

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | THURSDAY 26 | NOVEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



**Max:** 30°C  
**Min:** 22°C  
**Rainfall:** 38 mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Karthigai 11  
**Tithi:** Dwadashi  
**Star:** Revathi  
**Rahukalam:**  
1.30 pm to 3 pm  
**Yamagandam:**  
6 am to 7.30 am  
**PRAYERS**

**Fajar:** 4.57 am  
**Zohar:** 12 noon  
**Asar:** 3.13 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.39 pm  
**Isha:** 6.54 pm

**SUNSET TODAY** 5.40 PM  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 6.13 AM  
**MOONRISE TODAY** 2.32 PM  
**MOONSET TOMORROW** 2.52 AM

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+41,641)	(+481)
92,63,639	1,35,224

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+ 1,534)  
TN: 77,4710 11,655

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

6,04,58,280

### DEATHS

14,21,728

COUNTRIES,  
AREAS WITH  
CASES

218

worldometers.info

## PM Modi suggests state-specific export strategy

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday asked states to develop a state-specific export strategy and reviewed development projects worth ₹1.41 lakh crore spread across 10 states and union territories. Reforms are beneficial only when one performs, and this is the way forward to transform the country, Modi said as he chaired the meeting of PRAGATI — an ICT-based multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation involving central and state governments.

## Amazon fined for not displaying mandatory info about products

**New Delhi:** The government has imposed a penalty on e-commerce major Amazon for not displaying mandatory information, including the country of origin, of products sold on its platform, according to an official order. Last month, the consumer affairs ministry had issued notices to e-commerce majors Flipkart and Amazon for not displaying such information.

## COUNTER

## POINT



What is the landline, dad?

## Malayalam movie Jallikattu gets official Oscar entry

**New Delhi, Nov. 25:** Malayalam feature *Jallikattu*, directed by Lijo Jose Pellissery, has been selected as India's official entry for the International Feature Film category at the 93rd Academy Awards, the Film Federation of India (FFI) announced on Wednesday. *Jallikattu*, which was unanimously chosen from 27 entries across Hindi, Marathi and other languages, is about a tribe of

men coming together to stop a bull that has run amok in their village.

There were a total of 27 films that had entered the race from Hindi, Malayalam, Odia and Marathi. The film which has been nominated by the jury to represent India at Oscars is Malayalam film *Jallikattu*.

"It is a film that really brings out the raw problems which are there in human beings, that is we are worse

than animals," filmmaker Rahul Rawail, chairman, Jury Board, Film Federation of India, told reporters in an online press conference. The film, which derives its name from the popular-yet-controversial bull-taming event from the south, is based on a short story by Hareesh. It features actors Antony Varghese, Chemban Vinod Jose, Sabumon Abudusamad and Santhya Balachandran. — PTI

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**Barclay elected ICC's new independent chairman**



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The gates of the Chembarambakkam lake were opened up earlier to let out 1,000 cusecs of water amid heavy rainfall in Chennai on Wednesday.

— DC

# Nivar passes over, leaves 1 lakh people in shelters

**DC CORRESPONDENT**

CHENNAI, NOV. 25

● **Over 1L evacuated from TN, Pondy, says NDRF**

● **Under-construction fishing harbour in Nagai dt damaged**

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Torrential rains accompanied by gusty winds lashed several parts of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on Wednesday, inundating many localities while over one lakh people were moved to shelters as Cyclone 'Nivar' intensified into a very severe cyclonic storm and made the landfall with the eye of the storm passing over Marakkaanm in the state close to Puducherry by about 11 pm.

The storm formed over southwest Bay of Bengal moved west northwards, intensified into a very severe cyclonic storm and lay about 160 km off Chennai and 85 km from Puducherry, the India Meteorological Department said. It was to cross the coast between Karaikal in Puducherry and Mamallapuram, about 60 km from here, with a wind speed of 120-130 kmph gusting to 145 kmph.

Ministers were camping in the districts to oversee relief operations and fishermen had been advised not to venture into the sea, he said.

Flood warnings had been issued to people living on the banks of Adyar river, 12 villages in Chengalpattu district and eight in Kanchipuram district due to the opening of the Chembarambakkam lake.

In Chennai's suburbs of Varadharajapuram and Mudichur water entered homes in many residential

localities where people complained of snakes and venomous insects entering the houses. They were evacuated and lodged in relief camps by the authorities.

Also smaller lakes in places like Nandivaram, Mannivakkam, Manimangalam, Urupakkam and Guduvancherry also filled up due to the copious rains and water was released through the outlet canals.

Vignettes of the havoc wreaked by the continuous downpour in various parts of the city bombarded the people through social posts and WhatsApp forwards, increasing the fear of the rains. Intermittent power cuts too added to collective fear.

Some videos of heavy water logging in front of Olympia Tech Park or the winds bringing down the roof Dargah Hazrath Syed Moosa Sha Khaderi, the popular dargah on Anna Salai or the Parrys' Corner area going under a thick sheet of water, disrupting smooth flow of traffic were some of the images that created more panic to the people.

## Chembarambakkam opened as Chennai suburbs face flooding

**DC CORRESPONDENT**

CHENNAI, NOV. 25

Unabated heavy rains, flooded roads and marooned neighbourhoods disrupted normal life in Chennai, keeping the people on tenterhooks all through Wednesday even as the authorities opened the gates of Chembarambakkam reservoir opened for the first time in five years as a precautionary measure. After its storage was just 20 per cent short of its capacity due to heavy rains ahead of an incoming cyclone, water release to

the Adayar river that commenced with 1,000 cusecs was increased gradually, officials said. Another 2000 cusecs had also been released in the Adyar river, taking the total flow in the river to 6000 cusecs.

There was no need for the public to panic as Adyar river could hold 60,000 cusecs of water, Chief Minister Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said. He inspected the Chembarambakkam reservoir before opening the sluices. About 200 camps have been established in the 200 wards in Chennai,

he said.

In Chennai city, areas such as Egmore, Kilpauk, Vepery, Choolai, Chennai Central, Vadapalani, Choolaimedu, Velachery, Adyar, Adambakkam, Kotturpuram, Chitlapakkam and parts of Tambaram experienced water logging in arterial roads.

In Chennai's suburbs of Varadharajapuram and Mudichur water entered homes in many residential localities where people complained of snakes and venomous insects entering the houses.

■ **More reports on P2 &3**



General Patterson road in Chennai is flooded due to heavy rains caused by cyclone Nivar on Wednesday.

— DC

## Football legend Maradona dies of heart attack at 60

**Buenos Aires, Nov. 25:** Argentine soccer legend Diego Maradona, widely regarded as one of the game's greatest ever players, died of a heart attack on Wednesday, his lawyer said.

Maradona, 60, had recently battled health issues and underwent emergency surgery for a subdural haematoma several weeks ago.

He suffered a heart attack at his home in the outskirts of Buenos Aires on Wednesday, Argentinian media and acquaintances of the former player said. Argentine President Alberto Fernandez declared three days of national mourning. Retired Brazilian soccer star Pele was among those who mourned the Argentine player.

"Certainly, one day we'll kick a ball together in the sky above," he said in a brief statement provided



● **One of the most gifted soccer players in history, Maradona's pinnacle of glory came when he captained Argentina to win the World Cup in 1986**

by a representative.

One of the most gifted soccer players in history, Maradona's pinnacle of glory came when he cap-

**DC CORRESPONDENT**

CHENNAI, NOV. 25

Authorities ordered Chennai airport closed for 12 hours from 7 pm on Wednesday. Authorities said flights will not take off or land at the Chennai airport until further notice. The decision was taken considering the safety of passengers and the severity of the approaching cyclone, the Airports Authority of India said on Wednesday.

As Chennai continues to witness heavy rains with strong winds, major road routes across the city have also been closed. These roads will remain closed until further notice by the Greater Chennai traffic police.

East Coast Road, Old

Mahabalipuram road, Ennore express highway, GST road and Kamarajar Road off Marina Beach have been closed for movement from 4 pm Wednesday.

Residents lamented that due to clogged drainages, the stagnated water was mixed with the sewage in areas such as Mudichur, Varadharajapuram near Tambaram. Similarly, faulty drainage systems also inundated a few streets of Chrompet.

Drainage water mixed with rain water reportedly entered into the labor ward of Government Taluk hospital in Chrompet, causing a huge inconvenience to the patients. The patients were later evacuated to the first floor general ward of the hospital.



Cyclonic winds bringing down the roof of Dargah Hazrath Syed Moosa Sha Khaderi, the popular dargah on Anna Salai, on Wednesday.

— DC

## Cabinet okays equity infusion of ₹6K cr into NIFF

**New Delhi, Nov.25:** The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval to the proposal for equity infusion by the government of ₹6,000 crores in NIIF Debt Platform sponsored by National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), comprising Aseem Infrastructure Finance Limited (AIFL) and NIIF Infrastructure Finance Limited (NIIF-IFL).

According to the Ministry of Finance, "the approval is subject to the following conditions: That only ₹2,000 crore would be allocated during the current year 2020-21. However, in view of the unprecedented financial situation and availability of limited fiscal space due to the prevailing Covid-19, the proposed amount may be disbursed only if there is readiness and demand for debt raising. — PTI

■ **More on P8** — Reuters



12 POLICE  
TEAMS FORMED

City police said 12 teams, led by sub-inspectors of armed reserve, with necessary equipment and boats have been deployed for relief work.

OF  
CHEMBARAMBAKKAM  
AND ADYAR

The Chembarambakkam reservoir, among the four very important drinking water sources to Chennai, is spread across 25.51 square kilometers and is located in Kancheepuram district's Kundrathur taluk. Poondi, Cholavaram and Red Hills are the other reservoirs. The Adyar river empties into the sea, traversing city localities like Kotturpuram and suburban neighbourhoods including Sirugalathur and Kundrathur.

SHORT TAKES

1,347 shifted to relief  
camps in Ariyalur dt

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ARIYALUR, NOV. 25

As many as 1,347 people living in the low-lying areas of Alur, Sendurai, Andimadam and Jayankondam areas were shifted to 31 cyclone relief camps in view of Nivar cyclone, according to Ariyalur Collector T. Ratna.

Ms Ratna, accompanied by Tiruchy range DIG Annie Vijaya, inspected the basic amenities provided in the relief camps at Sripuranthan and Karaikurichi areas and told the media that the district administration has formed five committees consisting of revenue officials and 4 committees consisting of the police officials.

212 vulnerable areas in  
Tiruvarur district

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUVARUR, NOV 25

As per the instructions of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, preventive measures have been taken on a war-footing across the state and as part of it, Tiruvarur district administration has identified 212 low lying areas as vulnerable and 249 relief camps have established to house people, according to state food minister R. Kamaraj.

Kamaraj accompanied by the state government's joint secretary of the health and family welfare department and the Tiruvarur district monitoring officer Shilpa Prabhar Satish and Collector V. Shantha inspected Vanjiyur, Kaanavur, Vettaithidal and Arichapuram relief camps and the ongoing preventive measures. He told newsmen that the district administration has ensured food and health to people housed in the relief camps.

● **Power distribution was stopped in several regions and especially in areas that have overhead power transmission lines.**

● **Civic authorities removed banners and hoardings in several districts including Chennai and Vellore expecting squally winds.**

# Normal life hit in flooded Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 25

After Cyclone Nivar intensified with heavy rain on Wednesday, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) authorities shifted as many as 1,200 people to 25 relief camps as of 5 pm.

Incessant rainfall occurred throughout the day inundating all low-lying areas in the coastal areas in the city, derailing normal life. "150 more relief centres readied. The zones including 11, 12, 13 and 14 continue to be under watch," said Meghanath Reddy, deputy collector, GCC.

The rescue teams were on high alert after the shutters of Chembarambakkam reservoir were opened on Wednesday noon as a cautionary measure to prevent inundation, particularly on the upstream stretches. The public works department has announced that it will release 1,000 cusecs of water from the reservoir.

Following this, the GCC authorities asked people living near the banks of Adyar river especially in low-lying areas such as Kanu Nagar, Choolaipallam, Thideer Nagar, Amman Nagar, Burma Colony, Jafferkhanpet, Kotturpuram, and Chitra Nagar to move to the nearby relief camps.

A resident near Srinivasapuram said many people in the area went to the relief camps. The sea continues to be rough. What remains to be seen is whether boats would be swept away by high tides during the landfall of cyclone," said Kennit Raj, a local fisherman.



(Above) Arterial Broadway is filled with rainwater on Wednesday.

Ram Nagar residents in Velachery taken to safer places by Home Guards.

— N. Sampath and E.K. Sanjay

## Over 1L evacuated from TN, Pondy, says NDRF DG

New Delhi, Nov 25: Over one lakh people have been evacuated from the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry in order to "tide over the worst challenge" put up by cyclone Nivar that is expected to make a landfall in the early hours of Thursday, the NDRF chief said on Wednesday.

The National Disaster Response Force has earmarked a total of 50 teams -- with 30 being deployed on the ground in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh -- in view of the cyclone moving ahead from the Bay of Bengal towards the coastal areas. Twenty teams have been kept on standby at Vijaywada (Andhra Pradesh), Cuttack (Odisha) and Thrissur (Kerala).

S. N. Pradhan, the director general of the federal disaster response force, said all preparations have been done to "tide over the worst challenge that is put up by the cyclone". "As per latest reports, more than one lakh people have been evacuated across Tamil Nadu and in

Puducherry about 1,000-2,000 people have been evacuated by the local authorities and the NDRF," he said. He said there is "perfect coordination" between the state and central authorities which are monitoring the cyclone and the force is prepared with equipments like cutters and boats to help rescue those trapped and ensure resumption of normal life. "A total of 25 NDRF teams are deployed on the likely affected coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh after consultation with state authorities. "Out of these, 15 teams have been deployed in coastal districts of Tamil Nadu. Six have been positioned at Cuddalore, three at Viluppuram, two teams each at Chennai and Chengalpattu, while one team each at Mayiladuthurai and Nagapattinam districts," an NDRF spokesperson said. Besides, three teams are deployed at Pondicherry and one team at Karaikal, he said.

— PTI



## Under-construction fishing harbour in Nagai dt damaged

Nagapattinam, Nov 25: Tides due to the Nivar cyclonic storm have damaged the rubble mound wall in the fishing harbour under construction at a cost of ₹120 crore at Tarangambadi in Nagapattinam district. The tides have thrashed huge granite stones.

The sea off Tarangambadi has remained very rough for

the past few days. The fishing harbour came under the tidal attack on Wednesday, damaging the southern side of the rubble mound wall constructed on the seafloor. Tides were seen rising several metres causing damage to the granite stack. Local fishermen pointed out that the rubble mound wall was low in height and width. They appealed to

the government to increase the wall height and width to avoid damage during natural calamities in the future.

The fishing harbour construction work commenced last year in 6.7 ha land and would benefit thousands of fishermen in 24 hamlets around Tarangambadi

— PTI

## Pondy CM visits coastal areas; LG Bedi shares video message

Puducherry, Nov 25: As cyclone Nivar approaches, the Puducherry government on Wednesday said the administrative machinery is fully geared up to meet any exigency while Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy visited coastal villages to monitor steps taken to ensure the safety of fishermen community. The union territory has been experiencing intermittent moderate rains since Tuesday night under the influence of the cyclonic storm.

In a video message, Lt Governor Kiran Bedi on Wednesday appealed to the residents to stay indoors and asked those living in low lying areas to move to safer places. "The entire government machinery is at your service and listen to the advice of the government for safety," she said. Prohibitory orders under section 144



CrPC have been clamped in Puducherry region to restrict movement of people. The order came into force at 9 pm on Tuesday and would remain in force till 6 am on Thursday. Most of the roads and thoroughfares presented a deserted look because of the order.

The entire beach road has been closed and police have been deployed to ensure that there were no visitors at the



sea shore. Meanwhile, all the fishermen from Puducherry, who had gone fishing a few days ago had returned safely.

As far as Karaikal region was concerned 10 out of 100 boats were yet to return to the shore.

Control rooms had been set up and people facing distress could contact 1070 and 1077 for help.

— PTI



(Above) DMK president M. K. Stalin inspecting Kolathur constituency on Wednesday.

— DC

A flooded road in K K Nagar.

—DC

HELP?  
CALL THEM

The Chennai metropolitan police opened a control room to help people affected by the cyclone. People can contact: **9498181239**

For assistance, people may contact GCC on **044-25384530** **044-25384540**

## 33 trees uprooted

As many as 38 trees fell under 26 police station boundaries including Arumbakkam, Vadapalani, Virugambakkam, Kodambakkam, Ashoknagar, Peravallur, Egmore, Abiramapuram, Yanagavuni, Kodungaiyur, Korukkupettai, Valasaravakkam, Korattur, Nungambakkam, Keelpakkam, Choolaimedu, Mylapore, and Vepery. Four light vehicles were damaged. The rapid action forces are working together.

## Public holiday for 13 dts

The state government has declared a public holiday on Thursday in 13 districts, including Chennai, Thiruvallur, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Thanjavur, Mayiladudurai, Tiruvannamalai, Ariyalur and Perambalur.



## SHORT TAKES

**BJP high command will announce seat-sharing with AIADMK: Murugan****R. VALAYAPATHY | DC**  
TIRUCHY, NOV. 25

The BJP national high command will announce the seat-sharing arrangement with the AIADMK for the forthcoming elections to the Tamil Nadu assembly, said BJP state president L. Murugan.

Addressing a press conference at Tiruchy on Wednesday, Mr. Murugan pointed out that the electoral alliance between the BJP and the AIADMK had been confirmed and the AIADMK and the BJP high command will discuss on how many seats the two parties can contest. He said the 'Vel Yatra' has been cancelled due to cyclone Nivar. However, he along with the party men will offer worship in the rest of the six Lord Murugan temples on December 4. The yatra's culmination function will be held at Tiruchendur on December 5.

The government has launched a portal with the aim of providing hassle-free consent to telecommunication and infrastructure provider companies in the state. Chief Minister K Palaniswami launched the portal, developed by the state IT department, here on Tuesday. Telecommunication and infrastructure provider companies will get 'Right of Way' permission in a quick and transparent manner from the respective District Collectors through the portal, "https://row.tn.gov.in," an official release here said.

# Chembarambakkam and the ghost of 2015

**G. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, NOV 25

Shivers went down the spines of many people in Chennai as news wafted in of the opening of the Chembarambakkam reservoir sluice gates on Wednesday as it evoked painful memories of the 2015 floods that were subsequently termed a 'man-made disaster' by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

It was on the night of December 1, 2015, that the Chembarambakkam reservoir was suddenly opened increasing the outflow from 12,000 cusecs to 20,960 cusecs, flooding housing colonies, office complexes, roads, paddy fields and every human habitation, when Chennai was sleeping.

As the downstream Adyar river was in spate water entered the city, leaving scores of people dead and devastating property worth several crores of rupees. Many hospitals were inundated, leading to generators conking out and causing premature death of patients.

There were perhaps not many in Chennai whose life was not affected by the incident that saw water level in housing colonies reaching up to the second



As surplus water gushes forth with the opening of shutters, Chief Minister K. Palaniswami inspects the dam premises and reviews the precautionary measures and the outflow on Wednesday. — DC

floor, people going without electricity for days, lack of food, inability to draw money from banks, vehicles and household appliances damaged by the water gushing into homes. Water rushed into several new television studios, damaging equipment and disrupting telecast services that kept even those people, who had power in their homes, in the dark about what was happening.

Vignettes of that five-year-old tragedy came

rushing into the minds of the people as they heard a bout Chembarambakkam lake being opened again. Images of army helicopters hovering over the city to drop food packets or in search operations and even relief workers not being able to locate displaced people in need of food and other essentials returned like a flashback, causing panic. Through the water flowed out of Chembarambakkam for just two days, people

reeled under its impact for months or years and for life. One example of the long term impact was car companies not taking vehicles for service for repairs for months as there was such a big loss. The floods also turned out to be a great socio-economic leveler. Even the Meenambakkam airport was not spared. The second runway was completely submerged and the main runway also went under water, turning the airport unfit for opera-

tions for about five days.

So airport authorities were concerned when the Chembarambakkam was opened again due to the reservoir filling after five years. They feared a repeat of 2015 happening and the runaways getting submerged but were told that things had changed in the last five years. That the Adyar had been desilted and deepened to carry more water and that encroachments near the airport in places like Annakaputhur, Tharaipakkam, Kolapakkam and Manapakkam have been removed.

Though media reports did not remind people much of 2015, reminiscences of social media users made many shudder. Some of them referred to the Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami visiting Chembarambakkam before the sluice gates were opened, wondering if he was not holding the PWD portfolio in 2015.

However, Palaniswami's remarks dispelled fears of another flood as water release would be increased step by step with the PWD monitoring it carefully. He also said that the Adyar river can now carry 60,000 cusecs of water and hence there was no need to fear a flood.



Chennai's iconic Marina beach filled with water on Wednesday. — DC

## Chennai airport closed for 12 hours

**SINDHIYA SAMUEL & P.A JEBARAJ | DC**  
CHENNAI, NOV 25

In the wake of cyclone Nivar's landfall, authorities ordered Chennai airport closed for 12 hours from 7 pm on Wednesday. Authorities said flights will not take off or land at the Chennai Airport until further notice. The decision was taken considering the safety of passengers and the severity of the approaching cyclone, the Airport Authority of India said on Wednesday.

As the amount of water released from Chembarambakkam increases to 3,000 cusecs, the water is expected to enter Chennai airport. Due to the continuous rainfall and increasing amount of water flow from Chembarambakkam lake, the Chennai airport authorities has suspended operations from 7 pm on Wednesday to 7 am on Thursday. Earlier on Wednesday, the airport authorities announced cancellation of a total 24 flights, 12 arriving and 12 departing due to Cyclone Nivar. However, all the operations have been pulled in Chennai airport.

The government has

given alert to people living downstream in low-lying areas including Thirumudivakkam, Thiruneeermalai, Mannivakkam, Manapakkam and banks of Adyar river to remain vigilant.

It may be noted that In December 2015, Chennai airport was shut down completely due to the Chennai floods which waterlogged runways and taxiways. Flight operations were suspended for five days.

IMD also said that the cyclonic system is likely to maintain its intensity for about six hours after its landfall before weakening gradually. The IMD has forecast isolated extremely heavy rainfall over Ranipet, Tiruvannamalai, Tirupattur, Vellore districts of Tamilnadu and Chittoor, Kurnool, Prakasam; Cuddapah districts of Andhra Pradesh and adjoining southeast Telangana on November 26. The weather agency has also forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places in the remaining districts of north interior Tamilnadu, south Andhra Pradesh and southeast Telangana.

## Lankan boat intercepted, heroin worth ₹500 cr seized

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
THOOTHUKUDI, NOV. 25

The Indian Coast Guard personnel intercepted a Sri Lankan boat which illegally entered the Indian territorial waters near Thoothukudi and seized heroin worth Rs 500 crore from the boat. The Coast Guard patrolling team also arrested six Lankan nationals.

Acting on a tip-off about smuggling of drugs and arms to Sri Lanka through the Indian waters by an international drug-peddling gang, the Coast Guard launched an anti-smuggling operation involving four of its patrolling vessels and a Dornier aircraft in the Gulf of Mannar waters on November 17. The patrolling team also seized 100 kilogram of heroin in 99 packets hidden in an empty fuel tank and five 9mm pistols and a Thuraya satellite phone set, which is banned in India.

The interrogation of the arrested Lankan nationals by officials belonging to the Narcotics Control Bureau, RAW, IB, Q Branch and Coast Guard revealed that the drugs, meant to be smuggled to Australia, was from Karachi in Pakistan. The Indian waters near Thoothukudi close to Sri Lanka, however, was used by the smugglers to shift the drugs to the Sri Lankan boat, named Shenaya Duwa, owned by Negambo-based Alensu Kuttige Fernando in the mid sea from a Pakistani dhow. The seized drugs are worth around Rs 500 crore in the international market.

The arrested Lankan nationals will be brought to Thoothukudi by Wednesday night, following which they will be remanded in custody by producing them before the Ramanathapuram district chief judicial magistrate court.



Vysarpadi Jeeva station subway in the city inundated in the wake of heavy rains throughout Wednesday. — DC

## HC seeks Aavin pensioners' nod for med insurance

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, NOV. 25

In order to explore the feasibility and possibility of the medical insurance scheme, the Madras high court has directed the Tamil Nadu Co-operative Milk Producers Federation Ltd (TNCMPF) called Aavin, to issue a notice to all its former employees seeking their willingness to make a routine contribution every month from their pension. And on receipt of willingness from at least 60 percent of pensioners, Aavin can deliberate with the insurance company the possibility of envisaging a scheme for the benefit of pensioners.

Justice R.Suresh Kumar gave the directive while disposing of a petition filed by A. Mohanaragam, which sought a direction to the TNCMPF to consider his representation to have a common medical insurance scheme for all of its employees and pensioners.

Special government pleader Bala Ramesh submitted that considering the health insurance scheme being undertaken by Tamil Nadu for its employees as well as pensioners, in both the schemes, large number of government servants as well as pensioners have made contributions from their salary or pension every month. That was why both the schemes have become feasible and thereby implemented successfully in the state.

M. Silambarasan, counsel for the petitioner, submitted that several pensioners of the TNCMPF were willing to make a reasonable contribution every month from their pension to the TNCMPF towards the medical insurance scheme and it will not be a difficult task for the TNCMPF to envis-



● On receipt of willingness from 60% of pensioners, Aavin can deliberate with the insurance company the possibility of envisaging a scheme for the benefit of pensioners

age a medical insurance scheme for the pensioners also.

The judge said unless majority of the pensioners like the petitioner come forward to make a contribution, the TNCMPF may not be in a position to have such a scheme as this kind of insurance scheme for the whole employees or pensioners of an organization has to be undertaken only with the help of the insurance companies, for which, first of all, the insurance company should come forward to have a contract with the employer as to the quantum of the contribution, number of member and minimum contribution and these modalities have to be worked out by the employer and the insurance company before which, the TNCMPF has to ensure that at least 60 percent of the employees have come forward to make contribution every month towards this insurance scheme.

## Madras high court allows EWS certificate to poor medical student

**J. STALIN | DC**  
CHENNAI, NOV. 25

An MBBS graduate belonging to a forward community got a relief from the Madras high court which directed the authorities to issue her a fresh economically weaker section (EWS) certificate immediately to enable her study for the post-graduate medical course.

R.S. Poorvi could not pursue her higher studies last year despite having a EWS certificate, which is valid for one year, as her mother passed away due to cancer. She was denied EWS certificate this time.

Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana gave the directive while setting aside an order of the tahsildar, Egmore taluk, Chennai, rejecting her application for EWS certificate.

Justice Pushpa said the petitioner, who is competent, is financially weak. The policy of the government is to help such disadvantaged persons. That is the reason why reservation is applicable not only for backward classes, but also for financially backward people. Though the petitioner belongs to a forward community, she has to be given the certificate of economically weaker

section, to enable her pursue her higher education, the judge added.

The judge said, "reservation in higher education has become a serious issue now. It has created differences among different sections of society. Knowledgeable and deserving students are not able to avail the opportunities in education. However, students who could not make it to the merit list but belong to the reserved category enjoy the opportunities. Due to this many students are unable to realise their dreams. Oppressed people should be given an opportunity for uplift, without any compromise in quality in higher education. Similarly, persons from the forward community, who are financially backward, should not be denied an opportunity on account of reservation, which is the object of introduction of EWS reservations. Persons like the petitioner, who have scored well in exams, get a feeling that they are not given the same treatment and criteria of selection though they belong to the EWS. As the petitioner is a meritorious candidate and also has established that her income is less than Rs 8 lakh, satisfying the criteria fixed for getting the

EWS certificate, she should have been issued the certificate".

According to petitioner, after the completion of MBBS, she was appointed as a junior resident for one year from August 16, 2019 to August 15, 2020 with a basic pay of Rs 56,100 in ESIC Medical College and Hospital in Chennai. Her father has been working as an assistant to an advocate and did not have a regular income. Her younger sister was pursuing her education by availing a scholarship. She applied and got the EWS certificate for the year 2019-20 but could not participate in the entrance examination held in December 2019 as her mother passed away. As the said certificate was valid for one year, she had applied once again for the year 2021. However, the application was rejected on the ground that her family had an income of more than Rs 8 lakh. Therefore, she filed the present petition, she added.

The judge said the petitioner was working with ESIC Hospital from August 16, 2019 to August 15, 2020. As per the official memorandum, the income slab of Rs 8 lakh was for the financial year prior to the year of her applica-

tion. The petitioner has applied for the certificate on August 18, 2020 and again on September 12, 2020. Therefore, the previous financial year from date of application would be April 2019 to March 2020. Admittedly the petitioner had joined the ESIC Hospital in August 2019 for a one-year tenure. Therefore, the cut-off month would be March 2020 for the previous financial year.

Computing the salary from August 2019 to March 2020, her gross income would be Rs 7, 37, 877, which was certainly less than Rs 8 lakh. Similarly, she had also filed the IT returns of her father for the assessment year 2020-21 which was "Nil". Admittedly, the petitioner's family does not own any agricultural land or a residential flat of 1,000 sq.ft and above or a residential plot of 100 or 200 yards and above. While so, the tahsildar has wrongly computed that the family income exceeds Rs 8 lakh and has rejected the application for EWS. Having issued a certificate for the previous year, the tahsildar ought to have verified any improvement in the income of the family afterwards to disentitle her for the certificate, the judge added.

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, NOV 25

The ruling AIADMK and the main opposition party DMK gave a clarion call to their cadre to involve themselves fully in the relief and rehabilitation of the people affected by the ravages of Cyclone Nivar.

An AIADMK announcement from party coordinator O Panneerselvam and deputy coordinator Edappadi K Palaniswami urged cadre at levels, starting from MPs to ordinary members, to get into the field and immerse themselves in serving the people who need help.

Though the government was making efforts on a war footing to provide succor to the affected people, the party cadre should stand by the government in its work.

'For the people and with the people' should be their motto, the statement said, asking the party members to provide food,

water, dress and other necessary things to the people.

The cadre were asked to send in their reports to the headquarters along with photographs and also be with the people even after the cyclone crossed the coast until normalcy returned to the victims' lives.

DMK president M. K. Stalin, in a statement, cautioned the cadre that the cyclone-rain situation should turn into a second wave for the spread of Covid-19 and asked them to reach out to the people in distress. He reminded them that the DMK was a people's movement and that they should address the problems of the people.

He said that he visited some affected areas in Chennai that fell under the Assembly constituencies of Thiru Vi Ka Nagar, Kolathoor and Villivakkam and distributed food packets and other essential items to the victims.

## Stalin, K S Alagiri mourn Ahmed Patel's passing away

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, NOV 25

DMK president M K Stalin and TNCC President K S Alagiri mourned the death of Congress leader Ahmed Patel, who was the political secretary of Sonia Gandhi, at the age of 71 following a bout of Covid-19.

'Extremely saddened to hear of the passing of Mr Ahmed Patel, who was a lynchpin of the Indian National Congress,' Stalin said in a Facebook

post, adding 'On behalf of the DMK, I extend my condolences to his family as well as the Congress cadres who are mourning his loss.'

Alagiri, in a statement, likened Patel's passing away to a pillar giving way for the Congress and said the late leader had been a treasurer and also involved in key party work like selecting candidates for elections, interacting with leaders of other political parties and trouble-shooting within the party.



## SHORT TAKES

HC ALLOWS  
REPUBLIC TV TO  
AMEND THEIR PLEADC CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday allowed ARG Outlier (parent company of Republic TV) to amend their plea to challenge the charge sheet filed by the Mumbai Police on Tuesday in an allegedly fake TRP scam uncovered by the Mumbai Police. The original plea only sought quashing of the First Information Report (FIR) against Republic and its employees including Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami and an order transferring the investigation proceedings from the Crime Branch Mumbai Police to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

On Wednesday, Republic TV counsellor Abad Ponda urged the court to amend the petition because a charge sheet has been filed in this case and he also wants to quash the charge sheet.

Subsequently, the Bombay High Court has refused to pass any orders to restrain reporting on ongoing Television Rating Points rigging scam. Court refusal has come when the Maharashtra government urged the Bombay High Court to issue orders directing news channels especially Republic TV from running a parallel investigation and trial into the scam.

MP READIES BILL  
TO CURB 'LOVE  
JIHAD'RABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, NOV. 25

Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday cleared the draft bill of the proposed 'Dharma Swatantra Vidheyak (Freedom of Religion Bill) 2020, providing a 10-year-jail term for those found guilty of forcing girls into interfaith marriages for the purpose of changing their religion.

The draft bill is set to be placed before the state cabinet, scheduled to meet here on Thursday, for its nod before being tabled in the upcoming winter session of the Assembly, commencing on December 28.

Interestingly, state home minister Narottam Mishra on Tuesday said a draft bill of the proposed legislation providing 5-year-jail term to those who were found guilty of forcing a girl into interfaith marriage for the purpose of her religion conversion, has already been prepared. A meeting convened by Mishra here on Wednesday decided to revise the draft bill increasing the jail term of the offenders from 5 years to 10 years.

The revised draft bill comes in the wake of Uttar Pradesh cabinet approving a draft ordinance to deal with religious conversion for the sake of marriage, providing a 10-year-jail term for the offenders, on Tuesday.

IMARTI DEVI WHO  
LOST MP POLLS  
QUITS AS MANTRIRABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, NOV. 25

Three non-MLA ministers in the Shivraj cabinet who have lost the recent by-elections in their respective Assembly constituencies, have finally resigned.

While state women and child development minister Imarti Devi resigned on Wednesday, 2 other defeated ministers, Giriraj Dandotia and Anand Singh Kansana, resigned from the ministry over the last couple of days.

"I have tendered my resignation. It is up to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to accept or reject it", Devi who had made former chief minister Kamal Nath her sole target during her campaigning in the by-elections in her Assembly constituency of Dabra for calling her an 'item', told reporters on Wednesday.

Devi lost to her Congress rival Suresh Raj by over 7,000 votes. Devi had earlier sought to continue in the ministry till January 2 when her 6-month-period, a non-MLA minister is allowed to continue in ministry before being elected to the house, ended.

However, all the three defeated ministers were under pressure to resign from the ministry to enable the Chief Minister to expand his ministry as soon as possible.

"The CM may go for expansion of his ministry shortly following the development", a senior BJP leader said.

## Farm Bills stir reaches Delhi



Police stop members of various farmer organisations during a protest march against the farm reform bills in Hisar district on Wednesday. The farmers, who are protesting against the Centre's three new farm laws, will reach Delhi on Nov. 26 through five highways connecting the national capital as part of the 'Delhi Chalo' march call.

— PTI

States can take call on  
lockdown, says MHA

New guidelines give states a free hand to curb Coronavirus

VINEETA PANDEY | DC  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

With large parts of North and East India facing a third wave of Coronavirus, the central government on Wednesday issued new guidelines that suggest stringent measures for containment and prevention of the deadly virus along with stricter surveillance.

The guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) which will be effective from December 1 and will remain in force till December 31, give a free hand to the states and UT to impose lockdowns and movement restrictions if needed to contain the spread of the virus. However, state/ UT governments cannot impose any local lockdown (at state/ district/ sub-division/city level), outside the containment zones, without the prior consultation with the Central government.

Also, there shall be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement of persons and goods including those for cross land-border trade under treaties with neighbouring countries.

No separate permission/ approval/ e-permit will be required for such movements.

India till Wednesday had over 92.22 lakh cases out of which 44,376 are new detections.

In a single day, 481 deaths have been reported taking the total fatalities to close to 1.35 lakh.

The MHA said that the main focus of the guidelines is "to consolidate the substantial gains that have been achieved against the spread of Covid-19 which is visible in the steady decline in the number of active cases in the country."

"Further, keeping in view the recent spike in new cases in few states/ UTs, ongoing festival season and onset of winter, it is emphasised that to fully overcome the pandemic, there is need to maintain caution and to strictly follow the prescribed containment strategy, focussed on surveillance, containment and strict observance of the guidelines/ SOPs issued by MHA and ministry of health and family welfare," officials said.

Local district, police and municipal authorities shall be responsible to ensure that the prescribed containment measures are strictly followed and states and UTs, based on their assessment of the situation, are free to impose local restrictions, with a view to contain the spread of Covid-19.

The list of containment zones will be notified on the websites by the respective district collectors and by the states/ UTs.

Within the demarcated containment zones, only essential activities shall be allowed and there shall be strict perimeter control to ensure that there is no movement of people in or out of these zones, except for medical emergencies and for maintaining supply of essential goods and

services.

There shall be intensive house-to-house surveillance by surveillance teams and testing shall be carried out as per prescribed protocol.

Listing of contacts shall be carried out in respect of all persons found positive, along with their tracking, identification, quarantine and follow up of contacts for 14 days (80 per cent of contacts to be traced in 72 hours).

Quick isolation of Covid-19 patients shall be ensured in treatment facilities/ home (subject to fulfilling the home isolation guidelines). Clinical interventions, as prescribed, shall be administered.

Surveillance for ILI/ SARI cases shall be carried out in health facilities or outreach mobile units or through fever clinics in buffer zones.

Awareness shall be created in communities on Covid-19 appropriate behaviour and local district, police and municipal authorities shall be responsible to ensure that the prescribed Containment measures are strictly followed and state/ UT governments shall ensure the accountability of the officers concerned in this regard.

In order to enforce the core requirement of wearing of face masks, states and UTs may consider administrative actions, including imposition of appropriate fines, on persons not wearing face masks in public and work spaces.

For observance of social

distancing in crowded places, especially in markets, weekly bazaars and public transport, MoHFW will issue SOP, which shall be strictly enforced by the states and UTs.

All activities have been permitted outside containment zones though some have been permitted with certain restrictions.

These include international air travel of passengers, running of cinema halls and theatres with up to 50 per cent capacity, opening of swimming pools only for training of sports persons, exhibition halls only for business to business (B2B) purposes, social/ religious/ sports/ entertainment/ educational/ cultural/ religious gatherings, with up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity, with a ceiling of 200 persons in closed spaces; and keeping of the size of the ground/ space in view, in open spaces.

However, based on their assessment of the situation, state/ UT governments may reduce the ceiling to 100 persons or less, in closed spaces.

states and UTs also need to enforce social distancing in offices.

In cities, where the weekly case positivity rate is in more than 10 per cent, states and UTs concerned shall consider implementing staggered office timings and other suitable measures, with a view to reduce the number of employees attending office at the same time, thereby ensuring social distancing.

DIDI DARES BJP  
TO ARREST HER,  
VOWS TO WIN  
FROM JAILRAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, NOV. 25

Dubbing the BJP as a "garbage of lies" and "biggest curse to the nation", Trinamul Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday challenged the saffron party that she, even if arrested, would ensure her party's victory from jail in the Assembly elections.

"BJP is a garbage of lies. It is the biggest curse to the nation. Ahead of election, they threaten the TMC so that some of its leaders defect to them. They are asking all either to live in fear or stay in jail. If you (BJP) have the guts, arrest me and put me behind bars. Staying in jail, I will ensure our victory in Bengal. This is my challenge," Banerjee told a party rally in Bankura while kick-starting her poll campaign from the Jangalmahal district, visited by Union home minister Amit Shah earlier this month.

Mocking senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders, visiting the state, as "Dilli Ka Laddu," she said, "They abuse TMC so much daily as if TMC has become their eyesore. In future, only TMC will remain in power, uprooting BJP, CPI(M) and Congress from the state."

The Trinamul Congress chief also belittled the Bharatiya Janata Party's success in the recently concluded Bihar Assembly elections.

PDP leader held  
for links with  
accused copYUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, NOV. 25

After two days of grilling by National Investigation Agency (NIA), People's Democratic Party (PDP) youth leader Waheed Ur Rehman Parra was on Wednesday formally arrested by the premier anti-terror agency for his alleged links with tainted J&K police officer Davinder Singh.

Singh who last served as Deputy Superintendent of Police at the Anti-Hijacking Squad at the Srinagar International Airport is facing charges under various anti terror laws for helping separatist militants back home. The case is being investigated by the NIA which had in July filed a chargesheet against him and five others for their alleged terror activities in the country.

A spokesman of the NIA said that Parra was arrested "in connection with the Naveed Babu Davinder Singh case for supporting Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in conspiracy with the other accused persons."

Reacting to Parra's arrest, PDP president and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti tweeted "Waheed has no connection whatsoever with this man (Davinder Singh) & is being falsely charged. All just to blackmail & intimidate PDP & other mainstream political parties in J&K".

In another tweet, she said, "I can personally vouch for Waheed's integrity, honesty & character. It is up to the judiciary now to dispense justice & ensure @parawahid is released at the earliest". She alleged that the reason behind Para's arrest apparently was his contesting the upcoming District Development Council (DDC) elections in J&K.

"No coincidence that he filed his nomination for DDC on 20th Nov & received NIA summons next day itself", Mufti said.

Parra had appeared before the NIA at its headquarters in New Delhi on Monday and Tuesday for questioning.

He had said on Monday evening that he was asked about his political career and PDP's soft politics during the questioning. An earlier report had said that Parra's name had surfaced during the NIA's probe into the Davinder Singh case but he had publicly expressed ignorance about the same.

Singh was arrested along with Syed Naveed Mushtaq alias Naveed Babu, one of the most wanted Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militants, and his associate Asif Ahmed Rather by the J&K police in southern Kulgam district on January 11 this year. Subsequently, Kashmiri lawyer Irfan Shafi Mir and Naveed Babu's brother Syed Irfan Ahmed were also taken into custody after accused of being the Hizb's Over Ground Workers (OWGs).

The police officer who was soon placed under suspension and the militant duo were travelling in a Hyundai i20 car along the highway connecting J&K's twin capitals — Srinagar and Jammu — and were reportedly on their way to Chandigarh.

The investigations done by the J&K police had reportedly revealed that Singh had accompanied militants or helped them in relocating to various parts of the country on different occasions in lieu of money and other considerations. However, the Centre later asked the NIA to probe the case.

Special Cell of Delhi Police which also probed the police officer's alleged terror links and subsequently filed a case in a Delhi court, told that Naveed Babu and others were planning to execute terror attacks in Delhi and other parts of the country.

SuMo sees Lalu bid  
to topple Bihar govtNAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, NOV. 25

Senior BJP leader and former deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi on Wednesday accused RJD chief Lalu Yadav of making strategies to topple the newly elected NDA government led by Nitish Kumar in Bihar.

In a tweet, he also released a mobile number alleging that Lalu Yadav used it to call NDA MLAs ahead of Bihar Assembly Speaker's election.

"Lalu Yadav has been making calls from Ranchi to NDA MLAs and promising ministerial berths. When I telephoned on the number, he picked the call. I asked him not to play dirty tricks as he will not succeed", BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi said in a tweet.

Modi's sensational charge against the jailed RJD leader raised the political temperature in Bihar. While a section in the NDA demanded "a high-

level probe" and action against Lalu Yadav, RJD leaders denied the allegation calling it "baseless".

BJP leaders also demanded shifting Lalu Yadav to Tihar Jail from Ranchi where he is in judicial custody after being convicted in the fodder scam case.

The RJD chief, who is serving his jail term after being sentenced by a special CBI court in several fodder scam cases is currently admitted to Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences Ranchi. He has been shifted to the hospital director's official bungalow due to Coronavirus pandemic.

BJP MLA Lalan Paswan who had received the call from Lalu Yadav on Tuesday said that, "I felt he was calling to congratulate me for winning Assembly elections but I was shocked when he offered a ministerial berth and wanted my support to topple the government."

## BIG | LOSS

Patel could be creative in solving problems and was combative in defence of his party's interest

## A trusted aide, but political force in his own right also

ANAND K. SAHAY

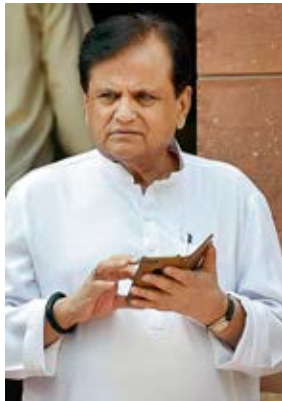
Ahmed Patel, who died at the relatively early age of 71 in the small hours of Wednesday, was much of the time a creative political force in his own right, although all his actions were in the name of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, currently her party's interim president.

He was no apparatchik - an expression of Russian Communist Party lineage given a derogatory connotation in English usage to denote a faceless, nameless, mindless, party bureaucrat. Patel was none of those things, although in careless hands

and in careless speech he has sometimes been spoken of in those inaccurate - and regrettable - terms.

He was instead an indispensable personal aide to the Congress president who could be creative in solving problems, unobtrusively combative in defence of his party's and leadership's interest, and was respected among politicians across the aisle though he held no high public office and was just one among many MPs.

Last year Patel camped in Mumbai to ensure that the Congress became a part of the three-party ruling coalition headed by Shiv Sena leader Udhav Thackeray to displace the



Ahmed Patel

BJP, to whose national power the state of Maharashtra contributed inordinately. Congress'

● In negotiations, he acted as the instrument and the principal since he commanded the implicit trust of Mrs Gandhi and didn't have to look over his shoulder or to await instructions at any stage. In her homage on the passing of an invaluable colleague, Mrs Gandhi has been respectful, calling her late colleague an "irreplaceable comrade".

inclusion was on terms that were acceptable to the top Congress leadership since the Sena had been seen as a communal party and Rahul Gandhi appeared to have reserva-

tions that were being sought to be exploited by the NCP. The Congress being inserted into the ruling scheme was achieved through skilful negotiations conducted by Patel. In these negotiations, he acted as the instrument and the principal since he commanded the implicit trust of Mrs Gandhi and didn't have to look over his shoulder or to await instructions at any stage. In her homage on the passing of an invaluable colleague, Mrs Gandhi has been respectful, calling her late colleague an "irreplaceable comrade" and "friend". Such expressions denote parity and trust. Patel was quiet. He didn't

discuss or run down the vilest political opponents even in private.

He seldom declined to see a journalist one on one and on those occasions could be frank in his assessment of a situation even if it was to his party's disadvantage.

His independent status was clear. He had first come to New Delhi, having won the Bharuch Lok Sabha seat in 1977 when the Congress was wiped out in upper India. Then in 2017, the way he won his Rajya Sabha seat is a saga on which a thrilling film can be made. He defeated every machination of the BJP which ran the state government and the

Centre and had the resources with which it made MLAs defect and back-stab their former colleagues. This famous win set the stage alight and became the precursor to the Congress nearly winning the Gujarat Assembly election the same year.

This writer had first met Ahmed Patel on the field of cricket in a journalist versus parliamentary cricket game in 1985, when he had just been made parliamentary secretary to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. He was self-effacing then and also when he was congratulated after beating the BJP in the Rajya Sabha stakes in 2017 — smiling shyly.



## IN BRIEF

KIWI SOLDIER  
CHARGED WITH  
SPYING

**Wellington, Nov. 25:** A New Zealand soldier has been charged with spying and will face up to 14 years in prison if found guilty. It is the first time somebody from the military has faced such a charge in New Zealand, at least in modern times, the New Zealand Defence Force said Wednesday.

The soldier faces a total of 17 charges and will be tried in a court martial. The military is releasing few other details about the case ahead of the trial, and the soldier's name is being kept secret by court order. The soldier was based at the Linton Military Camp with about 2,000 people near the city of Palmerston North. The website Newsroom said the soldier was first arrested in December and has close ties to far-right extremist groups.

CAR HITS GATE  
OUTSIDE MERKEL  
GERMAN OFFICE

**Berlin, Nov. 25:** A car crashed into the front gate of the building housing German Chancellor Angela Merkel's offices on Wednesday morning, but appeared to have caused little damage, Berlin police said.

Officers were on the scene investigating the crash at the German chancellery, police spokesman Hartmut Paeth said, but there were no immediate details about injuries or arrests. Rescue crews on the scene confirmed the man driving the car was being treated in an ambulance that remained in front of the chancellery.

The car, a Volkswagen sedan, had the slogan "You damned murderers of children and old people" scrawled in white paint on one side.

On the other it said "stop the globalisation policies."

It had licence plates from the North Rhine-Westphalia area of Lippe and was driven away by the Berlin fire department showing little sign of damage beyond a few scratches.

The metal gate to the chancellery appeared slightly bent.

The chancellery sits in downtown Berlin next to the Swiss Embassy and across from the capital's parliamentary offices.

AZERBAIJANI  
ARMY OCCUPIES  
EX-ARMENIA AREA

**Baku, Nov. 25:** The Azerbaijani army has entered the Kalbajar region, one more territory ceded by Armenian forces in a truce that ended deadly fighting over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry said Wednesday.

The cease-fire, brokered by Russia two weeks ago, stipulated that Armenia hand over control to Azerbaijan of some areas it holds outside Nagorno-Karabakh's borders. The first one, Aghdam, was turned over last week. Kalbajar was expected to be handed over on November 15, but Azerbaijan agreed to delay the takeover after a request from Armenia.

Azerbaijani officials said worsening weather conditions made the withdrawal of Armenian forces and civilians difficult along the single road through mountainous territory that connects the region with Armenia. Footage showed Azerbaijani troops slowly moving through snowy terrain, looking for mines.

BOAT OVERTURNS  
NEAR SPAIN, 7  
MIGRANTS DIE

**Madrid, Nov. 25:** At least seven people died after a migrant boat carrying more than 30 people hit rocks close to a small port on the Canary Island of Lanzarote, Spanish rescue services said Wednesday. The boat was one of 12 intercepted in the islands' waters overnight.

Some 300 people were rescued in the other boats but one died later. The Canary Islands emergency service said the Lanzarote boat crashed into pier rocks and overturned in the Orzola area on the north of the island late Tuesday. Video images showed rescue workers pulling young men in T-shirts from the water in the dark and other migrants sitting on the rocks. The emergency service said seven bodies from the boat were found overnight.

It said search operations are continuing. In the other incidents, the national rescue service and Civil Guard rescued some 300 people, including women and children, arriving in 11 boats. One person died. The services said many of the migrants were from northwest African countries.



A man dressed as Ded Moroz (Santa Claus, or Father Frost) stands in a street in Moscow on Wednesday.

— AFP

First Coronavirus vaccinations  
possible by Christmas, says EU

**Brussels, Nov. 25:** A top European Union official said Wednesday that the first citizens in the 27 nation bloc could be vaccinated against the Coronavirus by Christmas, but she warned that member countries must urgently prepare their logistical chains for the rollout of hundreds of millions of doses of the vaccine.

Claiming that "there's finally light at the end of the tunnel," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told EU lawmakers that "the first European citizens might already be vaccinated before the end of December." The commission, the EU's executive arm, has agreements with six potential vaccine suppliers and is working on a seventh contract.

The deals allow it to purchase over 800 million doses, more than the population of the bloc, which stands at around 460 million people.

On Tuesday, Brussels said it would sign a contract for up to 160 million doses of the experimental Coronavirus vaccine developed by Moderna, which the company says appears to be 94.5 per cent effective, according to its preliminary data.

But von der Leyen said that while vaccines are important, "what counts are vaccinations."

"Member states must get ready now. We're talking about millions of syringes, we're talking about cold chains, we're talking about organising vaccination centres, we're talking about trained personnel that is there. You name it. All this has to be prepared," she warned.

— AP

Christmas bubble:  
Boris offers days  
off from lockdown

**London, Nov. 25:** Prime Minister Boris Johnson has confirmed a time-limited one-off dispensation from Covid-19 lockdown rules agreed by all parts of the United Kingdom for families to get together to form a Christmas bubble between December 23 and 27. In a video message on Tuesday evening from Downing Street, where he continues to self-isolate after being in contact with a Covid-positive politician, Johnson said a family can get together with

two other households to form such a bubble in order to spend the festive period together.

"All four nations of the UK (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) have agreed that from the 23rd of December to the 27th of December, you will be able to form a Christmas bubble with up to two other households," Johnson said. It would mean that up to three households will be able to come together from any part of the UK.

— PTI

CHINA STIRS ROW  
SAYING FROZEN  
FOODS INFECTED

**Beijing, Nov. 25:** China has stirred controversy with claims it has detected the Coronavirus on packages of imported frozen food.

Frozen shrimp imported from an Ecuadorian company was banned for one week on Tuesday in a continuing series of such temporary bans. While experts say the virus can survive for a time on cardboard and plastic containers, it remains unclear how serious a risk that poses.

Like so many issues surrounding the pandemic, the matter has swiftly become politicised.

— AP

Email row: Sanford  
Health CEO ousted

**Sioux Falls (US), Nov. 25:** The head of one of the largest regional health systems in the Midwest has been replaced, less than a week after telling employees that he had recovered from Covid-19 and was not wearing a mask around the office.

Sanford Health said in a release on Tuesday that it has "mutually agreed to part ways" with longtime CEO Kelby Krabbenhoft, who took over in 1996 and helped expand the organisation from a community hospital into what is billed as the largest rural nonpr-

ofit health system in the country. Krabbenhoft left the executive position after telling employees in an email that he believes he's now immune to Covid-19 for "at least seven months and perhaps years to come" and that he isn't a threat to transmit it to anyone. He said wearing a mask would be merely for show. Dr Kathy Anderson, president of the North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said it was "an especially dangerous message to be sending right now in North Dakota."

— AP

## Pak hosts UN proscribed ultras: India

**United Nations, Nov. 25:** India has reminded Pakistan, the "host to the world's largest number of UN proscribed terrorists and entities", of Abbottabad, the garrison city where al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden hid for years and was killed, in a hard-hitting response as Islamabad's UN envoy gave a "dossier of lies" to Secretary General Antonio Guterres. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador T S Tirumurti on Tuesday tweeted that the "dossier of lies presented by Pakistan enjoys zero credibility".

"Concocting documents and peddling false narratives is not new to Pakistan, host to the world's largest number of UN proscribed terrorists and entities. Remember Abbottabad!" he said. The Indian Ambassador's tweet was in response to Islamabad's UN envoy Munir Akram meeting Guterres to hand over the dossier from the Pakistan government that alleged India was promoting terrorism in the country. Tirumurti made a reference to Abbottabad, where bin Laden was hiding for years and was killed.

— PTI

PAK CABINET GIVES NOD TO CHEMICAL  
CASTRATION, HANGING OF RAPISTS

**Islamabad, Nov. 25:** To combat rising cases of sexual attacks on women and children in Pakistan, the federal Cabinet has approved in-principle 20 anti-rape ordinances aimed at handing out exemplary punishment, including chemical castration and hanging, to rapists, according to a media report.

A Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad on Tuesday also decided to

change the definition of rape, the *Dawn News* reported on Wednesday. The Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Ordinance 2020 and Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Ordinance 2020 would be finalised in a week to be promulgated, Information Minister Shibli Faraz said. The two ordinances, are aimed at handing out exemplary punishment to rapists, including chemical castration and hanging.

— PTI

## SEXUAL | CRIMES

## Victims to present case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in March

## Raped by regime, women demand justice in Uruguay

**Montevideo, Nov. 25:** When Ana Amoros fell prey to Uruguay's dictatorship, the first thing her torturers did was strip her naked and hit her with a riding crop. Then they raped her. Amoros is one of a group of 28 former political prisoners seeking justice for torture and sexual crimes committed by the military regime that ruled Uruguay between 1973 and 1985.

Nine years after first filing a criminal complaint before Uruguay's courts,

the women will present their case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in March next year. The women's quest for justice is made more difficult by a law passed a year after the country's return to democracy in 1986 that blocked investigation of dictatorship-era crimes.

That allowed some a fresh start, but for others like Amoros, it meant suppressing the truth about regime-sponsored violence against women.

"Women's bodies were, and still are, the spoils of war," said Amoros, now 72.

Considered one of South America's most progressive countries, Uruguay remains conflicted about its military past. Torture, killings, enforced disappearances and other serious human rights violations were committed during the nearly 12-year dictatorship. "Women's stories are only recently emerging. There is a masculine narrative, a very masculine narrative," said

● **THE WOMEN'S** quest for justice is made more difficult by a law passed a year after the country's return to democracy in 1986 that blocked investigation of dictatorship-era crimes.

former political prisoner Luz Menendez, 66. Menendez was arrested and held in La Tablada, an estate outside Montevideo used to torture leftist suspects. She said her torturer

Biden: US ready  
to lead the world

## Prez-elect: Country to sit at head of table

**Washington, Nov. 25:** Declaring "America is back," President-elect Joe Biden has introduced his key national security and foreign policy officials and said the incoming administration is ready to lead the world and once again sit at the head of the table. Signalling a sharp shift from outgoing Republican President Donald Trump's "America First" policy over the last four years, Biden said America is "ready to confront our adversaries, not reject our allies. And ready to stand up for our values."

Speaking from his transition center in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, Biden, a Democrat, introduced his six top officials and highlighted the need to rebuild alliances, as well as tackling the coronavirus pandemic and climate change.

World leaders, he said, were "looking forward to the United States reasserting its historic role as a global leader over the Pacific, as well as the Atlantic, all across the world."

Biden's nominees and appointees, including Antony Blinken for secretary of state and former secretary of state John Kerry to a new position as special presidential envoy for climate, spoke for the first time since being announced on Monday by the transition team, and many of them offered implicit rebukes of President Trump and his isolationist and "America First" worldview.

"The team meets this moment, this team behind

Harris: End hurdles  
for global leadership

**Washington, Nov. 25:** Acknowledging that they would inherit a series of unprecedented challenges upon walking into the White House, United States Vice President-elect Kamala Harris said overcoming domestic challenges is a necessary foundation for restoring and advancing American leadership around the world.

"President-elect Biden and I have long known that when we were elected, we would inherit a series of unprecedented challenges upon walking into the White House," Harris, 56, told reporters on Tuesday at the transition headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware where President-elect Joe Biden announced his national security team.

"Addressing these challenges starts with getting this pandemic under control, opening our economy responsibly, and making sure it works for working people. And we also know

that overcoming our challenges here at home is a necessary foundation for restoring and advancing our leadership around the world," she said.

"And we are ready for that work. We will need to reassemble and renew America's alliances; rebuild and strengthen the national security and foreign policy institutions that keep us safe and advance our nation's interests; and confront and combat the existential threat of climate change that endangers us all," Harris said.

Asserting that she takes these issues very seriously, Harris said her whole career has been about keeping people safe, from serving as District Attorney to California's Attorney General to the United States Senate, where she have served on the Intelligence and Homeland Security Committees.

— PTI

● **Joe Biden has become the US first presidential candidate to win over 80 million votes. President-elect Biden won more than 80,011,000 votes as of Tuesday, while President Donald Trump had more than 73,800,000 votes.**

China opposes India's  
ban on 43 more apps

**Beijing, Nov. 25:** China on Wednesday said it was firmly opposed to India's decision to block 43 more Chinese apps on national security grounds, claiming the move violated WTO rules. India on Tuesday blocked 43 more Chinese mobile apps, including Alibaba Group Holding's e-commerce app AliExpress, in a fresh wave of web sanctions amid its border standoff with China.

The banned applications, which include a few dating apps, were a threat to the "sovereignty and integrity of India", an official statement said in New Delhi.

The Ministry of Electronics and IT issued the order for blocking the access of these apps by users in India based on the comprehensive reports received from Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center, Ministry of Home Affairs, the release said. Earlier on June 29 this year, the government had blocked access to 59 mobile apps and on September 2, another 118 apps were banned under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act.

The ban had come in the backdrop of border tensions with China in eastern Ladakh since May. Asked for his reaction to the latest ban on Chinese apps by India, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here China expresses serious concern over India's move.

— PTI

Japan protests  
island infiltration

**Tokyo, Nov. 25:** Japan issued a visit by the Chinese foreign minister on Wednesday to protest Beijing's increased activity and what it calls infiltration around disputed East China Sea islands. Both sides agreed to avoid provocative actions in the contested area.

"The situation is extremely serious," Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsumoto

Kato told reporters after meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who arrived in Tokyo on Tuesday for a two-day visit. Relations between the

two countries have been strained over territorial disputes and wartime history, even though ties have improved in recent years while China's trade dispute with the US has escalated. The territorial row in centred on Japanese-controlled East China Sea islands, which Japan calls Senkaku and China calls Diaoyu.

Chinese coast guard ships have stepped up activity around the islands despite protests and warnings by the Japanese authorities.

— AP

CHINESE CONSTRUCTION ALONG INDIA  
BORDER WORRISOME: U.S. LAWMAKER

**Washington, Nov. 25:** Expressing concern over reports of China's illegal construction activities along the Indian border in Ladakh, an influential US lawmaker has said that US will always continue to stand with India and oppose any "revisionist efforts" by the Chinese government or anyone else to challenge the peace and stability in the region.

"I am aware of and concerned with the public reports surrounding Chinese military construction along the disputed

border with India. If these reports are true, and I hope they are not, China's continued military provocations will continue to escalate tensions in the region," Democratic congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi said on Tuesday. "The United States will always continue to stand with our Indian partners in the Indo-Pacific region while opposing any revisionist efforts by the Chinese government or anyone else to challenge peace and stability," he said.

— PTI

had told her: "Girl, don't worry, you will leave here alive... but since you are a Communist, you will beg God to let you die, because we are going to drive you to the brink of madness."

Like other leftist opponents of the regime, Amoros, Menendez, Brenda Sosa, Ivonne Klingler and Anahit Aharonian were all in their 20s when they were imprisoned and tortured. AFP reporters have collected their testimonies since 2019. Amoros was a member of an armed anarchist

group, the Popular Revolutionary Organisation-Orientales 33. She was arrested on one of the group's premises she was helping to guard. She was stripped naked as soon as she arrived at the barracks.

"They hit you with a riding crop that they used to hit horses with, they hit you all over your body. I was blindfolded, but I knew that there were a lot of men." She remembers Colonel Gilberto Vazquez. He gave her a coffee and a cigarette, but when she

refused to answer his questions, "he got angry," said Amoros in a whisper. "That was the first time he raped me. 'I always thought if that happened, I'd bite him! Scratch him! I thought I would kick him in the genitals! I thought I would defend myself. But I did nothing. Nothing.'" Vazquez is currently under house arrest for dictatorship-era crimes.

Many of the women have been unable to speak to their families about their trauma.

— AFP



## DECCAN Chronicle

26 NOVEMBER 2020

# Biden signals US on way back to good governance

Having played truant for weeks while jousting with democratic principles like a Don Quixote engaging with windmills, Donald Trump finally gave in to allow the transition to begin of President-elect Joe Biden to the White House. Given that his political base began crumbling with Republicans too calling on him to cease his assault on the integrity of the presidential election and legal options disappearing as challenges on the premise of fraud in the polls were laughed out of court, Mr Trump may have altered his alternative reality view just a shade to accept Mr Biden was on the way to winning in the Electoral College while having dominated the popular vote.

It is, of course, far from certain that the outgoing President will not place further obstacles in the victor's path as he clings to the delusion the election was stolen from him and has set his lawyers on an incredulous path of conspiracy theories to undermine the sanctity of America's polls. If the US President's hesitant concession to the will of the people and the US electoral process is followed logically, as it must, by Mr Biden being sworn in on January 20, 2021, Mr Trump will become the laughing stock of the liberal world.

**The eccentric nomination and firing policies of Mr Trump who let go of loyalists refusing to toe his line when in office may be a thing of the past**

The damage Mr Trump has wrought by casting doubts freely in people's minds on the legitimacy of what has emerged as one of the cleanest elections in American history might have repercussions for the rest of the world. Authoritarian leaders in his mould would only be further encouraged to ignore the popular will even as the US election process and its presidential system of governance takes an image hit as a role model for democracies. The election is the very fount of democracy even if the US presidential poll hinges on the transfer of Electoral College votes and not on the popular vote as we saw also in Mr Trump's victory in 2016.

The path ahead of a Biden White House governing the US even with the obvious heft of its economy and the clout of its military might would be riddled with unprecedented health and economic challenges in a world still in the grip of the coronavirus pandemic. The colourful hints to be seen in the incipient composition of the Biden Cabinet straightway convey how different the US is going to be after four years of Mr Trump and his predominantly white and male Cabinet.

It is not only a reflection of the diversity that is to be welcomed as in Mr Biden's black and Indian origin vice-president Kamala Harris or in the choice of treasury secretary, likely to be Janet Yellen, with her expertise as one who headed the Federal Reserve, and in Avril Haines as the first woman to be director of national intelligence. The eccentric nomination and firing policies of Mr Trump who let go of loyalists refusing to toe his line when in office may be a thing of the past. The one thing that America needs most now is a settled mode of governance far from the maddening whimsicality of a Donald Trump, a salesman who became an accidental President.

## UP law violates basic rights

The right to life and the right to religious freedom are two fundamental rights of every Indian citizen, guaranteed by the Constitution. However, the Uttar Pradesh government has some other views on them and has come out with an ordinance that criminalises religious conversion even as the Allahabad high court affirmed the right of adults to decide on their choices.

The Uttar Pradesh Unlawful Religious Conversion Prohibition Ordinance, 2020, cleared by the state cabinet, makes religious conversion a cognisable offence inviting a jail term up to 10 years. It makes the onus on proving that a conversion was effected not for marriage or through misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or other fraudulent means on the person converting or those who facilitate it. The ordinance is condemnable as it shows how badly the state government seeks to intervene in the personal choices of people and score some propaganda points, violating the very fundamentals of the Constitution.

If someone has a doubt on the impact the new statute will have on interfaith marriages, they can look at the intervention the Allahabad high court was forced to make on Tuesday in a case. Holding that nobody, including the state, can have an objection to a relationship of two major individuals who out of their free will are living together, it quashed an FIR filed against a man, a Muslim, registered on the complaints of his father-in-law under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012, though both the man and his wife, a Hindu, were adults. If the POCSO Act can be misused against an adult in an interfaith marriage, then one can imagine how the new law will make the lives of interfaith couples miserable.

The Uttar Pradesh law is no accident; others on similar lines are in the works in many states. Unless they are stopped in their tracks, the great ideal of personal liberty in this country will suffer a serious setback.

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Abhijit Bhattacharyya



## RECP: Why India must be firm on staying out

The “real” world of trade, commerce and diplomacy fructify on the facts. Thus, the 15-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), including the 10-nation Asean bloc from Southeast Asia, which came into being in mid-November, can also be evaluated only on the facts, not on any “regret”, “shock” or “surprise”. When a former Indian commerce minister and a former foreign secretary express anguish over New Delhi committing a “historical blunder”, which they feel would negatively impact the nation's progress and prosperity and lead to “international isolation” diplomatically, one needs a scrutiny of the facts.

Why are we so hallucinating? India is a recurring, chronic laggard with the 15-member RCEP club – except for Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and the Philippines, India's trade balance with the other 11 RCEP states is negative. And while India's total trade surplus with these four Asean countries is just \$1,589.26 billion, the bilateral trade loss from the other 11 RCEP states – Australia, Brunei, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and New Zealand – stands at a staggering

\$99,870.87 billion. How then, with which magic wand, can India be guided to the path of profit and prosperity in the Chinese-run RCEP? One wonders!

Can't we see how all these countries, which till recently had an independent identity and freedom of choice and action in the 10-nation Asean bloc, by one stroke of the pen on Sunday, November 15, in Hanoi, virtually lost all their panache, being subsumed by the RCEP – subject to the overlordship of the Communist Party of China, operating from Beijing! All in the name of “free trade”, “ease of doing business”, “free flow of goods”, “tariff-free”, “common prosperity” and “shared (not shredded) goals”?

Contextually, however, the RCEP that was signed into existence in Hanoi on November 15 can't be seen in isolation as a one-time landmark wishlist for commerce, trade, investment or collective prosperity, etc. Far from it. It is born out of the acute inferiority-cum-insecurity complex of the overlord of Beijing, President-for-life Xi Jinping, who has been left badly shaken by the fate of America's outgoing President Donald Trump. But the maverick US leader is still in office till noon on January 20, 2021, and the autocrat that

he is, President Xi is not quite certain what steps his American counterpart may take against China in his few remaining weeks. That is the fear of the unknown. Therefore, he is searching for security, and the RCEP, he hopes, will fulfil that need.

The Communist Party of China's \$14 trillion economy needs a protective screen of allies urgently, thus the efforts in the past few years towards the Belt and Road Initiative and offshoots like the CPEC. The Chinese-sponsored banks have for long been trying to convince its partners and client states to replace the use of the US dollar with the Chinese yuan (renminbi), which has found few takers. Will it have better luck with the “RCEP Common Market”? If its members agree to use the Chinese currency for its trade, Beijing's road to numero uno status would get easier. No one would miss the symbolism.

After afflicting the entire world with the Chinese virus and killing millions, while it has mysteriously caused the least damage within the People's Republic where it had originated, the Chinese Communists know well it is time to build an image of credibility and trustworthiness. Otherwise there

is the very real danger of the West mobilising to strike back and maybe inflict damage – reminiscent of nineteenth and twentieth century Chinese history. It knows well that the existing world order faces its existential threat, as aptly shown in the IMF's latest annual report.

“Governments and central banks around the world might spend \$19.5 trillion just to put ‘a floor under’ the world economy – which has been reeling under the catastrophic impact of the pandemic”. Governments, as of September 2020, have “announced nearly \$12 trillion in stimulus measures and central banks across world have already spent \$7.5 trillion” to soften the impact of the Chinese-origin virus on economics. Yet, the fact is that today “the state of the world economy is worse... than the Great Depression of the 1930s”.

What India has done about the RCEP is perfect. It couldn't be otherwise.

Giving preference to imports rather than exporting indigenous goods, India's ruling class had made monumental blunders in the two decades since 2000, which led to New Delhi's capitulation before the CPC, with the Chinese brutally romping deep inside

India's hinterland and taking control of some sensitive and strategic sectors, thus endangering the security of India from within. Just contrast democratic India's behaviour with the way Beijing deals with non-Chinese entities operating in that country. India's decision on RCEP was also partly a damage-control exercise.

Our horrendous 2019-20 total trade deficit (despite the downturn due to the Chinese virus) still stands at \$1,61,348.24 billion, though down from the 2018-19 figure of minus \$1,84,000.33 billion.

India shouldn't be branded a “loser” for not joining the 15-nation RCEP as long as the supreme national interest of its 1.3 billion people is unaddressed by the RCEP's shadow of the CPC-created Chinese virus. Just wait and see: the octopus-like dragon will destroy economics, monopolise trade, break banks, create a debt trap, organise political sabotage, destroy indigenous industry, corner and usurp the dollar from all sources and replace it with the Chinese currency.

*The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College*



Subhani

# Use Tibet links, counter China in the Himalayas



Claude Arpi

For millennia, the Himalayas have been an active bridge between the Indic and Tibetan civilisations. The great physical barrier has been a place of intense contacts between two worlds which shared their search for infinity.

After the arrival of a newcomer (Mao's People's Liberation Army) on the plateau in 1950-51, the ancient relations became more and more strained, ending with being completely severed in 1962.

Beijing could not tolerate India's special relations with Tibet.

Today, while Beijing promotes its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), or the new Silk Roads, it has made sure that the ancient kinship between Tibet and the Himalayas is not revived; all the borders have been closed for almost 60 years now, with the exception of three land ports opened for petty trade at Nathu-la, Shipkila and Lipulekh-la; far from the flourishing business that took place over many centuries. Beijing has conveniently set aside these traditional trade routes to sponsor new ones (with Pakistan).

The situation turned for the worse in March 1959, when the Dalai Lama reached Khenzimane, north of Tawang, and was given asylum by the Indian government; and relations between India and Tibet, as well as the trade and pilgrimage, reached a point of no return.

Soon after the Indo-Tibet frontier became the “disputed” Sino-Indian boundary, intrusions took place in Longju in the then North East Frontier Agency (Nefa) and Kongka-la/Hot Springs in Ladakh in the summer of 1959, making New Delhi suddenly realise India had a new neighbour and that

the boundary had not been settled, as the idealist Indian government had wanted to believe.

After 1962, an ancient world disappeared and India (and the Himalayas) lost a friend, a kind neighbour and a peaceful border.

But the kinship of shared values and common history between India and Tibet have remained; unfortunately, this never translated into a coherent policy for Tibetan refugees as well as the populations of the border areas. Though the Indian government never wanted to be politically involved with Tibet, the age-old ties between the Land of Snows and India's Himalayas has remained alive (as we have seen since the start of the present crisis in Ladakh); but now it needs to be revitalised by the government.

While the People's Republic of China was able to annex Tibet by force of arms, Beijing has been unable to assimilate Tibetans into their system. Can Beijing succeed in the future? It is a moot question, the answer to which the future alone holds.

Some argue the past should be forgotten, as the world has changed; further, China has become a powerful state; and the fact that the Communist regime is today dreaming of leading the world and imposing the “Chinese Dream” on the planet is worrying for the Tibetan and the Himalayan population. In view of this situation on India's borders, we must think of a new approach towards the Himalayas.

At the outset, instead of a new policy for Tibet alone, it would be better to have a common policy for the Himalayan belt and Tibet, which have shared countless cultural, spiritual, strategic and economic similarities. I would there-

fore suggest a new “Himalayan and Tibetan Affairs' Policy”.

Some general principles should dictate this new policy.

First, that India should look after its own interests, then after the interests of those who are ethnically or culturally close to India, like the Tibetans. It seems obvious, but it has not always been the case.

India should adhere to its ideals of being a peaceful nation, of fighting against any form of imperialism and defending the rights of weaker people; further the government should certainly not take at face value declarations of peace by other nations, particularly China.

Another principle is that India's policies or actions should not be dictated by what others will think or say, particularly how China will react to a particular decision. This tendency has lasted too long with no tangible gain for this country (for example, the 2018 directive that no Indian officials should meet the Dalai Lama); retrospectively, it had counter-productive effects.

Unfortunately, India faces a country which still believes that power comes out of the barrel of a gun; without emulating China, India must quietly and forcefully look after its own interests and be honest, frank, straightforward about it.

Whatever overall policy is finally adopted, one element is crucial – coordination. In view of the individualistic tendencies of India's bureaucracy, this is extremely crucial in order to achieve the targeted aim of a common policy for all stakeholders (external affairs, defence, home, education, culture, security agencies). That is why I propose the creation of a Department of Himalayan

and Tibetan Affairs (DHTA), to function under the Prime Minister's Office.

If any “coordinator” were to work under one of the above ministries, he/she will not be able to implement the holistic policy decided by the government.

A DHTA, headed by a secretary-rank officer, could be the central element for developing the border areas.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a post of SOFA (Special Officer of Frontiers Affairs) existed; the scope of the SOFA's responsibilities was limited due to the fact that it worked under the MEA alone; it was however manned by (excellent) officers; a few SOFAs could be professionally looking after border areas and Tibetan affairs.

Keeping in mind the welfare and customs of the local population and the Tibetan refugees, the DHTA could take measures to stop the migration of the local population towards the big cities; build infrastructure, work on closer ties between the defence forces and the local population, an eventual revival of border trade, trans-border pilgrimages, and promote Buddhism on a larger scale.

The DHTA could revive the Indian Frontier Administrative Service (IFAS); in the 1950s, IFAS officers did a great job on India's northern borders and in Tibet; most of them had sacrificed promising careers in the Army to join the service; all were remarkable personalities. Even though the cadre does not exist any longer, they are still a role model for young IAS/IPS officers posted at the borders.

The need of the hour is to revitalise the Himalayas and link it with the welfare of Tibetan refugees and the promotion of their unique culture. It is the only way to balance China's propaganda efforts in the border areas.

*The writer is based in South India for the past 42 years. He writes on India, China, Tibet and Indo-French relations.*

### LETTERS

#### UNITY IN CALAMITY

The measures taken by the Tamil Nadu government for tackling the cyclone Nivar are laudable. The lessons learnt from the 2015 floods helped the authorities take all preventive measures to ensure safety of lives and property of the people. All political parties should/ are expected to work in unison with the government leaving behind their attitude of finding fault with the them and do whatever is possible to help the people come out of this natural calamity successfully with least loss of property and lives. Rehabilitation work should be carried out on a war footing by the ruling party, opposition and NGOs.

**M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai**

#### PREPARING FOR NIVAR

NEWS IS flashed every now and then about the precautionary steps taken by the state government under the personal supervision of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami. This is very heartening and people now witness how a government should function in emergency conditions and tackle the problems. No stone seems to be left unturned to meet the threat posed by Nivar cyclone to people at large and particularly the poor and impoverished. The criticism and the flak received by the government in the aftermath of Kaja cyclone seems to have taught a good and appropriate lesson to the state government and the details of preparedness made by the government are found to be excellent and heart-warming.

**V. Girilakshmi, Coimbatore**

#### BCCI TO BLAME

IT IS painful to know that Rohit Sharma and Ishant Sharma may miss the first two Tests. Since Virat Kohli would be on paternity leave after the first Test, we were expecting Rohit Sharma to fill the gap. Alas, his eagerness to please his franchise, Mumbai Indians, he overlooked his fitness to represent MI during the play-offs and jeopardised the Indian team interest. Now that he is struggling to prove his cent percent fitness, it could prove to be a big blow for our Test team. Since he is a contracted player, the Board should have ensured his full recovery before representing Mumbai Indians during the play off stage and finals to ensure that he is fully fit to represent the nation. Rohit Sharma and BCCI must share the blame for this.

**N. Mahadevan, Chennai**









**"Football and the world of sports has lost one of its greatest players today. Rest in Peace Diego Maradona! You shall be missed."**

*Sachin Tendulkar, batting great*



**"My hero no more..my mad genius rest in peace ..I watched football for you."**

*Sourav Ganguly, former India captain and BCCI president who terms the Argentine as his first sporting hero.*



**"One of the greatest icons of the game — Diego Maradona passes away, a very sad day for World sports. Condolences to his family, friends and well-wishers."**

*VVS Laxman, former India batsman*



**"Thank you for all the memories & madness... that genius left foot that was truly blessed by all the Gods above."**

*Viren Rasquinha, former Indian hockey captain.*



**"Argentinian football legend Diego Maradona was like a magician with the ball at his feet. Football has lost an invaluable gem today. His glorious legacy will forever have a place in football history. Rest in peace."**

*Praful Patel, All India Football Federation President*



# Diego takes hand of God

## Argentine football legend Maradona dies of heart attack aged 60

**Buenos Aires (Argentina), Nov. 25:** Diego Maradona, the Argentine football great who was among the best players ever and who led his country to the 1986 World Cup title before later struggling with cocaine use and obesity, has died. He was 60.

The office of Argentina's president will decree three days of national mourning because of Maradona's death on Wednesday, and the Argentine football association expressed its sorrow on Twitter.

Maradona died two weeks after being released from a Buenos Aires hospital following brain surgery.

Famed for the "Hand of God" goal in which he punched the ball into England's net during the 1986 World Cup quarterfinals, Maradona captivated fans over a two-decade career with a bewitching style of play that was all his own.

Although his reputation was tarnished by his addictions and an ill-fated spell in charge of the national team, he remained idolised in football-mad Argentina as the "Pibe de Oro" or "Golden Boy."

The No. 10 he wore on his jersey became synonymous with him, as it also had with Pele, the Brazilian great with whom Maradona was regularly paired as the best of all time.

Bold, fast and utterly unpredictable, Maradona was a master of attack, juggling the ball easily from one foot to the other as he raced upfield. Dodging and weaving with his low center of gravity, he shrugged off countless rivals and often scored with a devastating left foot, his most powerful weapon.

"Everything he was thinking in his head, he made it happen with his feet," said Salvatore Bagni, who played with Maradona at Italian club Napoli.

A ballooning waistline slowed Maradona's explosive speed later in his career and by 1991 he was snared in his first doping scandal when he admitted to a cocaine habit that haunted him until he retired in 1997, at 37.

Hospitalised near death in 2000 and again in '04 for heart problems blamed on cocaine, he later said he overcame the drug problem. Cocaine, he once said famously, had proven to be his "toughest rival."

But more health problems followed, despite a 2005 gastric bypass that greatly trimmed his weight. Maradona was hospitalised in early 2007 for acute hepatitis that his doctor blamed on excessive drinking and eating.

He made an unlikely return to the national team in 2008 when he was appointed Argentina coach, but after a quarterfinal exit at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, he was ousted — ultimately picking up another coaching job with the United Arab Emirates club Al Wasl.

Maradona was the fifth of eight children who grew up in a poor, gritty barrio on the Buenos Aires outskirts where he played a kind of dirt-patch football that launched many Argentines to international stardom.

None of them approached Maradona's fame. In 2001, FIFA named Maradona one of the two greatest in the sport's history, alongside Pele.

Maradona reaped titles at home and abroad, playing in the early 1980s for Argentinos Juniors and Boca Juniors before moving on to Spanish and Italian clubs. His crowning achievement came at the 1986 World Cup, captaining Argentina in its 3-2 win over West Germany in the final and decisive in a 2-1 victory against England in a feisty quarterfinal match.



**1.** In this June 13, 1982 photo, Diego Maradona is attacked by Belgium's Guy Vandermissen during the opening match of the Fifa World Cup in Barcelona. **2.** Maradona holds up his team's trophy after Argentinas 3-2 victory over West Germany at the 1986 World Cup final. **3.** Maradona arrives in Roma from Barcelona, before being transferred to Naples. **4.** Maradona celebrates a goal on his last official game with Boca Juniors in Buenos Aires, Argentina. **5.** Maradona flashes victory signs to fans below at the Casa Rosada government house after meeting with Argentine President last year. **6.** Maradona poses with his doctor after a brain surgery earlier this month.

### The 'Goal of the Century'

The solo goal against which all solo goals will be judged. Named the "Goal of the Century" by FIFA in 2002, his high-speed slalom in Mexico in 1986 ended England's World Cup and cemented Maradona's position as the world's best footballer. The goal trumps others of its type not just because of its impact, the stage, the spectre of the Falklands War and the fact that it came just minutes after his notorious 'Hand of God' goal, but for the efficiency of its execution.

Maradona barely deviates from his path towards goal the moment he spins free in midfield, with a few drops of the shoulder enough to embarrass England for the second time in the space of five minutes. "Diego assures me that he meant to pass to me several times but there was always some

## TOP THREE

obstacle that forced him to change plans. Just as well," striker Jorge Valdano, who followed Maradona up the field, said later.

### Free-kick that conquered Naples

Nicknamed the "divine free-kick" in Italy, Maradona's iconic winning goal for Napoli in the November 1985 home clash with Michel Platini's Juventus — reigning European champions — was the one that created the Argentine's legend in Naples.

Standing over an indirect free-kick well inside the penalty area, legend has it that Maradona

asked midfielder Eraldo Pecci to roll him the ball for a shot despite the closeness of the Juventus wall. A quick touch from Pecci was all he needed to flick a stupendous effort over a group of Juve players who were practically on his toes as he hit the ball and past a bamboozled Stefano Tacconi in the Juve goal.

### 'El Pibe' volleys Verona

There were more crucial goals among Maradona's 115 for Napoli, but few matched the sheer nonchalance of his outrageous lob in a 5-0 hammering of reigning Italian champions Hellas Verona in October 1985.

Collecting a long pass with his back to goal on the left flank, with the ball still bouncing, Maradona took a step and clipped a looping shot towards goal that gently faded off the left post.

## ONE DAY, WE WILL PLAY TOGETHER IN THE SKY, SAYS PELE

**Rio de Janeiro, Nov. 25:** Brazilian soccer icon Pele hoped he would "some day play ball with Maradona in the sky" as he paid tribute to the Argentine maverick, who died after suffering a cardiac arrest on Wednesday.

The only player, whose name was taken in the same breath with the 'King of Football,' the 60-year-old Maradona died two weeks after undergoing a surgery to remove a blood clot in his brain.

"What sad news. I lost a great friend and the world lost a legend. There is still much to be said, but for now, may God give strength to family members. One day, I hope we can play ball together in the sky," Pele tweeted.

Pele and Maradona had tremendous mutual respect and admiration for each other's skills.

Despite a 20-year age difference, the two were good friends for decades and are widely regarded the most gifted to have played the beautiful game.

—PTI

## MARADONA IN HIS OWN WORDS

*"To see the ball, to run after it, makes me the happiest man in the world."*

*"I made mistakes, and I paid for them. But the ball is still pure."*

*"I am Maradona, who makes goals, who makes mistakes. I can take it all, I have shoulders big enough to fight with everybody."*

*"You can say a lot of things about me, but you can never say I don't take risks. I am black or white, I'll never be grey in my life."*

*"When I wear the national team shirt, its sole contact with my skin makes it stand on an end."*

## ON PELE



"There would be no debate about who was the best footballer the world had ever seen, me or Pele. Everyone would say me. Pele should go back to the museum."

## ON THE HAND OF GOD

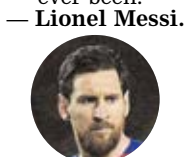
"I was waiting for my teammates to embrace me and no one came... I told them, 'Come hug me or the referee isn't going to allow it'. If I could apologise and go back and change history I would do. But the goal is still a goal, Argentina became world champions and I was the best player in the world."

## ON LIONEL MESSI

"Messi scores a goal and celebrates. Cristiano (Ronaldo) scores a goal and poses like he's in a shampoo commercial."

## Diego in the words of others

"Even if I played for a million years, I'd never come close to Maradona. Not that I'd want to anyway. He's the greatest there's ever been."



— **Lionel Messi.**



"No ball ever had a better experience than when it was at his left foot."

— **Argentina teammate Jorge Valdano.**



"Diego, for all Argentinians, is God. And he always will be."

— **Carlos Tevez.**



"What (Zinedine) Zidane could do with a ball, Maradona could do with an orange."

— **Michel Platini, French great**



"The best player there has ever been, better than Pele."

— **Ruud Gullit, Dutch legend**



"Maradona. When he was on form, there was almost no way of stopping him."

— **Former AC Milan and Italy defender Franco Baresi, when asked who was the best player he faced.**



"Maradona is a God to the people of Naples. Maradona changed history. In 80 years, we had always suffered, fighting against relegation, yet in seven seasons with him we won two leagues, a UEFA Cup, two Italian Cups. I'm a fan too and to live those years with Maradona was incredible."

— **Naples native Fabio Cannavaro, who was in the youth ranks at Napoli when Maradona was there and later won the World Cup with Italy in 2006.**

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