per the ministry of

civil aviation data, domestic traffic fell close to 80 per cent from 5.85 crore during March-July 2019 to a mere 1.20 crore in March-July 2020. International traffic too reduced by 87 per cent from 93.45 lakh to 11.55

lakh during the period. This led to a steep decline in revenues in the June quarter. The aggregate revenue of Indian carriers came down by 85 per cent from Rs 25,517 crore in the June quarter of 2019 to just Rs 3,651 crore during April-June 2020. Air India's revenue

fell to Rs 1,531 crore from



Rs 7,066 crore in the same quarter last year.

Aggregate revenues of airport operators too shrunk from Rs 5,745 crore in the June quarter of 2019 to Rs 894 crore in the June quarter of 2020, a drop of 84 per cent.
Reduced revenues saw

more than 18,000 employees losing jobs across airlines, airports, ground handling agencies and cargo operators. As many as 5,298 employees of air-lines lost jobs by the end of July while 3,246 people at airports, 8,466 people with ground handling agencies and 1,017 employees with cargo operators lost their jobs between March-end and July-end.

"The fall in domestic air travel demand has been much sharper than the

capacity cuts imposed for the industry. The pick-up in domestic passenger volume since end-May 2020 has been slow, with traffic increasing by only 6 per cent in July from the previous month. We think volume growth will remain in the single digits over the next few months, as the pandemic continues to spread in India and people forego non-essential travel," says Fitch Ratings.

Covid-19 has adversely impacted the financials of the Airports Authority of India and it is likely to see losses this fiscal. In order to meet the working capital require-ments, the AAI has taken 'fund-based working capital' facility of Rs 1,500 crore. Delhi and Mumbai airports were given a three-months deferral, up to July 15, on monthly fee payment against their annual fee obligation. Bangalore and Hyderabad airports have also been granted deferment of four months from July 1 for payment of concession fee to the central govern-

SC refuses to resume Ambani insolvency case

UPMANYU TRIVEDI

The Supreme Court rejected a petition by State Bank of India to allow a personal bankruptcy case against tycoon Anil Ambani to

A three-judge panel headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao ruled that the bankruptcy case against

will remain suspended and directed the Delhi High Court to decide on Ambani's challenge to

Anil Ambani

provisions of insolvency The case is among the first high-profile ones after

rules were set for personal bankruptcy last year. Bankers and investors in stressed assets are keenly watching the case as its final outcome may decide the power of lenders in taking action against founders who guaranteed repayments of loans by companies that later went

-Bloomberg

Defying China, top US official visits Taiwan

Taiwan Prez to host dinner for American delegation today

Taipei, Sept. 17: A top US diplomat landed Taiwan on Thursday, the highest-ranking State Department official to visit in 40 years, in a further sign of Washington's willingness to defy China and its campaign to isolate

the self-ruled island. Keith Krach, undersecretary of state for economic growth, energy and the environment, is visiting to attend a memorial service for late president Lee Teng-hui on Saturday, the US State Department said.

The trip, the second high-ranking US visit in as many months, sparked an immediate rebuke from China, which baulks at recognition of Taiwan and has mounted a decades-long policy of

marginalising the demo-

Beijing considers Taiwan part of its territory, to be absorbed into the mainland — by force if necessary. "China strongly opposes

this," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters on Thursday, saying the trip "encourages the arrogant attitude of Taiwan independence separatist forces". Relations between the

United States and China are at their lowest point in decades, with the two sides clashing over a range of trade, military and security issues, as well as the Coronavirus pandemic.

Washington's increased outreach to Taiwan under US President Donald Trump has become yet another flashpoint between the two powers.

"The United States honours President Lee's legacy by continuing our str-ong bonds with Taiwan and its vibrant democracy through shared political and economic values,' spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said in a statement announcing Krach's

Taiwan's foreign ministry said Krach, accompanied by assistant secretary Robert Destro, would also discuss "how to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation" during his three-day visit.

It described him as the highest-ranking State Department official to visit Taiwan since 1979, when Washington switched diplomatic recogni-Beijing

from Taipei.
Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen will host a dinner for the US delegation on Friday.
"We look forward to

more exchanges and discussions between Taiwan and the US to solidify the foundation for further collaborations, including economic cooperation, through undersecretary Krach's visit," her office

said in a statement. Beijing discourages any official exchanges with Taiwan but in recent months Washington has dramatically increased its outreach.

Last month, US cabinet member and health chief Alex Azar visited to high-Taiwan's widely praised efforts to stop Covid-19.

Gilgit-Baltistan to be full-fledged province in Pak

Islamabad, Sept. 17: Pakistan has decided to elevate Gilgit-Baltistan's status to that of a full-fledged province, a Pakistani media report on Thursday quoted a senior minister as saying. India has clearly conveyed to Pakistan that the entire union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of the country by virtue of its fully legal and irrevocable accession.

According to a report in the Express Tribune, Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Ali Amin Gandapur, on Wednesday said that Prime Minister Imran Khan would soon visit the region and make the formal announcement to elevate Gilgit-Baltistan to the status of a fullfledged province with all constitutional rights.

Gandapur said Gilgit-Baltistan would be given adequate representation on all constitutional bodies, including the National Assembly and the Senate. "After consultation with all stakeholders, the federal government has decided in principle to give constitutional rights to Gilgit-Baltistan," the minister told reporters. India has said the Government of Pakistan or its judiciary has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it.

India completely rejects such actions and continued attempts to bring material changes in Pakistan occupied areas of the Indian territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Instead Pakistan should immediately vacate all areas under its illegal occupation, the Ministry of External Affairs said in May while protesting Islamabad's efforts to bring material change in Pakistan occupied territories.

time, discovered a Jupiter-

named WD 1856 b, orbiting the

smaller star remnant every 34

hours. "This planet is roughly

the size of Jupiter, but it also

has a very short orbital period

— a year on this planet is only 1.4 days, so it's quickly whip-

Rich nations buy half of promised vaccine stocks

Washington, Sept. 17: Rich nations representing a fraction of the global population have already bought up over half the promised Covid-19 vaccine stocks, a study showed, as US President Donald Trump pledged to inoculating Americans within weeks.

Big pharma is racing to produce an effective jab to counter a virus that has now killed more than 9,35,000 people around the world and infected almost 30 million.

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday warned against "vaccine nationalism" that she said could put lives at risk by depriving the most vulnerable in poorer nations of immu-But a study released by

Oxfam showed a group of wealthy countries representing just 13 percent of the world population has already secured the lion's share of doses.
"Access to a life-saving

vaccine shouldn't depend on where you live or how much money you have, said Robert Silverman of Oxfam America. 'Covid-19 anywhere is

everywhere." Covid-19 The five leading vaccine candidates currently in late-stage trials will be able to supply 5.9 billion doses, enough to inoculate

Alarm across Europe over virus surge: WHO

Copenhagen , Sept. 17: The World Health Organisation on Thursday warned of "alarming rates of transmission" of Covid-19 across Europe and cautioned against shortening quarantine periods as countries in the region scrambled to find ways to reduce infections without resorting to new lock-

The WHO's regional director for Europe Hans Kluge said a September surge — Europe set a new record last week, with some 54,000 cases recorded in 24 hours — "should serve as a wake-up call for all of us." "Although these numbers reflect more comprehensive testing, it also shows alarming rates of transmission across the region," he told an online news conference from Copenhagen.

In Britain, new restrictions will take effect with Friday, Minister Boris Johnson warning that pubs may have to close earlier to help avoid a "second hump" of Coronavirus Residents of northeast England, including the cities of Newcastle and

Sunderland, will no longer be allowed to meet people outside their own or immediate homes social circles. The government already imposed rules across England on Monday limiting socialising to groups of six or fewer, as daily

cases reached levels not

seen since early May. Britain has Europe's worst-hit country, with the government registering nearly 42,000 deaths.

about three billion people, Macau. the Oxfam report said. Some 51 percent of those

Switzerland and Israel. jabs have been snapped up by the wealthy world, including the United States, Britain, the European Union, Australia, Hong Kong and

The remaining 2.6 billion have been bought by or promised to developing countries including India, Bangladesn, Brazil, Indonesia and — AFP

TRUMP NAMES INDIA AMONG **MAJOR DRUG TRANSIT HUBS**

Washington, Sept. 17: US President Donald Trump has identified India along with 20 other nations as major drug transit or illicit drug-producing countries and asserted that his administration is taking the fight to criminal organisations engaged in narcotics substances and their enablers on an unprecedented scale.

In his presidential determination, Trump also designated Bolivia and the regime of Maduro Nicolas Venezuela as having failed demonstrably during the previous 12 months to adhere to their obligations under intercounter-narnational cotics agreements.

"A country's presence



sarily reflection of its government's counternarcotics

efforts or level of cooperation with the United States." Trump said. He said countries such

as Afghanistan, India, The Bahamas, Belize, Burma, Colombia, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic among others are a major drug transit or illicit drug producing

nations. Trump alleged that the most complicit kingpin in this Hemisphere is the Venezuelan dictator, Nicolas Maduro.

Obama's memoir 'promised land' to be released in Nov.

Washington, Sept. 17: Former US president Barack Obama on Thursday announced the publication in November memoirs, "A Promised Land" — two weeks after

of the first half of his the election pitting Donald Trump against Joe Biden. Publisher Penguin Random House said the book will be released in

25 languages simultaneously on November 17. "There's no feeling like finishing a book, and I'm

proud of this one,' Obama tweeted. "In A Promised Land, I try to provide an honest accounting of my presidency, the forces we grapple with as a nation, and how we can heal our divisions and make demowork for everybody." Obama, America's

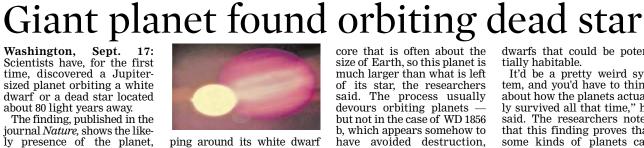


president, served terms in the White House from January 2009 through January 2017 when he was succeeded

by Trump. The book will reveal Obama's thoughts during the global financial crisis and his take on Russian President Vladimir Putin, the statement

from Penguin Random House says. It will also revisit the 59-year-old Democratic leader's approval of a May 2011 raid in which Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was killed in

Pakistan. A release date for the second volume has not yet been set, Penguin Random House said.



ping around its white dwarf star," said Ian Crossfield, assistant professor at the University of Kansas in the US.

A white dwarf is the vestige of a star that has ballooned into a red giant then collapsed back into a dense, dim

core that is often about the size of Earth, so this planet is much larger than what is left of its star, the researchers said. The process usually devours orbiting planets but not in the case of WD 1856 b, which appears somehow to have avoided destruction, they said. "This tells us white dwarfs can have planets, which is something we didn't know before," Crossfield said. "There are people who now are looking for transiting planets around white

dwarfs that could be potentially habitable. It'd be a pretty weird system, and you'd have to think about how the planets actual-

ly survived all that time," he said. The researchers noted that this finding proves that some kinds of planets can survive and be found around white dwarfs. At first, WD 1856 b captured astronomers interest when they noticed a possible transiting object with NASA's TESS Space Telescope survey.

SHORT TAKES

Hari slips, Carlsen

roars into lead

Chennai: Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna slipped to fifth spot from a share of lead after a win-less day at the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament, where he lost to Ian Nepomniachtchi and world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen. Harikrishna, who shared the lead with Lev Aronian after three rounds, lost the fourth round of the Rapid event to Nepomniachtchi, then drew with Armenian Aronian before losing the sixth to Carlsen. Meanwhile. Carlsen bounced back after a below par opening day to record three wins and jumped to sole lead with nine points. The Norwegian outplayed the India No.2 in 31 moves to wrap up a successful day on which he also defeated Aronian and Leinier Dominiguez (USA). Hari held Aronian to a draw in 58 moves after a 45-move defeat at the

NSFs gets SC nod

for recognition

hands of the Russian. - PTI

New Delhi: The Sports Ministry on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court's go-ahead to it on grant of recognition to **National Sports Federations** (NSFs) and said it would intimate the court about the process in a week's time. The Supreme Court said the ministry and the Indian Olympic Association are not required to seek the nod of the Delhi High Court before granting recognition to sports federations in the

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WRAP AND ROLL

MI look for more finishers to reduce Hardik's load

Monitoring comeback man Hardik Pandya's workload is paramount for Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene as

intends to groom a "few more finishers" for the upcoming edition of Indian Premier League starting here Saturday.

Defending champions Mumbai Indians will take on last year's runners-up Chennai Super Kings in the opening encounter on Saturday, which will be Hardik's first game in a year having undergone back surgery for stress fracture last year.

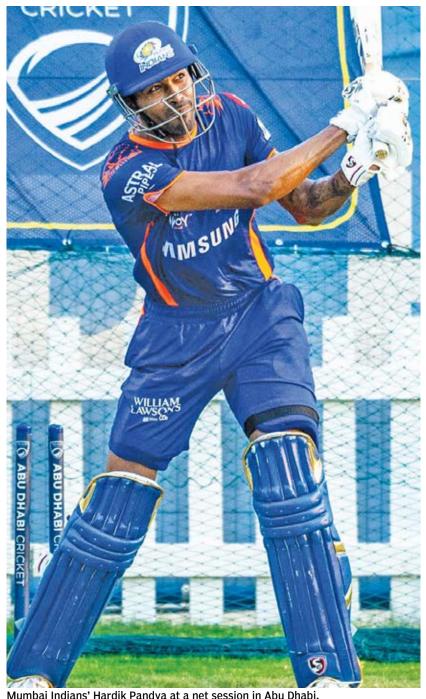
'Hardik is coming back from an injury. So we will have to be mindful of that but he is looking very good in the nets. Both the players (Pandya brothers) have been fantastic for MÍ over the last three or four years. It brings a lot of energy to the group,' Jayawardene said during MI's virtual media con-

ference on Thursday.

The Sri Lankan legend asked whether Hardik will again be assigned the finisher's

job.
"We have used him (Hardik) in different roles in the past and we will look into that. We will have quite a number of other players who can fix into that role as well, so whenever the opportunity is there we ask anyone to finish the game off," said the former Sri Lanka

captain. "It doesn't just fall on Hardik but it is one of his responsibilities, so we want to try and challenge players in different ways in this camp, so we will continue to do that," he



Mumbai Indians' Hardik Pandya at a net session in Abu Dhabi.

RCB PLAYERS TO HONOUR COVID HEROES

Dubai, Sept. 17: Royal Challengers Bangalore players will sport the jerseys with the "My Covid Heroes" written on them all through the IPL to pay tribute to all those on the frontline in the battle against the pandemic.

The slogan honouring the "Covid Heroes" will be printed on the back of the playing as well as the training jerseys, the team announced on Thursday.

"RCB will also be sup-orting GiveIndia porting Foundation by donating the proceeds from the auction of the jerseys that players wear during season's first RCB match," the statement read.

SPORTRADAR TO **CHECK 'BETTING IRREGULARITIES**'

New Delhi, Sept. 17: BCCI has roped in Sportradar to detect betting irregularities during the IPL beginning in the UAE. "As part of the agreement, all matches in IPL 2020 will be monitored by Sportradar's Integrity Services to detect betting irregularities," a press

release said.
"It will also provide a risk assessment to the BCCI driven by intelligence and data-driven insights, and the BCCI will be able to call upon Sportradar's Investigation

Rohit says Malinga will be missed in MI Abu Dhabi, Sept. 17: Mumbai Indians captain that," Rohit said in a Rohit Sharma on Thursday

online press conference. "His experience will be missed, what he did with conceded that "incomparable" Sri Lankan pace leg-end Lasith Malinga, who MI is unbelievable and it is has opted out of this year's

unfortunate that he is not a part of the team this year. "We have got likes (James) Pattinson, Dhawal Kulkarni, Mohsin (Khan) and these are the names that we are looking to replace Malinga with. But obviously what Malinga did for Mumbai, it is not just comparable," he added.

Rohit said he will continue to open. "I opened the entire tournament last year and I will continue to do that. Again I keep all the options open, whatever the team wants, happy to do that. Even when I play for India, message from my side to the management has always been the same 'do not close any doors'."

Just 36-hr quarantine for players arriving from UK

New Delhi, Sept. 17: The Indian Premier League franchises will be heaving a sigh of relief as all the 21 Australian and English players arriving to the UAE from the United Kingdom will have to undergo just 36 hours of quarantine instead of the earlier prescribed six days.

IPL, will be severely missed by his defending

champion team given his "unbelievable" past per-

The 37-year-old Malinga,

who is IPL's highest wick-

et-taker with 170 scalps to his credit, has pulled out

citing personal reasons in a major blow to the four-

time champions. MI will

take on the Chennai Super

Kings in this season's lung-

opener on September 19 here.
"I don't think it is easy to

come and fill his boots. He

has been a match-winner

for Mumbai. I have said it

many times, whenever we sort of find ourselves in trouble, Malinga was the

formances.

All the franchises which English Australian players arriving after the white ball series in the UK had appealed for reducing the quarantine period and the BCCI under Sourav Ganguly's leadership has been able to successfully sort the issue out with local authorities in the

'Yes, I can confirm that all the English and Australian players have to now undergo 36-hour quarantine instead of six days.

The matter has been sorted and most of the teams will now have their big stars available from the first game itself," a senior IPL functionary privy to development said on conditions

of anonymity.
The likes of Steve Smith,
David Warner, Jofra Archer, Jos Buttler will arrive in the UAE late on Thursday night (UAE time) from the UK and on arrival will undergo RT-PCR test for Covid-19.

"They have undergone one rapid test before boarding (the flight) and will undergo another on arrival. Otherwise, the robust testing protocols will be followed as usual. The rationale behind the move is that all the players are entering from one biobubble to another," the veteran BCCI official said.

COFFEE-BREAK

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



Aries: Your actions in a complicated business are effective. You'll be swept away in an unanticipated powerful love affair. Overseas travel aurus: Time with your spouse infuses a new



spirit in your marriage. Love life may be confronting today. You'll be appreciated for being Gemini: Maintain distance from senior offi-

cers. Avoid unreasonable arguments at work.



Your smile gets someone interested in you Cancer: You find it difficult to love again.
Circumstantial changes could force monetary losses. Not showing displeasure even if you're



unhappy ensures professional success. .eo: Elders may suffer age-related hearing loss. You'll have more cash than you need for emergency. Don't abandon your principles



irgo: Avoid confrontations with higher officials. Use your sense of humour to tackle tough situations today. Finalise pending deals. Remain alert against subordinates, or you may be defamed.



Shabana Azmi is an Indian actress of film, television and theatre. Azmi's performances in films in a variety of genres have generally earned her praise and awards.

even in testing times.

You share your b'day with



Libra: You'll achieve anything you want. Expect romance, pleasure and entertainment in the next few days. Stay emotionally calm and avoid arguments with stubborn individuals.

uneasy moments with partners and colleagues. Be flexible, negotiable and compromising to

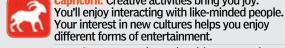
Scorpio: Your dominating attitude causes

maintain a harmonious atmosphere.



ittarius: You'll hunger for something exciting, challenging and entertaining. Seek some outdoor games, which keep your cheer and in perfect shape.

Capricorn: Creative activities bring you joy.



different forms of entertainment. Aquarius: Housewives should try to make extra money — take classes of cooking, stitching or painting or even help students with their schoolwork.



isces: Today's the unemployed will receive a good offer. People listen to you very attentively. Expect unforeseen gains/losses and invest with care. Problems arise with friends on telling them too much about your life.



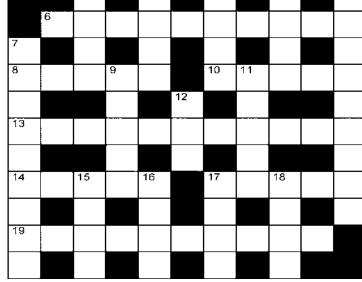
bridge ALDER

TO TRY TO **WIN A TRICK IS NATURAL** arl Jung wrote, "The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transreaction, both are trans-formed."

We have reactions to all we have reactions to all manner of different stimuli. At the bridge table, though, one that a less-experienced player has is not to let an opponent take a trick that the tyro could have won. But he soon learns that conceding a trick now sufficient to persuade South to take a shot at

might save two or more tricks in the long run.
In this deal, how should South play in four spades after West leads the heart two? In a competitive auction, jump raises of partner's suit should be preemptive. With a game-invitational raise or stronger, cue-bid the opponent's suit. So, here, North cue-bid two hearts. That was sufficient to persuade





Across 6.Holy expedition (10)

8. Very poor (5) 10. Born earlier (5) 13. Put behind bars (11)

17. Italian dish (5) 19. Payment (10)

Down 1. Plunge (4)

Word Mine

10 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the

3. Grain store (4)

QUICK CROSSWORD

14. Great merriment (5)

2. Repulsive (4)

C

AAY CMTLS ODAY'S RATINGS: 7 AVERAGE; 8 GOOD;

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

4. S African currency unit (4) 5. Let arrive (anag) (9)

Across: 1. Sewage, 3. Boss, 7. Oust, 8. Cranny, 10. Learner, 13. Sorcery, 16. Bribes, 17. Stir, 18. Yell, 19. Amulet. 7. Hospital (9) 9. Preliminary sketch 11. Grub (5) 12. Very cold (3) 15. Frolic (4)

Down: 1. Soon, 2. Wasted, 4. Owns, 5. Stylus, 6. Urgency, 9. Drooped, 11. Wobbly, 12. Brutal, 14. Sill, 15. Writ. 16. Detest (4) 17. Blueprint (4) 18. Laid up (4) jumble

UMYGM PMILE HNIKRS THE SOLDIERS BUILDING THE NEW ARMY EATING FACILITY WERE ---LRYASA

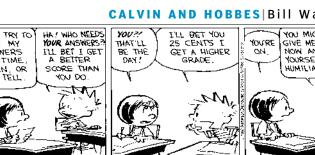
West takes that and

contract is no longer mak-able. Now go back to trick one and play the heart eight from the board. Yes, East wins the trick with his jack and cashes the heart ace, but what does he do next? If he shifts to the dia-mond jack. South wise with Declarer saw three sure Declarer saw three sure losers: one spade and two hearts. But there was also a risk of a diamond loser. However, he could see 10 winners: four spades, one diamond and five clubs. So what was the problem?

A declarer who must try to take every trick calls for the heart king, hoping that West has underled the ace. Here, though, East wins the trick and returns a low heart. West takes that and

mond jack, South wins with his queen, knocks out the spade ace and cruises Copyright United Feature Syndicate (Asia Features)

CALVIN AND HOBBES | Bill Watterson





THE WIZARD OF ID|Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE|Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman







BLONDIE Dean Young and John Marshall





ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe





TARZAN Edgar Rice Burroughs





