

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | THURSDAY 19 | NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 30°C
Min: 21°C
Rainfall: 1.5 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Karthigai 4
Tithi: Panchami
Star: Puradam
Rahukalam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm
Yamagandam:
6 am to 7.30 am

Sasikala pays ₹10 cr fine, release from jail likely soon

Chennai: A fine of over ₹10 crore imposed on late Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa's aide V. K. Sasikala in a disproportionate assets case was Wednesday deposited in a Bengaluru court and her release is expected soon, her lawyer said. The fine amount of ₹10,00,10,000 was remitted to the 34th city civil court, Bengaluru, by way of demand drafts, Sasikala's counsel N. Raja Senthoo Pandian said. ■ **P3**

COUNTER POINT



We know why we lost... but don't know why we won in some seats!

Decision on K'taka cabinet expansion in 2-3 days: Yediyurappa

New Delhi/Bengaluru, Nov. 18: A decision on expansion of the Karnataka cabinet will be taken in the next two-three days, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said after meeting BJP national president J.P. Nadda here on Wednesday. Yediyurappa, along with Deputy Chief Minister Govind Karjol, met Nadda in the national capital and explained to him the need to accommodate new faces in the cabinet. "I have informed (Nadda) about the need to undertake at the earliest the cabinet expansion to accommodate new faces. He (Nadda) said (he) will discuss the issue and get back in the next two-three days," Yediyurappa told reporters after the meeting. The chief minister further said he also discussed the issue of development of the state with the party chief. Nadda informed Yediyurappa that he would visit Karnataka next month as part of his countrywide tour. Asked if it would be cabinet expansion or reshuffle, Yediyurappa said, "It will depend on the direction given by Naddaji." Political activity has intensified within the ruling BJP camp in the state ever since Yediyurappa indicated on November 10 soon after the party's victory in bypolls to two assembly constituencies that cabinet reshuffle is on cards. The chief minister had said he would soon be proceeding to New Delhi to discuss with the party's central leadership and get their approval, as he hinted about reshuffle by dropping or inducting some ministers. — **PTI**



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CM Palaniswami launches medical counselling



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Trump fires top Homeland official

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New dad Richardson pulls out of Oz side



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Army readies winter habitat facilities for troops in Ladakh

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Indian Army has completed establishing winter habitat facilities for all troops deployed in eastern Ladakh as the military standoff with China is in its seventh month, senior officials said on Wednesday. This comes as temperatures in the forward bases in Ladakh have already reached below zero degrees Celsius. India has deployed around 50,000 troops in the area.

The winter deployment in Ladakh is especially difficult due to the tough terrain, low temperatures and bone chilling winds, which make survival extremely



Army sets up upgraded living facilities for troops in eastern Ladakh.

— **PTI**

difficult. "The Indian Army has completed establishment of habitat facilities for all troops deployed in the sector," the officials said. They added that apart

from the "smart" camps with integrated facilities which have been built over the years, additional state-of-the-art habitat with integrated arrangements

for electricity, water, heating facilities, health and hygiene have been recently created in order to accommodate the troops.

The troops in the front line are accommodated in heated tents as per the tactical considerations of their deployment. It has also received the first batch of winter clothing for its soldiers from the US.

The altitudes in Ladakh range from the high to super high altitude and the area experiences up to 40 feet of snowfall, after November. This, coupled with the windchill factor, is when temperatures dip down to minus 30-40 degrees.

COVID-19 VACCINE

Pfizer concludes trial, to apply for clearance

New York, Nov. 18: Global drugmakers Pfizer and BioNTech said on Wednesday that their Covid-19 vaccine was found 95 per cent effective in the final analysis of the Phase 3 trial, including in people aged over 65 years, paving the way for the companies to apply for emergency authorisation from US regulators within days. Pfizer and its German partner said they have concluded phase 3 study of their mRNA-based Covid-19 vaccine candidate BNT162b2, meeting all primary efficacy end points.

Based on current projections, the companies expect to produce globally up to 50 million vaccine doses in

2020 and up to 1.3 billion doses by the end of 2021.

The major announcement comes just two days after leading biotechnology company Moderna said on Monday its virus vaccine had an efficacy rate of 94.5 per cent.

Earlier this month, Pfizer and Biontech had said their Covid-19 vaccine candidate was found to be more than 90 per cent effective in preventing the pandemic in participants. The companies said the first primary objective analysis is based on 170 cases of Covid-19, of which 162 cases of coronavirus were observed in the placebo group while 8 cases in the BNT162b2 group. — **PTI** ■ **P5**

PM Modi calls up Biden, reiterates strength of ties

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Indian government made its first formal contact with the new American dispensation late on Tuesday night when Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to US president-elect of Joseph R. Biden and congratulated him on his election, describing it as a testament to the strength and resilience of democratic traditions in the US. In his tweet message, PM Modi said he has reiterated India's commitment to its strategic partnership with the US. ■ **P4**

Khushboo's car meets with accident

Chennai, Nov. 18: Actor-politician Khushboo escaped with a minor injury in the shoulder when a container truck rammed into her car near Melmaruvathur while she was on her way to attend BJP's vel yatra event at Cuddalore Wednesday. On her twitter handle, Khushbu said, "Met with an accident near Melmaruvathur...a tanker rammed into us. With your blessings and God's grace I am safe." — **DC** ■ **More on P2**

TN gets back 13 c. Ram, Lakshman, Sita idols

New Delhi, Nov 18: Union minister of culture and tourism Prahlad Patel on Wednesday handed over 13th century bronze idols of Lord Ram, Lakshman and goddess Sita to the Tamil Nadu government at the Archeological Society of India (ASI) headquarters here, restituting the artefacts stolen over 20 years

ago. On September 15, London Metropolitan Police had handed over the statues to the High Commission of India after they were recovered. Mr Patel had attended the event via video link as the chief guest.

In August last year, the High Commission of India, London, was informed by India Pride Project that

four antique idols of Lord Ram, Goddess Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman, were stolen from a temple built in Vijayanagara period in Tamil Nadu and smuggled out of India, may be to the United Kingdom. "Since 1976, we have recovered 53 artefacts from different countries, out of which 40 have been brought back since 2014.

Despite the artefacts being ours, we have to undergo long legal procedures to get them.

The state governments to which the artefacts are returned have to take responsibility that these incidents do not recur. The safety and security of these artefacts are essential," Patel said.

■ **Turn to P3**

Snow-covered road near Atal Tunnel at Rohtang



Vehicles lined-up as they move slowly on a snow-covered road near Atal Tunnel at Rohtang in Lahaul-Spiti district, on Wednesday.

— **PTI**

Ex-Kerala minister arrested for graft

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV.18

The Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau (VACB) on Wednesday arrested former PWD minister of Kerala and Indian Union Muslim League legislator V.K. Ebrahim Kunju in connection with corruption in the construction of Palarivattom flyover in Kochi.

The arrest of the former

minister was recorded in a private hospital in Kochi where he is currently under treatment. He was arraigned in the case after vigilance found his alleged role in releasing an advance amount of Rs 8.25 crore to RDS Projects Ltd, the contractor of the flyover construction work in violation of rules. The MLA has also been charged with criminal conspiracy and amassment of illegal wealth.

The flyover was constructed in Kochi at a cost of Rs 42 crore and commissioned in 2016. By 2019 it developed major cracks in the pier pipes and concrete girders leading to the flyover's closure for traffic. Metro man E Sreedharan and a team of experts from IIT Madras who carried out the technical inspection detected major faults and recommended reconstruction of pier caps, girders and deck.

Mr Kunju's arrest has come as major setback for the Congress-led opposition UDF of which Muslim League is the second biggest constituent. The opposition is currently engaged in a full scale agitation against LDF government's alleged corruption. The Congress and Muslim League, however, termed the arrest politically motivated and aimed at diverting people's attention from the gold smuggling case.

Kashmir's traditional copper trade gets boost from pandemic

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, NOV. 17

The coronavirus pandemic may have caused widespread disruptions, affected health systems and living conditions and pushed many parts of the world into recession, it has silver lining, at least, for Kashmir's traditional copperware and thousands of people associated with the trade.

Copperware trader Aaqib Javed said, "Covid-19 has pushed the trade by twenty to thirty per cent". Another Kashmiri Farooq Ahmed who runs a copperware store in summer capital Srinagar said, "If Coronavirus has brought misery with it for us, it has, at the same time, proved somewhat catalyst for boosting up our trade."

The Kashmiri copperware is an ancient artwork and the objects are used as household dailyware and also for decorative purposes. The art of casting copperware in the Valley had flourished from years but the trade has received a boost with the outbreak of Coronavirus as it is generally believed that the use of copper utensils for cooking and eating from these helps towards increasing immunity to fight viruses and also minimizes cancer risks and fight back other diseases.

Shivraj forms cattle cabinet for protection of cows

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 18

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday announced that he would be constituting a cabinet within the cabinet, christened "Gau Cabinet", to recommend measures for the conservation and promotion of cattle resources.

The first of its kind initiative in the country, the cabinet committee will have its first meeting on November 22, Mr Chouhan tweeted on Wednesday.

A statement issued by the state government said a six-member cabinet committee headed by the Chief Minister has been set up to prepare an integrated project for the conservation, protection and promotion of cattle resources in the state.

Other members of the committee are state home minister Narottam Mishra, agriculture minister Kamal Patel, forest minister Vijay Shah, panchayat raj minister Mahendra Sisodia and animal husbandry minister Prem Singh Patel.

The first meeting will be held in Agar Malwa, where Asia's biggest cow

● **An action plan will be implemented for increasing the use of cow dung cakes.**
● **Six departments will execute the decisions of the gau-cabinet.**

sanctuary was established in 2017. Infrastructure has been laid in the 1,100 acre-sanctuary to provide shelter to 10,000 cattle. However, currently the sanctuary has 4,000 cattle.

Madhya Pradesh has a cattle population of 1.76 crore. The state has 1,300 cow shelters where 1.80 lakh cattle have been rehabilitated.

Six departments will execute the decisions of the gau-cabinet in a coordinated manner, Mr Chouhan said later.

An action plan will be implemented for increasing the use of cow dung cakes (kanda'). The making and marketing of Gau-Kasht (cow-wood) is being encouraged at present, similarly efforts will be made to market other products made from cow milk, he said.

"It can be termed as the first cow cabinet in the nation as I am not sure whether or not such a cabinet exists in any other state," a top official said.

Scientists: Protein-based Covid vaccine candidates suitable for India

New Delhi, Nov. 18: As the world moves into the next stage of Covid-19 management and several vaccine candidates approach end-stage trials, scientists say a critical consideration for India is storage temperature and a protein-based preventive might therefore work best for the country. The decision on procuring the right Covid-19 vaccine depends on multiple factors, including safety, price and ease of deployment, the scientists added, pitching

for a preventive like the one being developed by US firm Novavax that can be stored at higher temperatures rather than those developed from mRNA or viral vectors.

Immunologist Satyajit Rath explained that the vaccine candidates by US-backed Pfizer-BioNTech and Russia's Sputnik V need much lower storage temperature conditions compared to protein-based vaccine candidates like the one developed by Novavax.

Wrong use of plasma therapy in Covid patients not advisable: ICMR

New Delhi, Nov. 18: The country's apex health research body, ICMR, has issued an advisory stating that indiscriminate use of convalescent plasma therapy (CPT) in coronavirus infected patients is not advisable.

The Covid-19 caseload in India has mounted to over 89 lakh. In an "Evidence Based Advisory to address Inappropriate Use of Convalescent Plasma in Covid-19 Patients", the Indian Council of Medical

Research (ICMR) said that a potential donor for convalescent plasma should have sufficient concentration of antibody working against Covid-19.

Benefits of CPT in improving clinical outcomes, reducing severity of disease, duration of hospitalisation and mortality in Covid-19 patients are dependent on the concentration of specific antibodies in convalescent plasma that could neutralise the effects of SARS-CoV-2. CPT or passive immun-

● **A study concluded that CPT did not lead to reduction in progression to severe Covid-19 in the group that received CPT as compared to the group that did not receive the therapy**

otherapy has been tried in the past for treatment of viral infections like H1N1, Ebola and SARS-CoV-1 etc. The ICMR recently conducted an open label phase II multicentre randomised controlled trial in India across 39 public and private hospitals on use of convalescent plasma in the manage-

ment of cases with moderate Covid-19 disease (PLACID Trial).

It was concluded that CPT did not lead to reduction in progression to severe Covid-19 or all-cause mortality in the group that received CPT as compared to the group that did not receive the therapy "PLACID is the world's

largest pragmatic trial on CPT conducted in 464 moderately ill laboratory confirmed Covid-19 affected adults in real world setting wherein no benefit of use of CPT could be established," the ICMR said.

Similar studies conducted in China and the Netherlands have also documented no significant benefit of CPT in improving the clinical outcomes of hospitalised Covid-19 patients, the advisory stated.

"Indiscriminate use of

OTHER STORY

SFI protests removal of book from syllabus

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUNELVELI, NOV. 18

The activists of Students Federation of India (SFI) laid siege to the Manonmaniam Sundaranar University (MSU) here protesting against the university's decision to remove Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy's book *Walking with the Comrades* from the MA English syllabus.

Around 200 members of the CPI(M)-affiliated students wing blocked the entrance of the university demanding restoration of Ms Roy's book in the syllabus. The students, who refused to withdraw their agitation, however agreed to disperse after MSU vice-chancellor K Pitchumani talked to them. Receiving a petition from the students, the vice-chancellor promised them to take up the issue at the next meeting of the board of studies this week.



Joint Commissioner of Police (East) R. Sudhakar distributes sewing machines, computers, laptops and other essential items to transgenders in the city on Wednesday. — DC

We will prevent DMK win in polls: BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARUR, NOV. 18

The BJP's main agenda is to prevent the DMK from winning next year's assembly elections and forming the next government, according to party's state general secretary Rama Srinivasan.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, he said the DMK always advocated separatism.

He said although the Tamil Nadu government attempted to prevent BJP's "Vel Yatra", the programme evoked good response among the people and will culminate at Tiruchendur on December 7.

He said Union Home Minister Amit Shah's Tamil Nadu visit on November 21 will attain political significance. He said the BJP will welcome if superstar Rajinikanth and DMK leader M K Alagiri float new political parties.

HC: Custodial deaths against humanity

J.STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, NOV 18

"Custodial deaths are not only inhuman but also against humanity at large. Any progressive and proud nation in this globe adopting the ideology of democracy is expected to be sensitive in eradication of custodial death completely, as the custodial deaths are barbaric", observed the Madras high court while directing the Director General of Police to issue consolidated instructions/circulars regarding the rights of common man approaching the police stations and police officials and the service to be provided by the officials by treating the citizen fairly and decently.

J u s t i c e S.M.Subramaniam gave the directive while dismissing a bail petition filed by S.Sridhar, a suspended inspector of police, who was arrested in connection with the custodial death of P.Jeyaraj and his son J.Bennix at Sathankulam in Tuticorin district.

The judge said, "There cannot be any second opinion, as the custodial death are to be wiped out completely and, if any complaints are received, investigation are to be conducted in a speedy manner and stringent actions are to be initiated both at departmental level and by prosecuting authorities". Though there are procedures to be

'Rights of complainants to be displayed'

The judge directed the DGP to ensure that CCTV cameras were installed in all police stations and CCTV cameras already installed were in working conditions all the time. The entire premises of the police stations were to be covered under CCTV cameras. "The DGP is directed to ensure that the rights of the complainants approaching the police stations and the police officers are boldly and legibly displayed in front of the police stations across the state of Tamil Nadu, both in English and Tamil languages", the judge added.

followed in the cases of custodial deaths, the mandate is not honoured by the authorities responsible and accountable. Prevention of custodial death is also of paramount importance. Curing being an aspect, prevention is more important. Thus, periodical observations, monitoring are imminent and necessary to initiate corrective measure and to implement various reformations in the police departments and amongst the public servants, who are all the law enforcing authorities, the judge added.

The judge said the state of Tamil Nadu was reporting many number of custodial deaths in comparison with many other states across the country. It was a serious issue to be considered by the DGP and urgent measures were required. Granting bail or declining bail in such sensitized cases would not provide any solution for the problem. The measures to be taken, corrections to be made, reformations and other wider implications were all of paramount importance to ensure so as to protect the rights of common man, the judge added.

The judge also directed the DGP to ensure the proper maintenance of CCTV cameras in all the police stations across the state of Tamil Nadu and repairs, if any noticed, must be rectified by the Station House Officer, within a period of three days. "The DGP is directed to ensure that CCTV storages must be sent to the higher officials within a stipulated period and the said storages are to be preserved for the period to be stipulated by the DGP in the consolidated instructions. The DGP is directed to state in the circular/consolidated instructions that violations of the Instructions/guidelines by any officials must be viewed seriously and appropriate disciplinary actions will be initiated under the discipline and appeal rules", the judge added.

Khushboo escapes unhurt in mishap

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV 18

Actor and politician Khushboo met with a road accident on Wednesday morning, when a container lorry hit a car she was travelling in, in Madurantakam. Police said the BJP leader did not sustain any injuries.

According to police, Khushboo was heading from Chennai to Cuddalore to take part in the BJP's Vetrivel Yatra. When her vehicle reached Ayyanar Koil in Madurantakam on Chennai-Trichy National Highway, a lorry hit her car from the side. The vehicle was partially damaged on the left side and in the middle, but the actor, who was sitting in the front seat, did not sustain any injury.

The Madurantakam police rushed to the spot and detained the driver, identified as Abdul Hakkim.

Khushboo shared the news of her accident on her Twitter account with



BJP functionary and actor Khushboo sits shocked in her car after the mishap. — DC

pictures that showed a heavily damaged white SUV, she wrote." Met with an accident near Melmaruvathur. A tanker rammmed into us. Khusboo further clarified that the container truck rammmed into their vehicle.

"My car was on the move in the right lane and its container came from nowhere and rammmed into me. Police are investigating and questioning the driver to rule out any foul play." She added that she was safe and that she would continue her journey to participate in the yatra.

A senior police officer said that the lorry was heading towards Puducherry "Both vehicles were heading in the same direction and the lorry scraped against Khushboo's vehicle. We have detained the driver. Further investigations are on."

Finalise contract for 900 push carts on Marina: HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV 18

Staying the operation of the order of a single judge, which directed the authorities not to finalize the tender process relating to 900 push carts to be placed at Marina beach, Chennai, the Madras high court has permitted the Greater Chennai Corporation to go ahead with the tender process for the 900 push carts for which tenders have been received and finalize the contract before December 3, 2020.

A division bench comprising Justices Vineet Kothari and M.S.Ramesh passed the further interim orders on a PIL filed by Fishermen Care. The matter relates to cleaning Marina beach, shifting of fishermen, Marina beach street vending carts and removal of encroachments.

"After hearing the counsel for the parties, we direct that the operation of the order passed by the



single judge on November 10, 2020, shall remain stayed and the said petition shall remain tagged with this batch of PIL petitions. After hearing additional advocate general S.R.Rajagopal and perusing the latest status report dated November 16, 2020, we permit the Greater Chennai Corporation to go ahead with the tender process for the 900 push carts for which tenders have been received and finalize the contract before the next date", the bench added.

"We permit the existing bidders and the said petitioner M/s Air Systems Limited also to partici-

pate in the said tender process further and have negotiations with the commissioner/committee of the Greater Chennai Corporation concerned in this regard who should finalize their decision with regard to the grant of tender/contract for the supply of the said 900 push carts. The conditions and modalities of contract will be within the discretion of the Chennai Corporation, who may relax or modify the same in this regard. At the request of the AAG, the matter is now posted to December 3, 2020, by which time, the concerned reports from other agencies will also be made available, on the basis of which, the AAG shall submit a complete work plan for the development of the Loop road fish market, footpath on Sea side and foot over bridge. Therefore, the matter may be placed with the aforesaid reports before the court on December 3, 2020", the bench added.

NOMINATIONS CALLED FOR 'ALERT BEING AWARDS'

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV 18

To recognize the brave soldiers who helped fight the battle against Covid-19 by putting others' lives before them, Alert, a voluntary non-profit organisation, has included a special category of nomination in its fourth edition of the "Alert Being Awards" 2020.

Alert empowers a common man to act in case of emergency to save lives, and its award is a unique recognition that honours humanity by awarding Good Samaritans, who have made a difference to individuals or the society at large, by impacting with prevention of trauma and saving lives.

This year, the new award category has been added to honor these unsung heroes and support them in their valiant efforts as a moment of glory to Corona warriors.

The last date to submit the nominations for both the categories is December 15, 2020, according to a press release from Alert adding that the awardees would be honoured at a ceremony scheduled in Chennai on January 29, 2021.

Murder suspect hacked to death

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV 18

A 25-year-old murder suspect was hacked to death by a gang near Singaperumal Kovil in the suburbs on Tuesday night.

The murdered person has been identified as M. Babu alias Gundu Babu by the police. The J J Nagar resident had a murder case pending against him, police said. He was recently out on bail and had been working as a tea master in an eatery close to Singaperumal Koil, railway station.

The incident happened on Tuesday night when Babu was walking home from the eatery. Police said a gang in a car followed him. He was intercepted by them and the gang armed with deadly weapons attacked him. Babu started running. However, he was chased and hacked to death.

Passersby who witnessed the crime alerted the Maraimalai Nagar police. District Superintendent of Police, Kannan, along

● After a preliminary investigation, police said Babu and Bharani, frequently fought over a land issue for the last four years. On Deepavali night, the duo attacked each other, when Bharani threatened to kill Babu.

with the police rushed to the spot and conducted spot inquiries.

After a preliminary investigation, police said Babu and Bharani, frequently fought over a land issue for the last four years. On Deepavali night, the duo attacked each other, when Bharani threatened to kill Babu. Police suspect Bharani to be the reason behind the murder. The Maraimalai Nagar police registered a case. They have launched a search for Bharani and his gang. Investigations are underway.

8-YEAR-OLD BOY MEETS WATERY GRAVE

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV 18

In a tragic incident, an eight-year-old boy drowned in a pond in Karumarapakkam village in Chengalpet district.

The deceased was identified as J. Lathishwaran, son of Jayaprakash, a resident of Malaimettu street in Karumarapakkam village near Tirukazhukundram, and a painter by profession. He was living with his wife, Renuka and two sons, Tamil Selvan (11) and Lathishwaran (8). The brother-duo went to Karumarapakkam government school, the police said.

According to police, on Wednesday morning, Lathishwaran went to a pond near his house along with some of his friends to take a bath. While he was playing in the waters, he started to drown. Though the people nearby tried to save him, he drowned in the pond and died of suffocation. His body was later pulled off.

Based on the alert by the family, Tirukazhukundram police rushed to the spot. They have sent the body to the Chengalpet government hospital for autopsy. Case of unnatural death is registered and further investigations are on.

ACTIVE CASE COUNT FALLS BELOW 15K

Chennai, Nov.18: The active Covid-19 cases in Tamil Nadu dipped below the 15,000 mark on Wednesday for the first time in over five months as the state reported 1,714 new infections, taking the tally to 7,63,282, while the toll stood at 11,531 with 18 more fatalities.

With 2,311 recoveries, a total of 7,37,281 patients admitted to various hospitals in the state have so far got cured of the infection, a health department bulletin said.

As many as 67,014 RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction) samples were tested and cumulatively, 1,12,66,091 specimens have been examined in 212 Covid labs in various regions. Chennai reported 479 fresh infections and neighbouring Chengelpet and Tiruvallur 129 and 112 respectively. The remainder was spread across the state.

The state capital accounted for 2,10,135 out of the 7.63 lakh plus cases reported so far in Tamil Nadu. All the 18 deceased had co-morbidities and the dead include a man and woman aged 90 and 43 respectively. The death toll of 11,531 includes 3,788 from Chennai. —PTI

Welcoming newborns



Health minister Dr C. Vijayabaskar participates in World Newborn Week and Diabetic Day awareness programme at Stanley Medical College on Wednesday. Health secretary J. Radhakrishnan also seen. — DC

Chennai students loathe walking or cycling to schools and back: Study

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 18

A unique study carried out by some Chennai-based researchers in association with International Physical Activity and the Environment Network (IPEN), an international organisation working in the field of physical activity to

develop future strategies to improve active school travel (AST) in India, has revealed that AST is not a serious option among school-going adolescents due to parental pressure and long distance to schools.

According to the study named BE ACTIV, only 23.5 per cent of students walk to the school while 28.1 per

cent return from school by foot 5-6 days a week. When it comes to cycling, only 20.1 per cent use cycles to reach schools while 20.4 per cent prefer it to return home.

At least 52 per cent of adolescents, irrespective of gender, opted for at least one trip of an active mode of travel a week to or from school.

● In all, 82 per cent of parents, especially of girls, perceive AST as a danger

The study conducted among 324 adolescents aged 12-17 across Chennai, revealed that 73.5 per cent don't walk to school or 69.1 per cent don't walk from

school. Similarly, most adolescents reported no cycling to (78.4 per cent) or from (78.1 per cent) school.

The study also revealed that 75 per cent of adolescents believe AST is a risk. In all, 82 per cent of parents, especially of girls, perceive AST as a danger due to various reasons including heavy traffic.

Dr R.M. Anjana, head of the research team, said that the study findings revealed that parental restrictions and distance to school were the strongest barriers for AST.

There are no catchment area policies in the country restricting the choice of school. Hence school selection is mainly decided by

parents.

It is, therefore, unsurprising that almost 50 per cent of adolescents considered their school to be too far to walk or cycle to. Opting to attend schools located closer to home or creating catchment areas for schools through policy measures may result in an increase in AST," she said.

OTHER STORY

Tamil Nadu Congress to hold 'plough' rally

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV 18

A farmers' 'plough' rally, demanding the withdrawal of the three anti-farmer legislation enacted recently by the BJP government recently, would be organized at Karumathampatti in Coimbatore on November 22 by the TNCC, which has vowed to continue protesting till the bills are withdrawn.

TNCC president K. S. Alagiri in a statement on Wednesday said the BJP government that came to power with a promise to double the income of farmers and procure farm produce at the minimum support price recommended by the M S Swaminathan committee, did nothing to farmers other than passing the Bills that were detrimental to the interest of farmers.

So, the TNCC, which had already held conferences and protests to fight for the farmers' cause and carried out a signature campaign against the anti-farmer's Bills, would hold a farmers' revival conference at Karumathampatti ahead of the 'plough' rally.

Following that, 'plough' rallies would be organized by the various District Congress Committees in one of the Assembly constituencies in their area on November 28 to protect farmers' interest. TNCC leaders would take part in all the rallies, the release added.

BJP chief attempts Vel Yatra, held

Cuddalore: Tamil Nadu BJP unit president L. Murugan was on Wednesday detained by police when he again attempted to take out the 'Vetrivel' yatra from here and was let off later. When Murugan, along with his party office-bearers tried to go on a rally after addressing a public meeting, police took them to a nearby hall, where they were detained. All of them were released later in the day.

Actor Khushbu Sundar, who had recently joined the party, took part in the meeting. — PTI

7.5% quota to usher in over 400 med seats for govt school students: CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV 18

Counselling for admissions to medical and dental colleges, based on Neet scores, began on Wednesday with Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami personally handing over the admission letters to 18 students selected under the newly introduced 7.5 per cent reservation for students of government schools.

Describing the day as a golden lettered day in the history of the state, Palaniswami said he was extremely happy that he could bring in the 7.5 per cent reservation for government school students, who were the first to be provided admission on the first day of direct counselling at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai.

As a student of a government school he derived more personal satisfaction from introducing the reservation, under which 313 students would get admission for MBBS and 92 students in BDS courses this year, he said.

The Chief Minister said that only 6 students from government schools could get admission last year in medical courses and said he was happy that the number had now gone up to a total of 405. He said of the total 8,41,251 plus-2 students in the state, 3,44,485 of them studied in the 3,054 government schools.

He also explained how the number of medical seats had gone up after he took over as Chief Minister and the efforts he had made to take health services to the rural areas. He said his government had taken steps to build more medical colleges and that once they were opened the number of seats would go up.



(Above and left) Scenes from the counselling centre at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor stadium in the city on Wednesday. — DC



The Chief Minister presented stethoscopes and aprons to 18 students and handed over seat allotment orders.

Health minister Dr C. Vijaya Baskar said he had met the students and parents, "who thanked the CM with tear-filled eyes for providing allotment orders under the (7.5 per cent) quota."

Sasikala may walk free soon

Chennai, Nov 18: A fine of over Rs 10 crore imposed on late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa's aide V. K. Sasikala in a disproportionate assets case was on Wednesday deposited in a Bengaluru court and her release is expected soon, her lawyer said.

Chief Minister K. Palaniswami, mean-

while, asserted that the anticipated release of Sasikala would not alter the stand of AIADMK to keep her and her kin at bay, both from the party and the government. There shall be no change in the party stand as regards Sasikala, he told reporters at Coimbatore.

The fine amount of Rs 10 crore was remitted to

Chief Minister K. Palaniswami asserted that the anticipated release of Sasikala would not alter the stand of AIADMK to keep her and her kin at bay, both from the party and the government.

the 34th City Civil Court, Bengaluru, by way of demand drafts, Sasikala's counsel N. Raja Senthoo Pandian said.

The court is now

expected to send a communication to the prison authorities about the payment of fine and "I expect her to be free soon, earlier than the



Min denies Stalin's 'irregularity' charge

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 18

DMK president M. K. Stalin alleged that names of candidates from other states like Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were found in the rank list of Tamil Nadu medical counselling. In a statement, Stalin accused the government of indulging in irregularities.

Replying to that charge, health minister C Vijayabaskar said that admissions to medical courses were being conducted in a transparent manner with the names and marks displayed on LED screens. He told the media that there was a selection committee that verified various certificates including the nativity certificate of candidates, who were also mandated to give a self-declaration.

He said though candidates could apply for admission in two states, nativity certificate could be obtained in only one state. There was no scope for any irregularity in the admissions, the health minister clarified. He said the first batch of 267 government school students had been called for admission on the first day of counselling and the Chief Minister handed over the letter to 18 of them.

Corpn school students Of the students selected under the quota for government schools, eight of them were from corporation schools in Chennai. Corporation Commissioner G. Prakash released the names of the students and said that they could make it only because of the reservation brought in by the government.

scheduled release date of January 27, 2021," he said.

Citing remission norms for good conduct available for prisoners, he expressed confidence that Sasikala would be released "sooner than later" and legal processes related to it were on.

Sasikala's two relatives, like her, are also under-

going simple imprisonment of four years in the assets case in the Parappana Agrahara Central Jail.

All the three of them were imposed a fine of Rs 10 crore in addition to Rs 10,000. Pandian said the process to pay the fine for the two others was also being taken up.

— PTI



Rainwater enters a house at Shankar Nagar in Avadi. —DC

Dams brimming in Nellai, Tenkasi districts

M. ARUL OLI | DC
TIRUNELVELI, NOV. 18

Copious rain in the catchment areas of dams in Tirunelveli and Tenkasi districts resulted in heavy inflow to all major dams much to the jubilation of farmers.

The water level in Thamirabarani, which caters to the drinking water and irrigation needs of Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Thoothukudi and Virudhunagar districts, rose by 15.70 ft on Wednesday to reach 117 ft against its maximum capacity of 143 ft. Registering 117mm of rain in its catchment area by 8 am, the Papanasam dam had a heavy inflow of 6813.45 cusecs as on Wednesday morning. If the rain continues the dam is expected to reach its maximum storage level within a week, said a PWD official, who added that the water level at the 156ft high Servalur dam touched 136 ft. The Manimutharu dam in the district too had a good inflow of 2992 cusecs on Wednesday.

The discharge of water from these dams for irrigation too has increased. The water discharged from the dams, coupled with the flood waters, enhanced the flow in



Over 1,100 cusecs of surplus water released from Srivaikundam dam in Thoothukudi district drains into the sea. — DC

Thamirabarani river that crossed its danger mark at Tirunelveli forcing the district administration to evacuate the people residing in low lying areas to the temporary shelter camps for safety.

The last dam across Thamirabarani at Srivaikundam is overflowing. Around 1,100 cusecs of surplus water from the Srivaikundam dam have been released into the sea.

Thoothukudi district functionary T T K Karthik Raja demanded the diversion of surplus water into the Sadayaneri channel to serve the water-starved irrigational

tanks in the Sathankulam and Udangudi unions in the district.

The Pisanam season paddy cultivation in around 80,000 acres in Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts commenced due to the abundant availability of water.

At Sivagiri in Tenkasi district three houses were damaged due to continuous rain on Tuesday night. The Sivagiri tahsildar inspected the damaged houses and recommended to Tenkasi district collector G.S. Sameeran for adequate compensation to the families residing in those houses.

Photo docu done in 1958 helps TN get idols back

FROM P1

He said luckily the photo documentation of these three metal sculptures was done in June 1958 at Sri Rajagopal Vishnu Temple in Anandamanal in Nagapattinam

district of Tamil Nadu, so they could be identified readily.

Once the idols were verified with relevant records, the matter was taken up with the Art and Antique Unit of the London Metropolitan Police as

well as the idol wing of Tamil Nadu police, the minister said. The Tamil Nadu police sent a comprehensive report confirming that the theft took place on November 23-24, 1978, and later criminals were also caught, a state-

ment from the ministry said.

Based on the photo, these statues were examined. The idol wing of Tamil Nadu police also provided the expert opinion about the match of the idol with IFP photo archive. A

detailed report was sent to the Indian High Commission in London. The Art and Antique Unit of the London Metropolitan Police probed the matter and based on information and documents provided to them.

— PTI

Census for school dropouts, spl kids in Tiruvarur dist

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUVARUR, NOV. 18

The Tiruvarur district administration will undertake a census on school dropouts and differently-abled children in the 6-14 age group across Tiruvarur district, said district collector V. Shantha.

She said in a release

here on Wednesday that the proposed census is going to be undertaken under the right of children to free and compulsory education (RTE) Act 2009. The census will be carried out from November 21 to December 10 by school headmasters, teachers, block resource centre supervisors, NGOs etc.

NOON-MEAL STAFF UNION SEEKS PAY PARITY

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, NOV. 18

The Tamil Nadu Government Nutritious Meal Employees Union has demanded a time-bound scale at par with the junior assistants of the state government.

Union state president V. Arumugam and general secretary A. Ayothi told the media after their state executive meet here on Wednesday that a resolution to this effect was adopted at the meeting.

They said the meeting also wanted that the retired employees of the nutritious meal scheme should be given 50 per cent of their basic pay as bonus along with dearness allowance and the family pension at par with the state government employees.

They appealed to the government to establish a separate department for Puratchi Thalaivar MGR nutritious meal scheme, promotion opportunities for male organisers on par with women organisers and promotion for male organisers based on their seniority as junior assistant of the state government.

They wanted the government to withdraw its GO which enables the government to appoint only women as organisers of the nutritious meal scheme and wanted that such opportunities should also be given to rural male youths, they added.



Uprooted trees paralyze traffic on the busy Coonoor-Kotagiri road on Wednesday morning. —DC

Pondy reports no Covid deaths for 5th consecutive day

Puducherry, Nov 18: No fresh coronavirus related deaths were reported in Puducherry for the fifth consecutive day on Wednesday.

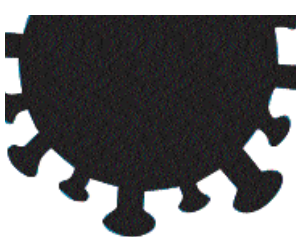
However, 56 new infections were recorded, taking the total number of those infected by the virus to 36,465 in the union territory.

Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release that the new cases were identified at the end of examination of 3,583 samples in the last 24 hours ending at 10 am on Wednesday.

He said 195 patients were discharged from hospitals.

While Puducherry region recorded 43 cases out of the total 56, Karaikal had nine and Mahe four cases.

Yanam region did not



report any new infection, the official said.

The fatality and recovery rates were 1.67 percent and 96.40 percent respectively. Of the 3.66 lakh samples tested for Covid-19 so far, it was found that 3.25 lakh turned out to be negative.

Of the total 36,465 coronavirus cases, 705 were active, 35,152 patients recovered and were discharged so far. The toll remained at 608, he added.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

'LADAKH IN CHINA' ERROR: TWITTER APOLOGISES

New Delhi, Nov. 18: Social media giant Twitter has apologised in writing to a key parliamentary panel for wrongly showing Ladakh in China and has promised to correct the error by the month-end, the committee's chairperson Meenakshi Lekhi said on Wednesday.

Twitter's deposition has come in form of an affidavit signed by Damien Kariem, Chief Privacy Officer of Twitter Inc, for wrong geo-tagging of India's map, Lekhi said.

Last month, the joint committee of parliament on data protection bill had come down heavily on Twitter for showing Ladakh as part of China, saying it amounted to treason and had sought an explanation by the US-based parent of the social media platform in form of an affidavit. Appearing before the panel, chaired by Lekhi, representatives of Twitter India had "begged apology", but they were told by the members that it was a criminal offence that questioned the sovereignty of the country and an affidavit must be submitted by Twitter Inc, not by its 'marketing arm' Twitter India.

"Twitter has now given us a written apology on an affidavit for Ladakh being shown in China," Lekhi said. "They have apologised for hurting Indian sentiments and have sworn to correct the error by November 30, 2020," she added.

POLICE ISSUE 3RD SUMMONS TO KANGANA, SISTER

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 18

The Bandra police station in Mumbai issued third summons to actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli asking them to appear before them on November 23-24, for questioning in connection with the spreading enmity case filed against them over their objectionable tweets. The police had first sent summons to the duo asking them to appear on October 26. The duo had sought time to appear stating they were busy with a family wedding till November 15.

The officials stated that this could be the last summons sent out to the duo and if they dodge again, further action would be taken against them. The second time they were asked to appear on November 9-10, however, they did not appear even then, officials said. The series of tweets by the two sisters led to enmity between communities, police claims.

"The duo needs to be questioned based on the complaint we had received, which is the basis of the FIR. They are yet to respond to the third summons we have sent them," said a police officer.

The case pertains to the complaint of fitness trainer Munawar Ali Sayyad in the Bandra court, seeking probe into the tweets and other statements given by the sisters.

ODISHA ASSEMBLY SESSION DROPS QUESTION HOUR

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 18

There shall be no question hour business during the ensuing winter session of the Odisha legislative Assembly. The House, beginning on Friday, will function four-and-a-half-hours everyday, informed Speaker Dr Surjya Narayan Patro on Wednesday.

Briefing media persons, he said since question hour business requires involvement of a huge number of government employees to gather data and information, it is impossible to do this exercise at present when the Covid-19 restrictions are put in place.

The Interim Budget will be tabled on the first day of the session on November 20.

Sitting arrangements have been made keeping in view of the Covid-19 guidelines and senior MLAs will have the option to join the House through video conference.

On the first day of the fifth session, the House will be adjournment for the first half after obituary references for former Speaker Sarat Kumar Kar and some ex-members police personnel.

The opposition BJP and Congress have strongly opposed the decision to suspend the question hour.

'Cow dung' festival

People take part in 'Gorehabba' festival at Gumatapura village on the border of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states. Laughing and cheering as they scoop up handfuls of cow dung to roll into balls, men and boys from a small village mark the 'Gorehabba' festival every year by flinging cow dung at each other.

— AFP

Adhir hints Sibal can leave Cong if he feels out of place

Suggests dissenting leaders may set up new party or join another party

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Congress' recent electoral debacle in Bihar has further brought out the discord within the party with leaders now publicly hitting out at each other and some even asking others to quit, "set up a new party or join any other party".

West Bengal unit chief of the Congress and Lok Sabha MP Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary on Wednesday, reacting to Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal's comments after the results of bypolls and Bihar Assembly elections, said, "If some leaders think that Congress is not the right party for them then

● **WEST BENGAL** unit chief of and Lok Sabha MP Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary said if some leaders think that Congress is not the right party for them then they may set up a new party or can join any other party which they think is progressive and according to their interest

● **FORMER UNION** finance minister P. Chidambaram also raised doubts over the party's organisational capacity in an interview to a local daily.

they may set up a new party or can join any other party which they think is progressive and according to their interest. But they should not indulge in such embarrassing activities since it can erode the credibility of the Congress."

"If such leaders are serious about revamping the Congress party, then they should try to prove their mettle on the ground. Did

they volunteer to work for the party during the recent Bihar elections?"

On Wednesday, former union finance minister P. Chidambaram also raised doubts over the party's organisational capacity.

In an interview to a daily he said, "I feel the Congress contested more seats than its organisational strength. The

Congress was given 25 seats where the BJP or its allies had been winning for 20 years. The Congress should have refused to contest from these seats. The party should have fielded only 45 candidates."

"I am more worried about the bypoll results in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. These results show that the party either has no organisational presence on the ground or has been weakened considerably," he said.

Interestingly, Chidambaram was not among the 23 leaders who wrote to the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, in August this year demanding

changes in the functioning of the party.

Earlier this week Sibal, who was signatory to the August letter, spoke about the inability of the party to change.

He said that it has been six long years now and the time for introspection is over, it's now time for action.

He further added that people do not see the Congress as an alternative and yet no action is being taken to correct this.

The disastrous election results have once again opened the Pandora's box on the functioning of the Congress and has aggravated the demand for a democratic change within the party.

ORDER ON BSF JAWAN'S POLL PLEA RESERVED

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its order on an election petition by a dismissed BSF jawan Tej Bahadur challenging election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency on the grounds that the rejection of his nomination papers by the returning officer was flawed.

Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde heading the bench also comprising Justice A.S.Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian said, "this is too important a matter to be adjourned so many times. The respondent is the Prime Minister of India".

Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde heading the bench also comprising Justice A.S.Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian said, "this is too important a matter to be adjourned so many times. The respondent is the Prime Minister of India".

Shah, Nadda to visit WB every month till polls end

Kolkata, Nov. 18: Firmly fixing its sights on West Bengal after victory in Bihar, the BJP in Bengal on Wednesday said Union home minister Amit Shah and party national president J.P. Nadda will visit the state every month till the end of Assembly polls.

Elections to the 294-member West Bengal Assembly are due in April-May next year. The two BJP leaders will visit the state separately every month to take stock of the party organisation ahead of the elections, state BJP president Dilip Ghosh said.

"Amit Shah and J.P. Nadda will visit the state separately every month till the Assembly elections are over. The dates are yet to be finalised. Their regular visits will energise the party workers," Ghosh told reporters. Shah is likely to visit WB for two consecutive days a month and Nadda for three days, party sources said.

After catapulting the NDA to power following stupendous performance by the BJP, the saffron party has made it clear that mission Bengal tops their next target.

Shah, who missed campaigning in Bihar, made a two-day trip to Bengal starting November 5 to oversee BJP's preparedness for the state polls.

BJP president J.P. Nadda was scheduled to accompany Shah to Bengal, but his visit was cancelled a night before.

During the visit, Shah

met the family members of a BJP worker Madan Ghorai allegedly killed in judicial custody last month in Patashpur in Purba Medinipur district and hit out at Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over alleged minority appeasement and deteriorating law and order.

The Bengal BJP chief also lashed out at the Congress-CPI (M) alliance, saying both the parties have been rejected by the people of the state long back. "The people of WB have given chances to the Congress, the CPI(M) and the TMC. All the three parties have failed to live up to the expectations of the masses, which will now be fulfilled by the BJP," he said.

— PTI

TEMPORARY | SHELTER**Temperatures in forward bases already reached below zero degrees celsius****Army finishes work on winter habitats for troops**

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Indian Army has completed establishing winter habitat facilities for all troops deployed in eastern Ladakh as the military standoff with China is in its seventh month, senior officials said on Wednesday.

This comes as temperatures in the forward bases in Ladakh have already reached below zero degrees Celsius.

India has deployed around 50,000 troops in the area to tackle any threat that may emerge from the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

● **INDIA HAS** deployed around 50,000 troops in the area to tackle any threat that may emerge from the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

● **THE TROOPS** in the front line are accommodated in heated tents as per the tactical considerations of their deployment.

The winter deployment in Ladakh is especially difficult due to the tough terrain, low temperatures and bone chilling winds, which make survival extremely difficult.

"In order to ensure operational efficiency of troops deployed in the winter, the Indian Army has completed establishment of habitat facilities for all troops deployed in the sector," the officials

said. They added that apart from the "smart" camps with integrated facilities which have been built over the years, additional state of the art habitat with integrated arrangements for electricity, water, heating facilities, health and hygiene have been recently created in order to accommodate the troops.

The troops in the front line are accommodated in

heated tents as per the tactical considerations of their deployment.

Also, adequate civil infrastructure has been identified to cater for any sudden emergency requirements.

The Indian Army had already been storing essential supplies for the winter deployment on a war footing.

It has also received the first batch of winter clothing for its soldiers from the United States.

The altitudes in Ladakh range from the high to super high altitude and the area experiences up to 40 feet of snowfall, after the month of November.

Bihar Oppn slams Nitish over graft charges on mantri

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, NOV. 18

A day after allocating portfolios, the Nitish Kumar-led NDA government in Bihar has landed in a fresh controversy over the induction of controversial JD(U) MLA Mewalal Chaudhary as education minister.

Mewalal Chaudhary, a former vice-chancellor of an agriculture university and a first-time minister in Nitish Kumar's Cabinet, faces serious corruption charges and was even suspended once by the JD(U) over the issue.

On Wednesday while questioning Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's "zero-tolerance" policy on corruption, Opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav demanded the sacking of Mewalal Chaudhary. "Has he (Mewalal Chaudhary) been awarded the ministerial berth for his involvement in corruption and given him the freedom to loot? He faces serious corruption charges under Sections 409, 420, 467, 468, 471, and 120B of the Indian Penal Code", RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said in a tweet.

The JD(U) had suspended him in 2017 after an FIR was registered against him over alleged irregularities in appointments during his tenure as the vice-chancellor of the Bihar Agriculture University at Sabour in Bhagalpur district.

RJD leaders in Patna said the case was lodged against him on the basis

of reports that highlighted irregularities in the appointment of assistant professors and junior scientists.

As per Chaudhary's poll affidavit, the case is still pending against him in the court of the additional district and sessions judge (I) in Bhagalpur and the matter is being investigated by the state vigilance department.

"For the sake of saving his chair, Nitish Kumar keeps preaching about his zero tolerance on issues like crime, corruption and communalism. But the reality is there for everyone to see, he has appointed a fugitive accused as an education minister in his Cabinet. There is no minister from the minorities in his Cabinet this year. This government is protecting the corrupt and criminals", Tejashwi Yadav said.

Amid the controversy, Bihar election watch and the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) has come out with a report highlighting the criminal cases against several ministers who took the oath Monday along with the chief minister. The report says eight out of 14 ministers have declared criminal cases against them in their poll affidavits, including serious criminal offences. The report says that among those who have declared criminal cases against them two are from the BJP and two from the JD(U), and one each from Hindustani Awam Morcha and Vikasheel Insaan Party.

Modi, Biden talk to strengthen ties

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Indian government made its first formal contact with the new American dispensation late on Tuesday night when Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to the President-elect of the United States Joseph R. Biden and congratulated him on his election, describing it as a testament to the strength and resilience of democratic traditions in the US.

In his tweet message, PM Modi said he has reiterated India's commitment to its strategic partnership with the US. The Prime Minister also conveyed congratulations to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, saying her success was a matter of pride for the Indian-American community.

"Spoke to US President-elect Joe Biden on the phone to congratulate him. We reiterated our firm commitment to the Indo-US strategic partnership and discussed our shared priorities and concerns — the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region," the MEA statement said.

Biden's transition team issued a statement saying the President-elect thanked Prime Minister Modi for his congratulations and expressed his desire to strengthen and expand US-India Strategic partnership alongside the first Vice President of South Asian descent.

The leaders agreed to work closely to further advance the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, built on shared values and common interests. The leaders also discussed their priorities, including containing the Covid-19 pandemic, promoting access to affordable vaccines, tackling climate change, and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region," the MEA statement said.

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Cop hurt, Florida slaying suspect killed in Maryland encounter

Maryland, Nov. 18: A suspect in a Florida slaying was killed in an encounter with Maryland law enforcement that left a police officer shot and wounded, authorities said. Montgomery County Police were attempting to arrest a suspect wanted in connection with a killing in Jacksonville, Florida, when the shooting incident happened. It occurred in Prince George's County on Tuesday afternoon, the agency stated in a message posted to Twitter. Montgomery County and

Prince George's County are Maryland suburbs of the nation's capital. One officer was shot by the suspect, officials said. That officer's condition was not immediately known, according to police. The suspect was killed, the department said. Authorities did not give additional information on how the suspect died. The wounded officer and suspect were not immediately identified. The agency said it would provide updates as more information is confirmed. —AP

Milwaukee officer who killed 3 resigns
Wauwatosa, Nov. 18: A suburban Milwaukee police officer who has fatally shot three people in the line of duty since 2015, including a Black teenager outside a mall in February, is resigning from the department. The Wauwatosa Common Council approved a separation agreement with Joseph Mensah on Tuesday night, effective Nov. 30, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported. The Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office has

ruled all three shootings by Mensah, who also is Black, were justified self-defense. Protests followed the most recent shooting outside Mayfair Mall. Alvin Cole, 17, was shot five times by Mensah after he fled from police following a disturbance inside the mall. Mensah said Cole pointed a gun at him, so he shot him. Protesters marched for months, calling for Mensah to be fired. They protested outside the mall and Wauwatosa City Hall. Mensah was suspended by the Wauwatosa Police. —AP

Trump fires top Homeland official

Washington, Nov. 18: President Donald Trump has fired a top Homeland Security official who contradicted his claims of voter fraud and asserted that the November 3 election was the most secure one in America's history. Trump, who has launched a slew of lawsuits in key states, but

has not provided any evidence to back his claims of fraud, announced on Twitter on Tuesday that he has fired Christopher Krebs, director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) at the Department of Homeland Security. Trump, Republican, has refused to concede

statement by Chris Krebs on the security of the 2020 Election was highly inaccurate," Trump said in a tweet.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client M/s.LIC Housing Finance Ltd having office at 654, Tri-Star Tower, Avinashi Road, Coimbatore -641037, propose to extend loan to Mrs.P.V.Ramya, W/o.C.G.Ranganathan, residing at New Door No.119, Ramalingam Colony, Coimbatore -641043 by mortgaging her property to an extent of 1320 sqft of land plotted as Northern Portion of Site No.82 in the layout of residential sites named as Sri Sathya Narayan Nagar approved by the Zonal Deputy Director of Town and Country Planning, Coimbatore Nilgiri Periyar Districts in L.P/R. (CPN) No.190/1987 situated at Coimbatore Taluk, Kuruchi Village in SF No.425/2. It is alleged that the Original Parent Sale deed dated 22.08.1990 registered as Document No.3717/1990 registered at Joint 1 Sub Registration District, Coimbatore is lost and not traceable. Anybody in possession of document or having any right, lien, and charge over the property or any objection in M/s.LIC Housing Finance Ltd extending financial assistance to her may inform me within 15 days from today. Any objection thereafter will not be entertained and the same shall not bind my client in any manner whatsoever it may be.

P.BHARATH, B.A., B.L., Advocate,
156 / 18, Parsn Trade Plaza, Dr.Nanjappa Road,
Coimbatore-641018, Ph:9443934865

Pfizer, BioNTech say Phase 3 virus vaccine candidate is 95% effective

New York, Nov. 18: Global drugmakers Pfizer and BioNTech said on Wednesday that their Covid-19 vaccine was found 95 per cent effective in the final analysis of the Phase 3 trial, including in people aged over 65 years, paving the way for the companies to apply for emergency authorisation from US regulators within days. American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech said they have concluded phase 3 study of their mRNA-based Covid-19 vaccine candidate BNT162b2, meeting all primary efficacy end points. Based on current projections, the companies expect to produce globally up to 50 million vaccine doses in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion doses by the end of 2021.

The major announcement comes just two days after leading biotechnology company Moderna said on Monday its virus vaccine had an efficacy rate of 94.5 per cent. Earlier this month, Pfizer and Biontech

had said their Covid-19 vaccine candidate was found to be more than 90 per cent effective in preventing Covid-19 in participants. Analysis of the data indicates a vaccine efficacy rate of 95 per cent in participants without prior SARS-CoV-2 infection (first primary objective) and also in participants with and without prior SARS-CoV-2 infection (second primary objective), in each case measured from seven days after the second dose. The companies said the first primary objective analysis is based on 170 cases of Covid-19, of which 162 cases of Coronavirus were observed in the placebo group while 8 cases in the BNT162b2 group. Vaccine efficacy was consistent across age, gender, race and ethnicity demographics. The observed efficacy in adults over 65 years of age was over 94 per cent, they said. There were 10 severe cases of Covid-19 observed in the trial, with nine of the cases occurring in the placebo group and

one in the BNT162b2 vaccinated group. "The study results mark an important step in this historic eight-month journey to bring forward a vaccine capable of helping to end this devastating pandemic. We continue to move at the speed of science to compile all the data collected thus far and share with regulators around the world," said Dr Albert Bourla, Pfizer Chairman and CEO. "With hundreds of thousands of people around the globe infected every day, we urgently need to get a safe and effective vaccine to the world," Bourla said. The announcements about the vaccines and their potential availability for use among the general population in the coming weeks and months has offered hope to millions around the world in a year that has seen the Covid-19 pandemic devastate lives and economies and still showing no signs of abating.

—PTI

STATE INDUSTRIES PROMOTION CORPORATION OF TAMILNADU LIMITED
19-A, RUKMANI LAKSHMIPATHY ROAD, EGMORE, CHENNAI - 600 088.
CIN U74999TN19715GCG00567

Tender Notice NIT.No.86/CW/DQ/T.No.90/2020-21 Dt.17.11.2020.
Short Term Tender Notice- 4th call

For and on behalf of State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited, sealed tenders are invited under "Two Cover System" for the following work from Class-I State level Civil/Electrical Contractors registered in PWD/Highways / Any other Department of Government of Tamil Nadu / National Highways, Government of Tamil Nadu or any other Government of Tamil Nadu Undertakings in similar nature of works. Tenders will be received upto 3.00 PM on **08.12.2020** and the same will be opened on the same day at 3.30 PM.

Name of Work	Approx. value of work	EMD
Formation of link roads and providing High Mast Lights in SEZ area at SIPCOT Industrial Growth Centre/Park at Perundurai and Oragadam	Rs.289.60 lakhs	Rs.1,54,800/-*

*EMD in the form of DD in favour of SIPCOT Ltd., payable at Chennai (In the Name of tenderer only).
The tender Schedule can be Downloaded at free of cost from the website: www.tenders.tn.gov.in

DIPR/ 4310 /TENDER/2020 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SIPCOT, Chennai-8.

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
OFFICE OF CHIEF ENGINEER / METERING
C-3, SHAKTI VIHAR, PSPCL, PATIALA, PUNJAB 147001
Tel. No. 0175-2218871, Fax No. 0175-2200284, e-mail: semeteringpatiala@gmail.com
Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813
Registration Number: 33813, website: www.pspcl.in
e-tendering page: <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender Specification No.	MQP-167 /2020-21/PR
Short Description	Procurement of Portable Secondary Injection Type CT & PT Test Equipment for Testing of LT/HT/EHT Current Transformers & Potential Transformers
Start date of downloading of tender documents / Bid submission start date	18.11.2020 at 11.00 Hrs
Last date of downloading / Bid submission	16.12.2020 till 11.00 Hrs
Bid opening date (Part-I & II)	21.12.2020 at 11.30 Hrs
Intending officer and Contact No.	SE/HMC, PSPCL, Patiala 98461-18774

Detailed NIT and set of specification/ tender documents can only be downloaded from website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. Tender ID is 2020_POWER_56212_1
Note: Corrigendum, if any, after the publication of this tender enquiry shall only be uploaded on site and will not be published in any newspaper.

C-352/2020
RO - I/05541 **SE/HMC PSPCL, Patiala**

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
CHENNAI CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE CIRCLE

TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No.23/2020-21/HDD, dated: 12.11.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, **Percentage tender** online only will be received upto **10.12.2020 - 11.00 AM** by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Chennai Circle for works under **Road Safety Component 2019-20 (Package 144 to 146)** pertaining to Chengalpattu, Tiruvannamalai and Cheyyar Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details will be available from **23.11.2020** onwards in the Government website <https://tntenders.gov.in>. If any Changes/Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER(H), C&M, CHENNAI CIRCLE

DIPR/4295/TENDER/2020

ARULMIGU DHANDAYUTHAPANI SWAMY TEMPLE, PALANI
Tender Notice no. 607/2020/E3, dated: 17.11.2020
The Executive Officer, Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple, Palani invites sealed tender at the office from the Registered Public Work Department Contractors for the following works.

S. No.	Name of work	Value of Work in Lakhs Rs.	Earnest Money Deposit Rs.
1.	Construction of combined information centre at North Giriveethi	74.93	48,000/-
2	Construction of R.C.C. Mandapam at foot Hill of the Idumban Hill Temple	32.36	27,000/-

1. Completed tender for the work shall be received upto **09.12.2020 till 3.00 PM** at the office of The Executive Officer, Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple, Palani and Opening shall be on the same day at **4.00 PM**
2. Date of availability of Tender Documents from **23.11.2020** to **08.12.2020** and Tender Schedule cost S.No.1 - Rs.15,000/- + Rs. 1800/- (GST), S.No.2 - Rs.9,000/- + 1600/- (GST)
3. The Tender document can be downloaded free of cost from the website www.tenders.tn.gov.in and www.tnhrc.org
4. The contractor offer the Tenders belong to the Hindu Religious Persons Only.
5. Further details and any changes can be had from the above websites only.

DIPR/ 4314 / TENDER/2020 Executive Officer

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU

HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT

LAND ACQUISITION OFFICER AND DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER, NAMAKKAL.

ROC. 18078 /2016/(H2)

Dated: 29.10.2020

The following amendment is issued to the public notice already issued under sub section 2 of section 15 of Tamil Nadu Highways Act-2001 for the acquisition of 1.06.36 Hectare of Dry lands situated in 44.Athipalayam Village of Tiruchengode taluk of Namakkal District for the formation of " Bypass road to Tiruchengode Town as published in English Daily " Deccan Chronicle", (Coimbatore Edition) dated 12.05.2017 & 06.10.2017

Amendment

1. In the said Notification, the following amendment is issued to the existing schedule.

District : Namakkal Taluk :Thiruchengode Village : 44.Athipalayam

15(2) Notification already published												15(2) Notification to be read as											
Sl. No.	Survey No.	Proposed Sub-Division No.	Total Extent of the lands in (Hect.)	Total Extent of lands to be Acquired in (Hect)	Classifi-cation	Name of the Pattadar as per 10-1 Chitta	Details of Buildings, Structures, Trees, Crops and Others	Boundaries for the proposed Acquisition lands				Sl. No.	Survey No.	Proposed Sub-Division No.	Total Extent of the lands in (Hect.)	Total Extent of lands to be Acquired in (Hect)	Classifi-cation	Name of the Pattadar as per 10-1 Chitta	Details of Buildings, Structures, Trees, Crops and Others	Boundaries for the proposed Acquisition lands			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(N)	(S)	(E)	(W)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(N)	(S)	(E)	(W)
1.	31/1A	31/1A2	0.02.0	0.00.31	Dry	Patta No.15 Ganesan S/o.Nallanagounder-1 Kannammal W/o.Ganesan-2 Palanivel S/o. Ganesan-3	Palm Tree-1	45 Boundry of Pokkam palayam Village	S.No. 32	S.No. 31/1B1	S.No. 31/1A1	1.	31/1A	31/3	0.02.0	0.00.24	Dry	Patta No.15 Ganesan S/o.Nallanagounder-1 Kannammal W/o.Ganesan-2 Palanivel S/o. Ganesan-3	Yielding Palm Tree-1	45 Boundry of Pokkam palayam Village	S.No. 32	S.No. 31/4	S.No. 31/1A
2.	31/1B	31/1B1	0.43.0	0.05.34	Dry	Patta No.362 Natesan S/o Chettiyanna Gounder-1 Nallaiyan S/o Ramasamy Gounder-2 BakkiyamW/o Manivannan-3 Gowrishankar S/o Manivannan-4	Yielding Palm Tree-2, Young palm Tree-3,	45 Boundry of Pokkam palayam Village	S.No. 32	S.No. 31/1B2	S.No. 31/1A2	2.	31/1B 1	31/4	0.43.0	0.05.34	Dry	Patta No.362 Natesan S/o Chettiyanna Gounder-1 Nallaiyan S/o Ramasamy Gounder-2 BakkiyamW/o Manivannan-3 Gowrishankar S/o Manivannan-4	Yielding Palm Tree-2, Young palm Tree-3,	45 Boundry of Pokkam palayam Village	S.No. 32	S.No. 31/1B1	S.No. 31/3
3.	34/1	34/1B	3.04.0	0.35.04	Dry	Patta No.84 Murugesan S/o Ramasamy gounder	Young Neem Tree-26 Yielding Tamarind Tree-2	S.No. 34/1A	S.No. 34/1C	S.No. 34/1C	S.No. 36, 34/1A	3.	34/1	34/1B	3.04.0	0.37.80	Dry	Patta No.84 Murugesan S/o Ramasamy gounder	Young Neem Trees-26 Pala Tree-1	S.No. 34/1A	S.No. 34/1C	S.No. 34/1C	S.No. 36, 34/1A
4.	34/2	34/2B	1.04.5	0.19.66	Dry	Patta No.45 Mani W/o Deverajan-1 Selvi W/o Sengottuvel-2 Sasirekha D/o Deverajan -3	Young Neem Tree-12 Yielding Tamarind Tree-2	S.No. 34/2A, 32	S.No. 34/2C	S.No. 34/2C, 32	S.No. 34/2A, 34/1A, 1B	4.	34/2	34/2B	1.04.5	0.19.77	Dry	Patta No.45 Mani W/o Deverajan-1 Selvi W/o Sengottuvel-2 Sasirekha D/o Deverajan -3	Young Neem Trees-16 Yielding Tamarind Tree-2	S.No. 34/2A, 32	S.No. 34/2C	S.No. 34/2C, 32	S.No. 34/2A, 34/1A, 34/1B
5.	36/4	36/4B	1.02.0	0.13.57	Dry	Patta No.140 Sellappan S/o Kuppusamy	Young Neem Tree-20	S.No. 36/4A	S.No. 41, 36/4C	S.No. 34	S.No. 41, 36/4A	5.	36/4	36/4B	1.02.0	0.07.68	Dry	Patta No.140 Sellappan S/o Kuppusamy	Young Neem Trees-24 Pala Tree-1	S.No. 36/4A	S.No. 41, 34	S.No. 41, 36/4A	
6.	41/1	41/1B	0.48.5	0.19.27	Dry	Patta; No.162 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	Yielding Coconut Tree-2 Yielding Palm Tree-1 Lemon Tree-1 Kariveppillai Tree-1 Water tank-1	S.No. 41/1A, 41/3B, 41/3A	S.No. 41/1C, 41/8A	S.No. 41/7A, 7B, 41/3B	S.No. 39, 41/1A	6.	41/1	41/1B	0.48.5	0.17.98	Dry	Patta; No.162 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	Yielding Palm Tree-1 Yielding Coconut Tree-2 Lemon Tree-1 Kariveppillai Tree-1	S.No. 41/1A, 41/3B, 41/3A	S.No. 41/1C, 41/3B	S.No. 41/7A, 41/3B	S.No. 39, 41/1A
7.	41/2	41/2B	0.11.0	0.00.13	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	-----	S.No. 41/2A	S.No. 41/3B	S.No. 41/3B	S.No. 41/3A	7.	41/2	41/2B	0.11.0	0.00.35	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	-----	S.No. 41/2A	S.No. 41/3B	S.No. 41/3B	S.No. 41/2A, 41/3C
8.	41/2	41/2C	0.11.0	0.00.93	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	-----	S.No. 41/2A	S.No. 41/3B	S.No. 41/3B	S.No. 41/2A	8.	41/3	41/3B	0.10.5	0.06.74	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	Electric Motor Room-1 Yielding Coconut Tree-2 Yielding Palm Tree-2 Murugai Tree-1	S.No. 36, 41/3A, 41/3C, 41/3D, 41/2B	S.No. 41/7A, 41/4A, 36	S.No. 41/4A, 41/3B	S.No. 41/1B, 41/3A
9	41/3	41/3B	0.10.5	0.07.97	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	Electric Motor room-1 Yielding Coconut Tree-2 Yielding Palm Tree-2 Murugai Tree-1	S.No. 41/2C, 2B, 36	S.No. 41/7A, 41/4A	S.No. 41/4A, 36	S.No. 41/2B, 2C 41/3A, 41/2A	9	41/4	41/4A	0.07.5	0.06.13	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	Yielding Palm Tree-3 Well-1 PVC Pipeline-1 Young Neem Trees-10 Yielding Coconut Tree-2 Young Aayaa Tree-2	S.No. 36, 41/3B	S.No. 41/4B, 41/4C, 41/5A	S.No. 41/4B, 36	S.No. 41/3B, 41/2A, 41/7A
10.	41/4	41/4A	0.07.5	0.03.0	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	Yielding Palm Tree-3,Well-1 PVC Pipeline Young Neem Tree-10 Yielding Coconut Tree-2 Young Aayaa Tree-2	S.No. 36, 41/3B	S.No. 41/4B	S.No. 41/4B	S.No. 41/3B, 41/7A	10.	41/5	41/5A	0.32.50	0.00.08	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	-----	S.No. 41/4A	S.No. 41/5B	S.No. 41/5B	S.No. 41/4A
11	41/7	41/7A	0.31.0	0.03.40	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	-----	S.No. 41/3B	S.No. 41/7B	S.No. 41/4A	S.No. 41/1B	11	41/6	41/6A	0.30.50	0.00.14	Dry	Patta No160 Palaniyammal W/o Ponnusamy-1 Natesan S/o Muthugounder -2 Natesan S/o Periyannagounder-3 Subramani S/o Ponnusamy-4 Sumathi D/o Ponnusamy -5	-----	S.No. 41/4A	S.No. 41/6B	S.No. 41/6B	S.No. 41/7A
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Total Extent of Dry Lands to be Acquired 1.09.50 Hectare												Total Extent of Dry Lands to be acquired – 1.06.36 Hect											

DIPR /660 /LAND/2020

Land Acquisition Officer and District Revenue Officer, Namakkal.

DECCAN Chronicle

19 NOVEMBER 2020

‘Love jihad’ laws are frivolous, will divide

Article 25 of the Indian Constitution provides for the right to practise religion: all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of Part III of the Constitution which deals with fundamental rights. Marriage is hardly a subject that comes in the way of a person practising the religion of his/her choice.

However, some of the state governments in India have of late been busy discovering marriage as one. It started with Uttar Pradesh where the chief minister, piggybacking on an order of a single bench of the Allahabad high court that ruled marriage for the purpose of conversion would not stand the scrutiny of the law, said the state government would be bringing in an anti-“love jihad” law. BJP governments in Haryana and Karnataka joined the bandwagon and said they, too, were contemplating introducing such laws.

Now, the Madhya Pradesh government takes the cake. The state home minister has announced that a “love jihad bill” will soon be introduced in the state Assembly making it mandatory for the people concerned to notify the district collector a month in advance before formalising an inter-faith marriage. According to the minister, marriages that take place forcibly, out of fraud or by tempting someone for religious conversion will be declared null and void. It will be a cognisable offence and non-bailable, attracting five years of rigorous imprisonment. Even those assisting such marriages will be considered a party to the crime.

Governments which lack in performance or in meeting the promises they had made to voters or in ensuring basic governance invent terminologies that offer them a covering fire while going to people. “Love jihad” is one such term. Every single authority in India, including Union ministers concerned, have said there is nothing in the law or statute which defines “love jihad”; it remains a derogatory term the right wing uses to denote the marriage of a Muslim man and a Hindu woman (and not vice-versa). In fact, the National Commission for Women has recently made it clear that no such thing exists though its chairperson holds a different view.

Those who advance such regressive ideas must bear in mind that no law that puts specific conditions on people based on their religion has a chance of survival as long as our Constitution lasts. And the Special Marriage Act, 1954, makes no distinction whether a marriage is interfaith or intra-religion. All that a couple has to do is to notify the official concerned a month before the marriage.

Governments and parties that seek to perpetuate themselves have the tough route of good governance to take. The alternative is to coin terminologies and fight an imaginary enemy. If they have the welfare of the people whom they claim to serve in mind, then they must invent ways of improving governance, not meddle with people’s private lives. The Union government must advise the states not to go ahead with such divisive and communal tools to protect themselves from the wrath of people.

Gupkar: Let Cong decide

Union home minister Amit Shah has raised the profile of the upcoming District Development Council elections in Kashmir by attacking the J&K mainstream parties as the “Gupkar gang”, and viciously and propagandistically describing them as being anti-national and pro-terrorism. He has also rhetorically asked the Congress leadership if it is a part of this “gang”.

The DDC polls for 280 seats in J&K, which kick off on November 28, will be the first proper electoral test of the popularity of the Centre’s move to do away with the former state’s autonomous status in August 2019. If the J&K parties, along with the Congress and the CPI(M) — the latter having limited influence in southern Kashmir — come together for the DDC polls, they are likely to be a formidable combine that could electorally embarrass the BJP.

Fruits of this unity could set up a united front spirit for the subsequent Assembly election also. This too will worry the BJP. The Centre’s promises of ushering a new era of development and ending terrorism with the annulment of Article 35-A and the reducing of Article 370 have proved hollow. Political reverse for the BJP in the DDC polls is apt to strengthen the public mood in favour of the Gupkar Declaration passed on August 4, 2019, by the National Conference, PDP, People’s Conference, Congress and CPI(M).

This declaration enjoins participants to unite to seek restoration of J&K’s special status and to retain the state’s identity, a perfectly legitimate demand in accordance with the spirit of federalism. The BJP is baiting the Congress and seeking to scare it with the so-called nationalist card. The Congress is being invited to take fright as it contests elections across the country, not just J&K. The idea is to detach the party from the Gupkar Alliance in the DDC polls.

Last year the Congress had participated in framing the Gupkar Declaration, but now seems defensive on account of stray utterances of PDP and NC leaders (which were later tempered). The party should think for itself and not under BJP’s pressure.

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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



MHA hard put to find officers ready to serve in Ladakh, J&K

More than a year after the change in the status of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, there is an acute shortage of IAS, IPS and other all-India service officers in the Union Territories. The situation is dire enough for the ministry of home affairs to write to all cadre-controlling authorities to prepare a list of IAS, IPS and other officers who can be immediately sent on deputation to J&K and Ladakh.

And the ministry is trying to cast its net far and wide. According to sources, a missive from the MHA has been sent to the Railway Board chairman, Comptroller General of Accounts, Comptroller Auditor General of India, secretaries of the ministries of defence, external affairs, corporate affairs and I&B, chairpersons of the Central Board of Direct Taxes and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, and the departments of

commerce, telecom and posts!

As of now, sources say, two officers have shown willingness to serve in J&K on deputation. Both are Kashmiri-born officers, one an IAS officer from Assam-Meghalaya cadre and the other an IRS officer. Not very encouraging, it seems.

After all, J&K has a stipulated cadre strength of 137 IAS officers, out of whom only 58 are serving in the cadre, including nine who are on Central deputation. Similarly, the cadre strength of IPS officers is 147, but only 66 are currently serving in the cadre.

CIC PUTS A LID ON INFORMATION

Among the first things the Central Information Commission (CIC) has done after the appointment of Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha as Chief Information Commissioner is to allow the Central Secretariat to withhold records of the resignation

Following the appointment of Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha as Chief Information Commissioner, the CIC let the Central Secretariat withhold records of the resignation of former home secretary Anil Goswami

of former home secretary Anil Goswami. Sinha, a former IFS officer and high commissioner to the UK, was sworn in by President Ram Nath after Bimal Julka retired from the post in August.

The panel has reportedly based its judgment on a Delhi high court order according to which file notings and deliberations of the Group of Officers or the authority cannot be disclosed. The CIC’s order came in response to an RTI application filed by IPS officer Anurag Thakur

who had sought to know from the Cabinet Secretariat the details of action taken on a complaint against Goswami, including communication exchanged between various authorities and file notings. Not getting a satisfactory response, Thakur appealed before the CIC. Goswami was forced to resign in February 2015 for allegedly trying to stall the arrest of a former Union minister in a case by the CBI.

MANIPUR INTRODUCES GOOD GOVERNANCE AWARD

Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh has introduced an award for good governance as an incentive for babus to do innovative and extraordinary work at the grass-roots level. The initiative will reward government officials whose performance is of “a very high order” and whose work has benefited a large number of citizens and stakeholders.

Sources say that the award will be

presented every year to an individual officer or a team including administrative secretaries, deputy commissioners, heads of departments and to any other official or department. A panel comprising of the chief minister, chief secretary Rajesh Kumar and other senior officials will select the winners who stand to win a cash prize of ₹1 lakh (individual category) and ₹2 lakh (group category). To become eligible, officials will have to successfully complete a challenging task or project that results in significant benefits to the public or in the reduction of time and costs, including implementation of Central or state government schemes.

The awards will be presented on Statehood Day, Republic Day or Independence Day every year.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian) on Twitter.com.

Subhani



BJP’s hopes for its own CM in Patna get dashed



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

In Bihar, the BJP is the new regent to a tired, jaded, ruler — Nitish Kumar — whose authority after his Janata Dal (United)’s below-par performance in the recent Assembly election has dimmed to the level of inane formality. The saffron party is thus well placed now to advance its mentor RSS’ disintegrative social agendas in Bihar, with the chief minister being the rubber stamp, so besotted is he with the mere idea of being CM even at the cost of his self-esteem.

Whether the BJP is actually able to gain its ends in the foreseeable future will of course depend on many imponderables. But the current situation doesn’t bode well for Bihar. The state’s governance systems have long been a wreck. Its finances are in a pitiable state due to long-standing disregard by the Centre (despite the so-called “double-engine” government), and the state is a byword for deficient revenue-earning capacity.

Besides, as a party the BJP — the regent — typically takes the wrong turn on serious matters of governance at the Centre and in the states where its writ runs. It has been content, in the main, to play up social faultlines to score at the ballot box and then to politically persecute opponents in disregard of the law, common decencies and democratic culture. It rules through sloganeering. When it puts its best foot forward, it comes up with “love jihad”, the CAA, triple talaq, and so on. What can Bihar gain from such a mindset?

India’s poorest state is truly in an unenviable position when a party like the BJP is to the fore and the CM is only too conscious that his best fate may lie in signing on the dotted line, quietly. For all the ear-shattering din of “vikas” — or devel-

opment — emanating from BJP’s most important leaders, Bihar’s economy and Bihar society appear poised to plunge, although there will be rallies declaring victory.

Bihar is the only state in north India, besides Jammu and Kashmir (now a Union territory) and Punjab, where the BJP has not had its own chief minister, either winning the state outright or having sufficient clout in a ruling alliance. In this quest it has been thwarted yet again. This must rattle the party’s leaders.

In the recent election, the BJP evidently worked to a plan which it thought would give the party its first CM in Bihar. It seemed clear to everyone that it set up the LJP’s Chirag Paswan, a NDA ally, to cut Mr Kumar’s votes so that the JD(U) leader was denued. That game has largely succeeded, although Mr Kumar was humiliated but not entirely defeated. What did not succeed, though, was the calculation that the main Opposition party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, led by jailed top politico Lalu Prasad Yadav’s greenhorn son Tejashwi, would be sent packing in the election. The opposite, in fact, happened. Tejashwi played what is quite possibly the most spectacular innings in recent memory for an untested captain, taking the battle to the BJP, JD(U) and LJP. In the process reaching new heights of

India’s poorest state is truly in an unenviable position when a party like the BJP is to the fore and the CM is only too conscious that his best fate may lie in signing on the dotted line, quietly

For now, the BJP must remain satisfied playing regent. But in the absence of a mandate, this is still an enviable position to be in. After all, the NDA has won state power, technicality or not.

endeavour.

He refused to live in the past, he showed energy, and he marshalled his resources and his coalition partners with aplomb. In the end his party won more seats than any other party and bettered its polling percentage by as much as five per cent compared to the 2015 election, which the RJD had fought under his redoubtable but controversial father. The BJP came up next, having dropped five per cent of its vote share, although this time it fought in an alliance with Mr Kumar, rather than independently.

The difference between the ruling NDA’s campaign and the opposing Mahagathbandhan campaign was stark. Within the NDA, the BJP played the communal metaphor to the hilt and made promises of “development” that didn’t ring true in light of the NDA’s abysmal performance in the past five years. Mr Kumar pleaded plaintively with voters to give him one more chance.

Tejashwi Yadav, in sharp contrast, spoke to the most pressing need of the young voter — for jobs and a better deal. Some 20 seats were lost to his party or combine by a couple of hundred votes or less. The Election Commission could have been seen to be scrupulous, but remained satisfied with form, although the gap in votes between the winning and the losing side was only 12,000 in the state overall.

So, who won? This is apt to remain a debate and a source of deep contention in the days ahead in case the NDA’s opponents go on the warpath. They boycotted the swearing-in ceremony of the CM and his Cabinet colleagues. That means Bihar’s polity is on notice.

The BJP’s core objec-

tive of having its own chief minister in Bihar remained unfulfilled in this election. Had the people of Bihar rejected Tejashwi Yadav in the manner that the BJP might have hoped, and the JD(U) had sunk a little lower in the tally, the saffron party might have hoped to win between 90 to 100 seats when the winning mark is 122. Since the BJP’s middle name is “defection”, the party might then have thought to make up the rest by breaking other parties through money power and using the state police as its personal army.

For now, however, it must remain satisfied playing regent. But in the absence of a mandate, this is still an enviable position to be in. After all, the NDA has won state power, technicality or not. The CM will have to sign on the dotted line as told and take the rap when things go wrong, unless even he turns. He may rest assured that the BJP will play both tough and smart with the full force of the pliant media behind it.

Right away, the saffron party sent the tallest Bihar BJP leader, the urbane Sushil Kumar Modi, Mr Kumar’s deputy CM of 13 years, home. Although from the RSS cadre, he was thought to be too close to the CM. So, he may not have been the best hatchet man. Out he went and the BJP appointed two nonentities as deputy CMs. With such ruthlessness on view, the CM had better watch out. The BJP will tolerate no demurrals as the state gets to be governed through remote control from New Delhi, with the capital of the Mauryan empire taking a long holiday.

Whether the BJP is actually able to gain its ends in the foreseeable future will of course depend on many imponderables. But the current situation doesn’t bode well for Bihar.

LETTERS

DOWN, BUT NOT OUT

This is with reference to your editorial *Nitish weakened, will his govt survive?* (Nov. 18). It is wishful thinking to foresee backseat driving by BJP from Delhi or Nagpur. Nitish, 69, has not joined NDA government at Centre even when he had good numbers. BJP with 74 members cannot form a government by torpedoing JD(U) in the foreseeable future. Governments in Rajasthan, Maharashtra and MP are managing the show somehow by reining in their flocks. Both Nitish and Modi are aware that they have to swim together in Patna, else they may sink together. Being a man of all the seasons, fourth time lucky Nitish will sail safely and complete his mandate, a la Naveen of Odisha.

Parthasarathy Mandadi
Tirupati

RCEP PACT

THE SIGNING of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) pact by 15 countries including China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea is significant on several counts. The decision of India to stay out of RCEP is nothing but retrograde. RCEP has now become one of the world’s largest free trading blocs, representing over 2.2 billion people and accounts for 29 per cent of global GDP. Despite their differences with China, Australia and Japan have not let it come in the way of becoming members of RCEP. On the face of it, India’s apprehensions that RCEP will open the doors for cheaper Chinese goods to deluge Indian markets and ruin domestic industries have some merit, but as an emerging power, India needs to send the right signal.

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

A GREAT ACTOR

THE PASSING away of veteran actor Soumitra Chatterjee leaves a huge void in Bengali cinema. Chatterjee was the face of Satyajit Ray’s *Apu* and *Feluda*. He was also well known for his splendid recitation of poetry and prose, especially of Rabindranath Tagore. He was a multi-faceted personality in Bengali theatre, who brought his unique sensibilities as an artiste to the fields of writing, directing and acting, carving out an imprint that was truly his own. A politically involved person, Chatterjee was one among a legion of eminent personalities who wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention to end mob-lynching across the country. Though Chatterjee survived a bout of cancer, Covid-19 related complications finally brought the curtains down on the illustrious chapter of the great thespian.

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

SHORT TAKES

Youngster Leon earns GM norm

Chennai: Young Indian International master Leon Luke Mendonca won a GM tournament in Hungary with a round to spare to close in on the coveted Grandmaster title.

The 14-year-old player from Goa won the First Saturday GM November 2020 event in Budapest late on Monday to earn his second Grandmaster norm in the space of 21 days. He needs one more norm to earn the GM title.

Mendonca (Elo 2516) finished with 7.5 points and won the title with a round to spare. He remained unbeaten in the event and scored wins over two Grandmasters. He posted six wins and three draws in the nine-round championship. In the opening round, he drew against higher rated GM Plat Vojtech of the Czech Republic. He had in late October won the RigoChess International Chess Festival Grandmaster tournament in Hungary where he gained his maiden GM norm.

— PTI

Dalmiya grandson is football official

Kolkata: Keeping up the family legacy, Aditya Dalmiya, grandson of former BCCI and ICC president late Jagmohan Dalmiya, on Wednesday made a foray into sports administration. Aditya is the son of Dalmiya's daughter Baishali, who happens to be a Trinamool Congress MLA from Bally constituency. The 21-year-old, who is pursuing masters in sports management, was appointed as the chairman of Indian Football Association 'School Committee' representing Rajasthan Club. "He is a young man with the right mindset. We made the 'School Committee' with much care and made him the chairman. My nephew Anirban Dutta, who is in the same committee, will work under him," IFA chairman Subrata Dutta said.

Recollecting his father Biswanath Dutta's role in Dalmiya's rise, he said: "My father had spotted Jagmohan Dalmiya in the early 1970s as the administrator of the football unit of Rajasthan Club."

— PTI

Aditi and Diksha start well in Saudi

King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia: Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar began with a round of one-under 71 respectively as the Saudi Ladies Team International got underway at the Royal Greens Golf and Country Club on Wednesday. They were both Tied-14th as Finnish golfer Sanna Nuutinen shot 66 to take the lead after the first round. Other Indians in the field were further down. Tvesa Malik (74) was T-41 and Astha Madan (80) was T-103rd. The tournament has an innovative team format, though the individual pros will also be vying for substantial purse. It is being played over 54-holes with \$500,000 up for grabs — \$300,000 for the team and \$200,000 for the individual. The players and amateurs make up 37 teams. The teams were selected in an NFL-style draft system and they compete in a team of four pro-am format with the best two scores to count.

— PTI

CWG all set for women's cricket

Dubai: Six highest-placed teams in the ICC rankings as on April 1 next year along with hosts England will get direct qualification to the 2022 Commonwealth Games women's T20 competition, which will make its debut at the quadrennial showpiece in Birmingham. Women's cricket will be a part of the Commonwealth Games for the first time ever when the 2022 edition gets underway in Birmingham from July 28 to August 8.

Live on TV

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Round robin matches from 7.30 pm and 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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GERMANY'S PAIN

Spaniards shame heavyweights with humiliating defeat

Paris, Nov. 18: Ferran Torres grabbed a hat-trick as Spain condemned Germany to their worst defeat in 89 years on Tuesday, winning 6-0 in Seville to qualify for the UEFA Nations League finals and join France, who came from behind to beat Sweden 4-2.

Manchester City forward Torres was the star for Spain, who were as brilliant as Germany were bad. The result raises further questions about Germany coach Joachim Loew, who was already under pressure coming into this game.

"This has been a black day for us," admitted Loew after Germany's heaviest defeat since losing 6-0 to Austria in 1931.

They came into their final game in League A, Group 4 on top, a point clear of Spain, and so only needed a draw at an empty La Cartuja to qualify for the finals in October next year.

But Alvaro Morata headed Spain in front in the 17th minute before Torres crashed in the second on 33 minutes after Dani Olmo's header hit the bar.

His City teammate Rodri headed in another to make it 3-0 for Spain before the end of a first half in which they lost Sergio Canales and skipper Sergio Ramos to injury.

Germany's defence was missing as Jose Gaya burst through and squared for Torres to get the fourth on 55 minutes, and Fabian Ruiz teed up the 20-year-old Torres to complete his hat-trick.

Germany now have several months to reflect on this loss before the start of 2022 World Cup qualifying in March and then the delayed Euro 2020 in June and July.

Spain, meanwhile, become the second side to qualify for the Nations League finals after France clinched their place by beating Portugal 4-2 at the weekend.

— AFP

THE RESULTS

Spain (Morata 17, Ferran Torres 33, 55, 71, Rodri 38, Oyarzabal 89)	6
Germany	0
Croatia (Kovacic 29, 65)	2
Portugal (Ruben Dias 52, 90, Joao Felix 60)	3
France (Giroud 16, 59, Pavard 36, Coman 90+5)	4
Sweden (Claesson 5, Quaison 88)	2
Luxembourg	0
Azerbaijan	0
Montenegro (Jovetic 14, Boljevic 25, 28, Mugosa 60)	4
Cyprus	0
Malta (Guillaumier 54)	1
Faroe Islands (Jonsson 70)	1



Spain players celebrate a goal against Germany during the UEFA Nations League football match at La Cartuja stadium in Seville, Spain, on Tuesday. Spain won 6-0, Germany's worst defeat since 1931.

— AP

Brazil, Argentina 2 good

Montevideo (Uruguay), Nov. 18: Brazil continued their perfect start to the qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup with a 2-0 win over Uruguay while rivals Argentina stayed in touch with an easy win in Peru. First-half goals from Arthur and Richarlison helped Brazil to a 2-0 win over Uruguay, who had Manchester United striker Edinson Cavani sent off.

Argentina, with Lionel Messi pulling the strings, brushed aside a limited Peru 2-0 in Lima, with goals from Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez and Nicholas Gonzalez in a game in which they were never troubled.

Ecuador, playing on their home turf in high-altitude Quito, hammered Colombia 6-1. Paraguay and Bolivia fought out a 2-2 draw while Venezuela picked up their first points in a 2-1 victory over Chile in Caracas.

Victory in Montevideo left Brazil on top of South America's qualifying standings on 12 points with four wins from four games. Argentina are second on 10 points after beating Peru, with surprise team Ecuador third on nine points.

— AFP



Brazil's Marquinhos (left) and Douglas Luiz vie for the ball with Darwin Nunez of Uruguay during their FIFA World Cup South American qualifier at the Centenario Stadium in Montevideo on Tuesday. Brazil won 2-0.

— AFP

THE RESULTS

Uruguay Brazil (Arthur 33, Richarlison 45)	0 2	Ecuador (Arboleda 7, Mena Delgado 9, Estrada Martinez 32, Arreaga 39, Plata 78, Estupinan 90+1)	6
Peru Argentina (Gonzalez 17, Martinez 28)	0 2	Colombia (Rodriguez 45+1-pen)	1
Venezuela (Mago 9, Rondon 81)	2	Paraguay (Angel Romero 19-pen, Kaku 72)	2
Chile (Vidal 15)	1	Bolivia (Moreno 41, B. Cespedes 45)	2

Nadal dances to Thiem music at ATP

London, Nov. 18: Rafael Nadal insisted he can still win the ATP Finals for the first time despite a damaging 7-6 (9/7), 7-6 (7/4) defeat against Austria's Dominic Thiem on Tuesday.

Thiem overpowered Nadal behind closed doors at London's O2 Arena to put a dent in the Spanish star's bid to finally lift the one major prize missing from his packed trophy cabinet.

Thiem became the first player to qualify for the semifinals a few hours later when reigning champion Stefanos Tsitsipas beat Russian seventh seed Andrey Rublev 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (8/6).

Tsitsipas saved a match point in the final set tie-break before the Greek sixth seed sealed his first win of the week.

Nadal had beaten Rublev in straight sets in his first match, but the 34-year-old was unable to cope with Thiem in a high-quality clash.

Now Nadal, who lost the 2010 and 2013 finals of the event, has to beat Tsitsipas in his last group match to keep alive his hopes of reaching the semifinals of the prestigious season-ending tournament.



Dominic Thiem of Austria celebrates defeating Rafael Nadal of Spain in their men's singles round robin match on Day Three of the ATP World Tour Finals at the O2 Arena in London on Tuesday.

— AFP

Despite his perilous position, Nadal took heart from the way he competed against the inspired Thiem. He believes that will stand him in good stead in a showdown with Tsitsipas that decides the second semifinalist from the group. "He played I think an amazing match, and I

played well too. So my feeling is not negative. I lost, but I had plenty of chances in the first and then I had break up in the second set," Nadal said.

"I'm happy with the way I played. I think my chances are bigger to have a very good result now than five days ago because

the level of tennis, even if I lost today, for me is much higher," he added.

Nadal, who last month equalled Roger Federer's record of 20 Grand Slams by winning the French Open, has won 86 titles but just one of those has come on an indoor hard court.

The world number two has qualified for the ATP Finals for 16 years in a row, but his record at the eight-man elite event pales in comparison with Federer and Novak Djokovic after six injury withdrawals.

Potentially facing another disappointment in the Finals, Nadal said he couldn't explain his problems at the event. "I don't know. I think even if I never won here, I don't want to pretend to be arrogant at all, because I am not. But I really don't need to show even to myself or to no one that if I am playing my best tennis I think I can win in every surface and against any player," he said.

"I never won in the World Tour Finals. That's the real thing at the same time. So no problem about that. I know I have to play my best if I want to have chances," Nadal added.

— AFP

English August for India in '21

London, Nov. 18: A five-match Test series against India will headline England's bumper home summer in 2021 as the country's cricket board on Wednesday unveiled a provisional fixture with plans to get crowds back into the stadiums.

The matches against India are scheduled for August-September.

Earlier this year, England hosted Pakistan and the West Indies in twin Test series behind closed doors due to the raging Covid-19 pandemic, before welcoming Australia for a series of limited overs matches.

However, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) now seems eager to stage the return of fans into the playing arena from the next season onwards depending on the Covid-19 situation.

"Next year we've got another big international programme to look forward to, with the thrill of a five-Test series against India as the centrepiece, compelling white ball series for our men and women, and an Ashes Series for our Visually Impaired team," ECB chief executive officer, Tom Harrison, said in a release issued by the board.

Much to the delight of

● **England's Test series against India is due to get underway on August 4 at Trent Bridge, with following matches taking place at Lord's, Headingley and The Oval, before finishing up in Manchester on September 14.**

English cricket fans craving for live action, the CEO added, "It's an exciting prospect for England fans, and while Covid-19 means there's still a great deal of uncertainty, we really hope to be able to welcome fans back into the grounds safely next year to bring that unique atmosphere to stadia across the country."

The Test series against India is due to conclude the men's international summer, with matches at Trent Bridge, Lord's, Headingley, the Kia Oval and Old Trafford.

The series is due to get underway on August 4 at Trent Bridge, with following matches taking place at Lord's, Headingley and The Oval, before finishing up in Manchester on September 14.

— PTI

NEW DAD RICHARDSON PULLS OUT OF OZ SIDE

Sydney, Nov. 18: Fast bowler Kane Richardson withdrew on Wednesday from Australia's limited-overs squad to face India to stay with his wife and newborn son in Adelaide, which is battling a coronavirus outbreak.

Richardson will be replaced by fellow quick Andrew Tye who was part of the squad on Australia's recent white-ball tour to England.

"It was a difficult decision for Kane to make but one which has the complete support of the selectors and the entire playing squad," national selector Trevor Hohns said.

Richardson informed selectors of his decision on Tuesday, hours before South Australia announced a six-day "cir-

cuit-breaker" lockdown to contain a sudden coronavirus cluster in the state capital Adelaide.

"Kane wanted to remain in Adelaide with Nyki and their newborn son. We will always support our players and their families, even more so given the challenging environment we are in," said Hohns.

Preparations for India's blockbuster cricket tour have been complicated by the outbreak in South Australia, with the first Test scheduled at the Adelaide Oval from December 17-21.

Before that there are three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 internationals to be played in Sydney and Canberra beginning on November 27.

— AFP

Akhtar pitches for Rohit as ODI lead

New Delhi, Nov. 18: Former Pakistan pacer Shoaib Akhtar feels Rohit Sharma leading the Indian Test team against Australia in Virat Kohli's absence is a no brainer and the much awaited series will be his "best chance" to stake claim for captaincy in one of the limited-overs formats.

Calls have been growing for split captaincy in the Indian team since Rohit led Mumbai Indians to a fifth title in the IPL. Rohit has also led India to an Asia Cup title in Kohli's absence. Though Ajinkya Rahane is the vice-captain on paper, Akhtar sees Rohit taking over leadership duties from Kohli following the first Test at the Adelaide Oval. The India skipper will be returning home after the series-opener to attend the birth of his first child.

"My take on it is pretty simple. From what I know Virat is very keen to take the team forward. It all depends on how fatigued he is feeling. He has been playing non-stop since 2010, has got 70 centuries and a mountain of runs under his belt," Akhtar said.

"If he is feeling fatigued, then he should think about giving the leadership role to Rohit in one of the formats (preferably T20s). I could see the boredom on his face during the IPL, may be it was because of the bio-bubble situation, he seemed a bit stressed out. It all depends on how he feels. Rohit has been ready for captaincy for a while," he added.

"Australia will be his best chance to prove himself as captain. He should grab it with both hands. He has the talent and ability to lead the team. The whole world would be looking at Rohit as captain and batsman. If he does well for himself and the team, then there should be a debate about split captaincy," Akhtar said.

— PTI

PAK CHIEF IS SURE OF HOSTING MORE GAMES

Karachi, Nov. 18: Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ehsan Mani believes the successful and event-free conduct of Pakistan Super League-5 has enhanced the image of the country and exuded confidence of hosting more international teams next year.

Mani said he was happy to have fulfilled his commitment of hosting the entire PSL this year at home. "I reiterated this when the event was suspended prior to the play-off stage, and despite several challenges, uncertainties and doubts, I am delighted that the PCB has fulfilled another commitment and promise to the loyal and passionate Pakistan cricket fans and supporters," he said after the summit clash that was won by Karachi Kings on Tuesday night.

— PTI