

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | FRIDAY 11 | SEPTEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



**Max:** 29°C  
**Min:** 24°C  
**Rainfall:** 1.5 mm

**Forecast:** A shower in spots in the evening followed by occasional rain

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**Smith sings Virat praises, says best**



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## 2G scam: Delhi HC seeks replies of Raja, others on pleas for early hearing

**New Delhi, Sept. 10:** The Delhi high court Thursday asked former telecom minister A Raja and others to respond to the CBI and ED pleas seeking early hearing of their appeals challenging the acquittal of individuals and firms in the 2G spectrum allocation scam cases.

Justice Brijesh Sethi issued notices to all the respondents -- individuals and firms -- asking them to file replies and listed the matter for hearing on September 21. The two investigative agencies have sought early hearing of the appeals which were listed for hearing on October 12. — *PTI*

## Metro rail time schedule extended

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) on Thursday extended its services by one hour as 7am to 9 pm from the previous schedule that was 7 am to 8 pm considering several requests from passengers.

This comes apart from the increased train stoppage time at stations from 20 seconds to 50 seconds to maintain social distancing and fresh air circulation.

Earlier, CMRL conducted its services with Peak Hour headway of 5 minutes and Non-Peak Hour headway of 10 minutes. ■ **Full report: P2**

## KANGANA VISITS OFFICE



Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut arrives at her office, where the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) conducted a demolition drive, at Pali Hill in Mumbai Thursday. — *PTI*

## RT-PCR is mandatory for symptomatic patients

**VINEETA PANDEY IDC**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

India on Thursday reported another record high number of fresh cases with 95,735 new detections taking country's overall numbers to nearly 44.66 lakh out of which 34.72 lakh have already recovered and the national recovery rate is 77.74%. In the last 24 hours 1172 deaths were registered due to the virus taking total fatalities to 75,062.

In order to curb the spread

of infection, the Union health ministry has asked states and Union territories to mandatorily retest all symptomatic negative cases of Rapid Antigen Tests through RT-PCR to ensure no positive cases are missed out.

“Union Health Ministry has noted that in some large States, symptomatic negative cases tested by Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) are not being followed up by RT-PCT testing. The guidelines of ICMR as well as the Union Health Ministry clearly state

that the following two specific categories of persons must necessarily be retested through RT-PCR tests: all symptomatic (fever or cough or breathlessness) negative cases of Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) and asymptomatic negative cases of RAT that develop symptoms within 2 to 3 days of being tested negative,” health ministry said in a statement.

“This is necessary to ensure that such symptomatic negative cases do not remain untested,” it said.

## India, Japan sign key defence logistics pact

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

Amid raging Sino-Indian military tensions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe held a “very warm” 30 minute “Summit telephone talk” on Thursday after which it was officially announced that the two countries had on Wednesday signed a key mutual defence logistics support pact called the “Agreement Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services between the Armed Forces of India and The Self-Defence Forces of Japan”.

The agreement will provide the armed forces of the

two countries access to each other's bases and ensure that either country's defence platforms including ships and aircraft being able to use the other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies including fuel and spare parts.

The inking of the pact is a development which is being seen by observers as a huge strategic signal by the two countries which both share territorial disputes with China.

It may be noted that India already has similar defence logistics support pacts with the United States, France, Singapore, South Korea and Australia and is expected to ink one soon with Russia as well.

Significantly earlier in the day, both the Indian and Chinese Foreign Ministers also met at a luncheon meeting together with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov as part of Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral cooperation in which views were exchanged on “topical issues of international and regional importance, in the spirit of mutual understanding, friendship and

trust”, with all three agreeing that “common development and cooperation of the three countries is conducive to promoting global growth, peace and stability”.

The trilateral luncheon meeting highlighted how the Russians are trying their best to nudge the two Asian giants towards a compromise in order to avoid a devastating war in the Ladakh sector.

## SC grants Centre 2 weeks to decide on moratorium

**PARMOD KUMAR IDC**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10:

The Supreme Court on Thursday gave two weeks to the Centre and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to decide on the plea seeking waiver of interest on interest-compound interest — being charged on deferred EMIs and also the downgrading of credit rating of the commercial borrowers during the six month moratorium period.

Fixing the next hearing on September 28, Justice Ashok Bhushan, heading a three judge bench also comprising justices R. Subhash Reddy and M.R. Shah, ordered that “on the next date of hearing the specific instructions with regard to charging of compound interest and credit rating/downgrading during moratorium period shall be obtained.”

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the court that the government was considering all the issues raised before the court at the “highest level”.



Rafale aircraft to be formally inducted into the Indian Air Force, at the airbase in Ambala, on Thursday.

— *PTI*

## IAF inducts Rafale; it's a message: Singh

**PAWAN BALI IDC**

**New Delhi, Sept. 10:** Indian Air Force on Thursday formally inducted Rafale fighter aircraft in its Squadron No. 17 or Golden Arrows at its first home base Ambala Air Force Station, one of the oldest air bases in the country.

The induction of French-made Rafale jets comes at a crucial juncture when India is involved in a four months tense military

stand-off with China that has escalated in the last few days.

Speaking at the ceremony, defence minister Rajnath Singh said that the induction of Rafale aircraft sends a strong message to those who challenge India's sovereignty.

“It's induction today is a big and bold message to the whole world, especially to those who are eyeing our sovereignty. This induction is especially important because of the

existing situation at our borders, which if I put in simple words has been created in the last few days. We fully understand that with the changing times we will also have to keep preparing ourselves,” said Mr Singh.

French Minister of Armed Forces Florence Parly, Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat and IAF chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria were also present during the ceremony.

## SC seeks AG's help in contempt case against Prashant Bhushan

**PARMOD KUMAR | DC**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked attorney-general K.K. Venugopal to assist the court in a 2009 contempt case against activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan for alleging misconduct against former Chief Justice of India S.H. Kapadia for being a part of forest bench that had decided the case of Niyamgiri mining lease in favour of Sterlite, a subsidiary of mining major Vedanta.

Mr Bhushan had said that Justice Kapadia had shares of Sterlite and thus should not have heard the matter.

Besides Mr Bhushan, former editor of *Tehelka* Tarun Tejpal is also facing contempt proceedings in the case.

Justice Kapadia went on to become Chief Justice of India on May 12, 2010 and had passed away on January 4, 2016.

Seeking the assistance of the attorney-general in the matter, a bench comprising Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and Justice Sanjiv Khanna directed the top court registry to furnish complete record of case proceedings



in AG's office.

The court agreed to ask Mr Venugopal to assist the court following a submission by senior counsel Rajeev Dhavan, who appeared for Mr Bhushan, said that some larger issues were involved in the matter and the attorney-general be requested to assist the court.

The court directed the listing of the matter in the week commencing from October 12, 2020, for further hearing.

Earlier, a bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, who has since retired, had embarked on examining the larger issues involving the allegation of corruption against sitting and retired judges and the procedure of dealing with such complaints making allegations.

However, the matter was left to be considered by another bench as Justice

Mishra was left with a few days to demit the office.

Mr Dhavan told the court that it was not a matter of Mr Bhushan but some important questions are to be considered in the matter and so “we want the attorney-general to assist this court in dealing with the questions framed by the previous bench and also questions given by us”.

In an earlier hearing Justice Mishra heading a bench had said that certain larger questions relating to freedom of speech and leveling allegation of corruption charges against the judiciary has to be addressed and decided by the court.

Mr Dhavan had sought to impress upon the court to refer the matter to a constitution bench and submitted 10 questions which he said were of constitutional importance and should be settled.

The questions included whether a bona fide opinion on the extent of corruption in any section of the judiciary amounts to contempt of court and whether the person who expresses such an opinion is obliged to prove that it is correct or whether it is enough to show that he bona fide held that opinion.



## OPPOSITION TO FIELD RJD'S JHA FOR RS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN'S POST

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP Manoj Jha would be the joint Opposition candidate for the post of deputy chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, election for which would be held on September 15.

Mr Jha is likely to file his nomination papers on Friday.

NDA candidate and incumbent deputy chairperson Harivansh filed his nomination on Wednesday.

Though discussions had been on for a joint Opposition candidate for some time, the decision was sealed when the Congress decided to back Mr Jha at a parliamentary party meeting held earlier this week.

The decision to field Mr Mr Jha becomes politically significant in light of the coming Assembly polls in Bihar as Mr Harivansh is also from Bihar and belongs to arch rival Janata Dal (United) headed by Nitish Kumar.

The position of the deputy chairperson fell vacant when Mr Harivansh's term ended. He has since been re-elected to the Upper House from Bihar.

Meanwhile, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar called up Odisha's Naveen Patnaik, seeking the support of the Biju Janata Dal he heads for the NDA nominee.

The BJD had supported Mr Harivansh in the last election as well, he said.

The strength of the BJP-led NDA has gradually increased to more than 114 in the house with an effective strength of 244 members as there is one vacancy.

# UPSC makes wearing masks compulsory for civil service exam

**New Delhi, Sept. 10:** Wearing masks or face covers is mandatory for candidates appearing for the civil services (preliminary) examination scheduled for October 4, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has said.

Candidates can bring their own hand sanitisers in transparent bottles, it said.

The civil services examination is held annually in three stages — preliminary, main and interview — by the UPSC to select officers for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), among others.

“Wearing of mask/face

cover is mandatory for all candidates. Candidates without mask/face cover will not be allowed entry into the venue. Further, candidates are allowed to bring their own hand sanitizer in transparent bottles,” the Commission said in a statement.

Candidates have to follow Covid-19 norms of ‘social distancing’ as well as ‘personal hygiene’ inside the examination halls/rooms as well as in the premises of the venue, it said.

This year's preliminary test was earlier scheduled to be held on May 31, but was deferred due to the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The Commission will be



● **“Wearing of mask/face cover is mandatory for all candidates. Candidates without mask/face cover will not be allowed entry into the venue. Further, candidates are allowed to bring their own hand sanitizer in transparent bottles,” the Commission said in a statement**

conducting the civil services (preliminary) examination-2020 on Sunday, October 4 all over India, the statement said.

The Commission has uploaded the e-admit cards for the convenience of the admitted candidates on its

website (<http://upsconline.nic.in>). “The candidates are advised to download their e-admit cards and take a printout thereof. e-admit card must be preserved till the declaration of the final results of the civil services examination,

2020. No paper admit card will be issued for this examination,” it said. The candidates will have to produce the printout of their e-admit card at the allotted venue to appear for the examination, the Commission said.

The candidates are also required to bring along their photo ID card, whose number is mentioned on the e-admit card, for appearing at each session of the examination, it said.

“It may also be noted that entry into the examination venue shall be closed 10 minutes before the scheduled commencement of the examination i.e. 09:20 AM for the forenoon session and 02:20 PM for the afternoon session. No candidate

shall be allowed the entry into the examination venue after closure of the entry,” the UPSC said. Candidates are also advised to bring “black ball point pen” as they shall be required to fill the OMR answer sheets and attendance list with black ball point pen only, it said. “Use of normal or simple wrist watches by candidates is allowed inside the examination rooms/ halls. However, use of watches fitted with any special accessory that might be used as communication device or smart watches is strictly prohibited and candidates are not allowed to take such watches into the examination rooms/ halls,” the Commission said.

Mobile phone (even in

switched off mode), pager or any electronic equipment, programmable device, storage media like pen drive, smart watches etc, camera or bluetooth devices, any other equipment or related accessories either in working or switched off mode capable of being used as a communication device and calculator are banned inside the examination hall, it said.

“Any infringement of these instructions shall entail disciplinary action against the concerned candidates including debarment from future examination/selection. Valuable/costly items and bags are also not allowed inside the examination venue,” the UPSC said. — *PTI*



## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aavani 26

Tithi: Navami

Star: Mrigashirsham

**Rahukalam:**  
10.30 am to 12 noon

**Yamagandam:**  
3 pm to 4.30 pm

## PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.47 am

Jumma: 12.12 pm

Asar: 3.21 pm

Maghrib: 6.16 pm

Isha: 7.28 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.13 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 11.55 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 1.07 PM

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+89,056)	(+1,186)
45,52,021	76,277

covid19india.org

## STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,528)

TN: 4,86,052 8,154

## WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,81,81,527

DEATHS 9,10,858

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 213

worldometers.info

## COUNTER POINT



**It's Kangana's new office with upgraded security!**

# Black mark is a punishment in police department: HC

J. STALIN | DC  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

Holding that black mark is also a punishment, the Madras high court has upheld an order of the police authorities, rejecting the request of a head constable to consider him for promotion to the post of special sub-inspector with effect from January 7, 2010.

Justice S. Vaidyanathan dismissed the petition filed by G. Gopal, challenging the order of rejection of his request for promotion and consequently directing the authorities to promote him as special sub-inspector.

Counsel for the petitioner submitted that the petitioner had received 45 rewards for his efficient service in his 34 years of service and the system of black mark is a common one in the police department, especially below the rank of head constable. Hence, the orders passed by the authorities in depriving promotion of the petitioner as special sub-inspector are without application of mind and needs intervention of the court.

The judge said a careful scrutiny of the entire scenario unfolds the fact that, admittedly, there was a currency of punishment

in existence, when the list of head constables, who were entitled to be promoted as special sub-inspectors, was published. Though it was argued by the petitioner that black mark was not a punishment and was common in the police department, a reading of the order dated February 12, 2010 discloses the fact that charges levelled against the petitioner were indeed serious in nature, in as much there was evidence against him to the effect that he received bribe for not taking action against illicit liquor sellers.

The judge said the petitioner was charged under

Rule 3 (b) of Tamil Nadu Police Subordinate Service (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1995 and a charge memo was also served on him on January 7, 2009.

"From the above conditions, it is clear that pendency of 3 (b) charges is a bar for consideration of promotion to the next level of promotion and there is no reference that the punishment of black mark was excluded in it. It is also not in dispute that the currency of punishment of black mark, imposed under Rule 3 (b), was pending against the petitioner as on the said date.



Children dressed like Lord Krishna and Radha celebrate Krishna Jayanthi festival at K K Nagar on Thursday. — DC

## IIT-M ahead in developing alternatives to batteries

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

The researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) have made significant strides in developing alternatives to conventional lithium-ion and lead-acid batteries for industrial usage.

Prof Sreenivas Jayanti, department of chemical engineering, said they have developed operating protocols and design criteria for flow battery stack of power rating up to 10 kW using the prototype of a practical size that can be directly employed in industrial-scale stacks for grid-level storage.

This project has been supported by the grants from the Union Ministry of Education and Department of Science and Technology. The researchers involved in the study are from the

departments of chemical engineering, chemistry, electrical engineering and central electronics centre.

"A basic life of a solid-state battery is three to five years. Vanadium flow batteries are commercially available with a warranty of 15 to 20 years. From a fire safety point of view, vanadium flow batteries are extremely safe as the electrolytes are not combustible and thermal runaway possibilities are practically nil. The major distinguishing characteristic of flow batteries from conventional solid-state batteries (like Li-ion and Lead-acid) is the independent rating of power and energy levels. In solid-state batteries the power and energy levels are dependent on each other and these levels cannot be changed once the battery is fabricated. There are important advantageous

characteristics of flow batteries. As the active species are in a liquid state and stored outside the battery, the energy can be stored indefinitely. The number of times the electrolyte can be charged or discharged is also very high (>10000 cycles). Also, there is no danger if the battery is completely drained. Thus, more percentage of energy storage capacity can be withdrawn effectively than what is possible with popular solid-state batteries", said Dr. Ravendra Gundlapalli. PhD scholar, department of chemical engineering,

These studies are crucial as India is aiming to achieve 40 per cent of its total electricity generation from non-fossil fuel sources such as solar and wind by 2030. The IIT-M researchers have already filed two patents in the same field.

## 1,405 Indians reach Chennai in last two days

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

As many as 1,405 Indians stranded abroad due to the coronavirus lockdown reached Chennai in 12 repatriation flights under the Vande Bharat mission on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Indian nationals arrived from the United States of America, Singapore, Kuwait, Riyadh, Oman, Qatar, Dubai. According to the sources at the Chennai Airport, of the 1,405 passengers, 840 produced negative RT-PCR test report on arrival at the airport. After the completion of customs and immigration procedures, they were allowed to undergo 14 days of home quarantine, unlike earlier where they were put into institutional quarantine either free or paid.

The remaining 565 passengers underwent a medical checkup at the Chennai Airport by the Health teams deployed there. They were later sent to home quarantine.

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

With the government allowing increased economic activities during Unlock 3.0 last month, Chennai witnessed more number of online searches for paying guest accommodation in the same period.

As per a study undertaken by Sulekha.com, an AI-driven tech platform for



Dark clouds hang over Sholinganallur on Thursday.

— E.K. Sanjay

## Lost in the sea for 50 days

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

Anger is simmering among the fishing communities of North Chennai as 10 fishermen, who set out to the sea on July 23 from Kasimedu harbour with plans of returning to the coast on August 7, have gone missing in the high seas with the government unable to trace them despite a prolonged search operation extending for over a month.

Though the families of the missing fishermen, various associations and activists had been urging the government to track them using the satellites that would be imaging the earth from space, nothing substantial had been done to look for them.

Ever since the families first made a complaint with the government on August 7, the day they were expected to land in the shore, the authorities had not been able to give them a definite answer.

The last signal received from the boat was on July 28 – five days after their departure – from the sea off Krishnapattinam in Andhra Pradesh. The GPS

Families of the missing fishermen, various associations and activists had been urging the government to track them using the satellites that would be imaging the earth from space, nothing substantial had been done to look for them

fitted in the motor boat had conked out and the entire crew with the boat had been lost.

Though the state government had claimed that the Coast Guard had been asked to look for the missing boat, Lincoln Bastin, a lawyer from the fishermen community, pointed out the Coast Guard had no powers to venture beyond 60 nautical miles from the coast.

It was for the Navy to search in the water beyond the 60 nautical miles border, he said and complained that the Navy was not alerted on time to undertake a proper search.

The boat might have run adrift and gone somewhere far away and could be tracked only with satellite imagery, said Bastin, adding that the government had not devised a proper protocol to conduct search operations in the sea though it had been a

recurring problem for the community.

He said whenever fishermen went missing in the high seas, be it due to natural calamities or otherwise, the government always wrung its hands in helplessness and did nothing to bring them back home alive.

While the state authorities claimed that they had alerted the coastal police of the states of Andhra, Odisha and West Bengal, some associations that had been demanding effective action by the Centre said that other countries like Bangladesh should also be asked to look for the boat.

Repeated tragedies like this had, however, made the associations and activists to make a general complaint that 'fishermen lives did not matter,' for the government and the rest of the society that they alleged was always apathetic to their plight.

The missing fishermen belonged to the age group of 18 to 48 and hailed from various fishing slums in North Chennai. Hence, the close family members who had been approaching the authorities for help are predominantly young women.

## More online searches for PG facility in city

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

With the government allowing increased economic activities during Unlock 3.0 last month, Chennai witnessed more number of online searches for paying guest accommodation in the same period.

As per a study undertaken by Sulekha.com, an AI-driven tech platform for

expert services, 1,293 people searched for paying guest facilities followed by placement consultancies (1,206) and job training (1,150).

This study was carried out based on visits and searches by nearly 70,000 users across the categories including placement consultancies, job training, competitive exam coaching, school tuitions and paying

guests.

The top three service categories that have seen a spike in August (Unlock 3.0) online searches are placement consultancies, job training and paying guests.

Comparing the growth in online searches for service categories from June to August (from Unlock 1.0 to Unlock 3.0), placement consultancies grew by 135 percent, while

job training and school tuitions went up by 72 and 73percent respectively. The top five cities that led in online searches across service categories are Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai.

Satya Prabhakar, founder of Sulekha.com, said that these results were a reflection of the rising concern amongst people regarding jobs cuts and pay cuts.

## Metro services extended till 9 pm

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

The Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) on Thursday extended its services by one hour from 7 am to 9 pm considering requests from passengers. Earlier it was from 7 am to 8 pm.

This comes apart from the increased train stoppage time at stations from 20 seconds to 50 seconds to maintain social distancing and fresh air circulation. Earlier, CMRL conducted its services with peak hour headway of 5 minutes

and non-peak hour headway of 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, more than 24,354 passengers have used the Metro services since the resumption of its service after five months due to the pandemic. According to a release issued by CMRL, 18,769 passengers used metro services with smart card while 637 travelled with the QR code ticketing system. On Thursday 13,980 passengers travelled in the metro. While 11,091 passengers used the smart card, 325 passengers utilised the QRcode.

The metro rail services resumed its blue line on Monday between Washermenpet to airport followed by green line services between Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G. Ramachandran Central Metro Station to St. Thomas Mount Metro Station via Koyambedu on Wednesday.

Alternate services between Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G. Ramachandran Central Metro Station to Airport Metro Station via Koyambedu have also restarted from Thursday.

## Writ jurisdiction of HC being abused: Judge

J. STALIN | DC  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

The Madras high court has observed that it is very unfortunate that of late the writ jurisdiction of this court has quite often been abused, particularly in seeking to issue the writ of mandamus (direction), for all kinds of relief across the spectrum.

Justice V. Parthiban observed, "a writ of mandamus is a prerogative writ, originally envisaged as a constitutional relief, to be granted by the writ court

to the citizens, against the state authorities who failed to perform their statutory obligations. But, over a period of time, the writ in the nature of mandamus, is being sought by all and sundry and for all casual requirements and for achieving personal and hidden agenda of the litigants, diluting the command of the constitutional court and reducing the writ jurisdiction of this court to a mere court of disposal with stereotyped directions".

The judge dismissed a

petition filed by one S. Jayaraman, which sought a direction to the Reserve Bank of India to withhold the retirement benefits which are due and payable to one of its employees, M. Sivaji Ganesan.

The case of the petitioner was that Sivaji Ganesan had borrowed ₹6 lakh from him for his personal needs and executed a demand promissory note. He did not return the loan as promised and a legal notice was issued in that regard.

On learning about the

retirement of Sivaji Ganesan from the RBI shortly, he has chosen to file the present petition, the petitioner added.

The judge said this court was agast as to how such a writ petition was conceived in the first place and filed before this court.

The petitioner has chosen a contrived legal route as a short cut to approach this court, seeking for issuance of a writ of mandamus, for realization of the loan amount from the borrower when the proper course of remedy

for the petitioner was to approach the civil court, by filing a suit for recovery, the judge added.

The judge said this court also finds that the trend of many litigants approaching this court for issuance of writ of mandamus, when proper and effective remedies were available elsewhere, but, they choose to approach the writ court, as they probably find that the effort to get such direction from this court was rather simple, easy and obtainable.

## Online or offline? Exam fever grips college students

B. Vijayalakshmi

## Viewpoint

While the Madras high court refused to ban online classes and directed schools to follow guidelines issued by the Central and state governments this week, the TN government said there would be a 5-day vacation for students attending online classes to help them refresh and de-stress. All schools, including private institutions, will be monitored by officers to

check if classes are conducted during these five days.

Meanwhile, colleges and universities are gearing up to conduct exams as the Supreme Court has ruled that students cannot be promoted without writing the final year or terminal semester examinations, upholding the UGC directive. While some colleges in the state prefer online exams, others favour the traditional pen-paper mode. Covid has also put brakes on the study-abroad dream of several students.

However, some students are not for online exams. Pandemic stress, incomplete syllabus and fear of not getting their degrees on time have driven students to seek

Some students are not for online exams. Pandemic stress, incomplete syllabus and fear of not getting their degrees on time have driven students to seek promotion on the basis of internal assessment marks. They claim courses were hurriedly wrapped up in online classes. There have been mixed reactions from teachers too

The vice-chancellors of

state universities favoured both online and offline exams at a recent meeting with state higher education department officials.

Some universities have asked students to appear for offline mode of examination if they are unable to take up online exams. With several students shifted from hostels and residing in low connectivity areas, online exams may turn out to be a nightmare.

Meanwhile, all colleges affiliated to Madras University have been asked to conduct UG final semester exams from September 21 to 30. The university has decided to conduct the pen-and-paper exam for those residing in Tamil Nadu, and

online for those from other states.

The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) has been conducting online final semester exams for students of its constituent and affiliated colleges from September 2. The exam sessions are supervised live online through proctoring by faculty members. The university had organised webinars to sensitize students and conducted mock tests to familiarize them on this digital exam from home.

With Covid upending the lives of students, it is left to the government and educational institutions to take appropriate action and help them face this grim challenge.



Parents along with their wards waiting for college admission without maintaining social distance near Bharathi Women's College at Broadway on Thursday. — DC



## SHORT TAKES

## ECI reschedules date

**Chennai:** The Election Commission of India has rescheduled the date of final publication of electoral rolls of photo electoral rolls 2021 to January 20 instead of January 15. This was announced by the Chief Electoral Officer on Thursday.

## Four tonnes of gutka seized in Adambakkam

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

Gutka products weighing 400 kilograms were seized from a godown in Adambakkam on Wednesday night.

Based on a tip-off that the gutka products that were smuggled from other states were stored in a godown in Kakkann Nagar in Adambakkam, the police personnel raided the premises. They found that the banned gutka and tobacco products and seized them.

While godown owner Meeran, 52, has been arrested, a hunt has been launched for his accomplices who helped him in the gutka business.

After preliminary inquiries, the police said that Meeran smuggled the banned gutka products from Karnataka and distributed it to the shops in suburbs and school and college students.

Adambakkam police seized a van and two-wheeler used for transportation of the contraband. Further investigations are underway.

## Rice and provisions given to 250 families

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
THANJAVUR, SEPT. 10

As part of its corporate social responsibility, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance branch of Thanjavur has distributed rice and provisions enough for a month to 250 families here.

Beneficiaries included corona warriors like sanitary workers of the city corporation and the poor. Kumara Kurubaran, vice-president of the company, presided over the function. Kumarakurubaran said that seven kg of rice and 18 types of provisions were given to the beneficiaries. Social distancing and wearing masks were strictly followed to prevent corona spread. Victor, Vice-president, managers of the company and agency partners participated in the function.

## Three of family commit suicide

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
PUDUKOTTAI, SEPT. 10

A 34-year-old housewife committed suicide after setting afire her two sons aged 13 and 9 years, as her husband abandoned the family and eloped with a 22-year-old college girl at Vallabakkadu village near Arantangi here, on Wednesday.

Police said, the deceased Radha several times requested her husband Muthu (45) a farmer, not to have any ties with the college girl. But, all on a sudden, he ran away with the girl. Based on a complaint filed by the girl's parents, Arantangi police registered a case and are on the lookout for the runaway couple. While Radha and her second son Abirith died on the spot, her elder son Abishek died at the GH.

## Maligaimedu excavations to begin soon

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
ARIYALUR, SEPT. 10

The state archaeology department has decided to undertake excavations at Maligaimedu near historic Gangaikondacholapuram in the district shortly, said Principal secretary and Commissioner, department of archaeology, TN government, T Udhayachandran.

Udhayachandran was accompanied by Collector T Rathna and others as he inspected the site museum at Maligaimedu. He told newsmen that the department would commence excavations once he gets the approval.

## AIADMK begins election work quietly

**G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

The ruling AIADMK has already begun the preparatory work for the 2021 Assembly election at different levels, one of them being the enrolment of members for the party's youth wing and young women wing with some of the top brass, holding positions in the government, dividing their time between overseeing Covid-19 prevention operations and checking on party work.

According to party sources, the party aspires to enroll a minimum of 25 young people per election booth in both the youth and young women wings. There are totally 65,000

According to party sources, the party aspires to enroll a minimum of 25 young people per election booth in both the youth and young women wings. There are totally 65,000 booths in the state and the new entrants would be used to reach out to the voters at the local level.

Part from doing the door-to-door campaigns and directly interacting with the people, they would add support to the party's robust campaign machinery. Almost 60 to 70 per cent of the enrolment

work is over and the party plans to complete the drive by October, 2020, much ahead of the hustings for the Assembly polls.

Top leaders of the party including ministers, MPs and MLAs have been assigned responsibilities in overseeing the drive and they were deeply involved in the work, sources said.

Similarly, the IT wing of the party has an ambitious plan of appointing 80,000 persons at various levels, starting from the booth level. They too have completed most of the appointments and have fixed October as the deadline.

One IT wing member would also be assigned to every booth to coordinate with the other leaders and campaigners. The rest of

them would be appointed at various levels to coordinate the campaigns.

Apart from strengthening the various wings of the party, another silent effort is on to bring back old supporters into the party fold. Local leaders had been asked to identify old time supporters during the times of MGR and Jayalalithaa and initiate discussions with them.

Many of the old time leaders and functionaries might have left the party due to disillusionment caused by various reasons and keeping themselves aloof. The local leaders had been told to assure them importance in the party and make them return to active campaigning.

Some of the disillusioned

leaders could have defected to the DMK too. Efforts were on to bring them also back into the AIADMK with a view to winning over the voters at the grassroots level.

However, 'Aspire' Swaminathan, who heads the IT wing in the northern part of the state, is confident of the AIADMK romping home in the 2021 elections. Even after 10 years of rule, there is no perceptible anti-incumbency wave, he said.

He also pointed to M. K. Stalin's caution to his cadre at the DMK general council that victory in the polls would not be a cake walk for them. Stalin had rightly gauged the mood of the electorate, which was in favour of the ruling party.

Some party sources said that ministers and other leaders were visiting their home districts frequently nowadays mainly to supervise the various operations undertaken in preparation for the elections. Even the Chief Minister, during his official visits to the districts, spends some time with local party functionaries to check on the developments.

The party is also gearing up for the byelections expected to be held along with the Bihar Assembly elections.

The AIADMK leadership is keen on winning the Kanyakumari Lok Sabha seat and also the three Assembly seats even if it might not be of any consequence, the sources said.

## Infection to peak in some districts

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

Coronavirus infections stood at 5,528 and fatalities at 64 in the whole State, while in Chennai there were 991 new cases and 11 deaths on Thursday.

The districts that had high numbers were Chengalpet 279, Coimbatore 440, Cuddalore 263, Salem 300 and Thiruvallur 296.

In the five districts of Coimbatore, Salem, Nagapattinam, Thiruvannamalai and Cuddalore, infection would peak in two weeks, said Health Minister C Vijaybaskar.

Speaking after inspecting the expansion of Covid-19 wards at the Stanley Medical College Hospital on Thursday, Vijaybaskar said the gov-

Speaking after inspecting the expansion of Covid-19 wards at the Stanley Medical College Hospital on Thursday, Vijaybaskar said the government had taken all precautionary measures to keep the spread of the virus under control in the five districts.

While the average rate of positivity in the state was less than 10 per cent, in the districts of Krishnagiri and Cuddalore it was at 11.7 per cent, he said, adding that it would be brought down to 10 per cent soon.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) had praised Tamil Nadu for efficiently monitoring and controlling the spread of coronavirus, the minister said. Every day an average of 85,000 tests were done in the State and the total number of tests done so far was 55,44,850, he said.

The recovery rate in the state was 88 per cent, he said adding that the death rate at the moment was 1.68 and that efforts were on to bring it down to 1 per cent.

The number of beds had been increased to 1,42,000 from the 75,000 in the initial stages of the pandemic and in Stanley Medical College Hospital 400 beds had been added to take the total number to 12,000, he said.

All hospitals were all well equipped to treat

Covid-19 patients and the recently started online consultation facility had helped over a lakh of people, he said. Though there were 3,300 ventilators, what was now required was oxygen supply facility, which the State had provided in all hospitals.

When asked by the vaccine trials, he said that it had just started and that it would take a long time for it to be used on people.

The best vaccine to prevent coronavirus infection was facemasks, said health secretary J Radhakrishnan, who was also present at the occasion. He said levying fines on those who violated the safety norms like wearing of facemasks and other things would start in a few days.

## PMK men miffed over Udhayanidhi visit

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
ARIYALUR, SEPT. 10

Tension prevailed for a while as a section of PMK volunteers led by state deputy general secretary, TMT Thirumavalavan, blocked the entry of DMK youth wing leader, Udhayanidhi Stalin, who came to pay homage to deceased MBBS aspirant Vignesh.

When Udhayanidhi Stalin approached the house of the deceased, he was blocked by PMK men protesting his visit, saying that no one had turned up since Wednesday, but had made their visit on Thursday just to derive political mileage.

This had triggered a heated argument between the PMK men and Udhayanidhi Stalin and his DMK party workers.

In the meantime, another section of PMK men, took away the body of the deceased and cremated it in a burial ground in the village.

However, Udhayanidhi Stalin met the parents of the deceased and consoled them, and handed over a sum of ₹ 5 lakh on behalf of the DMK party, and left the place.

Later, the DMK men took out a procession urging the Centre to withdraw Neet.

## Relief to family of Neet aspirant who committed suicide

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and the PMK announced financial relief to the family of Vignesh, the Neet aspirant from Elanthankuzhi village in Ariyalur district, who committed suicide on Wednesday.

Expressing his condolences to the family of Vignesh, Palaniswami announced a relief of ₹ 7 lakh from the Chief Minister's General Relief Fund and a government job for a member of the family based on their qualification.

PMK president G. K. Mani, in a statement said, that this party functionaries had handed a relief amount of ₹10 lakh on behalf of PMK. Both Palaniswami and Mani urged the student community to refrain from taking such extreme steps in life.

Deputy Chief Minister O. Pannerselvam, in a tweet, expressed his condolences to the family and advised parents to not allow children alone. He said parents should

## VCK chief flays Centre for rise in students' death over Neet

**R VALAYAPATHY | DC**  
ARIYALUR, SEPT. 10

Vidhuthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) president Thol Thirumavalavan strongly condemned the Centre's adamant stance on holding Neet, which has caused mental agony to many aspirants of medical and other professional courses, followed by the increasing incidents of students' suicide day by day.

Soon after placing a wreath on the body of Vignesh (19), an MBBS aspirant of Elamnthangkuzhi village near here, who committed suicide by jumping into an irrigation well in the village, Thirumavalavan told newsmen that the country's

ensure that children did not slip into depression

rulers should realize this pathetic situation. He further said, as far as the VCK was concerned, Neet is not needed in Tamil Nadu alone, but should be withdrawn across the country.

He said that Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami himself had accepted that though his government was against holding Neet, due to unavoidable circumstances it was not in a position to implement the same.

Yet he wondered as to why the Tamil Nadu government had failed to file a case against NEET like chief Ministers of other seven states.

Thirumavalavan handed over a sum of Rs 25,000 to the kin of the deceased on behalf of his party.

and counsel them accordingly.

## Puducherry adds 452 new Covid-19 cases

**Puducherry, Sept. 10:** Puducherry on Thursday logged 452 new coronavirus cases taking the overall tally to 18,536 while six more people including a 68-year old woman succumbed to the infection. The 452 new cases were identified after examination of 2,264 samples while 422 patients

were discharged during the last 24 hours, Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release. The six fatalities pushed the toll in the union territory to 353. Mohan Kumar said that the fatality and recovery rates were 1.90% and 72.23% respectively. —PTI



Doctors of Institute of Mental Health in Kilpauk take a pledge to create awareness against suicides to mark World Suicide Prevention Day. — DC

## Rly projects speeded up due to lockdown: Core

**M. ARULOLI | DC**  
TIRUNELVELI, SEPT. 10

The on-going railway line electrification works in the southern district in Madurai railway division are expected to be completed in the next two years, says the Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (Core).

Answering for an RTI application of Pandiarajan of the Railway Passengers' association, Tenkasi, CORE has stated that the works were in full swing due to the absence of traffic in the Madurai division, due to the lockdown.

Electrification works on the Tenkasi - Tirunelveli - Tiruchendur sections is expected to be completed by October 2022, and other

electrification projects in various other sections between Shengottai - Virudhunagar, Manamadurai, Madurai - Manamadurai and Madurai - Karaikudi - Tiruchy in the Madurai division also, would be completed by October 2022. Electrification on the Manamadurai - Rameswaram stretch would be completed and commissioned for passenger traffic by March 2021, said CORE.

In its RTI reply, Core also has stated that line electrification between Shengottai - Punalur and Punalur - Kollam, are to be taken up soon as the cost estimates for the projects, have been sanctioned. The on-going doubling project between

Madurai - Thoothukudi and Maniyachi - Tirunelveli - Nagercoil sections in the Madurai railway division also has been accelerated during the lockdown period, said a Southern Railway official, who added that in the 159-km-long Madurai - Maniyachi - Thoothukudi section, doubling work has been completed for 30 kms between Kadambur and Thattapara, and for 14.47 kms between Maniyachi and Gangaikondan.

The doubling project between Madurai - Thoothukudi and Maniyachi - Tirunelveli - Nagercoil also is expected to be completed and commissioned for passenger traffic by March 2022, said Southern Railway sources.

## Padayatra on OBC reservation issue

**M. ARULOLI | DC**  
THOOTHUKUDI, SEPT. 10

Popular farmer activist P Ayyakannu, known for his novel agitations, has now turned his focus on the OBC reservation issue, and he has planned to take up a 'padayatra' from Kanyakumari to New Delhi.

Charging the Centre and state government of not properly implementing reservation for OBC category in government jobs, Nallakannu

demanding that OBC communities should be reserved 50 per cent of seats in higher education and in Central government jobs also, as is being implemented in Tamil Nadu.

Complaining that the OBC section, despite being a majority category in the country, were not given proper representation, Ayyakannu demanded the release of caste-based census taken for the first time in 2011, and wanted an exclusive enumeration of the OBC population in the country along with the 2021 census.

"Stressing upon these demands, I have planned to launch a padayatra from Kanyakumari to New Delhi," said Ayyakannu, who submitted a petition in this regard to Thoothukudi collector on Thursday.

The padayatra is planned to be launched in Kanyakumari on Gandhi Jayanthi day on October 2, added Ayyakannu.

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In the early hours of September 7, after the elephant moved to Kerala, a message was given to the Kerala forest department to monitor the elephant. Hence, the animal was never driven forcefully into Kerala. It moved on its own, added the DFO.

## Retired race horses banned from joy rides

**B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC**  
OOTY, SEPT. 10

The use of retired race horses for tourist joy rides has been banned in the Nilgiris. The animal husbandry department in the Nilgiris in association with the Nilgiris chapter of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), headed by the collector, has made this announcement.

Animal husbandry official sources said that henceforth any person found abusing retired race horses for joy rides would be penalised with

a minimum of ₹50,000, and the horse shall also be confiscated and sent to an infirmary already identified by the local authorities for further care.

Collector of the Nilgiris, J Innocent Divya, has ordered the ban on retired race horses being abused in the name of joy rides in the Nilgiris. This ill treatment and disregard for the animal amounts to absolute cruelty.

These negligent horse owners repeatedly abuse retired race horses during the tourist seasons by using them for joy rides, and on several counts,

have declined to provide them basic care and food.

They have failed in their responsibility to ensure the well-being of these fine animals and have driven them to the streets denying them medical care, exposing them to contagious diseases, suffer injuries and vehicular accidents, and cruelly die on the streets.

The district here has instructed the police department and local authorities to remove such race horses from the streets of the town, sources added.

## TN forest dept releases map of makna's trail to Kerala

## Makna not tortured, says forest dept

**ANANTH MATHIVANAN | DC**  
COIMBATORE, SEPT. 10

Claiming that the makna (Tuskless male elephant) was neither tortured nor driven away forcefully into Kerala forests, the forest department here has released a map marking the route which the makna had taken as it moved between Kerala and Tamil Nadu forest areas.

The elephant which suffered serious injuries in its mouth after allegedly biting a crude bomb

(Outtukai) died a couple of days ago, after entering neighbouring Kerala.

Meanwhile, a video went viral in social media claiming that the elephant was tortured and forcefully driven into Kerala to avoid departmental complications. But, DFO D Venkatesh has released a map on Thursday claiming that the animal was only being monitored and stopped from getting involved in ransacking human habitats.

The DFO told DC that the movement of the elephant was observed for 12 days

continuously in Coimbatore forest division from August 27 to September 7, even as it damaged 12 houses on its way.

Firecrackers were used to drive away the elephant as it entered the STF camp at Mangarai and made an attempt to throw the gas cylinder from the kitchen kept for cooking. To avoid untoward mishaps, as a preventive measure, our staff had used a few crackers and we don't have any other choice, except it, the DFO added.

A map has been drawn

using Google map indicating the route which the elephant took. The blue line on the map indicates the elephant's trail after its injury. The violet line indicates its trail after treatment was given by Kerala forest department personnel. It clearly shows that the elephant traversed the same pattern within its home zone.

Staff from the Coimbatore forest division were just monitoring the elephant's moment to keep it away from human settlements, since it was damaging houses while ravaging

for food. Hence, the elephant moved on its own path.

The elephant was a bit aggressive and damaged houses. Whenever it resorted to such activities, the staff intervened to divert the elephant from human habitation.

In the early hours of September 7, after the elephant moved to Kerala, a message was given to the Kerala forest department to monitor the elephant. Hence, the animal was never driven forcefully into Kerala. It moved on its own, added the DFO.



## SHORT TAKES

2 SOG JAWANS  
KILLED IN  
ENCOUNTERAKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 10

Two jawans of Special Operation Group (SOG) of Odisha police died in an exchange of fire between security forces and Maoists in a forest near Sirki village on Kalahandi-Kandhamal border, police said on Thursday.

The martyrs were identified as Sudhir Kumar Tudu (28) of Mayurbhanj district and Debasis Sethy (27) of Angul district. At least five Maoists had died in the gun-battle that took place on Wednesday. Initially, four bodies of Maoists were recovered from the spot. During the combing operation following the encounter, the security personnel recovered another body of a Maoist.

On a tip-off from Intelligence input, an operation was launched on Kalahandi-Kandhamal border on September 8. Two composite teams of SOG and District Voluntary Force (DVF) had participated in this operation.

Following heavy firing from the Maoists, a team of SOG and DVF had retaliated, said an official statement issued by Odisha Police.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik paid tribute to the martyred jawans. "Salute to the martyrdom of Debasis Sethy of Angul and Sudhir Kumar Tudu of Mayurbhanj who laid down their lives fighting against left-wing extremists. My heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred jawans," the Chief Minister tweeted.

LUKEWARM  
OPENING DAY FOR  
RLYS SPL TRAINS

**New Delhi, Sept. 10:** There was a lukewarm response from passengers towards railways' 80 special trains, bookings for which opened on Thursday, with the average occupancy rate being less than 50 per cent, except for two trains which showed more than 100 per cent occupancy.

While Indore Jn Bg Railway station to Howrah in West Bengal showed an occupancy of 108 per cent, the Shramik Express from Valsad station to Muzaffarpur in Bihar showed occupancy of 179 per cent, according to data provided by the national transporter. Though the Indore to Howrah train was over booked, the train in the reverse direction had only 15 per cent occupancy.

Another train running over western railway between Manmad and Mumbai in Maharashtra showed 52 per cent occupancy. Occupancy in trains originating from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal for journeys towards Karnataka and Telangana maintained an average occupancy of around 30 per cent. The most occupancy of 47 per cent was seen in the Muzaffarpur-Bangalore weekly special train, followed by the Gorakhpur-Yesvantpur Jn Railway station at 32.4 per cent and the Darbhanga-Secunderabad special which has an occupancy of 31 per cent.

BMC: DEMOLISHED  
ONLY ILLEGAL  
STRUCTURE

**Mumbai, Sept. 10:** The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Thursday denied in the Bombay High Court that it undertook demolition of "illegal" alterations at actor Kangana Ranaut's bungalow here with ulterior motives.

The civic body filed an affidavit in the court a day after Ms Ranaut challenged the demolition at her bungalow in Pali Hill in suburban Bandra.

"The petitioner (Ranaut) is seeking to obfuscate and cover up her flagrantly illegal acts of unlawfully making substantial additions and alterations contrary to the sanctioned building plan, without permission by making baseless and wild allegations of malafide," the BMC said.

A division bench of Justices S.J. Kathawalla and R.I. Chagla had on Wednesday stayed the demolition, noting the action smacked of "malafide" (dubious intentions). On Thursday, BMC counsel contended that Ms Ranaut had carried out modifications in her bungalow in blatant violation of the sanctioned building plan. "All demolition work has been stopped as soon as the court directed so. But we request the court to direct the petitioner to maintain status quo and not commence other work in the premises," he said. *PTI*

## Tibet under electronic surveillance

China is miffed over India's recruitment of Tibetans in the Special Frontier Force

Army on alert  
along LoC after  
ISI uses drones

**Srinagar, Sept. 10:** A quadcopter used by Pakistani spy agency ISI in Jammu and Kashmir has necessitated alert along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Valley as the Army believes it could be used for dropping weapons for terrorists.

General-Officer-in-Command of strategically located XV Corps in Kashmir Lt Gen B.S. Raju said after an incident "across Peer Panjal", a reference to Jammu region in army parlance, "we have alerted all formations to keep a check on any flying object seen along the LoC". He said the terrorists holed up in the Kashmir valley have been facing acute shortage of arms and ammunition and they are desperately looking for some help from across the border for the same.

In June, BSF had shot down a Pakistani drone, loaded with a sophisticated rifle and seven grenades, along the International Border in Kathua district

of Jammu region.

The Chinese-made drone weighed about 17.5 kgs and had a payload of 5.5 kg including a sophisticated US-made M4 semi-automatic carbine and seven Chinese grenades. Four batteries, a radio signal receiver and two Global Positioning Systems were also recovered.

This, according to Gen Raju, is a "new dimension" in decades of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

"Instructions have been passed on to the forward formations to keep an eye on any flying object coming from across the border (LoC) and hit it hard to bring it down," he said. As small drones are tough to detect, an extra vigil using all high-tech gadgets along with human scrutiny is being maintained. A strict watch is also being maintained for movement of civilians along the LoC as terrorists may disguise themselves as nomads or shepherds to pick up an arms consignment. — *PTI*

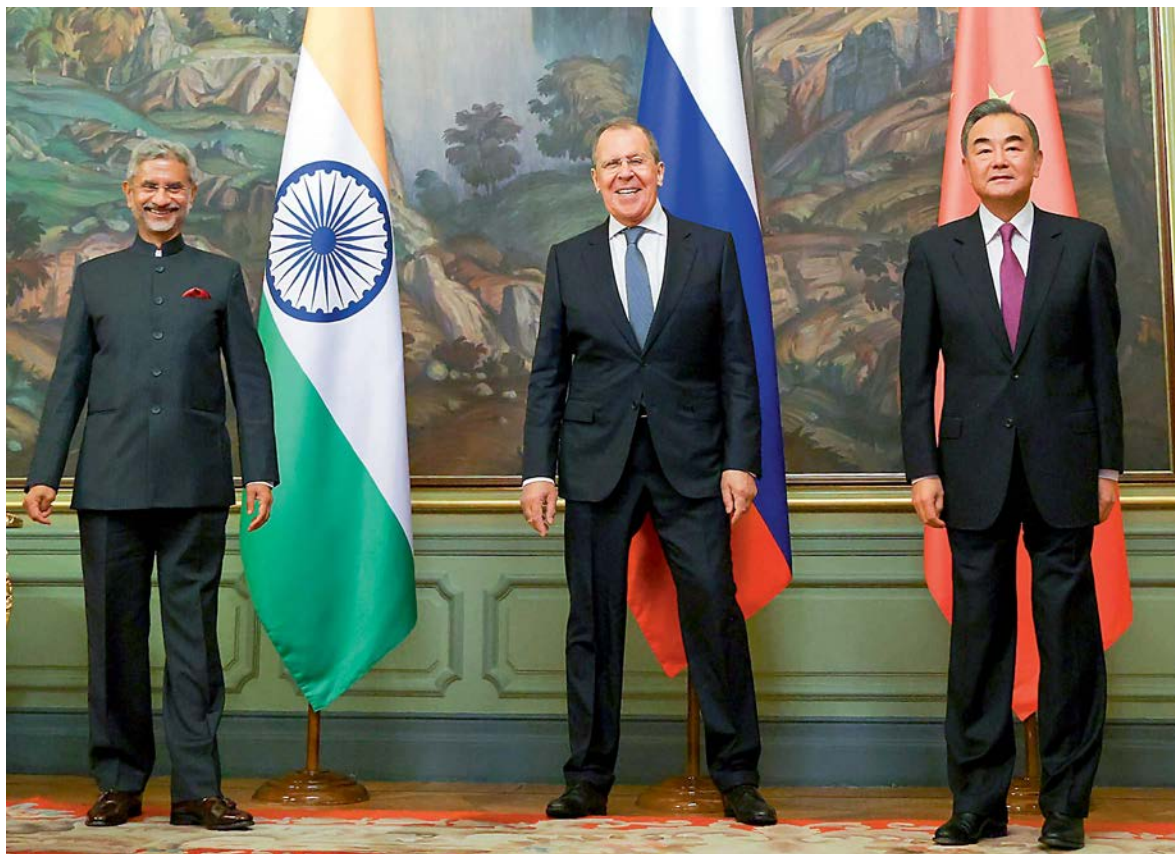
Sitting in Dharchula of Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand, repeated calls to locals in Purang town in the Tibet Autonomous Region using a Nepal Telecom SIM card do not materialise. Even if some calls go through, Tibetans at the other end either disconnect the call or the line would go blank after a few rings.

That was not the case till a few months ago when people from Dharchula — many of whom are fluent in Chinese and Nepalese — would regularly call up their Tibetan friends and exchange pleasantries. Several people from both sides share a close rapport, which further gets strengthened when they meet and stay together during the six months of annual trade that takes place in Tibet every year, under the watchful eyes of the People's Liberation Army of China.

While Tibetans have been victims of atrocities unleashed by the PLA since decades, the escalating tension with India in eastern Ladakh is said to have led the Chinese Army to take up massive electronic surveillance on Tibetans in the Tibet Autonomous Region, especially those living close to the borders with India. The move, Indian agencies say, is due to suspicions that Tibetans might "leak vital information" about PLA deployments and their activities to India.

Coming as it does at a time when China is miffed over India's recruitment of Tibetans in the Special Frontier Force which is fighting the PLA in eastern Ladakh, the Chinese Army is said to have issued multiple threats to local Tibetans if they are found indulging in "suspicious activity".

Information accessed by *Deccan Chronicle* after speaking to multiple sources suggest that Tibet is under massive electronic surveillance since the tensions began escalating



Foreign minister S. Jaishankar, left, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, and China's foreign minister Wang Yi, pose for a photo on the sidelines of a meeting of Foreign Ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Commonwealth of Independent States and Collective Security Treaty Organisation Member States in Moscow on Thursday. — *PTI*

## THE FALLOUT

- Tibetans living close to the Indian borders and otherwise are under massive electronic surveillance following tensions between India and China
- Ever since the Galwan valley clashes, surveillance has been increased on Tibetans and many of them who remained in close touch with Indians are now incommunicado
- Indians residing close to the borders in Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh and other areas share a good rapport with Tibetans
- In Tibet, human rights abuses include disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions, forced abortions and infanticide
- According to one report, 87,000 deaths have been recorded in Lhasa alone between March 1959 and September 1960

between the two countries following the clashes in Galwan valley in June. This includes mobile-phone monitoring and keeping an eye on other forms of communication, be it emails or chats — the contents of which are being monitored round the clock. It is learnt that in some areas close to the Indian borders, mobile-phone networks have been jammed to ensure there is

no communication.

Threats from the PLA have ensured that people keep to themselves lest they invite the wrath of PLA, whose brutality against Tibetans is well known. For the PLA, places like Purang are significant as they are not only close to the borders with India and Nepal, the Mansarovar lake and Mount Kailash are located towards the north of this

town, the area where the PLA has deployed surface-to-air missiles and is expanding its military base by taking up construction work.

Indian SIM cards do not work here due to poor connectivity and many locals in Dharchula use Nepal Telecom SIM cards to talk business with Tibetans.

It is not only Purang that PLA is worried about. Sources say that the

Chinese Army is heavily surveilling villages in Demchok in Ladakh, Tago and Yamrang areas in Khimkulla Pass along the LAC in Himachal Pradesh, Linzhi, a city in the southeast of the Tibet Autonomous Region which borders Arunachal Pradesh where the Bokar tribes live on both sides and also the areas near Nathu La.

"Tibetans living close to

the borders with India share a great rapport from even before the 1962 war as most of these routes were used for trade between the two nations. Generations of tribes or traders have close cultural ties besides having business interests which makes the PLA uncomfortable. With tensions at its peak between the countries ever since the 1962 war, the PLA wants to have a tighter grip over Tibet and its people, especially due to the friendship with the Indians," sources said.

Besides strict electronic surveillance, Indian agencies have learnt that due to the heavy mobilisation of

forces on the Chinese side, many Tibetans have been asked to evacuate and relocate to areas far away from the borders. In Tibet, not following the diktat of the PLA has led to disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests and even killings. Denial of freedom of speech and the Internet is a constant.

Recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping in his address to the seventh Central symposium on Tibet had called for building a "new modern socialist" Tibet and constructing an "impregnable wall" against separatism and "sinicisation" of the Tibetan Buddhism.

Why no curbs  
on channels:  
Mumbai HCKALPESH MHAMUNKAR | DC  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 10

The Bombay High Court on Thursday expressed surprise that the government had no control over the electronic media and asked why television news should not be regulated by the state.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a bunch of petitions that sought various reliefs related to the case of the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, including a direction to restrain the press in its coverage of the case.

The bench pleaded the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as a party in the matters. It also directed the ministry to file a reply in court indicating the extent of state control that is exercised in respect of telecasting news, particularly such news that may have serious ramifications.

The bench also made the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the central agencies that are currently probing cases related to the actor's death, as parties after one of the petitioners alleged that the agencies were "leaking" probe related information to the press and the public.

The petitions, filed by activists, and eight retired senior police officers, allege, among other things that several TV channels were running a parallel probe into the case and that they were running a malicious campaign against the Mumbai police.

No sanction for  
parallel probe by  
media: Delhi HC

**New Delhi, Sept. 10:** The Delhi High Court on Thursday questioned Arnab Goswami for running a parallel investigation and trial in the Congress leader Shashi Tharoor's wife Sunanda Pushkar's death case and directed the journalist to be bound by his undertaking on showing restraint and bringing down the rhetoric while covering the matter.

Justice Mukta Gupta said the court was not saying that anyone will gag the media but at the same time, sanctity of investigation must be maintained.

"Please show restraint. Once the police investigation is going on in the criminal case, there cannot be a parallel investigation by the media," the judge said and remarked that people must take a course in criminal trial and then get into journalism.

The high court referred to December 1, 2017 order in which it was stated that "Press cannot 'convict anyone' or insinuate that he/she is guilty or make any other unsubstantiated claims. Press has to exercise care and caution while reporting about matters under investigation or pending trial."

It has been noted in the 2017 order that the counsel for the journalist and channel has assured the court that in future they would exercise restraint as well as bring down the 'rhetoric'. On Thursday, the judge said, "Defendants (Goswami and his channel) are thus directed to be bound by the statement made on their behalf by their counsel till the next date of hearing." *PTI*

RT-PCR is must for symptomatic  
patients as Covid tally crosses 44 lVINEETA PANDEY | DC  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

India on Thursday reported another record high number of fresh cases with 95,735 new detections taking country's overall numbers to nearly 44.66 lakh out of which 34.72 lakh have already recovered and the national recovery rate is 77.74%. In the last 24 hours 1172 deaths were registered due to the virus taking total fatalities to 75,062.

In order to curb the spread of infection, the Union health ministry has asked states and Union territories to mandatorily retest all symptomatic negative cases of Rapid Antigen Tests through RT-PCR to ensure no positive cases are missed out.

"Union Health Ministry has noted that in some large States, symptomatic negative cases tested by Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) are not being followed up by RT-PCT testing. The guidelines of ICMR as well as the Union Health Ministry clearly state that the following two specific categories of persons must necessarily be retest-

ed through RT-PCR tests: all symptomatic (fever or cough or breathlessness) negative cases of Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) and asymptomatic negative cases of RAT that develop symptoms within 2 to 3 days of being tested negative," health ministry said in a statement.

"This is necessary to ensure that such symptomatic negative cases do not remain untested," it said.

**Telangana crosses 1.5 lakh mark**

**Hyderabad:** Telangana state crossed the 1.5-lakh mark in the number of Covid-19 cases. The state as of Wednesday evening had 1,50,176 Coronavirus infections, the state health department has said.

The state crossed the one-lakh mark on August 22, meaning that it has added 50,000 cases in 17 days. The state reached the 50,000 mark in July 22, and took a month to reach the one-lakh mark. The caseload has doubled in 32 days, going from about 75,000 on August 7 to 1.5 lakh on September.

The number of those dead from the disease continued to creep up, with 10 more fatalities taking the Covid-19 toll to 927.

**AP continues to record more than 10 K cases**

**Vijayawada:** Andhra Pradesh on Thursday recorded 10,175 new Covid-19 cases scaling up the tally to 5,37,687 and 68 deaths, taking the death toll from Covid-19 to 4,702 in the last 24 hours.

Out of a total of 43,80,991 samples tested so far in the state, 4,35,647 patients have been discharged from various hospitals after recovery while 97,338 patients are still active with the infection and taking treatment.

East Godavari continues to lead the state with the highest number of new infections at 1,412, followed by 1,386 in Prakasam.

**Active cases cross 1 lakh in Karnataka**

**Bengaluru:** The total number of active Covid-19 cases in Karnataka breached the 1 lakh mark

on Thursday, with the state reporting 9,217 new cases of coronavirus infections and 129 related fatalities, the health department said.

This takes the total number of infections in the state to 4,30,947 and death toll to 6,937. The day also saw 7,021 patients getting discharged after recovery.

Out of the fresh cases reported on Thursday, 3,161 cases were from Bengaluru urban alone.

**3,349 new cases reported in Kerala**

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala on Thursday reported 3,349 new cases of Covid-19 even as 1,657 persons got cured from infection. The state reported 3,000 plus cases for the third consecutive day.

Of the new cases, 3,058 contracted the infection through contact, source of infection among 266 persons is yet to be known, 30 came from abroad, 165 from other states and 72 health workers also tested positive. The state has so far reported 99,266 cases of which 72,578 have recovered.

## SAFETY | FIRST

85% vaccines are rejected but that does not mean that we will stop trying, says CCMB chief

## Scientists are not worried over halting vaccine trial

KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

Pausing trials for Covid-19 vaccine of AstraZeneca due to safety concerns is nothing new, scientists said while pointing out that 'trials' are experiments which may or may not work. The trials have been paused in India too by Serum Institute of India following instructions from the Drug Controller General of India.

The hype over an effective Covid-19 vaccine has created hope but ultimately every vaccine requires a time period and it has to cross various phases before it can be certified as safe. Reports from phase 1 and phase 2 trials were encouraging but in the phase 3 trials adverse effects were noted on two human subjects who volunteered for trials.

Director of the Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) Rakesh Mishra said, "They will now have to go back and

understand what has gone wrong. The phase 3 trials are meant for a large number of people. As the vaccine is tried on different human bodies, the results are bound to be different, said CCMB director Raksh Mishra

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He said importance of safety and efficacy, adverse side-effects and different responses are known only when the proposed vaccine is tried on a large number of people. "Science has noted 85 per cent rejection in vaccines. This does not mean that we will stop trying," Mishra said.

The adverse effect of neurological symptoms has raised alarm across

the world. It has dashed hopes of many who were looking forward to the vaccine as a safety net from the pandemic. But scientists say that further evaluation is required to understand the adverse response of the human body.

Meanwhile, two vaccine formulations developed by Russia are catching everyone's attention but scientists remain skeptical.

A senior scientist with a private pharmaceutical

company in Hyderabad said, "The number of human subjects for the vaccine from Russia is significantly less for drawing conclusions. The results of safety and efficacy will be known only after they are tested on more people. In the case of AstraZeneca, two people have reported adverse effects. Clarity will emerge when more trials are carried out."

Scientists urge that vaccine development is not easy and it will take a 'long time' before a 'safe

vaccine' is available. The different phases of trials are structured to understand safety and efficacy and unless tested on more humans, it cannot be termed as 'safe'.

They wish that scientists must be allowed to do their work without the pressure of 'time limit' to produce a vaccine. Governments and people have to follow the methods of prevention to control spread of the virus, which is the best way forward for now.



## IN BRIEF

Quake strikes  
New Jersey

**New York:** A magnitude 3.1 earthquake struck in East Freehold, New Jersey, early Wednesday morning, the US Geological Survey reported.

Residents took to social media to express their shock at the rare occurrence. Hundreds of people as far away as Philadelphia and Long Island, New York, contributed to the USGS' "Did You Feel It?" map, reporting only weak or light shaking and no damage. "It would be very surprising for us to see anything more than you know, damaged shelves or picture frames falling off of windows," said Robert Sanders, a geophysicist with the survey. The USGS said the earthquake happened about 2 a.m. and was centered 1.25 miles south, southeast of the centre of East Freehold.

Greece rescues  
151 migrants

**Athens:** Greece's coast guard says a rescue operation was launched overnight after a yacht carrying more than 150 migrants was found in distress in bad weather northeast of the Aegean island of Amorgos. The coast guard said Wednesday a nearby cargo ship picked up 151 people from the yacht during the search and rescue operation Tuesday, in which coast guard and Greek navy vessels also participated.

A witness on board the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged cargo ship said they saw one person swimming away from the yacht, but gale force winds in the area were hampering any further search and rescue operations Wednesday morning, the coast guard said. It said the cargo ship was transporting the migrants to Turkey. Thousands of people fleeing war or poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia arrive on Greek islands each year in an attempt to make their way into Europe.

Probe on if netted  
shark killed surfer

**Canberra:** Authorities will investigate whether a dead tiger shark caught in a net off an Australian beach killed a surfer, an official said Wednesday.

Nick Slater, 46, was fatally mauled on Tuesday off popular Greenmount Beach on the Gold Coast tourist strip in a rare attack off a beach protected by shark netting. His death is only the second fatal shark attack at one of Queensland's 85 beaches that have been protected by nets and drum lines since as early as 1962, the state government said. The first was a 21-year-old swimmer who was mauled by more than one bull shark off a netted beach on North Stradbroke Island, north of the Gold Coast, in 2006. Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said a large tiger shark had been found since Slater's death tangled in a net off Greenmount Beach. "Further investigations will be conducted to discover if there is any link between it and the fatal attack," Palaszczuk said. Before nets were put in place, the last fatal shark attack was in 1958.

2K HOMES  
WRECKED IN  
N. KOREA

**Seoul, Sept. 9:** A typhoon that struck North Korea wrecked nearly 60 bridges and destroyed or inundated more than 2,000 houses, state media reported Wednesday, with leader Kim Jong Un saying the damage had disrupted central planning for the rest of the year.

Typhoon Maysak brought days of heavy downpours to the country's east coast last week even as the North was still reeling from earlier flooding and typhoon damage, and this week it was followed by Typhoon Haishen.

Maysak "destroyed or inundated" more than 2,000 houses and tens of public buildings in the affected regions, the official KCNA news agency said, while 60 kilometres of roads and 59 bridges collapsed, with over 3,500 metres of railway roadbeds "swept away". Natural disasters tend to have a greater impact in the North due to its creaking infrastructure, and the country is vulnerable to flooding as many mountains and hills have long been deforested.

The damage obliged the authorities to "change the direction of our struggle after comprehensively considering the year-end tasks that were underway", Kim told a top committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, according to KCNA. It did not give specific details.

Trump downplayed Covid  
to avoid panic: WoodwardJustice Dept. push into Don  
case could prompt dismissal

**Washington, Sept. 10:** US President Donald Trump has acknowledged downplaying the dangers posed by the deadly Coronavirus, saying he did not want to create panic in the country, according to a new book by a renowned American investigative journalist.

The book, 'Rage', by Bob Woodward is being described by the publisher as an "unprecedented" and "intimate tour de force" of new reporting on the Trump presidency that is facing a pandemic, economic disaster and racial unrest. The book is scheduled to hit the stores on September 15, less than two months before the November 3 presidential election. Excerpts of the book and clippings of the interviews with Trump were released by Woodward to some media outlets on Wednesday.

"I wanted to, I wanted to always play it down," Trump told Woodward in March, a recording of which was released by the 77-year-old veteran journalist to *The Washington Post*. "I still like playing it down, because I don't want to create a panic."

In another interview on February 7, the audio clip of which was posted by *The Washington Post*, Trump told the journalist, who broke the Watergate scandal in 1972, that the Coronavirus was deadlier than the flu and could be transmitted through the

**Washington, Sept. 10:** Attorney General William Barr on Wednesday defended the Justice Department's move to intervene in a defamation lawsuit against President Donald Trump, even as experts were skeptical of the federal government's effort to protect the president in a seemingly private dispute. The Justice Department's action is "a normal application of the law. The law is clear. It is done frequently," Barr said at an unrelated news conference in Chicago.

He added, "The little tempest that is going on is largely because of the bizarre political environment in which we live." But experts said it's far from clear that the conduct at issue — whether Trump defamed E. Jean Carroll, a writer who

accused him of raping her at a New York luxury department store in the 1990s — has anything to do with the scope of his White House duties. The department's move is likely to have an ancillary benefit for Trump in delaying the case, but administration lawyers have a tough task at hand trying to argue that the president was acting in

his official capacity when he denied Carroll's allegations last year, experts say. "I wouldn't make such an argument, and if a president approached me to do it, I would say, 'Don't,'" said Stuart Gerson, who led the Justice Department's Civil Division in President George H.W. Bush's administration when Barr was attorney general for the first time.

"The president gets sued all the time and is defended by the government," Gerson added, "but those are for lawsuits that have to do with actions in his official capacity as the president. This isn't anything like that."

The Justice Department's action is consistent with the expansive view of executive authority it has taken under Barr.

WH: PREZ NOBEL  
NOMINATION  
HARD-EARNED

**Washington, Sept. 10:** The nomination of Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize for brokering the landmark Israel-UAE deal is a "hard-earned and well-deserved honour," the White House has said, underlining that the US President has made peace a cornerstone of his foreign policy efforts. Far-right Norwegian lawmaker Christian Tybring-Gjedde on Wednesday nominated Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in mediating the deal between Israel and the UAE which is seen as a historic step towards peace in the Middle East.

Israel and the UAE announced on August 13 that they were establishing full diplomatic relations. The first commercial direct flight between Israel and the UAE landed in Abu Dhabi on August 31 after both countries announced normalisation of relations. The deal would be signed on September 15 at the White House. The UAE is only the third Arab country to establish diplomatic ties with the Jewish state. Israel's neighbours, Egypt and Jordan, being the other two Arab states to recognise Israel.



This photo released by the semi-official Fars News Agency shows Iranian troops participating in a military drill near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, on Thursday. Units from the navy, air force and ground forces are participating in a nearly 2 million-square-kilometre area of the Gulf of Oman.

## Iran war games amid US tension

**Tehran, Sept. 10:** Iran's military Thursday began an expansive annual three-day exercise near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, state TV reported, with the manoeuvres taking place amid heightened tensions between the Islamic Republic and the United States.

Units from the navy and air force and ground forces are participating in a nearly two million-square-kilometre (772,200-square-mile) area of the Gulf of Oman.

State TV said Iranian submarines and drones were being deployed. Adm. Habibollah Sayyari,

commander of the annual exercise dubbed Zolfaghar-99, said Wednesday the operation is aimed at "improving readiness in confronting foreign threats and any possible invasion."

Sayyari's comments hinted at the threat of military conflict amid tensions between Iran and the US, which has sought to extend a years-long United Nations weapons embargo on Tehran that is due to expire in October.

ityary conflict amid tensions between Iran and the US, which has sought to extend a years-long United Nations weapons embargo on Tehran that is due to expire in October. Last month, US Central Command published a black-and-white video showing what appeared to be Iranian special forces fast-roping from a helicopter onto the oil tanker MT Wila, whose last position appeared to be off the eastern coast of the United Arab Emirates near the city of Khorfakkan.

Iranian state television later acknowledged the

brief seizure, referring to the operation as a routine inspection without elaborating. In July, Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard fired a missile from a helicopter targeting a replica of a US aircraft carrier in the Strait of Hormuz in an exercise aimed at threatening the US. In January, a US drone strike killed a top Iranian general at the Baghdad airport and Tehran responded by firing ballistic missiles at American forces in Iraq.

Iran's navy operates in the Gulf of Oman on the eastern side of the strait.

Pompeo: Moscow  
'poisoned' Navalny

**Washington, Sept. 10:** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday there was a strong chance Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's poisoning was ordered by senior officials in Moscow. "I think people all around the world see this kind of activity for what it is," Pompeo said in a radio interview.

"And when they see the effort to poison a dissident, and they recognise that there is a substantial chance that this actually came from senior Russian officials, I think this is not good for the Russian people," he told conservative host Ben Shapiro.

Navalny, the most visible critic of President Vladimir Putin within Russia, fell violently ill last month as he took a flight in Siberia. He was flown for treatment to Germany, where doctors said he was poisoned. Pompeo reiterated that the United States and its European allies all wanted Russia to "hold those responsible for this accountable" and said Washington would also try to identify the perpetrators. "It's something that we'll take a look at, we'll evaluate, and we'll make sure we do our part to do whatever we can to reduce the risk that things like

CAMPAIGNER  
FOR NAVALNY  
BEATEN UP

**Moscow, Sept. 10:** Unidentified attackers beat up an activist campaigning for hospitalised Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny in the Urals city of Chelyabinsk, his colleagues said Thursday. Alexei Baraboshkin, the local coordinator for Navalny, was "assaulted by unknown attackers" late Wednesday after receiving threats for several weeks, his campaign office wrote on Telegram. It posted a picture of him with a bruised and bleeding eye. Navalny is being treated in Germany for poisoning with Novichok in an incident that has sparked international condemnation and the threat of sanctions against Russia.

— AFP

this happen again." Pompeo's remarks come despite President Donald Trump's comment last week that he had seen no proof that Navalny was poisoned. Trump has sought warmer relations with Putin.

— AP

Covid risk pauses  
Assange hearing

**London, Sept. 10:** The London hearing on WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's extradition from Britain to the United States was suspended Thursday because one of the lawyers may have been exposed to the Coronavirus. District Judge Vanessa Baraitser ordered the proceedings adjourned until Monday while a lawyer representing the US government is tested for the virus.

Assange is fighting American prosecutors' attempt to get the British government to send him to the US to stand trial on spying charges. US prose-

cutors have indicted the 49-year-old Australian on 18 espionage and computer misuse charges over WikiLeaks' publication of secret US military documents a decade ago. The charges carry a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison.

Assange's lawyers say the prosecution is a politically motivated abuse of power that will stifle press freedom and put journalists around the world at risk. The hearing started Monday at London's Old Bailey criminal court and is scheduled to last about a month.

— AP

Court hears Nawaz  
surrender review

SHAFQAT ALI | DC  
ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 10:

Pakistan's Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday conducted hearing on former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's review petition against order to surrender in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption reference.

During the hearing, National Accountability Bureau (NAB) prosecutor said that the ex-premier has been declared proclaimed offender by the court.

Justice Mohsin Kiyani remarked that Nawaz Sharif's bail had been rejected after which he has become absconder in the case. The former premier is residing in London but his doctors are present in United States, he added.

Subsequently, the court directed to present arguments over admissibility of the plea and adjourned the hearing till September 15. Meanwhile, NAB has challenged Nawaz Sharif's bail in

3 PIA OFFICIALS  
SACKED OVER  
FAKE LICENCES

**Islamabad, Sept. 10:** Three officials of Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority have been sacked for their alleged involvement in the fake flying licence scandal in the country's national carrier, Pakistan International Airlines, according to a media report on Thursday. A fourth CAA employee obtained a stay order from a court against the possible decision to sack him, the Dawn newspaper reported.

—PTI

Avenfield reference in IHC, saying that the ex-PM is a convict and absconder. Interior secretary and foreign ministry should take action as per law for Nawaz Sharif's return.

## FILM | FEST

## Journalists are watching digital screenings, virtual red carpets in their pyjamas due to Covid

## Tiff opens, beams on thousands of laptops globally



SUPARNA SHARMA | DC  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

The annual Toronto International Film Festival (Tiff), which serves as the diving board for big Hollywood and European films eying the Oscars, opened on Wednesday on a thousand laptop-screens across

the world.

The 45th edition of Tiff is the first of its kind — a hybrid in the times of Coronavirus.

Every September, Tiff, which rolls out the red carpet on Toronto's buzzy King Street to welcome 400-odd films and their creators, actors, has this year split between screenings in cinema halls, and "outdoor screenings" in Toronto's two drive-in venues.

Film journalists from across the world, who are usually in attendance, are taking part in the festival virtually, watching digital

screenings, virtual red carpet events in their pyjamas.

"We began this year planning for a 45th festival much like our previous editions," said the festival's artistic director Cameron Bailey, "but along the way we had to rethink just about everything. This year's lineup reflects that tumult". It's true.

The 11-day festival opened on Thursday with Spike Lee's *American Utopia*, and the closing film, or well series, will be a taste of Mira Nair's *A Suitable Boy* (an adapta-



Alma Poysti as Tove Jansson in Finnish film *Tove*.

tion of Vikram Seth's 1993 novel).

Tiff, considered the most

middle brow of the Big 4 international film festivals (amongst the high-brow

Cannes, Venice and Berlin), is the most inclusive, democratic film festivals. Of all the films it's showing this year, 43 per cent are directed, co-directed or created by women, and 49 per cent are directed, co-directed, or created by Black, Indigenous or POC (people of colour).

There is *One Night in Miami*, Regina King's film about a young Muhammad Ali, actress Halle Berry's directorial debut, *Brutised*, Ricky Staub's *Concrete Cowboy* starring the Covid-recovered Idris Elba, and Francis Lee's *Ammonite*

starring Kate Winslet.

And there is, of course, Chaitanya Tamhane's Marathi film, *The Disciple*.

If there is a god of film festivals, it is *Serendipity*. Because that's all that can explain why my very first film at Tiff on Thursday was the delightful, peppy, *Tove*. A Finnish film written and directed by two women — Eeva Putro and Zaida Bergroth, respectively — *Tove* tells the story of the Helsinki-based author and illustrator, Tove Jansson (played with both verve and affecting vulnerability by Alma Poysti).



DECCAN Chronicle

11 SEPTEMBER 2020

Heed advice, announce rapid relief and stimulus

Democracy feeds on argument, on discussion as to the right way forward. This is the reason why respecting the opinion of others belongs to democracy," said Richard von Weizsäcker, the German president, under whose term his country got reunited. This philosophy is not new to India as it was ingrained in its culture with the Rig Veda declaring thousands of years ago: "Let noble thoughts come to me from all directions". However, the import of this philosophy seems to have been lost on the current government, which appears to believe that no consultation is required on the issues of national importance — especially on reviving the economy which is badly mauled by coronavirus.

A survey conducted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) serves as a reality check on all-is-well claims being made by officials and ministers. The survey claimed demand continues to be weak. In fact, 41 per cent of the companies, which participated in the survey, reported that their sales in August 2020 were less than 50 per cent of their sales in August 2019. Another 21 per cent said sales in August 2020 were between 50 and 75 per cent of the sales recorded in August 2019. Fifty-six per cent companies have reported that unlocking of the economy did not improve their order books, while 49 per cent companies reported cash-flow issues.

Automobile sales figures show that people don't have confidence in the economy. While car sales were relatively less impacted with people preferring safe personal transport in the pandemic, two-wheeler sales — that show the aspirational middle class is performing — have plunged by 28.7 per cent and commercial vehicle sales have more than halved reflecting the poor outlook of the economy.

India is a consumption-driven and domestic-focused economy. So a weaker demand could have a highly adverse impact on people's jobs, companies and also exchequer. The Narendra Modi government, however, ignored the advice of several well-known economists to announce financial stimulus to kickstart the Indian economy.

Dithering of the government to announce steps to ring-fence the economy from Covid-19 lockdown impact led to a 24 per cent contraction in the GDP in the quarter ended on June 30. Though government-paid economists believe in a V-shaped recovery, most banks and rating agencies have forecast an economic contraction of 10 to 15 per cent. State Bank of India believes that annual production of the country would be 10 per cent less this fiscal year, which means at least 10 per cent of jobs will vanish.

Commenting on the government's complacency, former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan said, "If you think of the economy as a patient, relief is the sustenance the patient needs while on the sickbed and fighting the disease. Without relief, households skip meals, pull their children out of school and send them to work or beg, pledge their gold to borrow, let EMLs and rent arrears pile up. So by the time the disease is contained, the patient has become a shell of herself."

In spite of hard facts arguing for a strong stimulus, if the Modi government does not act, history will not be kind to it.

Do animals have rights?

Is your dog equal to you? Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde on Wednesday posed this existential question before a petitioner. Allahabad-based People's Chariteer Organisation has sought juridical personhood for all members of the animal kingdom. Its plea cites legal entity status accorded to animals in two recent verdicts rendered by the Punjab and Haryana and Uttarakhand high courts. Besides the Centre and some of its ministries, it has arrayed all states, UTs, the National Crime Records Bureau and the Animal Welfare Board of India as party.

George Orwell famously wrote in *Animal Farm* "all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others". This literally holds true in nature, where might is right for the sustenance of food chains and ecosystems, and in economies to which agriculture, fisheries, food processing, leather and dairy are intrinsic. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017, notified by the NDA 2.0 government, for instance, became unsustainable in law for this very reason, and the ban on the sale of cattle for slaughter that breached the people's fundamental right to livelihood was since revoked.

While the Supreme Court considers this prayer of animal righters, if sceptically, as Justice Bobde himself clarified, it is important, therefore, to bear in mind that progressive, and innocuous, though this reform appears, it may end up wasting the judiciary's time. For sure there are international precedents — leftist Ecuador was the first to amend its constitution in 2008 to apply this definition to nature, while New Zealand accorded it to the Te Urewera national park in 2014 and the river Whanganui, "ancestor of the Maoris", in 2017. But to officially hold animals as not "property" but equals yet have them governed by manmade laws is openly fallacious.

The petition urges all citizens of India be declared persons *in loco parentis* for animals. However, treating wildlife as a person requires the establishment of guardians to represent its legal interests. This "doctrine of trust" is already in place; so, perhaps, the rights approach to this case is redundant, after all.

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Subhani

Vulnerable India faces crucial House session



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

Parliament will convene on the 14th of September, five days before the constitutional stipulation of 180 days expires. Article 85 of the Constitution stipulates that there should not be a gap of more than six months i.e. 180 days between two sessions of Parliament.

That the House convenes at an extraordinary moment in the contemporary history of India is a sequitur. The Covid-19 pandemic, the first in over a century of such global magnitude, is testing both the resilience of the Indian people and the Union and state governments to the extreme. With over 44 lakh cases and 75,000 deaths India now ranks second in the world, ahead of Brazil and behind the United States. However, the curve is not flattening. It is spiking like a fighter aircraft on a 90-degree upward ascent. With only five crore of 135.26 crore people tested so far India is looking at a very long haul with no vaccine in sight. The fact that the death rate is low is definitely a matter of relief. However, even this may unfortunately prove to be evanescent.

The most draconian lockdown in the world and that too at a four-hour notice completely failed. Nothing exemplifies it more than the fact that on March 22 the day the Janata Curfew was enforced India had 381 cases and seven deaths. Six months later the figures are traumatic. Prime Minister Modi's unfortunate boast that "today, the entire country is fighting a war against coronavirus... Mahabharata was won in 18 days but the war against coronavirus will take 21 days" sounds like a nasty joke.

The question that the country is asking is why

the government has not been able to control the pandemic especially when China where this evil ogre originated has been successful in stamping it out. Worldwide infections today stand at more than 27 million and over 8,90,000 people dead from the disease.

However, in China, the virus has been all but banished through a combination of lockdowns and travel restrictions earlier in the year. President Xi Jinping recently swaggered during an awards ceremony for medical professionals that China had passed "an extraordinary and historic test". "We quickly achieved initial success in the people's war against the coronavirus," Xi said. "We are leading the world in economic recovery and in the fight against Covid-19," he added. Where the NDA-/BJP government seriously erred is in underestimating the portentousness of the peril and doing precious little for 52 days between when the first case was reported in Kerala on January 30 and the announcement of the Janata Curfew on March 22.

The most severe casualty of the ill-conceived and poorly executed lockdown has been the Indian economy. In the early days of the lockdown itself it became fairly evident that epidemiologists had become economists and economists had morphed into epidemiologists. While the former flattened the economy the latter miserably failed to flatten the disease curve. The economic data for the fourth quarter of the 2019-20 fiscal estimated a GDP growth rate of 3.1 per cent capping a seven-quarter economic freefall. The fact that that the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal accounted for only eight days of the lockdown was a harbinger of

things to come. The first quarter economic data of the current fiscal revealed as was expected, that the lockdown had knocked the bottom out of the Indian economy. "GDP has shrunk from ₹35.35 lakh crore in Q1 of 2019-20 to ₹26.90 lakh crore in the first quarter of Q1 of 2020-21, showing a contraction of 23.9 per cent as compared to 5.2 per cent growth in Q1 2019-20," the official statement by the National Statistical Office proclaimed. Attempts by the government to talk up the economy are, at best, pathetic and, at worst, laughable. What Parliament must examine very closely is whether the assumptions that underpin the 30.42 lakh crores Union Budget passed on the last day of the budget session i.e. the 23rd of March, 2020, are still valid.

Another issue that has assumed menacing proportions is the question of GST compensation to the states. When the GST framework was being negotiated from 2015 to 2017 the NDA/BJP government had promised the states that in return for giving up their sub-sovereign taxing powers states would be compensated to the extent of 14 per cent compounded growth in revenue using 2015-16 as the base year for revenue estimation. This was to be done calculating the difference between that figure and the actual GST collections in a particular year till 2022. This arrangement was put in place to smoothen the implementation of the GST regime and compensate states for shortfalls in revenue collection as a consequence of such execution. The central government is now reneging on this sov-

ereign commitment to the states. This constitutes a sledgehammer assault on the federal structure of the nation. Parliament would naturally be very agitated for Article 1 of the Constitution states that India that is Bharat shall be a Union of states.

However, the most crucial issue that will dominate Parliament is the continuing Chinese aggression and occupation of Indian territory. While initially denying and obfuscating both the fact and extent of Chinese transgression into Indian territory even at the level of the Prime Minister in terms of the statement he made at the all Party meeting, the NDA/BJP government has now been compelled albeit reluctantly to accept that the situation is as if not more serious than 1962. While Parliament will unanimously express solidarity with our brave soldiers who were martyred in the Galwan Valley and other places there would be very hard and searching questions as to whether India is prepared for combating a four-front national security nightmare. The China-Pakistan axis, Covid-19 and a collapsed economy and a possible upsurge of left wing extremism in the red corridor from Tirupati to Pashupati, given the current antagonistic relationship with Nepal. Most of all even four months down the line government has not answered a fundamental question — why have the Chinese intruded into our land? Is it anger over some unfulfilled commitments given in Wuhan and Mamallapuram?

India is vulnerable like never before. No amount of cynical headline management using the unfortunate death of a cine actor will deflect from an almost existential crisis that stares us in the face.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

What Parliament must examine very closely is whether the assumptions that underpin the 30.42 lakh crores Union Budget passed on the last day of the budget session are still valid

LETTERS

A SENSIBLE DECISION

This is with reference to your report *Call to bring education under state list: Experts* (Sept. 9). In a diverse country like India where people belong to various social and economic backgrounds, the suggestion to bring education under the state list is a logical one. It is a well-known fact that the quality of education and literacy rates in different states vary drastically and in such a scenario, common policies for the entire country may not meet the needs of all students. Hence, organising specific policies and programs at the state level would gear up the current knowledge of students and yield better results.

S. Harenii, Chennai

RHEA'S ARREST

THE ARREST of Rhea Chakraborty in connection with SSR's mysterious death has opened a Pandora's Box of crimes related to narcotic drugs in which many celebrities, who are thought to be icons, are sure to be exposed with another side to their faces. The case, apart from being an investigation of an actor's death due to unknown causes, has revealed the very dark side of Bollywood VIPs and the deep roots that penetrate into the nation's security and economy by mafia groups. New angles to the mysterious death of SSR are flashed on TV channels with their own comments, guesses, and surmises. At this rate I feel it will take a few years for the actual culprits to get their due on the altar of justice as in the case of Nirbhaya.

Marudamalaiyan, Chennai

KESAVANANDA'S LESSONS

APROPOS YOUR editorial *Kesavananda's lessons* (Sept. 7). The late Mr Kesavananda Bharathi had remained as a beacon of light with the landmark verdict delivered about 50 years back. But for this judgment no party in power could alter or abridge the basic structure of our constitution, more so the fundamental rights enshrined in part 111. The clamour to remove the words "socialism" and "secularism" is foolhardy. According to the Supreme Court the goal of (Indian) socialism is the blend of Marxism and Gandhism, leaning heavily towards Gandhian socialism (Nakara vs Union of India). The word secularism was inserted in the preamble of the constitution (through 42nd amendment Act, 1976) to achieve the unity and fraternity of the people of India, enshrining the ideal of a secular state sans bigotry or any one religion holding sway over the powers-that-be, guaranteeing equal respect to all religions and unbridled fundamental rights.

A. Seshagiri Rao, Chennai

Abhijit Bhattacharyya



Throw Chinese out of India's economy; war is not an option

As the tense standoff with China in Ladakh worsens, with shots fired at the Line of Actual Control for the first time in 45 years, the battle drums are beating in some quarters and there is loose talk of a "short war" in the next few months. That is ill-advised, and a reality check is in order.

The September 5 *New York Times* had a disturbing front page headline: "Pandemic quiets India's streets and punctures its high hopes". The story read: "Not long ago, India's future looked entirely different... A sense of malaise is creeping... (as) China is increasingly muscling into Indian territory". September 4's *Wall Street Journal* was dismal too: "Economies reel in developing world".

Those talking of war have no idea of the economic disaster it will inflict. India's ruling class has never fully understood, or effectively dealt with, the Communist Party of China, and wishful thinkers actually hoped the CPC would offer a magic wand for India's economic uplift. That was never to be: ever since 1971 at least, when Henry Kissinger and his boss Richard Nixon reached out to Beijing, China's focus was firmly set on America. No

matter that the CPC constitution's original 1954 preamble clearly named the US as "enemy number one".

Where did India figure? Nowhere! The Han Chinese saw it as an "inferior" neighbour that could be used (and discarded) as a crutch in some sectors, as a "market of consumers, crazy for foreign goods; industry devoid of technology upgrades; capital and investment-starved; and banks riddled with mega fraudsters and bad loans".

Amid all this, an invisible Han-produced chemical/biological warfare-type salvo was enough to extinguish all enterprise, set India on the road to ruin, and knocked the aspiring power off its growth trajectory. "The economy of India shrank by 23.9 per cent a quarter, its worst performance since the 1996 figures," *WSJ* reported. And things will worsen the longer the Chinese-virus pandemic lasts. As India's resources to protect its workers and companies is limited, the prospect gets gloomier. "While rich countries can print more currency or take on debt at low cost, such a move by less fortunate nations" like India (will) enhance financial instability.

See the larger picture again. Latin America lost 26.5 million jobs, but one

country, India, sources suggest, lost 40 million-plus jobs. Brazil began one of the largest aid programmes... giving \$100 monthly to individuals, \$200 to families; and the US gave \$600 to jobless workers, in addition to other benefits. Has India done anything comparable? No, because it doesn't have the resources. India's economics has collapsed like a house of cards, in less than six months of the Chinese virus.

The Chinese have put India squarely on the mat, internally and externally. Their so-called "investment" resorted to long, deep penetration of India's private HDFC and ICICI Banks. They are everywhere, from telecoms to automobiles, with the likes of Great Wall Auto waiting to enter, expand and finish off established Indian carmakers.

The PLA's territory-penetration targets India's defences, and compels New Delhi to spend billions more in dollars to buy military hardware for high-altitude terrain. War, understandably, implies huge expenditure. For India, however, the dilemma is rapidly depleting revenue and rising expenditure. Given this background, India must not even think about a "physical war". Instead, tackle the enemy through a "finance war". It must not fall into the

Chinese trap. No one can predict the fallout of a war. If it lasts 15 days, for example, it may cause the death of upto 15,000 soldiers and three times more casualties.

Further, where will India fight? On its own territory — some of which has been occupied by force by the PLA? According to some calculations, 1,000 sq km has gone to the Chinese in this century itself: Depsang 900 sq km; Pangong 65 sq km; Chushul 20 sq km; Galwan 20 sq km. India fought to regain its own territory at Haji Pir in 1965. In Kargil 1999 too, India fought for its own land. There were mind-boggling casualties in both clashes with Pakistan.

With China, things will be far, far worse, further damaging the economy. That is not prudent, and a change in strategy is called for.

First, hit the Chinese companies lock, stock and barrel, target investments and whatever else in India. Use economics and finance as a tool to tackle the Hans' malevolence-cum-perfidy. War will destroy whatever wealth India does possess now.

Politically, too, it will create huge turbulence. The month-long 1962 war destroyed Jawaharlal Nehru. One hopes 2020 will not see a repeat. The

1962 war triggered an emergency over the external threat, followed by a draconian Gold Control Act. The 22-day conflict paved the way to demonetisation on June 6, 1966, followed by all-round economic dislocation. The 17-day 1971 war led to another economic recession, and then the 1975 Emergency which almost derailed Indian democracy.

India must therefore take the economic route to curb, deport, expel and de-couple from China. Not through bloodshed. The latter will inflict a massive body blow to India's defences, economics and democracy. Draconian laws are bound to follow due to the all-round external threat and internal dissent, and a destruction of India's polity, society and economy.

India needs to act fast. In October 1962 Nehru wrongly asked an ill-prepared military to throw China out of its territory. Don't do it today. Instead, first throw all non-military Chinese out of India's trade, telecoms, transport and tourism... and every other sector immediately.

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







## SHORT TAKES

## Natl badminton camp called off

**New Delhi:** The national badminton camp in Hyderabad for next month's Thomas and Uber Cup Final was on Thursday scrapped after it became clear that players would not get any relaxation on the mandatory seven-day quarantine period. The camp was originally scheduled to start on September 7 and conclude on September 27 for the event set for October 3 to 11 in Aarhus, Denmark. It was proposed by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) at the SAI Pullala Gopichand Academy.

Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, SAI wanted all the 26 players to be in quarantine for at least a week before training, an idea which was rejected by the players and Badminton Association of India (BAI).

SAI had said that players will have to stay and train at the Gopichand academy to ensure greater health safety amid the raging pandemic.

However, top players, who are mostly from Hyderabad, were against the idea and voiced their reluctance to stay at the academy to SAI in a video conference. — PTI

## Vaccine will not guarantee Games

**Laussane:** Amid uncertainty about planning the Tokyo Olympics, IOC president Thomas Bach said that progress with vaccines and rapid testing for Covid-19 would not be the complete answer for staging the rescheduled Games. "They will not be the silver bullet but they can greatly facilitate the organisation of the Games," Bach said after an International Olympic Committee board meeting. Bach declined to speculate on the Tokyo Olympics being held without fans. "We don't know how the world looks like tomorrow. So how can you expect from us to know how the world looks in 320 days from today?" Bach further added. — AP

## Jonty to coach Sweden post IPL

**Stockholm:** Former South Africa international Jonty Rhodes will be moving to Sweden with his family after the IPL to take charge as head coach of the country's national team, the Swedish Cricket Federation (SCF) has announced.

The 51-year-old Rhodes is currently in Dubai for the IPL as the fielding coach of Kings XI Punjab.

"Swedish Cricket Federation to invest in junior cricket, high performance & growth through the appointment of South African cricket great, Jonty Rhodes as head coach," SCF said in a statement. — PTI

## Panghal bats for formative coach

**New Delhi:** Asian Games champion boxer Amit Panghal has requested the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to allow the inclusion of his formative coach Anil Dhankar in the ongoing national camp in Patiala. The world number one in the 52kg category said he has sent across his proposal formally to both SAI and the Sports Ministry but hasn't got any response so far. "I can only request and I have done that. I am waiting for some response, haven't got any as yet," he said.

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**England vs Australia 1st ODI** from 5:30 pm on Sony Six, HD

## FORMULA ONE

**Italian Grand Prix Practice-1** from 2:25 pm; Practice-2 from 6:25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

## US OPEN TENNIS

**Women's Doubles Final** from 9:30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 2, HD

## MMA

**One Championship** bouts from 6 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

## WWE SMACKDOWN

Bouts from 5:30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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## VICTOR AZARENKA

## Serena, the other Mum, too into US semis

**New York, Sept. 10:** Serena Williams battled into a US Open semifinal showdown with Victoria Azarenka on Wednesday as top men's seeds Dominic Thiem and Daniil Medvedev booked their spots in the last four.

Williams, seeded third, came from a set down to overcome unseeded Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova and keep alive her bid for a 24th singles Grand Slam title at Flushing Meadows.

Later, Azarenka blew away Belgium's Elise Mertens as she continues her hunt for a first Grand Slam title in seven years.

Serena's comeback included two astonishing shots against her left hand that contributed to winning points.

"At that point I was fighting so hard. I was just trying to do everything I can whether rightly or lefty," she said.

A sluggish start saw the American lose the first 6-4, but she fought back to take the next two 6-3, 6-2, in 2hr 12min inside Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"I never give up and you know I just gotta keep going," Serena further added.

Serena smashed 20 aces, the most she has had in eight years, taking her tally for the tournament to 64 so far.

The record for the most number of aces in a US Open in the women's singles is 70, set by Serena in 1999 when she won for the first time.

"Sometimes when I'm serving, I just tell myself, I don't care if my arm falls off, I'm going to keep serving," she said.

Serena is looking to match Margaret Court's record for the most number of singles Grand Slam wins.

It has been more than three years since she won her 23rd at the 2017 Australian Open — when she was already pregnant with daughter Olympia.

Serena has come close since, reaching four major finals only to come away empty handed.

In the last four she will renew her rivalry with Azarenka who demolished Mertens 6-1, 6-0 in just 1hr 13 min.

Serena defeated Azarenka in the final of the US Open in 2012 and 2013.

The last few years of Azarenka's career have



Victoria Azarenka celebrates after winning her women's singles quarterfinal match against Elise Mertens at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on Wednesday. Azarenka won 6-1, 6-0.

been interrupted by a custody battle over her son who was born in 2016.

Azarenka said she found it "hard to accept losses" when she was young and at the top of her game, but was now benefiting from a more philosophical attitude.

"I enjoy the moment no matter what it is. I take life as it comes," Azarenka told reporters.

"It took me a long road to come here with a lot of struggles, a lot of understanding, forcing me to find this route, this path, if you can say that. But I'm here and I'm happy,"

## THE RESULTS

**Men's singles quarterfinals:** Daniil Medvedev (RUS x3) bt Andrey Rublev (RUS x10) 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 7-6 (7/5); Dominic Thiem (AUT x2) bt Alex De Minaur (AUS x21) 6-1, 6-2, 6-4.

**Women's singles quarterfinals:** Serena Williams (USA x3) bt Tsvetana Pironkova (BUL) 4-6, 6-3, 6-2; Victoria Azarenka (BLR) bt Elise Mertens (BEL x16) 6-1, 6-0.

she further added.

In the men's draw, Russia's third seed Medvedev downed compa-

triot and childhood friend Andrey Rublev 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 7-6 (7/5).

Twenty-two-year-old Rublev raced to a 5-1 lead in the first-set tie-break before Medvedev, last year's US Open runner-up, hauled back to win it 8-6 with an ace.

Medvedev, 24, smashed 16 aces and won 89 per cent of first-serve points. He made 75 per cent of returns to Rublev's 54 per cent.

"One point decided two sets so it was a really tough match and Andrey was playing unbelievable actually," Medvedev said.

## SINNER DOWNS PHILLIPP IN GENERALI OPEN

**Kitzbuehel (Austria), Sept. 10:** Jannik Sinner defeated former two-time champion Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-3, 6-2 at the Generali Open Tuesday, a week after both players lost in the opening round of the U.S. Open.

Sinner, the 2019 ATP Next Generation finals champion, won 85 per cent of the points on his first serve to keep his perfect record against Kohlschreiber, after also beating the German player in straight sets in Vienna last year.

Kohlschreiber, who resides in Kitzbuehel and won the title here in 2015 and again two years later, appeared at the tournament for the 10th straight year.

The 44th-ranked Sinner set up a second-round match against Laslo Djere. The Serb rallied from 4-0 down in the final set to defeat the eighth-seeded Albert Ramos Vinolas 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (2).

Also, Feliciano Lopez downed Pierre-Hugues Herbert 6-4, 6-3; Federico Delbonis won an all-Argentine duel with Juan Ignacio Londero 6-4, 6-0; and Jordan Thompson outlasted fellow Australian John Millman 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (2) in just under three hours.

Swiss qualifier Marc-Andrea Huesler got the better of Emil Ruusuvuori 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (2) and set up a match against Fabio Fognini. — AP

Medvedev will play second seed Thiem who demolished Australia's Alex de Minaur, seeded 21st, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4.

"I had a great feeling from the first moment on," said the Austrian.

Fifth seed Alexander Zverev of Germany faces Spain's 20th seed Pablo Carreno Busta in the competition's other semi-final.

The disqualification of Novak Djokovic for accidentally hitting a line official with a ball during the last 16 means the US Open will crown a first-time Grand Slam winner on Sunday. — AFP

## Lowry scores high as Raptors bully Celtics

**Miami, Sept. 10:** With their season on the brink and title repeat hopes in jeopardy, the Toronto Raptors outguffed Boston for a dramatic series-tying 125-122 double-overtime triumph Wednesday in the NBA playoffs.

Kyle Lowry led Toronto with 33 points and Norman Powell added 23 off the bench in an emotional thriller that resembled the intensity of a heavy-weight boxing matchup.

The defending champion Raptors equalised the best-of-seven Eastern Conference semifinal with a winner-take-all

game seven set for Friday, a conference final against Miami awaiting the winner.

Meanwhile, Kawhi Leonard finished an assist shy of his first playoff triple-double and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Denver Nuggets 96-85 in Game 4 to move a step closer to their first Western Conference finals.

Leonard garnered 30 points, 11 rebounds, four steals and two blocked shots. Reserve Montrezl Harrell added 15 points to help the Clippers take a 3-1 lead. They can close out the Nuggets on Friday night. — Agencies

## Smith sings Virat praises, says best

**Manchester, Sept. 10:** Australian run-machine Steve Smith has rated his great Indian rival Virat Kohli as the best ODI batsman in world cricket currently.

The two batsmen, who will face off in the upcoming IPL and also during India's tour of Australia later this year, have been fierce rivals on the field but share cordial relations off it.

Smith, who is currently in England for the three-match ODI series against the hosts starting from Friday, said this during an Instagram session with fans.

When a fan asked the 31-year-old Australian to name the best ODI batsman, Smith had no hesitation in taking Kohli's name.

The Indian captain is currently the leading scorer in ODIs among active cricketers with 11867 runs at an average of 59.34. He has 43 hundreds to his name and is only seven away from surpassing Sachin Tendulkar's world record for most hundreds in ODIs.

During the session, Smith described Kohli's RCB teammate and South African great AB de Villiers as a "freak".

Smith, who is set to represent Rajasthan Royals in IPL 2020, said India's KL Rahul and Sanju Samson are the two players to watch out for. — PTI

## ACU ARRIVES IN DUBAI TO KEEP IPL IN CHECK

**New Delhi, Sept. 10:** Preventing corrupt approaches through social media will be the focus of BCCI's anti-corruption unit (ACU) in the upcoming closed-door IPL, ahead of which the watchdog will educate players through video-counselling rather than physical sessions.

An eight-member BCCI team, led by Ajit Singh, landed in Dubai on Tuesday and is in the middle of their six-day quarantine. Singh has already said the IPL, beginning September 19, will be more secure than earlier as it is being conducted in a strict bio-bubble.

There will no crowds at the stadium and fans won't be allowed to throng the team hotel. There have been instances when corruptors masqueraded as fans to approach players.

The ACU will be speaking to all the eight teams separately and the sessions will be more useful for the younger players who are not exposed to international cricket and the glamour of IPL. The established players are already aware of the ACU protocols. — PTI

## Morgan and team set to take on Oz

**London, Sept. 10:** Eoin Morgan is hoping for spinning pitches during England's one-day series against Australia as the world champions plan for the 2023 World Cup in India.

The England captain is anticipating a gentle turner in Manchester, where the fierce rivals will play three one-day internationals over the next week, with weather conditions conducive to slow bowlers.

England's rise to top spot in the 50-over rankings was built around posting big totals on good batting tracks and their tournament triumph last summer

was driven by their pace attack.

But with the next World Cup due to be held in India in three years' time, as well as a T20 World Cup there next year, Morgan is embracing the need for change.

"It's a huge benefit to us playing at Old Trafford, particularly if we play on the wicket I think we're going to play on which will hopefully be slow and take a lot of turn," he said.

The three-match ODI series starts on Friday, following a Twenty20 series in Southampton, which England won 2-1. — AFP

## NUMBERS GAME

## AUSTRALIA-ENGLAND IN ONE DAYERS SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Venue Played	Aus won	Eng won	Tied	N/R
Australia	71	45	25	1
England	70	31	35	22
India	3	2	1	-
South Africa	2	2	-	-
Emirates	2	1	1	-
West Indies	1	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>23</b>
Day/Night matches	70	43	25	2
Last five matches	5	1	4	-

## HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS:

- Australia: 342-9 in 50 overs at Melbourne 14-02-2015
- England: 481-6 in 50 overs at Nottingham 19-06-2018

## LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS:

- Australia: 70 in 25.2 overs at Birmingham 04-06-1977
- England: 86 in 32.4 overs at Manchester 14-06-2001

## HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES:

- Australia: 161\* Shane Watson at Melbourne 16-01-2011
- England: 180 Jason Roy at Melbourne 14-01-2018

## BEST BOWLING PERFORMANCES:

- Australia: 7-20 Andy Bichel at Port Elizabeth 02-03-2003
- England: 6-45 Chris Woakes at Brisbane 30-01-2011

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

## Dhoni braces for another IPL hit in adversity



Hemant Kenkre  
Silly Point

If a question were to be put forth to Indian cricket fans as to who they would choose as the best captain of all eight teams participating in the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2020, the answer will be a no brainer.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the recently retired former Indian skipper and, considered a sagacious and most experienced captain, will walk away with majority of the votes.

Dhoni's record as a captain in the short formats of the game speak for themselves. With three

International Cricket Council (ICC) championships and an equal number of wins leading Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the IPL, his reputation to lead teams to success is unparalleled. He is known to be tough when it matters, humane when his compatriots need a shoulder, and cool despite any degree of heat created in a pressure cooker situation. His resume would make him the ideal candidate for leader of the decade; the many pros notched therein outweighing the cons.

Thala (the Head) as he is called can do no wrong

according to CSK fans. To them, he is like the animated, mythical character, Obelix who was born with a magic potion as part of his blood stream and could run through mammoth armies on his own. Blessed with a keen intuition and well honed instincts, Dhoni's super powers as a hero will be tested when he steps out for the toss in one of the fabulous stadiums dotting the stark desert of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Even as CSK step out onto the practice facilities, Dhoni's mind will be in overwork mode to figure out the best combination needed at the start of the tournament.

If the loss of Suresh Raina has weighed heavily on the probable combination of the team, the withdrawal of Harbhajan

Singh (due to personal reasons) must have put the yellow fellows a few more steps back. CSK fans have yet to assimilate what it would mean for their favourite team to take the field without Chinna Thala (little head) as Raina is fondly referred to.

Both Raina and Harbhajan get a lot to the undisturbed table of CSK, in different ways. With 5368 runs scored in twelve editions of the IPL, the left hander stands second on the list of top scorers, 44 runs behind Virat Kohli and above Rohit Sharma who follows at number three.

More than the runs, Raina's effervescence on the field (with brilliant catching and more) plays a big role in constantly inspiring the team.

Harbhajan, who came

into the CSK fold after a long stint with Mumbai Indians (MI), is the man Dhoni would trust most when squeezing the flow of runs matter. With an economy rate of less than 7.5, the crafty off-spinner is the best option in the death overs.

More importantly, Bhajji, as he is known, is the only full-time exponent of off-spin in CSK's ranks which will make planning difficult for Dhoni when it comes to bowling to a team packed with left handed batsmen.

With medium pacer Deepak Chahar and middle order batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad lodged in the sick bay, having tested positive for Covid, Dhoni's problems will be compounded when he sits to pick the best combination for the opening games. Getting a

good start is imperative, especially when it comes to high pressure tournaments like the IPL where there is a lot at stake. To get a disturbed combination into the groove and keep them mentally fit will be the super skippers biggest task on hand.

While on captaincy, Dhoni will be aware that he needs to be supremely fit to last the entire tournament as his able (former) deputy, Raina, is out of the mix.

With Harbhajan, former MI skipper, also out, the CSK management will probably look at Dwayne Bravo or Shane Watson (both having captaincy experience) as likely deputies.

With Bravo (about to hit 37 years of age) and Watson, at 39 years (the same age as Dhoni), team

CSK will continue to be top heavy with seniors playing a youthful game.

In 2018, Dhoni led CSK to their third IPL victory, the team coming back after a two-year hiatus.

The team, whose average age was a shade above 30 years, surprised everyone by winning the final thanks to a magnificent effort by Watson, the oldest member of the team. Those who called the team 'Dad's Army' were made to eat their words thanks to a motivational effort by the skipper.

Today, Dhoni is faced with a similar challenge of making his team rise from adversity.

For someone who has been there and done that, there could be no better motivation for the Thala who thrives on such situations.