

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SUNDAY 20 | SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 29°C
Min: 24°C
Rainfall: 2 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Purattasi 4
Tithi: Chaturthi
Star: Chithirai/ Swathi
Rahukalam:
4.30 pm to 6 pm
Yamagandam:
12 noon to 1.30 pm
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.47 am
Zohar: 12.10 pm
Asar: 3.21 pm
Maghrib: 6.11 pm
Isha: 7.22 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.07 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 8.38 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 8.42 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+61,637)	(+604)
53,69,293	86,299

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,569)
TN: 5,36,477 8,751

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

3,08,66,828

DEATHS

9,58,816

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
213

worldometers.info

India has more recovered cases than USA

New Delhi: India's single-day recovery outstripped the number of new infections as nearly 96,000 people recuperated from the novel coronavirus infection, even as the total caseload went past 53 lakh. According to the Union health ministry data, 95,880 people recovered from Covid-19 in a span of 24 hours. 93,337 new infections were recorded during the period. "India has overtaken the US and become the top country in terms of Covid-19 recoveries," said the health ministry on Saturday. Cabinet secretary chaired a high level review meeting with chief secretaries of the 12 state/ UTs, with 80 per cent total caseload, for effective containment and management of the Covid-19 pandemic. Minister of commerce and industry also addressed the states and reviewed the oxygen availability.

Net direct tax collection dips 31% in Apr-Aug

New Delhi: The net direct tax collection during April-August was ₹1.92 lakh crore, down 31 per cent over the same period of the last fiscal. The net indirect tax collection during the five-month period till August fell 11 per cent year-on-year to ₹3.42 lakh crore. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur said net direct tax collection was ₹2,79,711 crore in April-August 2019, compared to ₹1,92,718 crore in April-August 2020.

COUNTER POINT



Finally, they are staying at home!



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HC makes suggestions to curb anti-nationals



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Agri Bills are anti-farmer: Pondy CM

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US Liberal icon Ginsburg dies at 87



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CSK beat MI by five wickets



CSK's Ambati Rayudu (right) and Faf du Plessis en route to their century partnership in the IPL-13 opener against Mumbai Indians in Abu Dhabi on Saturday. CSK won by five wickets. — BCCI

Abu Dhabi, Sept 19: Chennai Super Kings (CSK) beat Mumbai Indians (MI) by 5 wickets with 4 balls to spare in the opening match of IPL 2020 on Saturday. MI scored 162/9 in the first innings. Rohit

Sharma (12) and Quinton de Kock (33) got MI off to a flying start before it was new recruit Piyush Chawla who got the first wicket in the 5th over. Sam Curran struck soon after to give CSK two

quick wickets. Chasing 163 to win, Rayudu blasted six fours and three sixes in his blistering innings, while Faf du Plessis cracked 58 off 44 balls as CSK romped home with four balls to spare. ■ **P8**

State on innovative path with block chain, AI tech

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said that his government's aim was to transform Tamil Nadu into the "Innovation Hub and Knowledge Capital" of the country through the creation of world class institutions in various fields and by utilising the human talent available in the State.

Addressing the valedictory session of the 19th edition of CII Connect 2020, he said the State had been effectively leveraging the IT skills of its human resources to match the growing demand of the skilled workforce.

To promote IT/ITeS industry in the State and to attract more investments, eight Special Economic Zones (ELCO-SEZs) were established in Chennai and Tier-II cities by ELCOT and Start-up Warehouse was established at Chennai and Coimbatore and a Centre of Excellence in FinTech and Centre of Excellence in Emerging Technologies (CEET) were also established at Chennai, he said.

To revolutionise the way Government services were offered to citizens, the Knowledge Proof Identity Based Services Delivery Project would be implemented by establishing and leveraging the State Family DataBase (SFDB) and Block-Chain Backbone infrastructure, he said.

This pioneering initiative would take Government to the citi-



● **"It is our endeavour to work with industry in addressing and resolving all the issues impacting the economic and industrial growth of the State," Chief Minister K Palaniswami said**

zens, eliminating the need for citizens to request G2C services. The ambitious BharatNet and TamilNet projects will be implemented to connect all 12,524 Village Panchayats of the State with minimum 1 Gbps high-speed connectivity, which will help to achieve the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of United Nations.

"I am confident that these steps will strengthen Tamil Nadu's position as an International IT hub in the country. In this journey, I look forward to the partnership with CII. It is our endeavour to work with industry in addressing and resolving all the issues impacting the economic and industrial growth of the State", the Chief Minister said. ■ **P4**

J&K govt marks ₹1,350 crore for ailing biz

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 19

The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday announced a ₹1,350 crore financial package for revival of businesses in the Union Territory (UT).

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, while unveiling the package at a press conference here said it would help the J&K's business sector "to tide over the problems."

The UT's business community welcomed the relief package but said it was "too little" given the magnitude of losses it has suffered particularly since August 5 last year, yet a "good beginning."

According to Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), the Valley's economy alone suffered losses to the tune of over Rs. 42,000 crores in the past over thirteen months.

"This is just a good beginning, may not all that's needed to salvage J&K's economy which fell off a cliff due to the post-August 5, 2019 lockdown and then 'lockdown within lockdown' (due to Covid-19) left it in a complete shambles. It is for the first time in about 14 months that something good is being done. Let us appreciate it and hope that the Centre will also come up with a good package to bail out J&K's economy," said Sheikh Ashiq, the outgoing president of KCCI.

Kolkata/Berhampore, Sept. 19: In a major crackdown on terror, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) busted a "Pakistan sponsored module" of Al Qaeda and arrested its nine members from West Bengal and Kerala early Saturday for allegedly planning terror attacks in New Delhi and other parts of the country.

Among them, six accused including two college students and two migrant workers were caught during a marathon raid at their homes in different parts of Murshidabad which earlier came under the NIA's scanner during its probe in the Burdwan blast which blew the lid of Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh network active in West Bengal six years ago around this time.

They are Najmus Sakib (20), Abu Sufiyan (44), Mainul Mondal (30), Leu Yean Ahmed (32), Al Mamun Kamal (30) and Atiturr Rehman (20). This was also the first time when such a large number of accused of terror were picked up simultaneously in the state.

Najmus is a second-year student of computer science at Basantapur Engineering College in Domkol of the district while Atiturr is a first-year BA student of Karimpur Pannadevi College. Mainul, a migrant worker, had returned home at Jalangi in the district from Kerala three months ago. Like him Mamun also worked as a mason in Bengaluru earlier. But he returned home two years ago.

The rest: Murshid Hasan, Iyakubb Biswas and Mosaraff Hossen were caught from Ernakulam in Kerala. All of them, also migrant workers, are also from Murshidabad. The

Farm Bills to come up in RS today

NDA HAS EDGE

● **The numbers, however, appear to be in favour of the ruling dispensation to get these bills passed from Rajya Sabha**

Rajya Sabha, many regional parties have backed it for the last several sessions to ensure passage of various legislations proposed by the government.

BJP leaders expressed confidence that they will get the support of over 130 members, including nine of the AIADMK and six of the YSR Congress — both of whom are not part of the ruling alliance if a division of votes is sought on these bills. Another regional party, Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) was also being wooed by the BJP, but its chief and Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Saturday asked his party MPs to vote against these

bills, alleging these would cause great injustice to farmers in the country.

The BJP itself has the highest tally with 86 seats, followed by 40 of the Congress. The three members of the SAD are sure to vote against the bills, but Shiv Sena, a former BJP ally and now in opposition, has expressed its support for these bills.

The Maharashtra party has three members in Rajya Sabha. Several other regional parties, including three-member Aam Aadmi Party, Samajwadi Party with eight seats, and BSP with four, have joined the opposition's ranks in protest against these bills but it may not prove enough to hinder their passage. Farmers in states like Punjab and Haryana have been protesting against these proposed laws which, their leaders allege, will end up dismantling the existing government-backed support system they have. — *PTI*

mified Cordyceps Sinensis is a parasitic fungus that penetrates the caterpillar of the Swift moth and bursts from it.

Though it grows in Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal, it has been on the decline lately due to the changing weather conditions though Chinese demand keeps increasing. "Less seasonal snow, higher temperatures and receding glaciers has made it difficult for the fungus to grow in China. Of late, this is being witnessed in Uttarakhand as well," officials explained.

flock the mountains to hunt for the herb. This year was no different. "We picked the herbs but could not deliver due to the pandemic and the tension. This led to a shortage in China where demand is huge," said Anup (name changed) of Dharchula. Like thousands in the region, he has been in the trade for a decade. The arduous trek in search of the herb has even led to deaths due to freezing temperatures and treacherous routes.

The best-known route for smuggling the herb is through Nepal, where there

● **"As per some estimates, Uttarakhand supplies over 400 kg of Cordyceps Sinensis in the global black market," administration officials said**

more than ₹20 lakh. China is the biggest buyer, with business of ₹150-200 crore. Singapore and Hong Kong are among other buyers.

As the snow starts melting in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh, Chamoli and Bageshwar in May, groups

ed from a labour camp at Pathalam near Kalamassery where he was staying along with five others, while Iyakub Biswas and Mosaraff Hossen were arrested from Perumbavoor.

Murshid Hassan had taken a house on rent from one Nasser about two months ago and started living there. Though the NIA had reportedly alerted the state police on a possible action just in case local force was warranted at any stage, the central agency did not specify about the case that it was following up.

The local police was informed only after the arrest of the three operatives. Murshid was taken into custody at around 2 am. Parallel raids were carried out in Perambavoor to arrest Iyakub and Mosaraff.

COVID AMONG MPs

Monsoon session of Parliament may be curtailed

DC CORRESPONDENT
With agency inputs
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 19

Faced with a surge in Covid-19 cases and more than two dozen MPs testing positive, the ongoing monsoon session of Parliament might be curtailed most likely by middle of next week.

The session in Lok Sabha is likely to wrap up by Wednesday next week. Rajya Sabha, the upper House of parliament, is expected to follow suit.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee of the Lok Sabha called by Speaker Om Birla on Saturday where floor leaders of most parties backed the move, sources said. The session started on September 14 and was scheduled to conclude on October 1.

The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, however, would take a final call.

More than two dozen MPs have tested positive for Covid-19 since the time the session began and daily tests were carried out within Parliament premises.

Seventeen members of the Lok Sabha and eight from the Rajya Sabha had tested positive for the coronavirus in the mandatory tests carried out before the monsoon session of parliament started. Among the infected Lok Sabha MPs, the BJP had the maximum number — 12. The YSR Congress had two MPs, the Shiv Sena, DMK and RLP had one each.

Govt yet to keep promise given to manual scavenger

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

It has been seven years since the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Rehabilitation Act, 2013, came into force. But the government has failed to keep the promise given to Y. Manikandan, 37, a manual scavenger from K.M. Garden near Pulianthope slum in the city, who was offered a permanent job as a sanitation worker at the slum clearance board.

It was on September 4, 2017, the Union ministry of social justice and empowerment directed the state government to provide him a permanent job at the slum clearance board.

Based on the direction, on January 24 this year, K. Sridharan, Deputy Secretary, Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department, sent an official



The lackadaisical attitude of the authorities comes at a time when the Union Budget in February had allocated a whopping ₹10,103.57 crore as against ₹8,885 crore given previous year to eradicate manual scavenging and rehabilitate the workers. But manual scavenging continues to be an ugly reality in Tamil Nadu. This newspaper had reported last Wednesday that 16 manual scavengers were asphyxiated this year so far during lockdown while they were cleaning septic tanks. (Pic taken for illustrative purpose only)

letter to the Commissioner, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), asking to take immediate action with regard to the permanent job and one-time cash payment offered to Manikandan. The letter also said that a copy of the action taken report (ATR) should be sent to the government immediately.

Nine months on, Manikandan, father of four daughters aged between 7 and 19, continues to knock on the doors of authorities to get justice.

Manikandan says the Union ministry of social justice and empowerment offered the job after one of his pictures standing in the neck-deep muck courted controversy. "As the incident drew flak, the authorities stopped me from doing the job. Since then, my family including seven members has been living with the meagre income earned by my wife as a domestic help. My wife lost her job after the pandemic struck. My second daughter, a plus-2 student,

missed online classes due to lack of a smartphone. My elder daughter, studying nursing, quit the course a year ago as I was unable to pay the fee. Now with the pandemic and lockdown making life more miserable. I sent various reminders to the corporation authorities, but to no avail," he said.

Though DC sent a query citing the letter issued by the municipal administration and water supply department, GCC commissioner G. Prakash did not respond.



Durga puja to go digital this year

N. SAMPATH | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

The nine-day Durga puja, a traditional festival of North India, is celebrated in Tamil Nadu too like the Navarathri festival in the recent past as lot of people from Bihar, Rajasthan and West Bengal have settled in the state. They celebrate puja with a statue of Goddess Durga with height ranging from two feet to six feet.

These statues are made using bio-degradable products like paper pulp. Several people buy statues of Lord Shiva and Lord Hanuman to use them as part of the daily morning and evening puja for which special pandals would be erected in their locality.

After successful completion of the nine-day festival the statues would be immersed in the sea. Cutting across age, elders along with youngsters will engage in the traditional Dandiya dance to celebrate the joyful occasion.

As the government has imposed the lockdown for Covid-19, devotees say the festival this time would be celebrated with less fanfare. Several festival organizers have urged the devotees not to come in large numbers to get the blessing of the goddess. The organisers have arranged online streaming of puja for the benefit of devotees across the world.

According to a craftsman, who makes Durga statues, in the past they made statues four months in advance, but this year due to the lockdown the work had just started affecting their livelihood in a larger way. "Very few people have placed their order with us so we don't know what to do as we have left with very few customers," the craftsman said.



Darkness of drugs devastates families



Apsara Reddy

And the point is..

A sight outside my tailor's home recently was that of his son scratching his own face and inflicting bloody wounds on himself. Why? Because the father, who earns a meagre ₹ 200 to 400 a day, couldn't fund his cravings for cocaine. For the past decade, the family has sold all they had to control, comfort and cajole their son who is now a full-blown addict. At 33, he stays home and demands that his parents give him money to buy his "happiness".

While city cops continue to crack the whip on the underbelly of drug traffick-

ing, more and more drug users are peddling their wares even during the strictest of lockdown. Using young mules, a few seasoned drug peddlers are pushing serious substances to those as young as 15.

The authorities are seizing huge quantities of ganja but other psychotropic drugs and harmful substances like small quantities of thinner mixed with cough syrup are also being sold hidden in matchboxes and Marie biscuit packets at hot spots.

North Madras being a hotbed for sourcing drugs, highly placed sources

reveal that a very influential family orders drugs and supplies it to other high society folk. Drug-fuelled parties at a posh penthouse in the inner city boast of guests like top DJs, industrialists and even those related to cricket. An IT professional who was invited to one of these parties says, "The hosts are extremely influential and have a door delivery service to carry their drugs for them. They spend about ₹20,000 or more each weekend just sourcing these substances and entertain their friends."

Small packets of marijuana are sold to first time users for as little as ₹ 400. A parent of a victim says, "My son started with smoking weed. But later we realised that the peddler was lacing it with small quantities of cocaine. This made him completely addicted to cocaine and marijuana. No amount of therapy and counselling has helped him.

He is an emotional wreck suffering from so many health issues now."

The Narcotics Control Bureau has been doing a tremendous job in the State in stopping entry of narcotics through the borders and the police take these cases very seriously. This is the reason cough syrups, psychotropic tablets and thinners are being used to concoct heady substances and potions.

An expat, whose son was involved in a narcotics deal and supplying to high flyers on the ECR stretch, says, "My son who was 22 years old then was befriended by two older men in their 30s. They all started hanging out and doing drugs. Eventually my son started buying expensive phones and gadgets. I realised that he was starting to be a drug mule for those men who were using him to go deliver marijuana and cocaine to users in beach houses. My son would just cycle along ECR and deliver these packets packed neatly in small matchboxes."

It's known that there is drug usage across the globe. It's difficult to wipe it out completely but what we must ensure is that no underage individual is being initiated in the name of friendship and peer pressure.

The devastation for families is unimaginable. From self-inflicted injuries to unleashing violence and paranoia, an addict can crush a family and its finances. As a society we mustn't just report it but work with the authorities in putting an end to this menace. Legalising marijuana will not change a thing, it'll only create a market for drugs that can be laced into marijuana and sold.

Are political parties going back in time?



G. Babu Jayakumar

Just spamming

The Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections 2021 could see some of the political parties turning the pages of their own history books and raking up issues that were thought to be passé. Pointers to the possibility of resurrection of old issues that had helped the parties gain popular support once emerged from some of their recent engagements. Those parties that showed such signs were PMK, DMK and BJP.

The BJP, as it has become evident now, no more talks about grandiose things like development, employment, economy and national security, at least not in Tamil Nadu. Here it is about protecting Hinduism and Lord Muruga. The present state president, L. Murugan, is planning a yatra to the various abodes of Lord Muruga in Tamil Nadu - from Thiruchendur to Tiruttani. The proposed yatra by

Murugan to the Lord Muruga temples is reminiscent of the 1990 Rath yatra of L K Advani, which catapulted the BJP to popularity and power at the national level. Ever since Murugan took over, the BJP in Tamil Nadu had been talking more about religious issues than serious politics, thus giving the indication that the promise on protecting Hinduism could be the key to its campaign in 2021.

Another party that dug up an old issue and gave it a new lease of life was the PMK, which now demands 20 per cent reservation for the Vanniyar community. Before the PMK was launched in 1989, the 20 per cent exclusive quota for the community was the demand of the Vanniyar Sangam, which organised a series of protests between 1980 and 1989 in the northern parts of the State.

In 1987, the Vanniyar

Sangam went for a prolonged agitation that saw the blocking of major highways with the trunks of massive roadside trees that were felled and laid across the roads, causing not just traffic disruptions but also paralysing normal life. It was the strike that gave rise to the community leader Dr S Ramadoss, who was earlier a humble people's doctor in Tindivanam and active functionary of the Vanniyar Sangam.

The agitation helped in making the government come around and Ramadoss won a major political victory when the 20 per cent reservation for Most Backward Communities (MBC) was carved out of the 50 per cent quota for Backward Classes (BC) with Vanniyars forming part of the MBC. That was 31 years ago and since then the community had been enjoying the benefits of the MBC quota.

Dr Ramadoss, on his part, became a successful politician, taking his party to places, striking alliances with various parties at the Central and State levels, ensuring that his candidates won elections, that they were given ministerial berths and so on. Though



his party never failed to remember the 21 persons who died in police action during the 1987 protests, the 20 per cent exclusive reservation for Vanniyars was never raked up all these years.

The creation of the MBC quota rendered the demand for 20 per cent reservation irrelevant. The PMK, too, had been talking about a plethora of other general issues that concerned the people, even projecting itself as an environment-friendly party. It dedicated itself to fight evils like tobacco and alcohol. The nation-wide ban on smoking was brought in when PMK's nominee Dr Anbumani Ramadoss was the Union Health Minister.

Then, at one point, it suddenly went back to the idea of protecting Vanniyars, particularly in safeguard-



ing the honour of families by preventing inter-caste marriages. But earlier this month, the General Council of the PMK passed 20 resolutions, the most striking among them being the one calling for reviving the demand of 20 per cent reservation in jobs and educational institutions for Vanniyars.

The resolution made it clear that the MBC quota created 31 years back had not helped the Vanniyar community get adequate representation in education and jobs. The resolution called it a 'betrayal of the then rulers' and said that Vanniyar representation in State government services was only eight per cent though the community formed 25 per cent of the population.

In Group I services they had only two to three per



cent representation, in Group Two six to eight per cent and Group Four seven to nine percent. Vanniyars had not benefitted from the reservation for MBCs, the resolution said, adding that if the trend continued the community would only go further backwards.

To rectify the backward slide, 20 percent exclusive reservation for them was the only answer, it said and called upon the government to bring in a special law to provide for the special quota. About 10 days after the resolution was passed, Dr Ramadoss pointed out that the government had not called the party for negotiations though the memorandum had been presented.

He was speaking at a meeting organised to release his book, 'Chukka... Milaga... Samuha Needi...', which



was about the way the community was cheated on the reservation issue, and asked for the formation of an equal opportunities commission. To put it otherwise, he again created a victim complex among his followers, urging them to fight for their rights.

This was reminiscent of the pre-PMK days when the Vanniyar Sangam leaders used the same language to mobilise the people. Perhaps, the idea behind the reviving of the age-old demand was to inform the modern youth that the PMK alone was concerned about their welfare and that it alone could fight for their uplift, thus ensuring that they voted for the party.

Another 'back to the olden days' music was played at the General Council meeting of the DMK, when the party's newly elected gener-

al secretary Durai Murugan, exhorted the youth wing secretary Udayanidhi Stalin to print out cards with two historic speeches, one of C N Annadurai and the other of Periyar E V Ramasamy that exemplified the basic tenet of the Dravidian movement itself.

'I belong to the Dravidian stock,' so begins the maiden speech of Annadurai in English at Parliament and the other is an avowal of Periyar who says that it was his duty to reform the Dravidian community. Durai Murugan wanted to reinforce the principles that guided the Dravidian movement by ensuring that the younger generation knew about it. So, he wanted the card printed with the two defining statements to be kept in the shirt pockets of the youth wing and student wing members for them to read them daily and feel rejuvenated.

So, there is a clear indications that political parties want to highlight their basic ideological positions to lure the modern generation of youth. By reversing a bit, political leaders feel, they could zoom forward into the fast track electoral highway with ease.

OTHER STORIES

Unable to pay college fee, parent commits suicide

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

A 46-year-old man committed suicide by hanging himself in his house at Kanchipuram on Friday as he couldn't pay his daughter's college fees.

Shankar, a resident of North Madra street, was a weaver. He lived with his wife Bhavani and two children. Shankar admitted his daughter Meenakshi in a private college in Kanchipuram, for computer science stream. Police said the college authorities asked him to pay her tuition fees. Shankar acquired a loss in the business and was struggling to meet ends, due to the Coronavirus lockdown. Depressed over not being able to pay fees, Shankar allegedly hanged self at his house on Friday night. Based on the alert, the police rushed to the spot and recovered his body. A spot enquiry was conducted. The Siva Kanchi police have recorded proceedings under Section 174 of the CrPC and sent the body to the Kanchipuram government hospital for post-mortem. Further investigation is under way.

DMK membership drive in full swing

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, SEPT. 19

The online DMK membership enrollment is going on in full swing and during the last five days as many as 1.16 lakh new members are enrolled into the DMK party across Tamil Nadu, said DMK MLA and party's Tiruchy south district in-charge, Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi. He told newsmen here on Saturday that they had a fixed target of 25,000 new membership in each assembly constituency of the party's Tiruchy south district unit.

To a question, Poyyamozhi said the party wanted the candidates, especially the youth wing members, to be fielded in at least 200 assembly constituencies in the next year's assembly elections, but it will be ultimately decided by the party high command.

Spl Covid-19 assistance

Tiruvarur: The government has sanctioned a sum of ₹10.30 crore as Covid-19 special assistance to provide loan assistance to the needy under the rural transformation project in the district, said Food minister, R Kamaraj, on Saturday. Speaking to newsmen after distributing ₹14 lakh to beneficiaries under the Covid-19 special assistance scheme, Kamaraj said the scheme is under implementation in 174 village panchayats of Mannargudi, Valangaiman, Needamangalam, and Muthupettai panchayat unions.

HC makes suggestions to curb anti-nationals

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

In a bid to curtail anti-national and separatist movements active in India to disintegrate our country by soft and violent militancy, Justice N.Kirubakaran of the Madras high court has made three important suggestions to the government in the interest of safeguarding the unity and integrity of the nation.

Dismissing a bail petition from a member of the banned organization namely "Tamil Nadu Liberation Army", Justice N.Kirubakaran heading a division bench made the suggestions.

Pointing out that in Tamil Nadu, language issue played a major role and it gave rise to formation of non-Congress Government in 1967, which is continuing till date, Justice Kirubakaran said, "Many states are equally very sensitive when it comes to language issue. For example, the state of Maharashtra has been claiming 814 border villages in Belagavi (earlier called as Belgaum), Karuvar, Bidar and Gulbarga districts of Karnataka, as those areas have a majority of Marathi speaking people. The issue is still pending before the hon'ble apex court at the instance of the Maharashtra government. Therefore, what is expected from the Governments is that, (i) Not to create an impression in the minds of the people that their language is being discriminated or suppressed, (ii) Not to create any apprehension in the minds of the people that only a few chosen languages are given prominence and recognition especially when there are about 22 languages recognized and listed in the VIII schedule of the Constitution of India which are entitled to equal treatment and protection so that all Indian languages are well-developed and preserved, (iii) To deal with communal elements, religious, extremist forces very firmly. The above suggestions are only in the interest of safeguarding the unity and integrity of the nation. There should not be any room for linguistic chauvinists to create any unrest in the name of languages in any part of our country".

He said as dealt with in this case, the banned organization namely, "Tamil Nadu Liberation Army", was asking people to fight for secession of State of Tamil Nadu from the Indian Union in the name of language, race and culture. Only to see that these forces do not raise their ugly heads, the above suggestions were given by this court.

He said some of the organizations in the name of fighting for the rights of the people always raise their voice for rights, forgetting about corresponding duties. These people, in effect, they also do not have any faith in the system. They always support separatists, secessionists forces and those who celebrate our enemy countries

TNLA member's bail plea dismissed

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

The Madras high court has dismissed an appeal filed by a member of the banned organization called "Tamil Nadu Liberation Army", who was arrested in the year 2014 for allegedly planting a bomb at the residence of erstwhile minister of state in Puducherry, challenging an order of the principal sessions court, Puducherry, dismissing his bail petition.

A division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and R.Hemalatha dismissed the appeal filed

and criminals in the name of violation of human rights. Sometimes, these groups themselves make anti-national comments making use of "Right to Expression" and "Freedom of Expression". By "Freedom of Expression", one can protest against the government and not against the nation. There was a huge difference between the fight against the people in power and fight against the country. These elements also do a lot of damage to our country and democracy and therefore, people should be wary of those elements, he added.

He said when these elements take Tamil culture, Tamil race and Tamil language as weapons for their sinister plans, the governments should be careful enough to see that no action of the government would pave way for or strengthen the propaganda made by these elements especially, with regard to emotive language issues. Already political parties were waiting to make use of such a position to arouse linguistic chauvinism to harvest political dividends, he added. He said any action of the government, which was likely to create an apprehension or give an impression that their language was discriminated or any other language was given prominence, would amount to adding fuel to the mischievous propaganda made by these secessionist forces. This court was interested in safeguarding the integrity and independence of this country which our ancestors got by shedding their sweat and blood and laying down their precious lives. At no cost, the integrity and security of the nation should be jeopardized, he added.

Justice Kirubakaran said the Britishers have left behind five valuable treasures in our favour viz., United India; English Language of Science and Communication; Infrastructures developed by them; Laws enacted; Administrative system. The above inherited treasures should be preserved and enhanced and under no circumstances they should be devalued or destroyed. Though our country got independence in 1947, as a whole, of course, political integration of princely

by Kalailingam, now confined in the Central prison, Cuddalore, against an order of the principal sessions court, Puducherry, dated May 13, 2020.

The bench said a perusal of the charge sheet filed in the case would reveal that the appellant and other accused are members of terrorist organization called "Tamil Nadu Liberation Army", which is declared so under section 2 (1) (m) and 35 and included in the first schedule at serial No.32 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

It is punishable under sec-

tion 20 of the said Act to be a member of a gang or terrorist and the members of the organisation want to achieve liberation of Tamil Nadu as an independent State and have an intention to threaten the sovereignty of India and to strike terror or likely to strike terror on the people or any section of the people in India, by using bombs, dynamites or other explosive substances or whatever nature, cause or likely to cause death or injury or loss or damage or destruction of supply and services of essentials to life of community in India, the bench added.

Judge gives dissenting note

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

Agreeing with the order of dismissal of the appeal filed by Kalailingam, against an order of a trial court, dismissing his bail petition, Justice R.Hemalatha of the Madras high court, however gave a dissenting note in respect of the views and suggestions made by Justice N.Kirubakaran in the order.

In her brief (separate) order, Justice R.Hemalatha said, "I agree to the dismissal of this appeal. However, I do not subscribe to the views expressed by Hon'ble Justice Mr.N.Kirubakaran with regard to the Tamil organisations, the languages and the consequent suggestions given to the government. They are not relevant to the present petition. Learning languages is a matter of one's personal choice".

1) It is stated disgruntled elements are stated to be mainly responsible for thousands of agitations in Tamil Nadu. It is a fact that Tamil Nadu tops the list of most protests in India since 2009. For example, in 2015, Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of protests among all States recording 20, 450 while Punjab came a distant second with little over 13,000 protests. This is according to data released by the Bureau of Police Research and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Union of India. In Tamil Nadu, more number of cases are being registered by the National Investigation Agency and more number of terror activities are carried out. Since 2014, the National Investigation Agency has claimed to have arrested 127 ISI sympathizers across the Nation and the highest number of 33 were from Tamil Nadu.

2) Before parting with the case, this court reiterates that unity of the nation and safety of the people are paramount. The Governments especially the central government has to keep a serious vigilance on religious fundamentalists groups, communal elements and anti-national forces and their supporters, flow of funds particularly in North-East, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, West Bengal, Punjab, Orissa, Bihar, Chhattisgarh where these elements are active and radicalizing the youth by creating fear psychosis. These elements ridicule the sacrifices made by our brave soldiers in the borders and disturbed states and glorify the terrorists, trouble creators in the name of human right violations. Regular reviews should be conducted in the suspected areas in co-operation with all agencies and a comprehensive scheme has to be devised including constant vigil on cyber space. Scientific advancements like the internet are effectively used by these elements for spreading false information, hate messages and misleading propaganda. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in Anuradha Bhasin V.Union of India and others had observed that modern terrorism heavily relies on the internet.

3) The governments should effectively deal with anti-national forces with an iron hand which are bent upon creating fear, unrest in the society in the name of "language", "race", "religion" or "Ideology" and stall the development and divide the country. Therefore, this court expects the governments to deal with the above sensitive issues very carefully and cautiously to protect the largest democracy in the world, keep the destructive forces including chauvinistic linguistic forces at bay and to uphold our unity in diversity.

states was done due to the great efforts of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as Union home minister, linguistic states have been created by the Act of Parliament in 1956, namely, states Reorganisation Act, 1956, paving way for the creation

of states and territories according to the language of the people.

When the states were reorganised based on language, one can understand the importance of language of people of various states, he added.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW



An aerial view of the upcoming bus terminus at Urapakkam where work is going on now. — DC

MAN KILLED AFTER LORRY HITS BIKE

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

A 28-year-old man was killed after his vehicle was knocked down by a tipper lorry on GST road near Chennai airport on Saturday.

Police said Gilbert Kumar, a resident of Pallavaram, was driving his two-wheeler back home after meeting his friend in Alandur." Around 3:30 pm, as he was passing through Chennai airport on the GST road, a tipper lorry hit the vehicle from the side, killing him on the spot", said a police source.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to the Chromepet government hospital for autopsy. Investigation revealed that the tipper lorry was taking a turn on GST road, when it hit the two-wheeler and the driver lost control of the vehicle.

Police said Gilbert Kumar worked as a software engineer in a private company at Ambattur. The Chromepet traffic investigation police registered a case and arrested Vijayakumar, 29 of Tirisulam. Investigation is on.

Chennai international airport withdraws e-pass facility

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

Officials at the Chennai international airport have announced that the e-pass system, available for the passengers at the airport, has been withdrawn with effect from 18:00 hours on Friday.

Earlier, the passengers travelling to Chennai could either obtain e-pass on Tamil Nadu e-pass portal or at the counter at the Chennai airport. The TN state government had set up five counters for the benefit of the passengers who land at the city airports without a Tamil

Nadu e-pass. Meanwhile, on Friday the e-pass counters at the Chennai airport were closed at around 6 pm without prior information. There was crowding at the e-pass counters because many passengers choose to arrive at the airport and then apply for the e-pass at the arrival hall and the sudden withdrawal of e-pass facility at the airport, made hundreds of passengers suffer.

Later on Friday, the Chennai airport announced that the passengers travelling to Chennai will have to obtain the e-pass only from the state portal.

Plea to complete bridge work

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, SEPT. 19

Members of the CPM unit here staged a demonstration before the PWD office at Grand Anicut on Saturday, demanding speeding up of work on the new bridge being constructed across Kollidam river. Party district executive committee member, V Jeevakumar, who participated in the agitation, said that construction of the bridge started in 2016. Work is going on for the

past five years and is still not completed.

The bridge will link Tiruchy and Thanjavur districts, and is located at the anicut where Cauvery, Vennar, Grand anicut canal and Kollidam river systems, branch out. People going to places like Poondi Matha Basilica near Thirukattupalli, Ayyarappan temple at Thiruvaiyaru in Thanjavur district and Sri Ranganam in Tiruchy district, will benefit out of the bridge.

CD RELEASE



Greater Chennai Police Commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal unveils the CD of Salam Chennai, a short film, in Chennai on Saturday. — DC

Criticism need not breed contempt



Sanjay Pinto

The tale of two tweets and no contempt, augurs well for free speech. A broad

shouldered casting aside of critical comments by two respected public figures, clearly not stemming from malice, instead of going down the beaten and controversial track of criminal contempt, has made our judiciary look taller.

Showing amazing grace, the Madras high court Chief Justice A.P. Sahi, wrote a comprehensive and erudite 29 page order on popular actor Suriya Sivakumar's recent tweet, reasoning that a constitutional court need not use a "sledge hammer" to deal with a statement that had raised "storm in a tea cup".

In the other instance, a quietus was given to a con-

tempt plea moved in the Supreme Court against senior TV journalist Rajdeep Sardesai. Interestingly, es-saying a mature role in both the cases was an uncle-nephew duo – Attorney General K.K.Venugopal opining that Rajdeep's tweets do not "undermine the majesty of the Supreme Court" and Tamil Nadu's Advocate General Vijay Narayan taking a similar stance on actor Suriya's statement.

The power of the Supreme Court and high courts flowing from Articles 129 and 215 of the Constitution of India, to punish citizens for criminal contempt under Section 2(c) of the Contempt of Courts Act, must ideally be sparingly used. What exactly amounts to scandalising the court or is prejudicial to or an interference with a judicial proceeding or an obstruction to the administration of justice is often a grey area.

The 2006 amendment to allow truth as a valid defence came with inherent judicial discretion with the words "the court may per-



mit" it in Section 13(b) of the statute. With our motto of 'Satyameva Jayate' and 'Yato Dharmastato Jayaha' in our High Courts and the Supreme Court respectively, does this element of discretion come across as incongruous? Not just my view but a question raised by the National Commission to review the working of the Constitution in 2002. If the entire list of 'reasonable restrictions' to free speech under Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India are to be very stringently viewed, would they remain reasonable? If a headline is taken on all these riders, will this fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) merely be subjected

to a chilling effect or end up being consigned to a deep freezer?

Observations of the privy council quoted in a Supreme Court decision in Aswini Kumar Ghose Vs Arabinda Bose (1953) are instructive. "The path of criticism is a public way; the wrong headed are permitted to err therein; public abstain from imputing improper motives to those taking part in the administration of justice, and are genuinely exercising a right of criticism, and not acting in malice or attempting to impair the administration of justice, are immune. Justice is not a cloistered virtue: she must be allowed to suffer the scrutiny and respectful, even though outspoken, comments of ordinary men."

And these ordinary men will wonder if things other than critical comments would scandalise the court. Like inordinate judicial delays. Like judgments reserved which the apex court in Anil Rai Vs State of

Bihar had lamented was a "stark reality." Like advocates, who are officers of the court, not given a fair hearing.

When in doubt, go back to Lord Denning on the law of contempt. "Let me say at once that we will never use this jurisdiction as a means to uphold our own dignity. That must rest on surer foundations. Nor will we use it to suppress those who speak against us. We do not fear criticism, nor do we resent it. Exposed as we are to the winds of criticism, nothing which is said by this person or that, nothing which is written by this pen or that, will deter us from doing what we believe is right."

An estate of democracy, that is meant to uphold the fundamental rights of citizens, can be strengthened by criticism, or rise above it, and does not have to be a prickly pear.

(The writer is an advocate at the Madras high court, columnist & author)



The temporary wholesale flower market at Vanagaram lies flooded on Saturday after overnight rains. — DC

RAIN EFFECT

OTHER STORY

Palmyra planting project

DC CORRESPONDENT
NAGAPATTINAM, SEPT. 19

The district administration here has planned to plant 20,00,000 palm (palmyra) seeds through the district rural development agency under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment guarantee programme, across the district. Collector Praveen P Nair, said in a release here on Saturday, that out of these proposed 20,00,000 palm saplings, 11 lakh seeds will be planted in all the 11 panchayat union areas in the district, planting each one lakh seeds.

He said the seed plantation will be mostly concentrated on sea shore areas. The scheme was officially launched by the Handloom and textile minister O S Manian Kadvivelvayal near Vedharanyam, on Sunday last.

Puducherry adds 543 new Covid-19 cases

Puducherry, Sept. 19: Puducherry reported 543 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday taking the overall tally in the union territory to 22,456.

Eleven more people succumbed to the infection as the death toll rose to 448, Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said. The fatality rate was two per cent while the recovery rate was 76.63 per cent, he added.

The Health Department has increased testing of samples with improvement in the infrastructure and deployment of more manpower in the hospitals, he said.

The 543 new cases were identified at the end of examination of as many as 5,159 samples of swabs and blood.

The Health department Director said 494 patients were discharged during the last 24 hours ending 10 am on Saturday. Of the overall 22,456 coronavirus infections, the active cases were 4,799 and 17,209 patients had recovered and were discharged, he said.

The Director said that 1,30,099 samples were tested so far and 1,01,462 samples out of them were found to be negative and result of the examination of the remaining samples was awaited.

— PTI

Understanding between CM, Dy CM is like Lord Rama, Lakshmana: Min CM releases cyber security policy

Chennai, Sept. 19: Chief Minister K Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam have an excellent understanding similar to what was seen between Lord Rama and his brother Lakshmana, revenue minister R. B. Udhayakumar said here on Saturday. The duo were leading the party with military-like discipline, he told reporters answering a question on Friday's party meet vis-a-vis claims of differences on some issues between the top two leaders. Both the leaders have about 1.5 crore cadres bound by love and they were taking along everybody with a motherly affection, he said. Some news reports on the party meet and alleged differences were aimed at mere sensationalism, Udhayakumar, a Madurai-based party leader said adding, Palaniswami and Panneerselvam "have a very good understanding like the one between Rama and Lakshmana and this is the sathyam (truth)." Taking potshots at the DMK without naming it, he said there were no takers for its initiatives like 'Ondrinaivom Va,' whereas young people flocked to the AIADMK. The "Ondrinaivom Va" is a DMK initiative to help people who are in need of support and assistance during the

FROM P1

He said the state has been attracting investments over the years and added that 81 projects, signed during the Global Investors Meet, 2019, had commenced commercial production and another 191 were under various stages of implementation.

Subsequent to the GIM 2019, the State attracted 63 projects, with an investment of Rs19,000 crore, which would create 83,300 jobs. 'Even during COVID lock down period, we have signed 42 MoUs, involving an investment of Rs 31,464 crore with a potential to create 69,712 jobs, he said.

In the information technology sector, Tamil Nadu had emerged as one of the

leading States in certain verticals of IT and ITeS sectors, he added. Palaniswami also released the Tamil Nadu Cyber Security Policy 2020, Tamil Nadu Blockchain Policy 2020 and Tamil Nadu Safe and Ethical Artificial Intelligence Policy 2020 on the occasion.



year. The minister's remark comes against the background of reportage in a section of media over alleged differences between Panneerselvam and Palaniswami like the one related to setting up a steering committee to lead the party.

— PTI

Amma canteen food delicious: Nabard chief

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development chairman G. R. Chintala found the food served in the Amma canteen to be delicious when he stepped into the one at Pongy Bazaar during a personal visit to Chennai.

Chintala, who was in Chennai to attend a series of official work, narrated

his personal experience at the Amma canteen during a dinner hosted by the Tamil Nadu State Apex Cooperative Bank, an official press release said on Saturday.

A native of Andhra Pradesh, Chintala said that he had worked in many states and that his family had lived in Chennai. It was during a visit to Pongy Bazaar that he was delighted to see the

Amma Canteen and walked in.

It was not only the food, even the cleanliness of the premises impressed him that he had been narrating his experience in various meetings all over the country, he said.

Describing Tamil Nadu as a developed state, he praised the government for its people welfare schemes and said that the State had an excellent infrastructure.

Agri Bills are anti-farmer: Pongy CM

Puducherry, Sept. 19: Senior Congress leader and Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy on Saturday flayed the Centre over the Agriculture Bills which, he said, were anti-farmers.

Addressing reporters here, he said the Bills encouraged affluent and big corporates who would hold the small and medium farmers to ransom.

He said the Centre should

have consulted the state governments before bringing in the Bills.

"Big and affluent corporates will rule the roost in fixing the price for farm produce," he said and wanted the three Bills to be referred to Standing Committee. Referring to the adoption of NEET system of admission of students to professional courses across the country, Narayanasamy

said the Centre's relentless stand and adoption of Neet-based selection of students have caused a huge catastrophe in the lives of the students.

He said the people in the Union Territory of Puducherry should rise in revolt against the Neet system.

He further said Puducherry was adopting the ideal system of selecting students to professional

DMK calls for all-party meet

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

The DMK has called for an all-party meeting to discuss the three anti-farmer Bills passed in the Lok Sabha recently.

The meeting, under the leadership of DMK President M K Stalin, would be held at the party headquarters Anna Arivalayam at 10.30 am on Monday, September 21, a notification



from DMK said on Saturday. Meanwhile, Chief

Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami lashed out at Stalin for 'politicising' the passing of the three bills and explained in detail how those new laws would only go on to help the farmers in many ways.

In a statement, Palaniswami said the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services bill, the Farmers Produce Trade

and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill and Essential Services (Amendment) Bill were passed on September 15 and 17.

He debunked the charges made by Stalin, saying the Bills have all the safeguards required to protect the interest of farmers and declared that he was proud to call himself a farmer and would do it not once but a thousand times.

LS committee to take up complaint of DMK MP

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

The notices of breach of privilege given by DMK MPs T. R. Baalu and Kalanidhi Veerswamy, against the Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam for his alleged 'disrespectful and insulting' behaviour will be taken up for consideration by the Committee of Privileges of the Lok Sabha on Thursday, September 24.

The two DMK MPs had given the memoranda on May 14 following an incident in the Secretariat, in which the Chief Secretary was alleged to have not received the DMK MPs who went to hand over bundles of complaints from people collected by the DMK through its 'Ondirivom Vaa' programme.

The Committee of Privileges would also adopt the same day a draft report on the breach of privilege notice given by the late Congress MP, H Vasanthakumar, for alleged non-intimation to the Lok Sabha Speaker about his detention on October 21, 2019, by the Tirunelveli police.

PURATTASI SPECIAL



Several devotees throng Tiruneermalai temple on the auspicious Purattasi Saturday.

— DC

Tirupur GH lacks basic infra, says MP

ANANTH MATHIVANAN | DC
COIMBATORE, SEPT. 18

The Tirupur government hospital lacks all proper infrastructure meant to treat Corona-infected patients, forcing officials to claim that there was no availability of beds.

Speaking to DC, CPM MP, P R Natrajan, said, "The pandemic is rapidly spreading in Coimbatore and Tirupur districts, but the government had failed to control the spread, despite a series of lockdowns.

Tirupur, being a textile city, has hundreds of textile units and directly supports thousands of small-scale production units, connected to textile exports. Lakhs of migrant labourers have again returned to the city and production has started

in full swing. Along with them, the infection has also spread in a rapid manner. "The district administration and health department have failed to control its spread. The sudden weather change in Coimbatore and Tirupur marked with continuous drizzle along with moisture in the air had spiked the spread of the disease.

Recently, the government had upgraded the hospital and announced it as Tirupur Medical College and Hospital, but the hospital still remains without

proper infrastructure to treat Covid-19 patients.

While the WHO has suggested tests on a maximum number of Corona patients on a daily basis, the district is capable of undertaking only 2,500 tests, which needs to be increased to 6,000. Only then, it would be possible to know the real number of affected patients, added the MP.

While private labs are capable of releasing Covid test results in a few hours, government labs prolong the process, forcing untold mental agony on the patient.

The district administration should immediately take necessary steps to control the spread in Tirupur and also improve the infrastructure of the government hospital, added the MP.

Farmers adopt new grass varieties

B RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, SEPT. 19

Dr P Sundarambal, Principal Scientist, IISWC-RC, here said that fodder grass breeds like the 'Hybrid Napier' grown on the 'bench terrace riser', provide fodder throughout the year. About 4,000 rooted slips of various grasses and trees of Lucerne for 'Alley Cropping' system, were distributed to farmers recently, in an effort to earn their support for soil and fodder management, she said.

Farmers are being constantly provided technical know-how about the culti-

vation of these grass on bench terrace riser'. Interested farmers are also being trained on silage making with grass for use during the dry season, she added.

Praveen, a progressive farmer from Thalajiyattimund area, has already taken up stall-fed goat rearing and dairy farming along with agriculture.

Praveen said that he had never seen such fodder-cum-soil conservation grass varieties in the Nilgiris, that too in a place like the grass arboretum established at the IISWC-RC. He said that the very

look of robust and gorgeous growth of fodder grass varieties and the technological inputs provided by the scientists at the Centre has prompted him to try his luck in soil and fodder management by planting these grass.

Stating that this is certainly a new millennium technology through 'grass-rooting' approach to bind the soil, check erosion and grow nutritious fodder for cattle, Praveen said that he is convinced about these practices, and asserted that he wanted to be a model farmer and disseminate his learning to fellow farmers in the region.



grass varieties like Cumbu Napier Hybrid (CO4), Bajra Napier Hybrid (CO5), Guinea grass (Co GG3), Signal grass, Congo signal grass, Weeping love grass,

Lemon grass, Vettiver grass and Gouthimala grass, are some of the breeds which help tackle the twin problem of soil erosion and fodder scarcity. While Guinea

grass developed by the department of forage crops, TNAU, is being introduced in the Nilgiris for the first time, other grass breeds like Signal grass and Congo

<<<<<
Farmers take technical inputs at the grass arboretum at IISWC-RC in Ooty.

— DC

Signal grass, have been sourced from Kerala, and are being introduced for the first time in the Nilgiris. The agro-climatic conditions in the Nilgiris are found to be highly conducive for these fodder grass breeds to grow well in the hills. These grass breeds are good in soil binding and help check erosion. They are also a good source of proteins and help livestock increase their meat mass and milk yielding potential.

"Dr Kannan explained that soil loss due to erosion in the Nilgiris ranges from 20 - 40 tons per hectare per year, when vegetables are cultivated in slopes. Soil loss is reduced to just 300 - 500 kg per hectares per year when these slopes are converted into bench terraces. To reduce the huge investment involved in making mechanical bench terraces, farmers are reluctant to opt for bench terracing. This problem can be overcome by adopting biological bench terracing.

"When two lines of grass are planted across the slope at one meter vertical interval, bench terraces are formed naturally in a gradual manner. This technology costs only one sixth of the cost which is required for making bench terraces manually or using mechanical equipment. Besides, fodder grass planted in between vegetable crops, provide high quality fodder for cattle," he added.



-----Addressing soil management, fodder woes of Ooty ryots----- Growth of hybrid grass varieties mooted

B RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, SEPT. 19

The Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Research Centre, (ICAR-IISWC-RC-Ooty), here has launched efforts to mitigate soil management issues of farmers, and to combat economic loss arising due to the pandemic.

Responding to the current challenges, IISWC-RC-Ooty, in tune with the policies and guidelines of the Government of India, has established a grass arboretum growing various hybrid grass varieties suitable for soil conservation and also fodder production in the Nilgiris in collaboration with the department of forage crops, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU). This, of course, is a two-in-one approach to conserve the upper soil and provide quality fodder for cattle and other livestock, thus helping the farming community to manage soil erosion issues and increasing fodder growth using modern technology.

IISWC-RC, Ooty, which had been in the forefront in developing innovative technologies in soil and water conservation, is now advocating farmers to go for diversified farming with different agricultural enterprises including stall-fed goat rearing and dairy farming, along with agriculture to minimise risk, effective re-course use and to increase farm income. These enterprises need quality fodder suitable for this region.

Dr K Kannan, Head (in-charge), IISWC-RC, Ooty, an expert in agronomy, said

IN BRIEF

WEAPONS SENT BY DRONE FOR LeT MILITANTS

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, SEPT. 19

Jammu and Kashmir police on Saturday claimed arresting three Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) militants from frontier district of Rajouri and said that the weapons and cash recovered from them were sent from across the border and dropped by a drone in an area close to the Line of Control (LoC).

DG police, Dilbag Singh, who was on a visit to Rajouri, told reporters that the arrested LeT cadres were residents of Kashmir Valley who had travelled all the way to the frontier region to receive a weapon and cash consignment from across the LoC.

"Yesterday (Friday), the trio was chased by the jawans of J&K police and the Army's 38 Rashtriya Rifles unit, after which one of them hurled a grenade at the forces which luckily didn't explode. They were, subsequently caught alive", he said.

He added, "All the three are affiliated with the Lashkar outfit and were in touch with their handlers from across and had received weapons and cash through drones."

The weapons seized from the accused identified as Rahil Bashir, Amir Jaan and Younis Wani include two AK 56 rifles, two pistols, four grenades and Rs. 1,00,000 cash, the police said.

The police chief reiterated that charge that Pakistan "is trying hard to keep the pot of militancy boiling in Rajouri and Poonch districts".

He said "Also, this weapon consignment and cash were aimed at fuelling militancy in Kashmir Valley."

He further said that this was the first attempt of aerial weapon drop on the LoC and second in the recent past as earlier one drone was shot along with weapons by the BSF on the International Border in Samba district. "We are aware of the challenge and will evolve a counter strategy to foil these bids," he said in reply to a question.

IGP (Jammu range) Mukesh Singh said that a huge consignment of heroine weighing 7 kilograms and worth ₹7 crore was seized by the police on September 14.

"The arrest of one person from Kulgam (district in Kashmir Valley) in this connection led to the arrest of three more from Poonch district (bordering LoC) on whose integration 4 more kilograms of heroin worth ₹4 crore was recovered besides IED making material and a pen drive," he said.

He added that in the pen drive "there were indications and training sessions as to how an IED can be prepared."

Meanwhile, the police here said that two "terrorist associates" were arrested by it from Awantipora and Khrew areas of southern Pulwama district. "Incriminating material of proscribed terrorist outfits Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and Al-Badr has been recovered from the arrested terror associates," the police said in a statement here.

41 ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL DIED OF COVID-19

New Delhi, Sept. 19: The coronavirus pandemic has killed 41 and infected 22,353 armed forces personnel, according to details provide by the government in Rajya Sabha on Saturday.

Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik said a series of measures have been put in place to check the spread of the coronavirus infection in the armed forces which included a campaign on preventive measures.

"The total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases amongst serving armed forces personnel is 22,353," he said, adding 41 personnel died of the infection till date.

"In line with the international and national treatment protocols for Covid-19, armed forces hospitals have a wide array of anti-viral drugs (Favipiravir and Remdesivir)," he said.

The minister said two hospitals in the armed forces are using plasma therapy for treatment of severely ill patients.

To a separate question, Naik said the strength of women officers serving in the Indian Air Force is 1,875.

"Of these, 10 women officers are fighter pilots and 18 women officers are navigators," he said. Naik said women fighter pilots are inducted and deployed in IAF as per strategic needs and operational requirements within the laid down policy.

DGP: ACTION ON ENCOUNTER IN SHOPIAN BASED ON DNA REPORT

Jammu, Sept. 19: Director-General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh on Saturday said the DNA sample report of three youths killed in an alleged fake encounter in Shopian district is expected soon and subsequent action will be taken accordingly.

On July 18, the Army had claimed that three militants were killed in Amshipura village in the higher reaches of south Kashmir's Shopian district. However, the families of the men identified them as their kin and had filed a police complaint. Police had taken the DNA samples of three families from Rajouri on August 14 for matching it with the DNA of the youths who were killed in Shopian. *PTI*

End of an era



Decommissioned aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy, INS Viraat during its last journey from Naval Dockyard to Alang in Gujarat, where it will be dismantled, in Mumbai on Saturday. For Navy veterans who watched the huge vessel being towed away by a tug boat, it was an emotional moment as they stood near the Gateway of India, waving at the once 'floating town', aboard which they spent the best years of their career. The aircraft carrier served the Indian Navy for 29 years before being decommissioned in March 2017. It had served in the UK's Royal Navy as HMS Hermes and was named INS Viraat after being inducted in the Indian Navy in 1987. Alang-based Shree Ram group bought it for ₹38.54 crore at an auction. Viraat will be dismantled at the Alang ship breaking yard. The ship will be scrapped in 9 to 12 months.

BJP is lying, we promised to promote farmers' cos: Cong

Congress manifesto talked about producer companies, says Chidambaram

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 19

The Congress on Saturday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP spokespersons over the farmers' Bills, accusing them of "maliciously" distorting the party's 2019 manifesto which promised creating small markets before repealing the APMC Act.

Ahead of elections last year, the Congress suggested changes to farm laws that would see the Agricultural Market Produce Committees (APMC) Act abolished. Mr Modi and BJP leaders have accused the Congress of hypocrisy by proposing farm reforms, similar to what one of the Bills proposed by the BJP government does, but resisting it after being voted to the Opposition.

Defending the Congress' promise of repealing the APMC Act, P. Chidambaram said in a statement, "The Prime Minister and the BJP spokespersons have deliberately and maliciously distorted the Congress manifesto. We promised

to promote farmers', producer companies/organisations to enable farmers to access inputs, technology and markets; and to establish farmers' markets with adequate infrastructure and support in large villages and small towns... Today, our farmers produce huge surpluses in many agricultural produce — notably wheat and rice. On the strength of our farmers, successive Congress governments built, brick by brick, a food security system, that culminated in the National Food Security Act, 2013."

"Farmers need multiple accessible markets... Congress' proposals would have given them that. Once that is accomplished, the Congress manifesto promise on repealing the APMC Act and making trade in agricultural produce free would be a natural sequel in course of time," he added. The statement came a day ahead of the government listing the three farm Bills for consideration and passing in the Upper House on Sunday.

Bills to harm farmers, help only corporates, says KCR

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT 19

TRS president and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has asked party MPs to vote against the farm bills in the Rajya Sabha, saying the legislations would cause great injustice to farmers.

The TRS has seven members in the Upper House, including D. Srinivas who is miffed with the party. They are expected to come up for voting in the Rajya Sabha next week.

Talking with TRS Parliamentary Party leader Dr K. Keshava Rao over phone on Saturday, the Chief Minister said the Bills would severely harm the farming community and were meant to benefit the corporates.

"For public consumption, it was stated in the

Bills that farmers could sell their produce anywhere in the country. But, in reality, farmers seldom go to faraway places. The traders and corporate companies travel around in the country to buy or sell their goods," the CM said. "The Bills will throw open flood gates for corporate companies and private traders to expand their operations across the country."

The controversial legislations have sparked protests in Punjab and Haryana and has seen Shiromani Akali Dal leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal resign.

The Chief Minister asked: "How is it possible for farmers who produce in small quantities to hire lorries to transport their yield to faraway places at high expense in their attempt to earn profits." He said the Bills are nothing but sugar-coated pills and asked TRS MPs to oppose them at all costs.

He found fault with the Centre's decision to reduce the import tax from 50 to 15 per cent while allowing the import of one crore tonnes of maize. "What will happen to our farmers and their produce if the Centre opens doors for imports," Mr Rao asked.

Stating that the Centre had procured 70-75 lakh tonnes of maize, he pointed out: "Whom does the Centre want to benefit at a time when the nation is facing an economic slowdown? We have plenty of maize produced in the country."

The Chief Minister instructed the MPs to oppose and vote against the Bills in the Rajya Sabha since they would cause huge losses to the agriculture sector.

Scribe was passing info to China: Cops

New Delhi, Sept. 19: Delhi Police on Saturday said arrested freelance journalist Rajeev Sharma was allegedly passing sensitive information about India's border strategy and Army deployment to Chinese intelligence.

At a press conference, Special Cell DCP Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said Sharma was writing on defence-related issues for some Indian media organisations, as well as China's *Global Times*.

He was allegedly contacted by Chinese Intelligence agents in 2016. Sharma was also in contact with some

Chinese intelligence officer, the police officer claimed, adding the freelance journalist got ₹40 lakh in one-and-a-half years and he was getting USD 1,000 for each information".

Sharma was arrested September 14 based on inputs from central intelligence. Police have seized classified defence documents from him, the DCP said.

He said that a Chinese woman and her Nepalese associate have also been arrested for allegedly paying Sharma large amounts of money routed through shell companies. — *PTI*

NCB busts narco ring, seizes drugs sourced from Ethiopia

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, SEPT. 19

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) busted a drugs racket seizing 670 gram cocaine from Delhi that was sourced from Addis Ababa and arrested accused persons from Mumbai. The officials said that the drugs, concealed inside a thread roll, were making way to high profile users in Mumbai and the buyers are also under the scanner.

The NCB had earlier seized a parcel at the Import Custom Examination Area in Delhi, which had originated from Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. The said parcel was declared as tailoring material samples and on examination, 670 gm of cocaine was found concealed in the same.

To unearth the drug syndicate, the NCB officials

replaced the contraband with a dummy as per the provisions and clearances from the NCB chief.

"The controlled delivery mechanism empowered NCB to keep the parcel delivery alive, even after seizing the contraband and replacing the same with the dummy parcel.

Subsequently, the KYC of the consignee were verified and the team reached Mumbai. The operation was successfully executed and the consignee was apprehended from Vasai," said an NCB official.

The accused was identified as S. Ghangale, who was found to have close association with few high-profile drug traffickers in Mumbai. The network of these peddlers operate under the guise of property dealers, construction contractors while dealing in drugs.

Opposition steps up protest against Jaleel

DC CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEP. 19

The workers of opposition parties clashed with the police at many places across Kerala even as their statewide agitations continued for the eighth consecutive day on Saturday demanding the resignation of higher education minister K.T. Jaleel.

The opposition workers took out marches, held demonstrations and protest meetings in various districts. At many places the police used brute force to disperse the assembled workers.

Youth Congress workers took out a big march to the Collectorate in Pathanamthitta district. The agitators tried to overturn the barricade placed before the collectorate which led to a scuffle with the police. With workers attempting to cross the barricade and enter the Collectorate premises, the police resorted to lathicharge in which many YC activists were injured.

Three YC workers were injured in Kozhikode when their protest march turned violent. The police hurled stun grenades twice but it didn't work and then used a water cannon to disperse the workers.

India's Covid recovery outstrips new cases

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 19

India's single-day recovery outstripped the number of new infections as nearly 96,000 people recuperated from the novel coronavirus infection, even as the total caseload went past 53 lakh.

According to the Union health ministry data, 95,880 people recovered from Covid-19 in a span of 24 hours, 93,337 new infections were recorded during the period. "India has overtaken the US and become the top country in terms of Covid-19

recoveries," said the health ministry on Saturday.

Cabinet secretary chaired a high level review meeting with chief secretaries of the 12 state/ UTs, with 80 per cent total caseload, for effective containment and management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He specifically requested them to focus on analysing district level and health facility level status and effectively plan and manage logistical issues related with Oxygen availability, reports said.

Kerala reports record spike of 4,644 cases

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Saturday recorded the biggest single day spike in Covid-19 cases with 4,644 cases even as 2,862 persons recovered from infection. The total number of active cases in the state stood at 37,488. The state reported 18 deaths on Saturday.

Telangana has 2,123 new cases, nine deaths

Hyderabad: The GHMC area continues to record

the highest number of Covid-19 cases in the state and on Friday the figure stood at 305. The state registered nine more Covid-19 deaths and 2,123 new cases, taking the toll 1,025 and the caseload to 1,69,169.

8,218 new cases, 58 deaths in AP

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh has registered 8,218 new Covid-19 cases, raising the overall tally to 6,17,776, apart from 58 deaths in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 5,302.

Recoveries cross 4 lakh in Karnataka

Bengaluru: Total number of Covid-19 recoveries in Karnataka so far crossed the 4 lakh mark on Saturday, as the state reported 8,364 new cases of coronavirus and 114 related fatalities, the health department said. The total number of infections on Saturday stood at 5.11 lakh cases and the toll was at 7,922. The day also saw the number of recoveries outnumbering new infections, with 10,815 patients being discharged.

Villagers on Nepal border demand basic amenities

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 19

Even as Nepal is making constant efforts to lure people of three villages in Dharchula of Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand district so as to stake claim over them, the residents on Saturday informed the local administration that they stood firmly with India and would not allow the nefarious designs of the neighbour to succeed.

They, however, wanted the Centre and state government to come to their rescue and provide employment and other basic facilities in the border villages.

Deccan Chronicle had carried reports highlighting how the K.P.

Sharma Oli government in Nepal was offering huge money and land to the locals of Gunji, Kuti and Nabhi villages, located close to the tri-junction of India, China and Nepal. A group of residents led by Virendra Singh Nabyal, president of Dharchula Bachao Abhiyan, submitted a petition to the sub-divisional magistrate of Dharchula.

"Nepal is offering more than ₹2 crore to each family and wants the people of these three villages to hoist Nepal flags. We will not allow it to happen," the locals said. In the petition, also signed by other residents, they highlighted the problems being faced by the people living in border villages, particularly unemployment. They demanded that with increasing deployment of forces, the locals be used as porters or for doing other jobs and assist the Army and ITBP instead of bringing outsiders to do the job.

They pointed out that many people from Nepal had been regularly visiting the Indian side unchecked, without valid passes. "There are no hospitals in the villages. With no proper police outpost, there is no check of people coming in and going out. Keeping in view the tensions between India and China, there is an urgent need to develop infrastructure," Dinesh Gunjyal, vice-president of Bharat-Cheen Vyapar Sangh, said.

RS nod for changes to insolvency law

New Delhi, Sept. 19: Rajya Sabha on Saturday passed amendments to the insolvency law for suspension of fresh insolvency proceedings for at least six months starting March 25 amid the coronavirus pandemic, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman saying a decision on extending the suspension of relevant provisions will be taken next week.

In the wake of the Covid-19 situation, the government decided to suspend the provisions starting from March 25 for six months by promulgating an ordinance in June. Default on repayments from March 25, the day when the nationwide lockdown began to curb coronavirus infections, would not be considered for initiating insolvency

proceedings for at least six months. The six-month period is ending next week.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2020, seeks to replace the ordinance issued in June, was passed by a voice vote after a brief discussion. Replying to the debate, Sitharaman said the suspension of provisions will end next week.

"At the moment, amendment to the Code gives me a provision to only extend till one year. If at all, because it is coming to an end on September 25, September 24 itself we have to make an announcement about what is going to happen. But even if I do, it means by March it should be ending," she said.

GREATER VISAKHAPATNAM MUNICIPAL CORPORATION			
Tender Notice No.09/2020-21(CCE/GVMC/SEWS)/EE-I/WS&S-MB/Dt:17-09-2020			
01. Number of Works	1 No		
02. Value of Works (ECV)	Rs.857.34 Lakhs		
03. Down Loading Starting Date	18-09-2020		
04. Down Loading Ending Date	05-10-2020	@ 3.00 PM	
05. Last date of bid submission	05-10-2020	@ 4.00 PM	
06. Date of PQ Opening	06-10-2020	@ 5.00 PM	
07. Date of Commercial opening	08-10-2020	@ 1.30 PM	
08. Date of TQ opening	12-10-2020	@ 5.00 PM	
Note: For any other details required in respect of above tender notice, please contact EE-I(WS) before applying for tender schedules and visit vsp at www.apcprocurement.gov.in			
			CE(GVMC)

DECCAN Chronicle

20 SEPTEMBER 2020



Shreevatsa Nevatia

Off the beaten track

Beauty no antidote to Beirut's legacy of loss

I have developed a strange habit of late. An hour before I sleep, I tune into either BBC or CNN. Having caught up on the day's news, I wait for the foreign voices of TV anchors to first turn into a drone, then into lullaby. I often wake up in the middle of the night to fresh updates of Donald Trump's dangerous shenanigans, but on most days, I do not mind these rude interruptions. Even though my subconscious mind isn't well put together, it is, I tell myself, well informed. On occasion, however, my plans backfire.

A little over a month ago, on August 4, I couldn't fall asleep, no matter how hard I tried. Both the BBC and CNN had begun to flash breaking news, pictures of Beirut's historic port exploding. The television didn't make the blast any less deafening or scary. Hours before the Lebanese government could wrap its head around the cause of the explosion — a large, volatile consignment of ammonium nitrate — reports of devastation had begun trickling in. Houses, storefronts and bystanders had been blown to pieces. The CNN bureau had been destroyed. I was anguished. Beirut is my favourite city in the world.

In 2006, when Israel began pounding Lebanon with bombs, my editor called me and said, "You're going to Beirut." I was only 22, but my boss was one of those rare men who did not see inexperience when he looked at youth, he saw hunger. He was also one of those rare editors who believed that one could only make sense of affairs at home when one understood the world. A war, even if being fought between Israel and a terrorist Hezbollah, had ramifications for us all. To show that violence is futile, he believed, it needed to be widely reported. As I was parachuted into Lebanon, I knew he was right.

For my first few days in Beirut, I embedded myself with the Red Cross. I was asked to shadow Sana'a, a volunteer not much older than me. She translated the Arabic I heard and read. She spoke English with a delectable accent. She was the most beautiful woman I had seen. Even when she took me to meet Fadiya Al Ahmar, I spent more time looking at her than a nearly nine-months pregnant Fadiya, who had been caught in Israeli-Hezbollah crossfire just a few days ago. "I am taking pills to calm myself, knowing they could be dangerous in my present state. I am so frightened my milk will be poison for my baby," the 30-year-old told us. After my interview, Fadiya hugged me tight and cried inconsolably.

Driving into Dahieh, a predominantly Shia suburb in Beirut, the windshield of my car would sometimes be hit by pamphlets that Israeli aircraft would drop from the skies. "Get out or get killed," the flimsy papers would read. Lebanon's youth had begun to take this message seriously. Mohammad, a man I met in Dahieh, a Hezbollah stronghold, said he didn't want take sides in the war: "I like sitting on the fence, it takes less place." Checking into a hotel with his family, Mohammad confided he wanted to move to Europe. Bilaal, a 14-year-old, watched Macaulay Culkin's *Home Alone* once every month. All he wanted was a life in the US. Even in 2006, Lebanon was, sadly, a country you survived or escaped.

Fourteen years ago, Beirut still had wounds that hadn't healed. A 15-year long (1975-1990) civil war had left its people scarred and distrustful. Rafic Hariri, one of Lebanon's beloved prime ministers, had been assassinated in 2005. Israel and Hezbollah were only compounding Lebanese trauma. All of 1,191 civilians are believed to have died in the 2006 Lebanon War, but the number of people who left the country as a result of it is estimated to be much, much higher. In recent years, a financial crisis has brought Lebanon to its knees. With inflation above 50 per cent, the life savings of several Lebanese people have now been erased. A banking scandal has made it difficult for many to access funds or take loans.

The nostalgia of tourists and travellers is inevitably myopic. It misrepresents both the past and present. When I think of Beirut, I remember the Rauouche Rocks that I could see from the city's exquisite beach. I long to return to the Roman Baths in downtown Beirut and walk past the Parisian cafes that surround Nejme Square. When I was 22, I believed that beauty and disaster could coexist, but watching the Port of Beirut being blown to smithereens, I knew that beauty is only a ruse. Rather than help us ease another's pain, it only tries to make us forget their suffering altogether. Sana'a had told me, "I don't care how bad it gets. Beirut is my home. I'll do all that I can to protect it." I imagine her fighting alone.

Shreevatsa Nevatia is a Kolkata-based journalist and the author of How to Travel Light: My Memories of Madness and Melancholia



Hope was never easy to find in Beirut, but the destruction of its port might make it extinct altogether

Subhani

SEAT SHARING...



How a 'friendly' media hurts govt's credibility



Pavan K. Varna

Chanakya's View

Rajat Sharma, who runs India TV, once told me a story about Atal Behari Vajpayee. The story deserves to be known more widely, so I hope that Rajat, who is a friend, will not mind if I share it. India TV has a very popular show called "Aap Ki Adalat", which Rajat anchors. A prominent personality from any walk of life is invited to the show, and literally put in the dock to be interrogated. Once, Atalji, as Prime Minister, agreed to be in the dock.

The interaction went off very well, or so Rajat thought. But as Atalji was leaving, he said, "Main aapse naraaz hoon: I am not very happy with you. Come and see me at my residence." Rajat was apprehensive that he had perhaps been too aggressive in his questioning, or said something that the PM did not like. In any case, at the first opportunity, he took an appointment, and was promptly given one. When they met, Atalji was gracious as ever, but told Rajat bluntly the reason for his *naraazgi* or unhappiness. "Aapne mujhe bohut aasani se chhod diya. You did not ask me the tough questions, and let me off lightly. That was not good of you."

There is a moral in this story, both for our current ruling party, and for some parts of our media. I don't think that leaders who welcome a more open interaction with the media, including sometimes unscripted — even hostile — questioning, lose their believability.

In fact, they enhance it. Similarly, if the media stops being blindly supportive of the ruling party's agenda, it does not lose its credibility. It only increases it.

I often wonder why the BJP's media managers don't understand this simple truth. It is said — apocryphally perhaps — that the BBC has a maxim: You must admit your minor truths if you want your major lies to be believed. With so many "pliant" channels openly toeing the ruling party's line, the BJP is soon going to ensure that no one anymore fully believes what these channels are saying. Intelligent media management requires the ability to propagate your point of view in the midst of a counter-viewpoint, not flat footedly have that viewpoint muted or shouted over. People from one generation before would remember when nobody believed what Doordarshan said. To get the "real" news they would tune in to BBC. But, Doordarshan was a government run broadcaster. What else could it do? That certainly is not the constraint of our non-governmental

When open bias crosses a certain threshold it endangers its own outreach. We saw this happening in the ongoing case of Sudarshan TV's 'Bindas Bol'. The channel was rightly hauled up by the Supreme Court.

Nothing is worse for media management than to have a situation where even your truths are discounted or dismissed because of the lack of credibility of those disseminating it.

media. In fact, the PM would do well to be a little more accessible to the public through interactions with the independent media, interactions that are not a one-way monologue.

When open bias crosses a certain threshold it endangers its own outreach. We saw this happening in the ongoing case of Sudarshan TV's "Bindas Bol" programme which alleged a "jihadi" conspiracy in the supposed increase of Muslim candidates qualifying for the civil services. The channel was rightly hauled up by the Supreme Court for its hateful, hurtful and dubious findings. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said: "While we respect freedom of media, let this message go to the media as well that any community shouldn't become a target. Ultimately we all exist as a nation, which must be cohesive and not against any community." The SC imposed an injunction on the broadcast of the programme, and called for a more robust mechanism for self-regulation in the media. Referring to several provisions under the law that are against hate speech and incitement of religious hatred, the Court specifically asked the regulatory powers of the News Broadcasters Association to be strengthened. At present, it felt, the NBA is "toothless", with several channels not its member and,

therefore, not under its jurisdiction.

Freedom of speech is a sacrosanct right guaranteed under the Constitution. But this freedom is neither limitless, nor is it one-sided. In a democracy, there must be space for those who wish to dissent, disagree or interrogate the viewpoint of the government. The media is a vital instrument in ensuring that such a liberal milieu of free debate and questioning exists. The BJP's proclivity to encourage and patronise only those "friendly" media outlets that unreservedly espouse its point of view, is counterproductive. I have been the official spokesperson of the ministry of external affairs, the Press secretary to the President of India, and the national spokesperson of the JD(U). Nothing is worse for media management than to have a situation where even your truths are discounted or dismissed because of the lack of credibility of those disseminating it.

Atal Behari Vajpayee was, I am sure, not averse to good media coverage of his government. All leaders, and all governments, want that. But, he was intelligent enough to understand that "good" coverage means very little if it lacks credibility. If the perception is that certain media outlets just blindly eulogise the government, more and more people will devalue what they say. Such outlets may be watched, but may not be believed. That is why he told Rajat Sharma that he should have been a little tougher in his questioning. It is something that the BJP would do well to ponder about.

The writer, an author and former diplomat, is in politics. The views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

TEXTBOOK PRESCRIPTION

It might be early to view the farm policy bills as anti-farmer but taken together, their text-book construct is patently naive. Marginal farmers make up 85% of the agro producers. They have been made to depend on local creditors for financing for long. As to the formal banking system, they were never a welcome client. The present clutch of policies espouses an open market architecture for the farming community for everything else except a grid for financing that can assure easy flow of low cost credit. It is this malady that has long been marginalising the farming class. But the same government would bend backwards to big industry that constantly whines over high borrowing costs.

R. Narayanan, Chennai

FARM BILLS

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi has said that the recent farm bills of the country are intended to facilitate farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country. He is sanguine that this will eliminate the middlemen who have been a thorn in the flesh of farmers for decades. But the question is: Do the Indian small and marginal farmers have the knowledge of market conditions in their region, let alone other places? India is a country where every state (barring Tamil Nadu) looks like a separate nation, thanks to the linguistic fanaticism of majority of the people living there. Even the educated ones are hesitant to eke out their livelihood in unfamiliar places. How can the farmers be expected to sell their crops anywhere in the country and earn lucrative prices? Nevertheless, the Congress has no moral right to criticise the BJP's farm bills, as they didn't do anything concrete to solve the farmers' perennial marketing woes.

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

IPL PROMISE

THIS IS with reference to your report *IPL promises a 'happy distraction'*. As mentioned in your report it will serve as a catalyst for "positive distraction". It will definitely be a relief from the "corona positive" news and data which have thrown the people into melancholy and depression. It will also be a blessing in disguise as most of the youngsters will stay at home to watch the matches which will reduce the spread of infections. There is a delay in the start of the IPL, but it was worth waiting for. Hope Chennai Super Kings will entertain the people and fans who expect them to lift the cup this season.

M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai

IRANIAN REVOLUTION

IRAN IS going through a dating revolution. As more and more young people, unable to reconcile the strict Islamic rules of engagement and the wishes of their parents opt to stay single, the government has stepped in to open dating websites, sans photos and with parental guidance, of course, to play matchmaker. Iran now has 30 million people of marriageable age. But parents of women hold men to very high standards of wealth and prosperity to be enforced by the Islamic custom of mehr, which is a form of reverse dowry, while the women, themselves, lead a circumscribed existence and are subjected to rules that are both subtle and restrictive. Let a thousand roses bloom in Iran when its young define the course of their lives and set their society free.

Priyanka Mathur, Kolkata

BOLD INITIATIVE

BY PASSING the agriculture bills in the Lower House of Parliament, the government has shown its commitment to the welfare of farmers which was overdue since 1991 when economic reforms were started but bypassed the agriculture sector which remain untouched. Its turn has now come though the government will have to do extra work to allay the fears of farmers. The agitation going on in different parts of the country are but part of a temporary phase. Perhaps, a new mechanism to regulate the MSP and institute safeguards for farmers are the need of the hour.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandhar

Kangana's vitriol corrodes Bollywood reputation

Avenging angel

The Kangana Ranaut saga has upset and demoralised Bollywood. Already badly hurt by the Covid-19 pandemic that is depriving lakhs of their livelihood, the "drugs society" charge is hurting the entertainment industry further. Some former stars wonder why Kangana, an accomplished actress, is speaking with vengeance and making it look as if the drug menace is confined to film industry wallahs. Does it have to do with an ugly episode from Kangana's own life when a superstar and other A-listers had cornered her badly?

Desperately seeking 'Suzy'

Others acknowledge that Bollywood cliques have occasionally concocted their own narcotic for personal consumption. These concoctions are given informal names. One mild drug was reportedly called "Suzy". Who is Suzy? Is she some style trendsetter who habitually hangs out with other A-listers? Nobody knows for sure.

Rajnath comes second

Kangana Ranaut's Mumbai visit was followed by her war of words with co-actress-

es such as Urmila Matondkar. The media frenzy was so extraordinary that it even rattled BJP communication personnel who struggled to make space on TV news for defence minister Rajnath Singh's important statement on China. Even some anchors and channels considered sympathetic to the ruling establishment were reluctant to run political news in place of the saucy Jaya Bachchan-Kangana-Urmila saga.

They still love Sidhu

Shiromani Akali Dal minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal's resignation from the Narendra Modi government over the new farming bill is sought to be underplayed. But informed sources say there is much more happening as part of the run-up to the early-2022 Punjab Assembly polls. While both the Akalis and the BJP have gone on record to say that all is well and that the SAD would continue in the NDA, in private conversation some BJP leaders say the SAD has become a political liability for the BJP in Congress-ruled Punjab. They recall that even in 2016, Narendra Modi and Amit Shah had contemplated breaking ties and going at it alone in the 2017 Assembly polls but Arun Jaitley had argued in favour of the SAD. Interestingly, some BJP leaders view Navjyot Singh Sidhu — who had left the BJP



By WAQYANAWIS

and is currently a disgruntled MLA in the Captain Amrinder Singh-led Congress in Punjab — as an asset for 2022. You heard this here first.

No more corridor scoops

For journalists covering the Parliament of India, Covid-19 is posing problems.

Incredible as it may sound, they and officials have to get their nose drilled for RT-PCR and antigen tests on a daily basis, or each time they enter Parliament. At the functional level there are many handicaps. Senior scribes cannot meet (or run into in Parliament's corridors) leaders who used to provide valuable information, leads or just gossip.

Waiting for Sonia

During the UPA era, Gurdeep Singh Sappal was everywhere. A political aide of former Vice-President Hamid Ansari and heading Rajya Sabha TV, Mr Sappal had wide access. Today, his independent TV venture, Swaraj Express, has conked without a trace. Mr Sappal has not given up hope. He, like many others, is anxiously waiting for Sonia Gandhi to return and looking for a meaty role in the AICC media department or party's "War Room" at 15, Gurudwara Rakabgunj Marg. Some Congress leaders feel that if failure and insignificance act in Mr Sappal's favour then he may bounce back.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power

SHORT TAKES THOUSANDS JOIN DEMOCRACY RALLY IN THAI

Bangkok, Sept. 19: Tens of thousands of pro-democracy protesters massed close to Thailand's royal palace on Saturday, in a huge rally calling for PM Prayut Chan-O-Cha to step down and demanding reforms to the monarchy.

The kingdom has seen nearly daily gatherings of youth-led groups since mid-July calling for the resignation of Prayut, the former army chief behind the 2014 coup, and a complete overhaul of his administration. Some are also demanding reforms to Thailand's ultra-wealthy and powerful monarchy — a once-taboo topic in the country due to its tough royal defamation laws.

The burgeoning movement, partly inspired by Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests, remains largely leaderless.

But the weekend's demonstration is organised by students of Bangkok's Thammasat University — a group that has been among the most vocal about the royal family's role in Thailand.

2 KILLED, 14 HURT IN SHOOTING AT U.S. PARTY

Washington, Sept. 19: Two people were killed and 14 wounded early on Saturday in a shooting at a backyard party in Rochester, New York state, police said.

Officers responding to reports of gunfire in the area found a "chaotic scene" with about 100 people running in various directions, interim police chief Mark Simmons told reporters.

"In total we have 16 confirmed victims of shooting. And I'm sad to announce that two of the 16 received a fatal wound," he said.

Those killed — one man, one woman — were both between 18 and 22 years of age, and had not been formally identified, he said.

The 14 wounded had been taken to hospital and were not in a life-threatening condition, he said. No arrests have been made so far and police could not say if more than one shooter was involved. "For our community to have to deal with this tragedy ... is unfortunate and shameful," Simmons said.

FIREFIGHTER DIES BATTLING BLAZE

Juniper Hills (US), Sept. 19: The death of a firefighter on the lines of a wildfire east of Los Angeles was under investigation on Friday as another blaze to the north burned homes in a small community on the edge of the Mojave Desert.

The death occurred Thursday in San Bernardino National Forest as crews battled the El Dorado Fire about 75 miles (120 kilometers) east of LA, the US Forest Service said in a statement.

The fire erupted earlier this month from a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said. The name of the firefighter was being withheld until family members are notified. "Our deepest sympathies are with the family, friends and fellow firefighters during this time," Forest Service spokesperson Zach Behrens said in the statement.

TORRENTIAL RAIN HITS SOUTHERN FRANCE

Marseille, Sept. 19: One person was reported missing on Saturday and dozens faced evacuation from their homes after torrential rain hit southern France, authorities said.

The Gard region, where firefighters reported the missing person, was on red alert after as much as 350 millimetres (13.5 inches) of rain fell in parts of the Cevennes mountain range on the edge of the Massif Central.

Helicopters carried out two rescue missions and some 300 firefighters were mobilised for three further operations as some 200 people were led to safety in two villages.

The mayor of one commune, Anduze, some 70 kilometres (45 miles) north of Montpellier, told AFP around 100 homes on low ground would have to be evacuated.

The adjacent region of Languedoc was also hit by severe storms as meteorological authorities warned of more downpours to come come across much of the deep south.

US Liberal icon Ginsburg dies at 87

Flags fly at half-mast as crucial vacancy expected to set off pitched political battle during Prez polls

Washington, Sept. 19: US Supreme Court Justice and liberal icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg died Friday, opening a crucial vacancy on the high court expected to set off a pitched political battle at the peak of the presidential campaign.

Affectionately known as the Notorious RBG, the 87-year-old Ginsburg was the oldest of nine Supreme Court justices.

She died after a fight with pancreatic cancer, the court announced, saying she passed away "surrounded by her family at her home in Washington, DC." Coming just 46 days before an election in which President Donald Trump lags his Democratic rival Joe Biden in the polls, the vacancy offers the Republican a chance to

lock in a conservative majority at the court for decades to come.

Trump issued a statement praising Ginsburg as a "titan of the law," but gave no indication whether he intended to press ahead with a nomination. Accolades flowed in for the pioneering Jewish justice.

"Our Nation has lost a jurist of historic stature," said Chief Justice John Roberts.

Trump's predecessor Barack Obama said in a tweet that Ginsburg "fought to the end, through her cancer, with unwavering faith in our democracy and its ideals." Biden said she was "an American hero, a giant of legal doctrine, and a relentless voice in the pursuit of that highest American ideal: Equal



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Justice Under Law." In Washington, hundreds of tearful mourners laid flowers in front of the Supreme Court, where the diminutive Ginsburg sat for 27 years — even taking arguments and issuing opinions from her hospital bed after repeated bouts of illness over the past two years.

US flags flew at half-mast on each side of the court building. People lit candles on the steps of the court while others held rainbow flags.

Among the notably young crowd was Erin Drumm, a student at the Catholic University of America.

"I came here because I think RBG represents everything that America should stand for," the 19-year-old said. "She represents the freedom to choose and respect for science and other people regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity or religion."

Taylor Gutierrez, 26, said he wanted to celebrate Ginsburg's achievements, "especially as a gay man knowing that she helped create a more equitable society for us." —AFP

McConnell vows Sen. will hold vote on Ginsburg replacement

Washington, Sept. 19: US Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell vowed on Friday to hold a vote on a nominee that President Donald Trump names to replace late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, despite the looming November election.

Her death sets up a mammoth battle for the seat she left behind, with Trump potentially moving to nominate a new justice just weeks before the November 3 vote, and challenger Joe Biden demanding the election be held first, and the winner to

pick Ginsburg's successor. "President Trump's nominee will receive a vote on the floor of the United States Senate," McConnell, a chief ally of the president in Congress, said in a statement shortly after Ginsburg's death was announced by the court.

The move would be in direct opposition to Ginsburg's reported dying wish that she not be replaced "until a new president is installed" in January, 2021.

Such a step would be unprecedented in modern times — and is certain to infuriate Democrats who

have already called for McConnell to wait to bring a nomination to the floor until at least January, when control of the White House and Senate could change. "The voters should pick the president, and the president should pick the justice for the Senate to consider," Biden told reporters after learning of Ginsburg's death.

"This was the position the Republican Senate took in 2016 when there were almost 10 months to go before the election. That's the position the United States Senate must take today." —AFP

UK FOREIGN MIN'S BODYGUARD AXED AFTER LEAVING GUN ON PLANE

London, Sept. 19: A bodyguard who was traveling with Britain's foreign secretary has been suspended from duties after he reportedly left a loaded gun on a plane.

British media reported on Saturday that the police protection officer traveling with Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab on a visit to the United States left the pistol on a plane at London's Heathrow Airport on Friday. A cleaner found the weapon, media reports said.

London's Metropolitan Police said the force was aware of "the incident on a flight into the UK on Friday" and "taking this matter extremely seriously."

"The officer involved has since been removed from operational duties whilst an internal investigation into the circumstances is taking place," the police department said on Saturday in a statement. Raab visited Washington this week to speak with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and other officials about Brexit. —AP

PAK'S FORMER-PM NAWAZ SHARIF MULLING POLITICAL COMEBACK

Islamabad, Sept. 19: Pakistan's deposed premier Nawaz Sharif is set to make a comeback in active politics following a year-long absence after PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari invited him to virtually attend the Opposition-led multiparty conference aimed at launching a protest movement against the Imran Khan-led government on Sunday.

Sharif, 70, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supremo, has been living in London since November last year after the Lahore High Court granted him permission to go abroad for four weeks for treatment. —PTI

Water area festival



A flyboarder performs in Moscow River Channel during a SUP (Stand Up Paddle), Water area festival in Moscow, Russia, on Saturday. — AFP

US envoy wraps up Taiwan visit as China sends more warpalnes

Taipei, Sept. 19: A top US diplomat attended the funeral for former Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui Saturday which featured a eulogy by Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama before wrapping up a visit overshadowed by Chinese military exercises.

China sent more warplanes toward Taiwan for the second day on Saturday.

Keith Krach, undersecretary of state for economic growth, energy and the environment, was the highest-ranking State Department official to visit Taiwan since 1979 when Washington switched diplomatic recognition to Beijing.

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

US Secretary of State

China protests US ban on tech giants, warns of counteraction

Shanghai, Sept. 19: China said on Saturday it had launched a mechanism enabling it to restrict foreign entities, a much-anticipated move seen as retaliation to US penalties against Chinese companies such as telecom giant Huawei.

An announcement by the Ministry of Commerce did not mention any specific foreign entities, but broadly spelled out the factors that could trigger punitive measures, which may include fines, restrictions on import-export business or investment in China, and

the entry of personnel or equipment into the country.

It covers "foreign enterprises, other organisations and individuals", it said. The launch of the "unreliable entities list" ups the ante in the escalating commercial fight with the Trump administration, which has used its own "entity list" to bar Huawei from the US market on national security grounds.

The announcement also came a day after the US ordered a ban on downloads of popular video app TikTok and effectively

blocked the use of the Chinese super-app WeChat on similar grounds, which prompted a threat by China to strike back.

Beijing would consider sanctions on entities whose activities "harm China's national sovereignty, security, and development interests" or violate "internationally accepted economic and trade rules".

That language closely tracks wording that Beijing has used to repeatedly denounce US actions against Chinese companies. —AFP

Mike Pompeo accused China of "military blustering" as Beijing conducted military exercises on Friday near the Taiwan Strait during

Krach's visit. Chinese fighters and bombers crossed the so-called median line dividing the Strait and entered Taiwan's southwest air

defence identification zone (ADIZ) for a second straight day on Saturday, Taiwan's defence ministry said as it scrambled fighters in response. —AFP

FILM | FESTIVAL Lindon's French love story, *Spring Blossom* captures the shine and bounce that love brings

What is life? It's that youthful first love, a funeral and a party

**SUPARNA SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 19**

"What is youth? A dream. What is love? The content of the dream." These unforgettable lines, by Soren Kierkegaard, appear at the beginning of director Thomas Vinterberg's Danish film, *Another Round*, which is playing at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). But it's almost as if they were written after watching another film that's playing at TIFF — 20-year-old Suzanne Lindon's French love story, *Spring Blossom*.

Lindon is the star of her film. She plays Suzanne, a bored 16-year-old girl in Paris who, on her way to

and from school, lingers a bit in a cobbled, cafe-lined square, her eyes peeled for a 35-year-old dashing actor, Raphaël (Arnaud Valois). Boys and girls her own age don't interest Suzanne. She wants to be seen, by him.

Raphaël's parked red scooter is an indicator that he's inside the small theatre rehearsing a play. She doesn't know that he too is bored. She doesn't know that sometimes he is asked to play an Oak tree.

Spring Blossom follows Suzanne everywhere — when she's with her friends, at home with her parents, or out with Raphaël.

The film's story, which Lindon wrote when she was 15, celebrates the



A still from the movie *Another Round*.

heady concoction of uncontrollable joy, chuckles and tingles in a young mind and body while negotiating first love. It captures the shine and bounce that love brings, as well as the overwhelming confusion before that first breakfast date, and the shy, awkward moments at that date with the sort of lyrical swaying that the young in love are prone to.

As Raphaël too begins to fall in love with Suzanne, they are locked in a moment. And just as she likes to linger in that square, Suzanne wants to linger in that moment too, sipping grenadine and lemonade.

Usually, love stories have trauma, drama, villains, loss. There is no turmoil, loss in *Spring Blossom*. Just the fear of losing that



A still from the movie *Spring Blossom*.

moment, that love.

Vinterberg's *Another Round* is about having lived those moments and then lost them to a job, a family, a house.

The film tells the story of four high school teachers of whom Martin (Mads Mikkelsen) is most obviously struck by a sadness that's taken hold of his soul.

"Am I boring?" Martin

asks his wife, and breaks down at a dinner with his friends. That's when Nikolaj (Magnus Millan), a psychology teacher, talks of Norwegian psychiatrist Finn Skårderud's claim that humans are born short of 0.05% Blood Alcohol Content, and to function at our best — physically, intellectually and emotionally — we must drink.

Martin tests this theory

and his dull, confusing, rambling history classes become engaging, fun.

He tells the others, and on Nikolaj's suggestion and pretence of taking notes for research, they all begin taking a few swigs before and during work. It helps initially, to smile, to take more interest, to reconnect with themselves, and to connect with others. But there's temptation to drink more, and soon some relationships, lives begin to capsize.

Another Round is funny, sad, real, bizarre, scary, warm. And it's message is simple — life is both, a funeral and a party. That's why it ends on a glorious note, with a dance sequence by Mads Mikkelsen that will add two years to your lifespan.

SHORT TAKES

Hari stuns Carlsen before four losses

Chennai: Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna pulled off a stunning win over world champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway but suffered four losses later in the day to slip to overall sixth place in the St Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament.

Harikrishna defeated world number one Carlsen in round three of Blitz 1 in 63 moves with white pieces. He also beat lower-rated American Jeffrey Xiong but save for the two wins, he had a forgettable day as he suffered four defeats, apart from three draws. Harikrishna shares the sixth place with Armenian GM Levon Aronian with 3.5 points after the nine rounds of Blitz 1. Carlsen, who had dropped to second place behind So at the end of the Rapid event, leapt to the top spot in the standings with 18.5 points. — *PTI*

Tvesa lies T-2nd at French Open

Bordeaux, France: Indian golfer Tvesa Malik put herself in contention with a solid three-under 68 to lie tied second after round two of the 2020 Lacoste Ladies Open De France.

As Tvesa carded 68 to get to four-under 138, Sweden's Julia Engstrom had a memorable day with a hole-in-one en route to a second round 64 (-7) which put her on top the leaderboard heading into the third and final round.

Things were, however, rather disappointing for another Indian Diksha Dagar, who after 89 in the first round, carded 85 and missed the cut by a big margin.

Tvesa shares the second place with local French golfer and the 2015 champion Celine Herbin at four-under and they are four behind Julia Engstrom. — *PTI*

Djoker loses cool again during win

Rome: Less than two weeks after getting defaulted from the U.S. Open, Novak Djokovic lost his cool again midway through a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 win over German qualifier Dominik Koepfer in the Italian Open quarterfinals Saturday.

When Djokovic was broken at love to even the second set at 3-3, he slammed his racket to the red clay in anger.

With the frame broken and the strings all mangled, Djokovic was forced to get a new racket and received a warning from the chair umpire.

Djokovic had already appeared frustrated the previous game, when he glared toward the umpire following a couple of overrules and a point that was ordered to be replayed.

— *AP*

Lakers dominate Nuggets in Game 1

Miami: Anthony Davis scored 37 points and pulled down 10 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers dominated the Denver Nuggets 126-114 on Friday in game one of the NBA Western Conference finals.

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Delhi Capitals vs Kings XI Punjab from 7:30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Southampton vs Tottenham Hotspur from 4:30 pm; Newcastle vs Brighton from 6:30 pm; Chelsea vs Liverpool from 9 pm; Leicester City vs Burnley from 11:30 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

Spanish League: Huesca vs Cadiz from 7:30 pm; Granada vs Deportivo Alaves from 10 pm; Real Betis vs Real Valladolid from 10 pm; Real Sociedad vs Real Madrid from 12:30 am (Monday) on LaLiga page on Facebook

Italian League: Parma vs Napoli from 4 pm; Genoa vs Crotone from 6:30 pm; Sassuolo vs Cagliari from 9:30 pm Juventus vs Sampdoria from 12:15 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

TENNIS

Rome Masters: Semifinals in two sessions from 5:30 pm and 9:30 pm on Sony Six, HD

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DAZZLING DUET

Century stand between Rayudu, Du Plessis help CSK pull off incredible win

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 19: Ambati Rayudu smashed a 48-ball 71 to guide Chennai Super Kings to a comprehensive five-wicket win over defending champions Mumbai Indians in the opening match of the 13th IPL here on Saturday.

Chasing 163 to win, Rayudu blasted six fours and three sixes in his blistering innings, while Faf du Plessis cracked 58 off 44 balls as CSK romped home with four balls to spare.

Earlier, Mumbai Indians posted a challenging 162/9 after Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni won the toss and elected to bowl.

The highlight of Mumbai's innings was Saurabh Tiwary's 42 off 31 balls and Quinton de Kock's 20-ball 33 at the top.

For CSK, Lungi Ngidi (3/38) was the most successful bowler while Ravindra Jadeja (2/42) and Deepak Chahar (2/32) captured two wickets apiece and Sam Curran (1/28) and Piyush Chawla (4/21) picked one each.

The shrewd Dhoni introduced Chawla into the attack and he right away dismissed Rohit Sharma (12) who always have had a problem with wrist spinners. It was a straight delivery that Rohit was trying to hit

inside out but couldn't get past Curran at the mid-off circle. — *PTI*

SCORECARDS

Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma c Sam Curran b Chawla 12, Quinton de Kock c Watson b Sam Curran 33, Suryakumar Yadav c Sam Curran b D. Chahar 17, Saurabh Tiwary c du Plessis b Ravindra Jadeja 42, Hardik Pandya c du Plessis b Ravindra Jadeja 14, Kieron Pollard c Dhoni b Lungi Ngidi 18, Krunal Pandya c Dhoni b Lungi Ngidi 3, James Pattinson c du Plessis b Lungi Ngidi 11, Rahul Chahar (not out) 2, Trent Boult b D. Chahar 0, Jasprit Bumrah (not out) 5. **Extras: (w-4, lb-1) 5. Total: (for 9 wkts, in 20 Over) 162.**
FoW: 46-1, 48-2, 92-3, 121-4, 124-5, 136-6, 151-7, 156-8, 156-9.
Bowler: Deepak Chahar 4-0-32-2, Sam Curran 4-0-28-1, Lungi Ngidi 4-0-38-3, Piyush Chawla 4-0-21-1, Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-42-2.

Chennai Super Kings Innings: Murali Vijay lbw b James Pattinson 1, Shane Watson lbw b Boult 4, Faf du Plessis (not out) 58, Ambati Rayudu c and b Rahul Chahar 71, Ravindra Jadeja lbw b Krunal Pandya 10, Sam Curran c James Pattinson b Bumrah 18, M.S. Dhoni (not out) 0. **Extras: (w-3, nb-1) 4. Total: (for 5 wkts, in 19.2 overs) 166.**
FoW: 5-1, 6-2, 121-3, 134-4, 153-5.
Bowler: Trent Boult 3-2-0-23-1, James Pattinson 4-0-27-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-43-1, Krunal Pandya 4-0-37-1, Rahul Chahar 4-0-36-1.



Ambati Rayudu of Chennai Super Kings plays a shot against Mumbai Indians in their Indian Premier League match at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Saturday. — *Sportspics for BCCI*

DC, KXIP in battle of power-hitters

Dubai, Sept. 19: Two greats will pit their wits against each other in the background as their captains, with an ability to achieve greatness, lead their power-hitters out for an IPL match between Delhi Capitals and Kings XI Punjab here on Sunday.

Ricky Ponting and Anil Kumble are arguably two of the biggest names in cricket and the dazzling array of talent in both the teams would seek to draw inspiration from their respective heavyweight coaches in their tournament opener.

Man-to-man, Delhi Capitals seem to have a slight edge, more so in the spin department, with the trio of R. Ashwin, Amit Mishra and Axar Patel streets ahead of their counterparts from the Mohali-based side.

Spin is expected to play a big role on the UAE pitches.



Delhi Capitals captain Shreyas Iyer (left) and coach Ricky Ponting at a training session in Dubai on Saturday.

The match, at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, will also be a face-off between skippers K.L. Rahul and Shreyas Iyer, both seen as future India captaincy material.

Shimron Hetmyer.

In this scenario, Ajinkya Rahane (strike-rate below 120), who was bought from Rajasthan Royals, may be left out.

The KXIP also boast of some of the finest clean hitters in the form of Chris Gayle, Glenn Maxwell and Rahul himself.

Maxwell's confidence must be sky high after his ODI series-winning century (108) against England. He also had a memorable run the last time the IPL was held in UAE, albeit partially, in 2014 when he hammered 552 runs in 16 games.

The KXIP have a dangerous opening pairing in Gayle and Rahul with Mayank Agarwal to follow. But it remains to be seen whether the 40-year-old Gayle will continue to be a regular feature at the top of the order this time around. — *PTI*

Rahul vows to make it memorable

Dubai, Sept. 19: Kings XI Punjab skipper K.L. Rahul on Saturday said the side is motivated to making this IPL season a memorable one by playing a good brand of cricket.

The Rahul-led side will open their campaign against Delhi Capitals at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday.

"The team has been fantastic, we've been getting along great and are looking forward to playing a good brand of cricket and making this season a memorable one," Rahul said.

"We're confident, we're motivated and we are really excited to be a part of this edition of the



Indian Premier League," he added.

Rahul, who has been handed the Kings XI Punjab captaincy after two stellar seasons with the bat at the top of the order, said it will be a

challenging experience playing in the UAE without the fans but the team is ready for it.

"It is going to be a different experience this year, but we as a team are up to the challenge and

are playing for all the fans who continue to support us," Rahul said.

KXIP, who have never won the IPL, are aiming to go all the way this time with a strong squad at their disposal with the likes of Mayank Agarwal, Mohammad Shami and overseas recruits Chris Gayle, Glenn Maxwell, Sheldon Cottrell, Jimmy Neesham, the in-form Nicholas Pooran and Mujeeb Zadran.

"The team looks great and we have a top-notch line up this season. The boys have been working really hard and we have a nice balance of youth and experience in our squad," head Coach Anil Kumble said. — *PTI*

SMITH, ARCHER, BUTTLER CLEAR COVID-19 TESTS

Dubai, Sept. 19: Captain Steve Smith along with star players Jofra Archer and Jos Buttler have cleared the mandatory Covid-19 test on arrival and are available to play Rajasthan Royals' IPL opener against Chennai Super Kings at the Sharjah Cricket ground on September 22.

The trio were part of the 21-strong contingent of Australia and England players, who arrived in the UAE from UK by a special chartered flight on September 17.

"Smith, Buttler and Archer underwent Covid-19 tests on Friday and

results are negative. So they are available for selection with quarantine duration being reduced to 36 hours," an IPL source said on conditions of anonymity.

Former Australia skipper Smith has had concussion problems and missed all three ODIs against England and his participation in the opening game is subject to clearance from both franchise and Cricket Australia's medical team.

If Smith misses the first game, Buttler could lead the side as he is one of the senior most players in the team. — *PTI*

EVERTON FIRE 5 PAST WEST BROM

London, Sept. 19: Dominic Calvert-Lewin hit a hat-trick and James Rodriguez bagged his first Premier League goal as Everton crushed 10-man West Bromwich Albion 5-2 to extend their perfect start to the season on Saturday.

Carlo Ancelotti's side fell behind to Grady Diangana's early goal at Goodison Park.

But Calvert-Lewin equalised and James put them ahead before West Brom imploded.

Kieran Gibbs was dismissed for pushing James in the face in first half stoppage-time.

Then Albion boss Slaven Bilic was sent to the stands after storming onto the pitch for a furious rant at referee Mike Dean.

Matheus Pereira equalised for Albion after the interval, but Michael Keane restored Everton's lead and Calvert-Lewin sealed the points with his second and third goals.

Ar 23, Calvert-Lewin is the youngest Englishman to score a Premier League hat-trick for Everton.

After a summer spending spree, Ancelotti is under pressure to deliver a big improvement on last season's 12th place finish and the early signs are promising. — *AFP*

THE RESULT

Everton 5
(Calvert-Lewin 31, 62, 66, James 45, Keane 54)
West Brom 2
(Diangana 10, Pereira 47)

BAYERN RUN RIOT IN OPENER

Munich (Germany), Sept. 19: Leroy Sane said all-conquering Bayern Munich crave even more silverware after the German winger scored on his debut in Friday's historic 8-0 thrashing of Schalke in the opening game of the new Bundesliga season.

"We're still hungry, even though we won the treble last season," said Sane after creating two goals for Serge Gnabry, who claimed a hat-trick in the goalfest.

"Winning our first game at home 8-0 is obviously super.

"It felt really, really good finally to be able to play with the lads," said Sane. Just 26 days after winning the Champions League final, Bayern picked up where they left off last season with their 22nd-straight win.

The jaw-dropping result is the highest win in an opening game of a new Bundesliga season — five weeks to the day after Bayern's 8-2 thrashing of Barcelona in the quarterfinals of the Champions League. — *AFP*

THE RESULT

Bayern Munich 8
(Gnabry 4, 47, 59, Goretzka 19, Lewandowski 31-pen, Mueller 69, Sane 71, Musiala 81)
Schalke 0



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

After months of suspense, apprehension and anticipation, the IPL is finally underway. The circumstances are unusual. The tournament has been played overseas earlier too, so that it not such a severe setback, though it could impact the teams in sundry ways since players were chosen, retained or dumped based on the tournament being played in India.

What's starkly different this time is that this high-

octane tournament will be without spectators, and with a stringent protocol in place to counter the looming threat of Covid19. It remains to be seen what impact this has on the players' mood and mind.

Barring players from West Indies, England and Australia, others are also shorn of match practice since the lockdown began in March. How rusty will they be? Other factors that could have a bearing on team and individual performances are the heat

and humidity in the UAE, at least for the first half of the tournament, and the character of pitches which is unknown.

None of this, however, can subdue the excitement of the tournament being played. The IPL is a platform where talent can be showcased and careers made or consolidated. The *creme de la creme* of the world's players (barring from Pakistan) will be in action.

No player's worth can be undermined, but this season my attention will be on five Indian players, at different stages in their careers, for whom this IPL could be decisive in one way or another.

M. S. Dhoni: Recently retired from international cricket, he still remains

perhaps the biggest draw-card in the IPL. Pushing 40, how fit is he for the demanding schedule of the league? Does he still have the form to win matches off his own bat? Most important in Dhoni's case is captaincy. He commands loyalty, of that there is no doubt. But with seasoned pros Raina and Harbhajan missing, how he deploys his resources will be key. And how CSK fares this season could well determine whether Dhoni will wear the yellow jersey next season.

Virat Kohli: India's most successful captain in international cricket has been floundering to win the IPL title, though he's been spectacular with bat and is the league's highest rungetter. This is his 10th

season in the leadership role. The best RCB have achieved under him was runner up in 2016. Since then, RCB's results have been poor: bottom placed in 2017 and 2019, 6th in 2018, raising queries about Kohli's captaincy in this format. Harsh considering his captaincy record in the same format in internationals. But Kohli has certainly something to prove.

R. Ashwin: Picked for international cricket on the strength of IPL performances, became a certainty in all three formats, before losing his place in ODIs as well as T20is. A productive IPL season could bring Ashwin back in the reckoning for India in limited overs cricket. Move from Kings XI Punjab cost him the cap-

taincy as Delhi Capitals have preferred to retain Shreyas Iyer in the top position. Crafty and strong-minded, how well and swiftly he strikes rapport with Iyer and coach Ponting could define DC's fortunes as well as his own future.

K. L. Rahul: Made captain of Kings XI after Ashwin's departure, faces multiple challenges as the team seeks its first IPL title. Rahul's batting ability is hardly doubted. He's mauled the best bowlers with his rich and powerful strokeplay. Under scrutiny now to see how he tackles burden of captaincy. Managing individuals with different skillsets and temperaments can be hugely demanding. Several fine players who

have suffered under the pressure. But this is also an opportunity which can take Rahul higher in Indian cricket.

Hardik Pandya: Broke down during the ODI World Cup in 2019, Pandya's comeback to Indian cricket — in all formats — depends on how well he survives this IPL season. His all-round skills and aggressive instincts make him a matchwinner: with bat or bowling fast medium with clever variations. Add to that brilliant fielding, and it is easy to see why Hardik is so coveted by Mumbai Indians, as well as the Indian team. Whether his career graph resumes its upward trajectory, stagmates or slumps depends on his form and fitness in this tournament.