

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | WEDNESDAY 30 | SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 31°C
Min: 26°C
Rainfall: 2 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Purattasi 14
Tithi: Chaturtashi
Star: Puratathi
Rahukalam:
12 noon to 1.30 pm
Yamagandam:
7.30 am to 9 am
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.48 am
Zohar: 12.07 pm
Asar: 3.19 pm
Maghrib: 6.00 pm
Isha: 7.11 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.00 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.59 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 5.19 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.26 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+72,613)	(+1,099)
62,16,632	97,450

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,546)
TN: 5,91,943 9,453

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

3,36,90,297

DEATHS

10,08,629

COUNTRIES,
AREAS WITH
CASES **213**

worldometers.info

Daughter backs suspended IPS officer

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh government on Tuesday suspended a senior IPS officer who was seen, in a viral video, beating his wife after she confronted him at the house of a news anchor with a regional channel. In a new twist, IPS officer Purshottam Sharma's daughter claimed that her mother is suffering from "psychiatric issues", and 'orchestrated' the whole 'drama'.

Kuwait ruler Sheikh Sabah dies at 91

Dubai: Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, the ruler of Kuwait who drew on his decades as the oil-rich nation's top diplomat to push for closer ties to Iraq after the 1990 Gulf War and solutions to other regional crises, died Tuesday. He was 91. In a Middle East replete with elderly rulers, Sheikh Sabah stood out for his efforts at pushing for diplomacy to resolve a bitter dispute between Qatar and other Arab nations that continues to this day.

COUNTER POINT



I promise to get you the first dose of vaccine!

SANGEETHA G | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

Over the last five years, there were several stories about financial pain caused to the rich because of events such as black-money-busting demonetisation, anti-tax evading GST and a persistent fall in economic growth rate. Now let's have a reality check: 828 super-rich persons commanding a wealth of ₹1,000 crore have seen their wealth swelling thrice in the last five years, according to the IIFL Wealth Hurun India Rich List 2020.

The survey also claimed that the combined wealth of India's richest is \$823 billion,

which is one-third size of India's GDP. This further widens the inequality in wealth between the super-rich and the poor. Their combined wealth is more than the combined GDP of India's South Asian neighbours — Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Bhutan.

According to the World Bank's Gini Index, which measures inequality, has been rising since 1993, which portrays a sorry picture of economic reforms benefiting the rich more than the poor.

While the country's economic growth slowed last year, the cumulative wealth of the 828 super-rich has increased by 20 per cent or

● **With a wealth of ₹6,58,400 crore, Mukesh Ambani continued to be the richest man in India**

● **With a wealth of ₹1,43,700 crore, the Hinduja brothers occupied the second spot**

₹10 lakh crore compared to that of last year. However, the average growth in wealth among 828 super-rich has remained nine per cent, suggesting few individuals in the super-elite club benefitting more than others.

“About 28 per cent of the upswing in wealth on the list

has been bestowed by Mukesh Ambani, who saw meteoric success post diversifying from oil to telecom and retail. A further 21 per cent of the additional wealth has been generated by pharma, mainly on the back of the rise in healthcare spends and a realigned priority towards personal healthcare stimulated by the Covid-19,” Anas Rahman Junaid, MD and Chief Researcher, Hurun India said.

With a wealth of ₹6,58,400 crore, Mukesh Ambani continued to be the richest man in India. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Ambani's wealth dropped by 28 per cent to ₹3,50,000 crore



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2G case: HC orders day-to-day hearing on appeals



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OPS skips two official meetings, triggers speculation in AIADMK

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

Political and media circles were abuzz with speculation as Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam skipped two crucial official meetings relating to the relaxing of lockdown norms Tuesday. Instead, he was closeted with his supporters, sending across the message that he was sulking after the show-down at Monday's AIADMK executive meeting.

Though many AIADMK leaders, including Minister D Jayakumar, were trying to gloss over the issue, saying that the two leaders, Panneerselvam and Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, would name the next chief ministerial candidate on October 7, as they had announced, the day's developments did not augur well for the unity of the party.

When the Chief Minister held the morning meeting with district Collectors in the State as a prelude to announcing relaxations to the lockdown and to take stock of the situation prevailing in the districts with regard to the pandemic, a few of this Cabinet colleagues were present with him.

Some senior party leaders like Manoj Pandian and KP Munusamy called

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on Pannrerselvam, as he stayed at home, and spent a lot of time in discussions. It is speculated that they were working out a strategy to handle the pressure that would be put on him in the coming days to leave the race for the chief ministerial candidate and agree for other compensation.

One of the offers that had been reportedly made to Panneerselvam was to nominate his son OP Ravindranath Kumar to the Union Cabinet. The rumour is that it was not done in the past was because the BJP was willing to give only one ministerial berth to an ally and

DIFFERENT STROKES



Panneerselvam's impromptu meet with party senior office-bearers and his absence at a meeting of district collectors on coronavirus pandemic chaired by Palaniswami at the secretariat set off speculations on further escalation of the situation.

When Palaniswami returned home from the morning meeting with collectors, Minister SP Velumani joined him for personal discussions, sending across the message that both the leaders are still in the race.



Some senior party leaders like Manoj Pandian and KP Munusamy called on Pannrerselvam, as he stayed at home, and spent a lot of time in discussions.

the AIADMK was reluctant to nominate the first time MP, overlooking other senior members who were Rajya Sabha members.

Now the party, for the sake of unity, is said to be willing to nominate Ravindranath Kumar in the event of Panneerselvam willing to take it as a quid pro quo for his giving up the chief ministerial candidate aspirations. But from the day's developments it looked that Panneerselvam would not back out.

Even as the meeting was on at the Deputy Chief Minister's house, R Vaithilingam dropped in

and held talks for about an hour. Vaithilingam, who is also a deputy coordinator of the AIADMK, told the media outside that they would know who the chief ministerial candidate was on October 7. Later in the day, Panneerselvam left for his hometown of Theni without taking part in another coronavirus related meeting with medical experts in the evening.

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Faulty ammunition cost ₹960 cr, 27 lives in Indian Army

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

The faulty ammunition supplied by Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) to the army in the last six years resulted in the death of 27 personnel and loss of ₹960 crore, said a hard hitting report by Indian army to the defence ministry. The money lost in the faulty ammunition supplied by Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) in the last six years could have been used to buy 100 medium artillery guns, it said. Indian army said 27 personnel lost their lives and another 159 were injured due to OFB manufactured ammunition and armament during this period.

New Delhi, Sept. 29: India Tuesday said it has conveyed its strong protest to Pakistan over announcement of elections to the "so-called Gilgit-Baltistan" legislative assembly next month, holding that the "cosmetic exercises" are intended to camouflage the 'illegal' occupation of the

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AIIMS rules out poisoning in Sushant case

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Pak's oppn leader Sharif remanded



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Uneasy 'No war, no peace status' in North: IAF chief

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

Indian Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria said on Tuesday that the present security scenario along the country's northern frontiers is at an uneasy — no war, no peace status. He was referring to the five month old military stand-off between India and China in the Eastern Ladakh.

“Our defence forces are prepared for any eventuality as you are aware,” he said. Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria pointed out that the Indian Air Force has responded to the situation with rapidity and is fully resolved to counter any ‘misadventure’ in the region.

India queries China's 1959 view of LAC

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

India has never accepted the so-called Chinese unilaterally-defined 1959 version of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and therefore the “insistence of the Chinese side now that there is only one LAC is against the solemn commitments made by China” in previous agreements, New Delhi told Beijing on Tuesday evening, in the latest round of diplomatic sparring between the two sides.



Rashid Khan's brilliant spell of 3/14 helped Sunrisers Hyderabad get the better of Delhi Capitals by 15 runs in an IPL match in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. It was Sunrisers' first win of the season in three matches. ■ **Report on P8**

India protests polls in Gilgit-Baltistan

New Delhi, Sept. 29: India Tuesday said it has conveyed its strong protest to Pakistan over announcement of elections to the "so-called Gilgit-Baltistan" legislative assembly next month, holding that the "cosmetic exercises" are intended to camouflage the 'illegal' occupation of the

region by Islamabad. The Ministry of External Affairs said actions like holding of elections in the region can neither hide the “illegal occupation” of parts of Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh by Islamabad nor the “grave human rights violations and

exploitation” of people in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Pakistan has announced that elections for the legislative assembly of Gilgit-Baltistan will be held on November 15.

“The government of India has conveyed its strong protest to the gov-

ernment of Pakistan and reiterated that the entire Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of so-called Gilgit and Baltistan are an integral part of India by virtue of its accession in 1947,” the MEA said in a statement.

Amnesty halts India operations citing government witch-hunt

New Delhi, Sept 29: Amnesty International on Tuesday said it is halting all its activities in India due to freezing of its accounts and claimed that it is being subjected to an 'incessant witch-hunt' over unfounded and motivated allegations.

The Home Ministry, responding, said Amnesty International's statement was unfortunate, exaggerated and far from the truth. The ministry said all the “glossy statements” about humanitarian work and speaking truth to power are nothing but a

“ploy to divert attention” from their activities which are in clear contravention of laid down Indian laws.

Amnesty India, in a statement, said the organisation has been compelled to let go of staff in India and pause all its ongoing campaign and research work. “The complete freezing of Amnesty International India's bank accounts by Government of India which it came to know on 10 September 2020, brings all the work being done by the organization to a grinding halt,” it said.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

Amazon India launches fulfilment centre in TN

Chennai: E-commerce major Amazon India has launched a new fulfilment centre in Tamil Nadu as part of strengthening its network in the state, that would lead to economic growth and create new jobs, the company said on Tuesday. "With this infrastructure expansion, Amazon.in will now offer storage capacity of close to three million cubic feet across five fulfilment centres to its more than 43,000 sellers in Tamil Nadu", a company statement said. "Tamil Nadu industries department principal secretary N. Muruganandham said, "We are happy to have Amazon's investment in Tamil Nadu will generate significant employment opportunities".

Amazon India, Director-Amazon Transportation Services, Abhinav Singh said, "This expansion will work as an enabler to SMBs (small and medium businesses) in Tamil Nadu helping them with faster delivery of their products to a wider customer base" — *PTI*

Two more die of corona in Pondy

Puducherry, Sept. 29: Two peoplesuccumbed to Covid-19 infection in Puducherry on Tuesday, taking the toll in the union territory to 517.

Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release that 387 fresh cases were reported after examination of 5,031 samples during last 24 hours pushing the total case-load to 27,066. He said 460 patients recovered and were discharged during last 24 hours from hospitals.

The fatality rate was 1.91 percent while the recovery rate was 79.86 percent. Kumar said 1.79 lakhsamples have been tested so far and it was found that 1.49 lakh out of them were negative and result of examination of remaining samples was awaited.

Of the total 27,066 positive cases, 4,933 were active, the number of patients who recovered and were discharged stood at 21,616. The two deceased hailed from Puducherry region and were in the age group ranging between 68 and 70 years. They both had co-morbidities. While Puducherry region reported 312 new cases out of the total 387 fresh cases, Karaikal had 48 while Yanam recorded 17 and Mahe 10, the official said. — *PTI*

DRI busts drug peddling gang, seizes 25 kg pseudoephedrine

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

The officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Chennai, have busted an interstate drug smuggling gang and seized 25 kg of pseudoephedrine from a parcel service office on Walltax Road.

Based on specific information, the DRI sleuths on Monday busted the inter-state drug smuggling gang operating in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and intercepted a consignment of European water closets from a private parcel office on Walltax Road, Chennai, which was about to be despatched to Ernakulam.

On examination of the consignment kept in 15 cartons, around 25 kg of a white powder, believed to be pseudoephedrine, was found concealed in the inner walls of the cartons, and was seized under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.

Pseudoephedrine, due to the possible use in the production of various narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, is notified as a controlled substance under the NDPS Act. Hence, it is in high demand among illicit drug manufacturers.

Further investigation is on to trace the origin and destination of the seized consignment.

Tamil Nadu doctors at receiving end

T. SUDHEESH I DC CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

As the death toll of front-line doctors in Tamil Nadu reached 60, the ex gratia of Rs 50 lakh, announced by the government for the family members of medical practitioners who died of Covid-19, remains on paper.

It was on April 22 Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami increased the solatium from ₹10 lakh to ₹50 lakh and promised a government job for a family member of the deceased based on their qualifications. Five months since, family members of none of the doctors who died of Covid-19 have received neither solatium nor job.

Dr. C.N. Raja, president, Indian Medical

Dr. S. Perumal Pillai, secretary (DME), Service Doctors and Post-Graduates Association (SDPGA), said more than thousand doctors in the state have been infected by Covid-19

Association (IMA), Tamil Nadu branch, told DC that 60 doctors in the state have so far died of Covid-19. All of them tested positive through RT-PCR testing. "We have taken up the matter with the health minister and the present and former health secretaries. They told us the fund would be released soon. But nothing has materialised. Now we are hearing that the government is planning to merge the scheme with the

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana as the number of claimants is going up. Why should the state government link it to a central scheme as it was announced as its own," Dr Raja asked.

Dr. S. Perumal Pillai, secretary (DME), Service Doctors and Post-Graduates Association (SDPGA), said more than thousand doctors in the state have been infected by Covid-19. "Two government doctors (Dr Sukumar, Chief Medical Officer of Maduranthagam Govt Hospital and Dr. Kalyanaraman, Aral Primary Health Centre, Thoothukudi), lost their lives due to Covid-19 in early July. The family of Dr Sukumar has got half of the declared amount.

But the family of other doctor has got nothing so far," he said.

According to Dr Pillai, as many as 18,000 government doctors still work overnight for more than six months in spite of the government's false promise. Apart from this, the salary hike for the doctors the government promised in October last year has not been approved so far. The Karnataka Government has decided to hike the salary of doctors. When other states give due respect and due salary to the doctors, the doctors in Tamil Nadu have not even been given their salary, he said. Though DC tried to get in touch with health secretary J. Radhakrishnan for response, he was unavailable.

Man jailed for sexually abusing boy

DC CORRESPONDENT COIMBATORE, SEPT. 29

A 54-year-old man, working as a cook, was on Tuesday arrested for sexually abusing an eight-year-old boy.

Police identified the accused as Daniel, native of Pudukottai district, presently residing in a rented house near Athipalayam in the city's suburbs here, and working in a nearby eatery.

Daniel had frequently taken the boy, his neighbour, to his house, and allegedly abused him sexually. On Monday, the boy had told his mother about Daniel's behaviour, who lodged a complaint at the Kovilpalayam police station.

Based on the complaint, police picked up Daniel, and during enquiry, he admitted to the crime.

Subsequently, he was booked under the Pocco Act and imprisoned at the Coimbatore Central prison after producing him before the court.



Foot-operated lift mechanism and foot-operated buttons for restroom taps installed at metro rail stations.

— DC

Foot-operated lifts at metro stations

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

In order to ensure the safety of the passengers, the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has introduced a foot-operated lift mechanism in its all 32 stations.

A CMRL release said the new mechanism was launched as part of studying various contactless optional measures for the

safe usage of its elevators. Now, CMRL has come up with an ingenious way to avoid and minimise hand contact with the elevator buttons to reduce the virus spread and ensure safety of the users.

This foot-operated mechanism is a kind of prototype and CMRL has become the first metro rail in the country to implement it. It was experimented at its

administration block in Koyambedu.

Based on the successful trial, CMRL has decided to install the new mechanism in all metro stations.

The CMRL has also installed foot-operated buttons to the water taps in all 190 restrooms at all 32 metro stations to encourage contact-less usage for the safety of passengers.

Flight operations affected due to bad weather

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

Foggy weather delayed three flights in Chennai on Tuesday evening as poor visibility at the Chennai international airport triggered disruptions.

Flights were delayed due to sudden change in weather in Chennai and

suburbs on Tuesday evening.

A Spice Jet flight from Madurai with 81 passengers on board scheduled to land at Chennai airport at 5.30 pm was unable to land at the airport due to bad weather. The weather delayed departures of two other international flights from Doha and Kuwait. Two repatriation flights

from Doha and Kuwait were scheduled to land at Chennai airport at 5.15 pm and 5.45 pm.

Two international flight and a domestic flight were asked to delay their landing.

Airport sources said the flights landed in Chennai after 6 pm, after the weather became normal.

Woman stabs hubby, held

DC CORRESPONDENT COIMBATORE, SEPT. 29

Police here arrested a 31-year-old woman on Tuesday for allegedly stabbing her husband over a family dispute, and staging a drama to picture as if the incident was an accident that occurred while cutting vegetables.

Police identified the accused as Caroline, resident of Thirumala street near Variety Hall road. She had taken her husband, Franklin Brito, to the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital (CMCH) in an ambulance on Tuesday, claiming that he was ill for the past many months.

While doctors examined Brito, they found stab marks on the chest and neck, and he had died on way to hospital. Hence, doctors declared him 'brought dead'.

On receiving informa-

tion, Variety Hall road police took Caroline into custody and started investigations. Caroline claimed that she using a knife to cut vegetables and that it accidentally injured her husband, leading to his death

tion, Variety Hall road police took Caroline into custody and started investigations. Caroline claimed that she using a knife to cut vegetables and that it accidentally injured her husband, leading to his death.

Intense grilling revealed that Caroline had quarreled with her husband asking him to return her wedding chain (Mangal Sutra) which he had pawned to a broker. Following a heated quarrel Caroline had stabbed him. Investigations are on.

Auto driver jumps to death from high-rise

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

An auto-rickshaw driver ended his life by jumping from the fourth floor of an under-construction building on Pallavaram-Thoraipakkam radial road on Monday night.

The deceased has been identified as Ellappan (32),

a native of Pozhichalur near Pallavaram.

According to Chitalapakkam police, on his way home, Ellappan stopped his vehicle near a 10-storeyed under-construction building. When he was stopped by the securitymen, he allegedly told him that he wanted to meet his friend, Muthu,

employed at the site. He went to the fourth floor of the building and jumped from there, the police said.

Even though the ambulance service was alerted, he died on the spot. The police shifted his body to the Chromepet government hospital for post-mortem and later handed to over to the family. A

case under Section 174 of CrPC has been registered by the Chitalapakkam police. During preliminary inquiry, police found that no Muthu was working at the site, and Ellappan used a random name to get inside the building and jump. Further investigation is under way.



Greater Chennai corporation under the smart city project has put up a colorful iron grill near Cooum canal at T Nagar.

— DC

Inform steps taken to check spread of dengue: HC to Centre

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

The Madras high court has asked the Indian Council of Medical Research and Union ministry of health and family welfare to come up with a response indicating as to what steps have been undertaken in the field of medical research, or procuring of any medicine, to meet the challenge of spread of dengue.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice A.P.Sahi and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy passed the



further interim order on a PIL filed by advocate A.P. Suryaprakasam, which

sought a direction to the state government to appoint an expert committee of health and other experts in the field of public safety and communicable diseases to consider the efficacy/adequacy of the measures taken by the authorities in tackling the dengue menace in Tamil Nadu. In his petition, Suryaprakasam also sought a direction to the state government to provide free and immediate medical treatment to all the dengue affected people in private hospitals of their choice at the cost of the government

and also pay a sum of Rs 10 lakh to all the dengue affected death cases in Tamil Nadu in the year 2019. After perusing the report of the corporation of Chennai, the bench said it was satisfied that appropriate measures were being undertaken, even though there may be certain shortfalls, to effectively eradicate any adverse impacts on account of breeding mosquitoes, including the spread of dengue.

The bench said advocate Suryaprakasam pointed out that on account of parking

of unauthorised vehicles on roads and streets, shelters were created and cleanliness was impeded. He also submitted that these streets and roads were maintained by the corporation and, therefore, it was the duty of the corporation to remove such impediments and carry out the cleaning process, or taking such hygienic steps for the purpose of ensuring that health conditions improve. According to the counsel for the corporation, unauthorised parking was a traffic police department subject

matter and, therefore, its removal can only be by taking assistance of the traffic police department.

The bench said D.Sreenivasan, counsel for Krishna Ravindran, submitted that some more appropriate steps should be undertaken, whether it be in the shape of vaccine, or introducing some modern medicines in order to ensure that any spread of dengue resulting in fatalities was avoided.

"Let respondents 5 and 7 (Indian Council of Medical Research and Union min-

istry of health and family welfare) come up with a response indicating as to what steps have been undertaken in this field of medical research, or procuring of any medicine, to meet the challenge of spread of dengue," the bench added.

The bench said since the issue requires a continuous effort, it post the matter on January 5, 2021, and the corporation shall take effective measures, as suggested above, to effectively carry out cleaning and hygienic measures.

"We will act according to the directions of the AICC president to bring in new farm bills in Congress-ruled states to nullify the Central legislations," he added. He said the Secular Democratic Alliance constituents had organised agitations against the Bills in Puducherry and Karaikal regions on Monday "despite the efforts of Lt Governor to stop the agitations." The chief minister said farmers and farm workers had participated in the protests. He said baseless rumours were being spread that the quota of seats for students of the union territory in the first MBBS course in centrally-administered JIPMER would be lost now that the Medical Council of India would conduct the admission test.

— *PTI*

SHORT TAKES

Meet on tourism and rural development

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

With the lockdown being lifted in stages, a convergence of professional minds in forestry and tourism took place in a live symposium on 'Tourism and Rural Development' to mark World Tourism Day.

Chennai Snake Park, which offers a diploma course on Wildlife Tourism Management, brought forest officials and tourism stake holders from TAAI and ADTOI onto a common platform, to assess the impact of ecological and sustainable tourism on rural development and explore the potentials in skillset development for rural and adventure tourism. Among those who spoke were tourism deputy director general Shreevats Sanjay, former head of TN forest force N. Krishnakumar, executive chairman of Snake Park S. Paulraj, chairman of Pollution Control Board A V Venkatachalam and Snake Park's Dipankar Ghose, who convened the programme.

Chennai Food Bank feeds monkeys

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

Over 2,000 starving monkeys near the temples at Sholingur due to the lockdown are now being fed by the members at Chennai Food Bank, managed by RYA Madras Metro since September 20.

According to a press release from the food bank, the monkeys living in two hills at Sholingur where the famous Narasimha Swamy temple and Anjaneyar temples are situated were dependent on the food given by devotees as there are no fruit bearing trees in the hills.

Since the temples were closed, no devotees came for darshan. So the food bank volunteers started feeding the monkeys with curd rice, banana and roasted Bengal gram every day at Sholingur.

"We have come up with a simple and effective process and tied up with local vendors and caretakers to ensure this is done every day. Monitoring this through daily videos and photos," the press release said.

Rupa reappointed India Cements whole-time director

Chennai, Sept. 29: The board of India Cements Ltd has approved the re-election of Rupa Gurunath as whole time director for a five year period, with effect from March 5.

The shareholders approved the appointment at the 74th Annual General Meeting of the company held through virtual platform recently. Gurunath holds chairmanships/directorships in Coromandel Travels Ltd, Coromandel Electric Company Ltd., ICL Shipping and India Cements Infrastructures Ltd.

She is also the president of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association and a trustee of the India Cements Educational Trust and the India Cements Gratuity Fund. She has been assisting Managing Director (N Srinivasan) in the day to day management and administration of the company and has been instrumental in successful and timely completion of the company's various projects, besides laying down systems resulting in huge cost savings and overall improvement in the performance of the company, the annual report said.

Raja's ouster, a part of strategy

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

The easing out of Tamil Nadu leaders like H. Raja and also those associated with the state like Muralidhar Rao in the recent reshuffle of BJP office-bearers at the national level is said to be part of a strategy to expand the party in the state and pave the way for members of minority communities to freely join in.

Since hardcore Hindutva acolytes like H. Raja, S Ve Sekar, K. T. Raghavan and others had been too harsh in their criticism of people from the minority communities, the party is said to have worked out a strategy to keep them away from

The first step that was taken by the party was to appoint L. Murugan as the president of the state BJP. He was the first BJP leader in the history of BJP in the state who acknowledged the contribution of Periyar E. V. Ramasamy to the state

some time and tone down the anti-minority and anti-Dravidian tirade that emanates from its camp.

The first step that was taken by the party was to appoint L. Murugan as the president of the state BJP. He was the first BJP leader in the history of BJP in the state who acknowledged the contribution of Periyar E. V. Ramasamy to the state.

In fact, the BJP's earlier political narrative had been to oppose vehemently the Dravidian ideology

and movement. Apart from the top BJP leaders many other prominent women supporters like Maduvanti Arun and actress Kasturi had been vehemently speaking against Periyar in interviews and through videos.

Probably realizing that the acrimonious statements of the leaders, most of them from the elite sections of society, were preventing people from subaltern communities from associating themselves with the party, the BJP

national leadership wanted to put up a farcical face, seemingly not inimical to minorities and Dalits.

Murugan's tenure had been marked by some leaders from other political parties and members of subaltern communities gravitating towards the BJP. A Christian like Paul Kanakaraj joining the party was only helpful in terms of mobilizing crowds for street-side agitations.

People like Kanakaraj and others might have changed the political dynamics of the party but the national leaders seem to be applauding the party making its presence felt at the street-level. For so long BJP in the State had been a party dominated by

elites.

That the contours of the party have changed was evident from the recent skirmishes with DMK cadre over painting slogans on the walls and putting up posters. Though it was a phenomenon new to the BJP, the party managed to pull it off successfully with the police too not cracking down on trouble makers.

As the next step, the state leadership is said to be keen on roping in more Christians and Muslims. To make the political ambience in the party favourable for the members of minority communities the hard-hitting Hindutva narrative is sought to be toned down, at least temporarily.

To put it otherwise, whatever is the core ideology of the party at the national level, in Tamil Nadu the BJP wants to present itself as any other political party. That was why Murugan spoke against the desecration of the Periyar statue in Tiruchy, notwithstanding the fact that leaders like H. Raja had wanted the demolition of all Periyar statues.

However, Dravidar Kazhagam President K Veeramani had already described this apparent change in attitude, particularly towards Periyar and the people of Tamil Nadu, as a farce and a strategy to win over the people fraudulently on the eve of the elections. He said the people of the State would not

be carried away by such guile craftiness.

Whatever it is, the state BJP has been taking in all sorts of people, including persons with criminal antecedents, into the party fold and given a new identity to ordinary people as politicians.

Though some senior BJP leaders are said to be cribbing over the culture of the party being run over by riff raff elements, the party feels that such changes were needed to make an impact in the elections.

There is also a rumour that the BJP was in talks with some prominent names from the minority communities and they could be joining the party before the elections.



WORLD HEART DAY

World Heart Day was observed at Government Omandurar Medical College Covid-19 critical care centre. Dean Dr R. Jayanthi along with doctors and nurses took a pledge. Nearly 20 corona affected patients, with comorbid conditions like diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases discharged after complete recovery, were greeted with fruits bouquet.

— DC

Two drown in Mettur dam

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC
SALEM, SEPT. 29

Two unidentified bodies of men aged about 30 years were found floating in the Cauvery river at the Mettur dam.

On an alert, Mettur police rushed to the spot and retrieved the bodies and sent them to the Mettur government hospital for autopsy. Police said they retrieved a mobile phone number from a paper kept in the shirt pocket of one of the deceased persons.

When police contacted the number, a person from the state of Assam responded, and no details could be secured. The bodies were found in an area declared as 'dangerous' by the public works department. Mettur police have registered a case and are investigating.

Police said they retrieved a mobile phone number from a paper kept in the shirt pocket of one of the deceased persons

Face masks vital: Collector

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, SEPT. 29

Collector M Govinda Rao has stressed upon the need for wearing masks to prevent corona spread. In a press release issued here on Tuesday, Rao said that corona tests will be conducted for those who don't wear masks in public places, and they would also be fined. "So far, a

fine amount of Rs 19 lakh has been collected from 8,945 persons in the district, for not wearing masks," the collector said. He advised people to make wearing masks a habit, and avoid removing them even while talking. Corona cases are on the increase in the district and wearing masks alone would prevent its spread, he added.

No more by-elections for TN Assembly

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

No by-election would be held to fill up three vacancies in the State Assembly, whose term would come to an end by May 25, 2021, as the Election Commission of India (ECI) had received reports from the State authorities on the difficulties involved in holding the elections now.

Of the three constituencies — Tiruvottiyur, Gudiyattam (SC) and Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni — in the state, by-elections

are now due for Tiruvottiyur and Gudiyattam. But the ECI had decided not to hold them at all, which means that even the third seat would not be filled up.

Along with Tamil Nadu, vacancies in the Assemblies of Assam (2 seats), Kerala (2 seats) and West Bengal (1 seat) would not be held, an ECI press release said.

For 56 other Assembly seats in various seats and one Lok Sabha seat in Bihar (Valmiki Nagar) notification for the by-

elections has been issued and the constituencies would go to polls on November 3 and November 7.

By-election for the Kanyakumari Lok Sabha constituency, which fell vacant recently, would be held later on. 'Regarding other, recent vacancies in the Parliamentary constituencies and Legislative Assembly, the Commission will decide after taking necessary inputs from the States,' the press release said.

Newly-wedded couple commit suicide

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC
ERODE, SEPT. 29

Police here are investigating the suicide of a couple who died within three months of marriage near Appakkudal, in the district.

Police sources identified the couple as Ilango (23) hailing from Malliyoor near Appakkudal and his wife Ramya (23). Ilango was a mechanical engineer. The couple had fallen in love while studying in college and got married only three months ago.

On Tuesday, neighbours found the door closed and suspecting something amiss, peeped into a window of the house. They were shocked to see Ilango and Ramya hanging.

Appakkudal police were informed about the incident, and the bodies were sent to the Anthiyur government hospital for autopsy.

Police have registered a case and are investigating.

The couple had fallen in love while studying in college and got married only three months ago



CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami addresses district collectors regarding Covid-19 via video conferencing from Chennai on Tuesday.

— DC

Opening of cinema theatres depends on Centre's norms

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

The state government would soon take a decision on opening cinema theatres by following the guidelines given by the Centre and it would be announced by the Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

Information minister Kadambur C. Raju told the media at the secretariat on Tuesday that cinema hall owners had met him and sought the opening of the theatres but it was not

a decision that could be taken easily.

In a cinema hall people sat at a place close to three hours so several factors had to be considered before a decision could be taken. The government had acceded to several demands of the film industry in allowing them to start shooting with 75 persons and also to start post-production work, he recalled.

Even for television serials permission had been given to start shooting, he said, adding that the gov-

ernment was relaxing the lockdown rules little by little taking into account livelihood issues of the people.

To a question on films being released on OTT platforms, Raju said that it was a global problem and the state government had nothing to do with that. He said it was for the theatre owners, film producers and film distributors to sit together and sort it out. The government can play the role of a facilitator, he added



AIADMK senior leaders coming out after a meeting with Dy CM O. Panneerselvam at his residence on Tuesday.

— DC



READY FOR AUCTION

Bananas from various districts kept for auction at the mandi on Thadagam road in Coimbatore.

— Vignesh. B

2G case: HC orders day-to-day hearing on appeals

New Delhi, Sept. 29: The Delhi High Court Tuesday ordered day-to-day hearing on the CBI and ED appeals against the acquittal of former telecom minister A Raja and others in the 2G spectrum allocation cases, saying delay in filing applications and voluminous documents should not deter it from hearing criminal appeals.

The high court allowed the pleas of the two inves-

tigative agencies for early hearing in the 'leave to appeal' applications, scheduled earlier for October 12, and listed the matter for arguments on October 5. Leave to appeal is a formal permission granted by a court to a party to challenge a decision in a higher court. Justice Brijesh Sethi, who is going to retire on November 30, said it is in the interest of justice that the court makes all

endeavours to conclude the part-heard matters before he demits office. The judge clarified that he will first hear the arguments in the CBI case in which Raja and 16 others were acquitted as it has already been part-heard. The court has extensively heard the CBI in the matter from October 24, 2019 till January 15, 2020, almost on a day-to-day basis and hearings could not continue from March

due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are three cases pending with the court — two CBI and one ED. The court said however that if the agencies had moved these applications 2-3 months earlier, it would have been easier to decide the pleas. CBI and ED had said substantial judicial time of the high court was consumed in hearing arguments and it should be concluded before the

retirement of the judge otherwise, they will have to start afresh.

The agencies' early hearing pleas were opposed by the counsels for acquitted individuals and firms on the ground that they had not shown the urgency so far and expressed apprehension that it will be difficult to connect with the clients and they will not be able to make effective submissions.

— PTI

Corona cases cross 4,000 mark in Nilgiris

DC CORRESPONDENT
OOTY, SEPT. 29

The number of Covid-19 positive cases has crossed the 4,000 mark in the Nilgiris, with the region witnessing an increase of 1,000 cases, in just a week's time.

The first spell of corona

spread in April and May saw hardly a few cases here, but the second spell from July till date saw a steep hike in Corona positive cases. During these three months alone, the district witnessed around 4,000 cases. In the last one week alone, about 1,000 positive cases have been

reported here, taking the total tally to 4,093.

Sources said that the seasonal flu and common cold currently prevalent here after the SW rains, are additional contributive factors. The health department has stepped up the day-to-day testing of samples to diagnose positive cases.

Sources added that the officialdom is looking forward to set up more Covid-19 care centres across the Nilgiris to help rural folk get access to treatment facilities near their doorsteps. As on date, 3,115 patients have been discharged. There are another 953 active cases.

There were 25 Corona deaths so far in the Nilgiris.

Despite the pandemic, life is limping back to normalcy in the hills after 'unlock 4.0' with tourists, though in small numbers, beginning to visit the hills even as public transport has also started their services.

SHORT TAKE

90 PER CENT STILL VULNERABLE TO CORONAVIRUS

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

The second sero-survey conducted by ICMR has found that one in 15 individuals, aged 10 years and above, were estimated to have been exposed to SARS-CoV2 till August 2020. According to ICMR, this shows that a considerable population is still susceptible to Covid-19.

While giving out the details of the survey, ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava said 6.6 per cent of the 29,082 people (aged 10 and above) surveyed between August 17 and September 22 showed evidence of past exposure to Covid-19 and 7.1 per cent of the adult population (aged 18 and above) also showed evidence of past exposure to it.

Dr Bhargava added that though lockdown, containment and behavioural change at population level have managed to check the potential spread of SARS-CoV2, the survey findings show that about 90 per cent of the population is still vulnerable.

The survey showed that urban slums (15.6%) and non-slum (8.2%) areas had higher SARS-CoV2 infection prevalence than that in rural areas (4.4%).

The second sero-survey was conducted in the same 700 villages and wards from 70 districts from 21 states, which were covered during the first survey.

The first sero-survey of May revealed that the nationwide prevalence of Coronavirus infection was only 0.73%.

The second survey further showed that there is a lower infection to case ratio in August compared to May, which reflects a substantial increase in testing and detection across India.

Meanwhile, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday tested positive for Covid-19, the Vice President secretariat said.

It said Naidu, 71, is asymptomatic and in good health.

“The Vice President of India who underwent a routine Covid-19 test today morning has been tested positive. He is however, asymptomatic and in good health,” the secretariat tweeted. Naidu has been advised home quarantine. His wife Usha Naidu has been tested negative and is in self-isolation, the tweet said.

Decline in fresh cases of Coronavirus continued on Tuesday as 70,589 new patients were detected taking India's overall tally to 61.45 lakh.

In the last 24 hours, the number of deaths too came down to 776 from a thousand that was reported daily for the last several days.

India's total deaths now stand at 96,318, as per Union health ministry.

Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said considerable decline has been noted in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh but in Kerala cases are on the rise.

The health secretary also said that the government does not agree to the ₹80,000 crore figures put out by Serum Institute of India for the Covid-19 vaccines saying, “We have calculated the amount required in the meetings and currently, that amount is available with the government.”

He added that a panel of experts on vaccine administration has met five times to work out the modalities.

Want to bury them in our zameen, say kin of three Shopian victims

Families of the 3 youths want bodies to be exhumed and handed over to them for burial

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
MODA KATHUNI (J&K),
SEPT. 29

“My child was innocent. I'm completely shattered and broken. My heart is bleeding also because we couldn't bury him and our two other boys in our own zameen (soil),” lamented teary-eyed Shameema Akhtar while showing the photograph of her son Muhammad Imtiaz saved in her other son's mobile phone.

Imtiaz, 20, was among three youths from Rajouri killed in an alleged fake encounter by the Army in Shopian district on July 18, a day after the trio had arrived there to work in an apple orchard to earn living and then passed off as ‘terrorists’.

J&K police say that they had provided sufficient time for identification of the corpses at the Police Control Room Kashmir at Srinagar. As no one came forward to claim the bodies and people also failed in identifying them, they were buried in a cemetery in the remotest Baramulla district, almost 250 kilometres from their home district in presence of a magistrate after conducting post-mortem and lifting DNA samples, the police said.

Bahut zulum hova oss kay saath (a great injustice was done to him), said Sabir Hussain, father of Imtiaz.

He revealed to this correspondent that his son had passed his Class 12th examination with good marks and was “very keen” to get admission in a good college either in Rajouri town, Jammu or Srinagar and in order to meet the expenses for his studies he went to Shopian to “earn some money”.

Hussain said the other



Shameema Akhtar looks at the photograph of her son Muhammad Imtiaz saved in a mobile phone.

two slain youths Muhammad Abrar, 25, and Ibrar Ahmed Khan, 16, were his nephews (sagay bhanjay). “You can understand we have been devastated,” he said but added that he is quite confident that the Army “will do justice with us.”

He and also his other son Muhammad Aarif pleaded that since the Army has admitted that the three youths were killed by its men during a so-called operation in Shopian's Amshipora on July 18 and the J&K police have announced that the results of the DNA samples of their parents have matched those of the slain, their bodies should

be exhumed and handed over to their families.

“We want to give them decent burials in our own zameen,” said Hussain.

Inspector General of Police (Kashmiri range), Vijay Kumar, said in Srinagar last week, “We've received the DNA sample results of three families of Rajouri and these have matched with those of the three killed in Amshipora, Shopian on July 18. We will now take further course of action and complete the remaining formalities.”

According to DGP Dilbag Singh, the investigation into the alleged fake encounter is in the final stage.

“I'm myself monitoring the investigation process and very soon further details of the case will be shared with you. The Army is also investigating the case on its own and, hopefully, it will be completed in next few days,” he had told reporters in Srinagar on Monday.

While Hussain has full faith in the investigation process and expects justice will be delivered soon, Aarif wants those involved in this “heinous crime” to meet the fate of his brother and cousins.

“They killed them in cold blood. They too should be brought forward and shot dead,” he said.

The parents and other

relatives of Abrar and Ibrar who also live in mud houses in dispersed settlements tucked away in the hills of Rajouri and at a three hours walking distance from a motorable side road opening on Mughal Road that connects Srinagar with Rajouri town, endorsed the demand that the mortal remains of the trio be handed over to them for burial in their native places “before these get decomposed further.”

Said Ibrar's father Baga Khan, “We must get their bodies now...No one in the families could see their faces before they were laid in their graves. Justice must be done.”

Irshad Ahmed, the village panch while endorsing the demand said that the Aadhaar cards and mobile phones of the slain youths may also be handed over to the families and the government should consider sanctioning ex-gratia relief to the families which live in “extreme poverty” besides a job for the next of the kin.

Sarpanch of Dhar Sakri area, Aijaz Ahmed, questioned the Army's earlier claim that it had killed “unidentified terrorists” at Amshipora on July 17.

He asked, “How is it possible for any authority to say unidentified as all the three were carrying their identity i.e. Aadhaar cards?” He called for a judicial inquiry into the killings and strict action against the guilty.

“We also demand that an FIR be registered under relevant sections of the law against those who killed them,” he added.

Watching out for his antecedents, Faiza Akhtar, the slain youth's neighbour said, “I never ever saw him indulging in any undesirable pastime. We are so sad that such a decent boy has been snatched from us and that too in such a cruel way.”

While Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane was in the Valley, its Srinagar-based 15 Corps issued a statement admitting that the three youths were killed by its men and that “disciplinary action” in being initiated by it under the Army Act against them.

A night before the youths were killed, they had informed their respective families over the phone that they had reached Shopian where they had been hired by a local fruit grower to work in his apple orchard.

Covid daily caseload goes below 75K after a month

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency input
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

India showed an early sign of easing the Covid-19 infections with less than 75,000 persons testing positive in a day after nearly a month on Tuesday, while total recoveries crossed the 51 lakh mark. The Union Health Ministry's data also said 776 people died during the day.

The total coronavirus cases in the country mounted to 61,45,291 with 70,589 new infections, while the death toll reached 96,318 in a span of 24 hours. There are 9,47,576 active cases in the country which comprise 15.42 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

Kerala to tighten curbs: Kerala on Tuesday reported 7,354 new cases of Covid-19 even even as 3,420 persons recovered from the disease. This is the third time that the state crossed the 7000

mark a day. Chief minister Mr Pinarayi Vijayan has warned that if the infection spread increased at this rate the state might report 15,000 cases daily by mid October. The all party meeting held on Tuesday also unanimously decided to scale up Covid control activities, impose strict restrictions and Covid safety protocol in the state. The Chief Minister, however, said there is no need for declaring a health emergency or lockdown at this stage.

Karnataka sees biggest spike: Karnataka on Tuesday reported the biggest single-day spike of over 10,400 new Covid-19 cases and 136 fatalities, taking the total number of infections to 5,92,911 and the toll to 8,777, the health department said. The day also saw 6,628 patients getting discharged after recovery.

Hyd scene eases: The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

that has been recording the highest number of new Covid-19 cases every day also has the most number of active cases. Of the 29,477 active cases in the state as on Tuesday, the GHMC area had 4,026, director of public health Dr G. Srinivasa Rao said.

The state registered 2,072 new cases of Covid-19 and nine more deaths, taking the total to 1,89,283 as on Monday evening and fatalities to 1,116. Greater Hyderabad registered the most cases for the day with 263. As many as 1,58,690 Covid-19 patients have recovered so far in the state.

AP records 6,190 new cases: Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday registered 6,190 new Covid-19 cases during the last 24 hours, raising the overall tally to 6,87,351, apart from 35 deaths, taking the death toll to 5,780. Out of total 57,34,752 samples tested so far in the state, 6,22,136 patients have been discharged.

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency input
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

Bypolls for 56 Assembly seats in 12 states and one Lok Sabha seat in Bihar will be held on November 3 and 7. The results will be declared on November 10 alongside Bihar results.

The Election Commission of India, however, in a statement said that it has decided not to hold Assembly bypolls in seven states across Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam and West Bengal at this stage.

There are two vacancies each in the Assemblies of Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, while one seat is vacant in West Bengal.

The term of the legislative Assemblies of the four states would end on different dates between May and June next year.

According to the ECI, bypolls for 54 Assembly seats would be held on November 3 while that for

one Lok Sabha seat in Bihar and two Assembly seats in Manipur would be held on November 7.

“The decision has been taken based on inputs received from the chief secretaries and poll officials in these states”, ECI said in a statement.

Besides the Valmiki Nagar Lok Sabha bypoll in Bihar, by-elections are being held to 28 seats in Madhya Pradesh.

Earlier, the commission had said that bypolls are pending in 64 Assembly seats.

But the figure now stands at 63, including the seven seats in four states where the schedule was not announced on Tuesday.

Eight assembly seats are going for bypolls in Gujarat, followed by seven in Uttar Pradesh, two each in Odisha, Nagaland, Manipur, Karnataka and Jharkhand, and one each in Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Haryana.

NO BYELECTIONS IN KERALA: EC

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPT. 29

The Central Election Commission on Tuesday canceled Assembly bypolls in Chavara and Kuttanad constituencies in Kerala.

The Election Commission's decision came on the request made by the state government to abandon the byelections.

The request was made in the wake of increasing cases of Covid-19 in the state, political parties questioning the logic of getting MLAs elected for a tenure of just three months since the state would be going to Assembly polls early next year and the huge expense to the tune of ₹12 crore for the conduct of bypolls.

Daughter backs ‘wife-beater’ DGP

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, SEPT. 29

Spouse of ‘wife-beater’ director general of police (prosecution) of Madhya Pradesh Purushottam Sharma on Tuesday, curiously, faced attacks from two fronts, from her daughter who called her mentally sick and from the media woman who accused her of encroaching upon her privacy by taking video of her house.

The top cop was placed under suspension by the state government on Tuesday evening.

The couple's daughter Diwanshi Gautam stoutly defended her father describing him a victim of marital conflict triggered by her mother. She also claimed that her mother was suffering from mental disorder.

In a letter to chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Ms

Gautam said she as well as her father have been at the receiving end of her mother's abnormal behaviours. “My mother wanted to ruin me and my father”, the letter said.

She said her mother once tried to set their house on fire and also kill herself.

She described her father as innocent and pleaded to the chief minister not to take any action against him over the viral video in which Mr Sharma was seen thrashing his wife in their government quarters here.

The DGP has been relieved of his duties after the video went viral on Monday.

In a related development, the media woman who was video-graphed along with the DGP in her house by Mr Sharma's wife on Monday lodged a complaint with the local police station demanding action against her for encroaching upon her privacy.

ODISHA BABU ARRESTED FOR HARASSING WIFE

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 29

A senior bureaucrat of Odisha was on Tuesday arrested for allegedly torturing his wife.

The accused identified as Sarat Chandra Bag was posted as Deputy Collector of Boudh district. Bag's wife complained that he was regularly beating her as she opposed his extra-marital affairs.

“My husband was having an extra-marital affair. I had caught him red-handed with another woman recently. When I confronted him over his affairs, he and his other associates brutally thrashed me and snatched my mobile phone,” the wife told reporters in Jharsuguda.

Dalit woman gangraped in Hathras dies

New Delhi/Hathras, Sept. 29: A 19-year-old woman, who was brutally gangraped in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district two weeks ago, died of her grievous injuries at a Delhi hospital on Tuesday, prompting outrage, protests and calls for justice.

Recalling the horrors of the Nirbhaya case, the Dalit teen was allegedly sexually attacked by four men on September 14 and referred on Monday to a Delhi hospital in an extremely critical condition with spinal injuries, paralysis and cuts in her tongue.

She couldn't survive the night and died at 3 am, Hathras Superintendent of Police Vikrant Vir quoted her family as saying.

As news of her death spread, protests broke out at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital as well as in Vijay Chowk and in Hathras, about 180 km away.

All sections of society, including politicians, sports and cine stars and activists, spoke out on Twitter and elsewhere to express their anguish and demand justice for her.

Cricket captain Virat Kohli hoped that justice would be done to the Hathras gangrape victim saying that the incident “goes beyond cruelty”.

“What happened in #Hathras is inhumane and goes beyond cruelty. Hope the culprits of this heinous crime will be brought to justice. #JusticeForManishaValmiki”, Kohli, who is in the UAE for the ongoing IPL, tweeted.

The four men alleged to be involved in the crime have been arrested and will now face charges under Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code, according to the Hathras SP.

On September 14, the young woman had gone to

● **THE DALIT TEEN** was allegedly sexually attacked by four men on September 14 and referred on Monday to a Delhi hospital in an extremely critical condition with spinal injuries, paralysis and cuts in her tongue.

the fields with her mother and went missing soon after. She was found later, beaten and tortured, her tongue cut as she bit it when the accused attempted to strangle her, the SP said while giving details of the attack. A spokesperson at the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College and Hospital in Aligarh where she was first admitted said her legs were completely paralysed and arms partially paralysed.

Leading the protests outside Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital, Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad said he appealed to

all members of the Dalit community to take to the streets and demand death penalty for the guilty.

“The government should not test our patience. We won't rest until the culprits are hanged,” he said as restless crowds milled around the complex. Azad held the state government “equally responsible” for her tragic death.

Hitting out at the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress questioned the “silence” of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and women BJP leaders on the issue and alleged that the state has become the “crime capital” of the country. The party also staged protests demanding justice for the victim at Vijay Chowk.

The party said its leaders P.L. Punia, Udit Raj and other leaders were detained at the Mandir Marg Police station for the protest. Congress leader

AMNESTY HALTS OPERATIONS IN INDIA

New Delhi, Sept. 29: Amnesty International on Tuesday said it is halting all its activities in India due to freezing of its accounts and claimed that it is being subjected to an “incessant witch-hunt” over unfounded and motivated allegations.

Amnesty India, in a statement, said the organisation has been compelled to let go of staff in India and pause all its ongoing campaign and research work.

“The complete freezing of Amnesty International India's bank accounts by the Government of India which it came to know on 10 September 2020, brings all the work being done by the organisation to a grinding halt,” it said. However, the government has said that Amnesty has been receiving foreign funds illegally.

In 2018, the Enforcement Directorate had carried out searches at the headquarters of Amnesty International in Bangalore. The raids were conducted for an alleged violation of the foreign exchange act.

There is no ED investigation against Amnesty International India Foundation, but against a private company linked to the NGO that allegedly received dubious export proceeds worth over ₹51 crore, government sources said.

The BJP alleged that Amnesty International is involved in “multiple illegalities” and it has no right to lecture on propriety. Addressing a press conference in the national capital, BJP leader Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore said any organisation can work in India but it cannot violate the laws and regulations of the country.

—PTI

AIIMS RULES OUT POISONING IN SUSHANT CASE

SAURABH JOSHI | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 29

The investigators in the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case on Tuesday revealed that the viscera report from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has ruled out poisoning as the cause of death of the actor. The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), meanwhile, stated that more actors are likely to be summoned in connection with the probe in the drugs angle. The NCB last week grilled actors Deepika Padukone, Shradhdha Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan and Rakul Preet Singh in the case.

The AIIMS was conducting an independent probe in the case and the findings of the Cooper Hospital who conducted the autopsy on the deceased actor were under consideration. The officials revealed that the cause of death is yet to be ascertained.

Rahul Gandhi said the “class-specific jungle raj” of UP has killed another young woman. “The government said this is fake news and left the victim to die. Neither was this unfortunate incident fake, nor was the death of the victim and the brutality of the government,” he said in a tweet in Hindi.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said a “Dalit girl who was victim of demonic behaviour in Hathras” has passed away at Safdarjung Hospital after struggling for two weeks between life and death in hospitals.

“Law and order in UP has deteriorated to a great extent. There is no semblance of safety for women. The criminals are committing crimes in the open,” Priyanka said. BSP chief Mayawati and Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav also spoke out.

—PTI

IN BRIEF

UAE to send mission to moon in 2024

Dubai: The United Arab Emirates plans to send an unmanned mission to the moon in 2024, a top Emirati official said Tuesday, a new gamble in space by the oil-rich nation that could see it become only the fourth country to accomplish that goal. The announcement by Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who also serves as the vice president and prime minister of the hereditarily ruled UAE, shows the rapid expansion of the space program that bears his name.

Roadside bomb kills 14 in Afghan

Kabul: At least 14 civilians, including women and children, were killed on Tuesday by a roadside bomb in central Afghanistan, officials said, as violence continues despite peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government. Seven women, five children and two men died when their vehicle detonated an explosive device in Daikundi province, interior ministry spokesman Tareq Arian said in a statement. Three children were also wounded, he added, blaming the Taliban for the blast. Nasrullah Ghorri — the spokesman for the governor of Daikundi — said the victims were traveling to a shrine when their minibus struck the bomb.

Saudi breaks up Iran trained terrorist cell

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia has said it arrested 10 members of a "terrorist cell", some of whom underwent military and explosives training at Revolutionary Guard camps in Iran. Tehran on Tuesday denied the charges. Saudi security authorities said weapons and explosives stored at a house and a farm were seized, but did not say where the raid or the arrests last week were carried out. "Competent authorities at the presidency thwarted a terrorist cell... whose elements received military and field training on how to make explosives, at the Revolutionary Guard's sites in Iran," the kingdom's State Security Presidency said late Monday.

French envoy faces probe for 'stealth'ing'

Paris: Paris prosecutors are investigating a French ambassador for allegedly not using a condom as requested during consensual sex, a practice known as "stealth-ing", a source close to the inquiry said Tuesday. The woman, 30, told police she had spent part of the night at the home of the 44-year-old envoy she met through a dating site. "They had met up several times without any sexual relations. That evening, they had consensual sex," the source said, confirming a report in French magazine *Le Point*. "She asked him to use a condom but realised during the act that the man was not wearing one," the source added. The woman filed her complaint three days later. The source did not identify the envoy by name, while *Le Point* said only that he is based in the Middle East.

TEACHER GIVEN DEATH PENALTY FOR POISONING KIDS

Beijing, Sept. 29: A kindergarten teacher in China has been sentenced to death for poisoning dozens of children in an act of revenge against a colleague that left one toddler dead.

A court in the central Chinese province of Henan said Wang Yun put sodium nitrite into porridge being prepared for her colleague's students, sickening 25.

The attack took place in March 2019 and left one boy severely ill for months before he died in January this year, according to news reports.

The Jiaozuo City Intermediate People's Court on Monday said Wang knew sodium nitrite was harmful but went ahead "with no regard for the consequences", leaving many innocent children in hospital.

News reports last year said the children began vomiting and fainting after eating their breakfast.

Kindergarten students in China are aged between three and six.

The death sentence was handed to Wang this week for the offence of using dangerous substances.

Thousands flee California wine country fires

San Francisco, Sept. 29: Northern California's wine country was on fire again on Monday as strong winds fanned flames in the already scorched region, destroying homes and prompting orders for nearly 70,000 people to be evacuated. Meanwhile, three people died in a separate fire further north in the state.

In Sonoma County, residents of the Oakmont Gardens senior living facility in Santa Rosa boarded brightly lit city buses in the darkness overnight, some wearing bathrobes and using walkers. They wore masks to protect against the Coronavirus as orange flames marked the dark sky.

The fire threat forced Adventist Health St. Helena hospital to suspend care and transfer all patients elsewhere. The fires that began Sunday in the famed Napa-Sonoma wine country about 45 miles (72 kilometers) north of San Francisco came as the region nears

the third anniversary of deadly wildfires that erupted in 2017, including one that killed 22 people. Just a month ago, many of those same residents were evacuated from the path of a lightning-sparked fire that became the fourth-largest in state history. "Our firefighters have not had much of a break, and these residents have not had much of a break," said Daniel Berlant, assistant deputy director with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire.

Sonoma County Supervisor Susan Gorin evacuated her property in the Oakmont community of Santa Rosa at about 1 am. She is rebuilding a home damaged in the 2017 fires. Gorin said she saw three neighboring houses in flames as she fled early Monday.

"We're experienced with that," she said of the fires. "Once you lose a house and represent thousands of folks who've lost homes, you become pretty fatalistic that this is a new way of life and, depressingly, a normal way of life, the megafires that are spreading throughout the West."

More than 68,000 people in Sonoma and Napa counties have been evacuated in the latest inferno, one of nearly 30 fire clusters burning across the state, said Cal Fire Division Chief Ben Nichols.

Many more residents have been warned that they might have to flee, even though winds eased significantly Monday afternoon, giving firefighters an opportunity to make some progress, he said.

— AP



The Glass Fire slowly crests the ridge outside of Calistoga in Napa Valley, California. The wildfire went from 1,500 acres to more than 15,000 acres overnight as winds spread embers across the valley.

— AFP

First US Prez TV debate rolls

Debate to offer platform for Don and Biden to outline their visions on US crisis

Cleveland (US), Sept. 29: In an election year like no other, the first debate between President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, could be a pivotal moment in a race that has remained stubbornly unchanged in the face of historic tumult.

The debate will offer a massive platform for Trump and Biden to outline their starkly different visions for a country facing multiple crises, including racial justice protests and a pandemic that has killed more than 2,00,000 Americans and cost millions of jobs.

The health emergency has upended the usual trappings of a presidential

campaign, lending heightened importance to the debate. But amid intense political polarisation, comparatively few undecided voters remain, raising questions as to how, or if, the debate might shape a race that has been defined by its bitterness and, at least so far, its stability.

Biden will step onto the Cleveland stage holding leads in the polls — significant in the national surveys, closer in the battleground states — but facing questions about his turn in the spotlight, particularly considering Trump's withering attacks.

And Trump, with only 35 days to change the course of the race, will have

the first moment in four years that someone will walk on stage as co-equal to Trump and be able to hold him to account for the malfeasance he has shown leading the country," said Steve Schmidt, senior campaign aide for John McCain's 2008 Republican presidential bid and a frequent Trump critic.

arguably his best chance to try to reframe the campaign as a choice election and not a referendum over his handling of a virus that has killed more people in America than any other nation. "This will be

opening handshake scrapped. And the debate could be shaped by an extraordinary confluence of other recent moments: the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, allowing Trump to nominate a conservative jurist to replace a liberal voice and reshape the high court for generations, and the blockbuster revelations about Trump's long-hidden tax history, including that he paid only \$750 a year in federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017 and nothing in many other years. But the impact of the debate — or the two that follow in the weeks ahead — remains unclear.

— AP

opening handshake scrapped.

— AP

Fighting rages in Nagorny Karabakh despite truce calls

Berlin, Sept. 29: German Chancellor Angela Merkel has urged an immediate end to the fighting in the region of Nagorny Karabakh in phone calls with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, her spokesman said on Tuesday.

At least 95 people have been killed in the clashes that have been raging since the weekend, including 11 civilians, according to the latest available tallies.

"The chancellor urgently called for an immediate ceasefire and a return to the negotiating table," Steffen Seibert said.

Merkel spoke with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday and with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on Tuesday, he added.

The so-called Minsk Group of mediators, led by France, Russia and the United States, "offers an appropriate forum" for dialogue, Merkel said in the calls.

The UN Security

Council is due to hold emergency talks Tuesday behind closed doors on Nagorny Karabakh, diplomats said.

Yerevan and Baku have been locked in a territorial dispute over the ethnic Armenian region of Nagorny Karabakh for decades, with deadly fighting flaring up last July and in 2016.

The region declared independence from Azerbaijan after a war in the early 1990s that claimed 30,000 lives.

It is not recognised by any country — including Armenia — and is still considered part of Azerbaijan by the international community.

— AFP

Rapid virus tests unveil as Covid deaths top 1 mn

Geneva, Sept. 29: Coronavirus tests that deliver results in 15-30 minutes are to be rolled out across the United States and in scores of poorer countries, as health authorities worldwide try to get a handle on a disease that has now killed more than a million people.

US President Donald Trump announced 150 million tests would be distributed in America, while the World Health Organisation said 120 million more would be available for the developing world at \$5 each as long as funding was secured.

The testing push comes as the virus shows no sign of receding, with infection numbers climbing rapidly in Europe again and governments there clamping down on movement in an attempt to curb the surge.

Paris, London and Madrid have all been forced to introduce controls to slow infections, and on Monday Dutch authorities became the latest to tighten curbs, while the Czech Republic and Slovakia said they were preparing to declare

China enters global race to defeat virus

Beijing, Sept. 29 : A Chinese company is entering the global race to help defeat the Coronavirus, promising its testing machine will return results faster than a lab and more reliably than at-home screening kits.

The Flash 20 "is currently the fastest machine in the world for PCR tests for the Coronavirus", says Sabrina Li, founder of the company Coyote.

PCR tests are the industry standard and a major weapon against a pandemic that has now killed more than a million people and eviscerated the global economy.

a state of emergency.

The WHO said its \$600 million scheme to roll out the quick diagnosis kits across 133 countries in the next six months would enable low- and middle-income nations to close the gap in testing with the

rich world.

The kits are far faster, cheaper and easier to administer than regular standard polymerase chain reaction (PCR) swab tests but are less sensitive and more likely to return false negatives.

— AFP



Shahbaz Sharif

PAK'S OPPN LEADER SHARIF REMANDED

Lahore, Sept. 29: Pakistan's Leader of the Opposition and PML-N chief Shahbaz Sharif was on Tuesday sent on a 14-day physical remand by an accountability court in assets beyond means and money laundering case, a day after he was arrested by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Shahbaz, the younger brother of three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, was taken into custody from the Lahore High Court's premises on Monday after the court rejected his bail application in the ₹700 crores money laundering case.

— PTI

POMPEO VOICES SUPPORT FOR GREECE, TURKEY

Athens, Sept. 29: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo expressed support on Tuesday for talks between Greece and Turkey, NATO allies whose relations have deteriorated sharply to the point where both had warships facing off in the Mediterranean.

Speaking from the Souda Bay military base on the island of Crete, on the second day of a five-day regional tour, Pompeo said relations between the United States and Greece are "at an all time high and getting stronger." "Today I'm in Crete to showcase one of America's strongest military relationships throughout all of Europe," Pompeo said. "We, the Americans, look to Greece as a true pillar for stability and prosperity in the eastern Mediterranean, and we're incredibly proud to support its leadership."

— AP

PARADIP PORT TRUST e-TENDERING NOTICE Online tenders in three bid system i.e. (1) EMD Bid (2) Technical Bid (3) Price Bid (Item Wise Rate) are invited from manufacturer/ authorized dealer for supply of 300 KW, 3.3 KV Squirrel Cage Induction Motor . The last date and time of submission of the tender is 17.15 Hours on Dt. 19.10.2020 . For details, log on to website https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app Sr. Dy. Materials Manager, Paradip Port Trust PPT/PR/236/20-21 Dated:29.9.2020
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It is hereby informed to the general public at large that our client lost/misplaced the below mentioned original title document pertaining to land in Survey No.91/10 situated at Thazhambur village, Vandalur Taluk, Chengalpattu District

1. Sale deed dated 15.06.1962, registered as Doc.No.759 of 1962 in the office of the Sub- Registrar— Thirupurur

If anyone is in possession or custody of the enlisted document, please inform the same to the undersigned immediately within 15 days from the date of this notice, failing which it will be deemed that no third party has custody of the enlisted original title document and that the said document has been lost/misplaced forever and not capable of being found. That no one has any kind of claims, rights, or any other interest over the said property and any such claims received by the undersigned after the expiry of this notice period shall not be valid and binding.

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France to ban use of wild animals in circuses

Paris, Sept. 29: France's environment minister has announced a gradual ban on using wild animals in traveling circuses, on keeping dolphins and killer whales in captivity in marine parks and on raising mink on fur farms.

Barbara Pompili, France's minister of ecological transition, said in a news conference on Tuesday that bears, tigers, lions, elephants and other wild animals won't be allowed any more in travelling circuses "in the coming years."

In addition, starting immediately, France's three marine parks won't be able to bring in nor breed dolphins and killer whales any more, she



A visitor takes a selfie with a camel during a circus performance at Bastille square in Paris. Frances environment minister announced on Tuesday.

— AP

— AP

animals are raised for their fur, within the next five years.

The ban does not apply to wild animals in other permanent shows and in zoos. Pompili did not set any precise date for the ban in travelling circuses, saying the process should start "as soon as possible." She promised solutions will be found for each animal "on a case-by-case basis." The French government will implement an 8 million-euro (\$9.2 million) package to help people working in circuses and marine parks find other jobs.

"That transition will be spread over several years, because it will change the lives of many people," she said.

SRI LANKA BANS CATTLE SLAUGHTER

Colombo, Sept. 29: The Sri Lankan government has approved a proposal to ban cattle slaughter in the island nation. However, it decided to import beef for the benefit of those who consume it.

The Cabinet on Monday approved the proposal to ban cattle slaughter in the country, Cabinet spokesman and Mass Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella said on Tuesday, adding that legalising the decision would be done in due course.

On September 8, the Parliamentary Group of

the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) approved Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's proposal to ban cattle slaughter in the country.

The Cabinet said it will take immediate necessary measures to amend the Animal Act, the Cattle Slaughter Ordinance and other related laws and regulations currently in force in the country.

According to officials, the Cabinet has decided to import beef and provide it at a concessionary price to people who consume it.

— PTI

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DECCAN Chronicle

30 SEPTEMBER 2020

Don't let political fight hurt interest of farmers

The repeated assurances given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the continuance of the minimum support price for agriculture produce notwithstanding, the farmers' protests against the three new laws governing agriculture and markets show no signs of abating. It is in this background that Congress president Sonia Gandhi's direction to the state governments her party runs to enact laws that can circumvent the three laws — the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 — gains significance.

The Congress move shows the principal Opposition party has decided to take on the government politically and legally on an issue that can have nationwide appeal. Politically, it has thrown the ball in the court of the BJP's allies in National Democratic Alliance asking if they wanted to work against the interests of the farming community and risk their future.

Experts are divided over the states' power to enact laws in the subject that can stand legal scrutiny but a stiff resistance by the Congress governments to the Modi dispensation could once again catapult the Congress into the centre of political activity, a role it abdicated long ago. Agriculture is on the concurrent list but "markets" are exclusively in the states' domain and hence the Centre is barred from legislating on them. It was this realisation that stopped the government from going ahead with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017, while they were challenged in the Supreme Court. This time around, the government did not interfere with the markets or mandis; instead, it removed their very raison d'être by allowing people to sell their produce wherever they want.

The state governments have economic reasons as well to fight the Centre as these laws will effectively choke and eventually stop a steady stream of their revenue as rents and taxes. A legal fight, and a possible win, could force the governments run by other parties also to follow the course, earning the Congress a decent political dividend.

The Congress has more reasons to invest in the agitation. It is not the first time a Central legislation has triggered widespread protest — those against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, are not that distant to fade away. But the government put up a resistance and defended it positions using many a card, including the communal one. But farmers as a class are unlikely to give in to such machinations as they feel a threat to their livelihoods. It is indeed wise for the Opposition to be seen on their side.

A protracted legal battle could imperil the interests of the farmer, who even otherwise feels he has little future in this country. If his interest, and the food security of the nation, are supreme, then the Union government which has committed to doubling farmers' income by 2022-23 should initiate a consultation process with the farmers, the Opposition, the state governments and other stakeholders to end the agitation and stop legal battles.

Trump: Artful tax dodger

Long before he became President of the United States Donald Trump was among those thought to be famous for just being famous. He parlayed such fame into a path to the White House where he holds court while having paid less income tax in a year — \$750 in 2016 and 2017 — than a successful hairdresser would have. The ridiculously low taxes he paid or none at all in 10 of the last 15 years, as exposed by the *New York Times*, were made possible by a show of chronic losses, which betrays his pretensions to being a billionaire honcho. Mr Trump's tricks might not be unusual for real estate businessmen bilking the US tax system, but it becomes extremely worrisome considering he personifies conflict of interest.

What the expose of chicanery in computing taxes means in politics — as he is in the thick of a re-election campaign and going into the first debate with Joe Biden — is it lays bare the myth of Donald Trump, 'The Apprentice' of the reality show. He may conveniently brush it aside as "fake news", which is what he dubs anything that goes against the grain of his presidential persona. The fear that the mountebank from a parallel universe who lives and thrives in an alternative reality may be a security threat as he owns responsibility for debts of \$400 million is just dawning on America.

Curiously, the facts dug out may not be the decisive tipping point in the polls. Mr Trump's antics help show up the uber-wealthy as they are seen compulsively cheating on taxes through tax havens, rebates, refunds and handouts to kin, all by employing clever accountants and sharp lawyers. Most white and blue collar workers of the world have no such devices to deny Caesar his due even if the argument is stretched into saying a person may be considered smart if he can legally avoid personal taxes. Every US President since Watergate has made public his financial records, but not Mr Trump. It remains to be seen if his name is all that marketable anymore.

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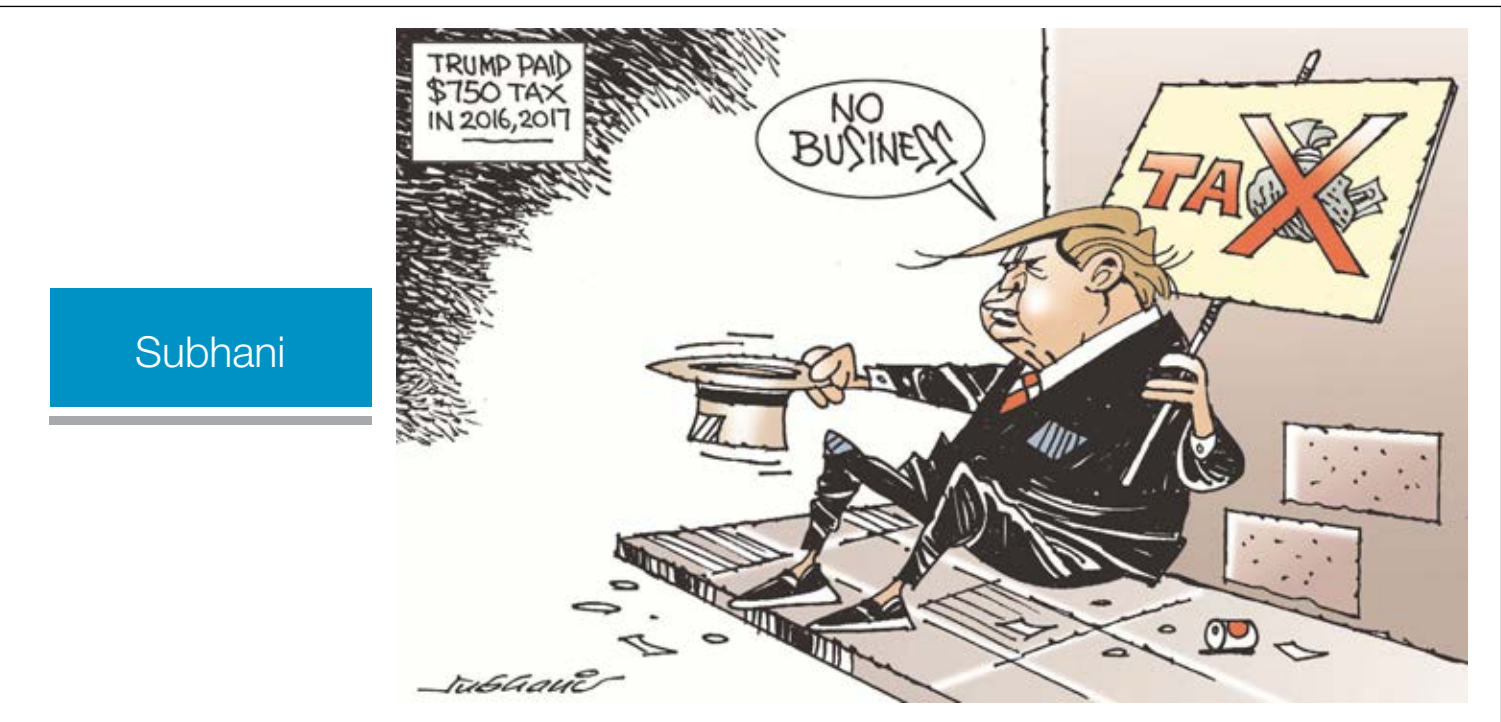
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Subhani

Unlock 5.0: Woes will linger, support a must



Sanjay Kumar

The quarterly GDP growth figures for the first quarter of 2020-21 released couple of weeks ago revealed a dismal state of Indian economy, with a growth rate of -23.9 per cent. This GDP growth rate is at its lowest since the quarterly figures started releasing in 1996. This figure does not convey anything new; it merely provides an aggregate picture of economic hardship being faced by a large number of Indians in the big cities, small towns as well as in villages. This situation cuts across people employed both in the formal and informal sectors. Several reports indicate lakhs of people losing their jobs, and salaries being reduced in different proportions in different sectors due to lockdown as a result of Covid-19. What also indicates towards economic hardship being faced by a large number of people is the amount of money withdrawn by the people from their employer's provident fund (EPF). The labour minister informed the Parliament of about 39,400 crore EPF withdrawals during the period March-August 2020. While it is true that lockdown brought economic activity to a complete standstill having an impact on the daily lives of the people, there are evidences which suggest that the economy was not doing well even before the outbreak of Covid-19 and the lockdown. What the lockdown did was to make the economic condition of the people much worse than it was before.

The GDP figures are not surprising as the strict nationwide lockdown has brought the economy to a virtual standstill, many people losing their jobs, families having faced moderate to harsh eco-

nomie hardship. Analysis of the data collected from the survey conducted by Gaon Connection team and Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) amongst 25,371 respondents spread across 23 states and Union Territories helps us unravel this story. The data presents a grim situation. More than 78 per cent of those surveyed mentioned that their work had either completely (44 per cent) or largely (34 per cent) come to a standstill due to the lockdown. It is not surprising to note that a very large number of people suffered financially resulting in many families finding it much more difficult to make ends meet during the lockdown as compared to before the lockdown. It is important to note that a large proportion of households reporting a high difficulty in making ends meet even during pre-lockdown times indicate that a very large proportion of rural households were already suffering financially even before Covid-19 struck, and the pandemic-induced lockdown only exacerbated their economic woes. Even before the lockdown, 60 per cent people in rural India found it difficult to meet their daily needs, but their numbers increased to 73 per cent during the lockdown. It is evident that Covid-19 augmented economic hardship and severely impacted economic conditions across rural India. While the lockdown affected the work of people across class groups, the change in economic conditions was sharpest in the lowest strata. Unemployment continues to remain a major concern in rural India and the situation has been worsened by the return of migrants from urban centres — more than 77 per cent people

mentioned that unemployment was a severe concern in their respective village. While it is true that a large number of migrants have either returned or are planning to return back to the cities, there are still sizeable numbers of migrants who have stayed back in the villages at least for a few more months. The findings of the survey suggest 28 per cent migrants are not willing to return to the city, while another 16 per cent are unsure if they would return or stay back in their village and engage themselves in agricultural labour or MNRGA work.

The lack of steady income meant that the severe economic shock left many across the country in a precarious situation. Almost one-fourth of those surveyed (23 per cent) mentioned that they were forced to take additional loans or borrow money as they ran out of funds during the lockdown. A small segment of rural India faced a harsher situation and was forced to sell or mortgage assets to overcome economic woes.

The only saving grace for the economy seems to have been agriculture. Agriculture and allied activities still grew at 3.4 per cent during the contraction. The findings of the survey also suggest, due to lockdown, while there were delays in harvesting of crops, selling produce, and sowing the crop for the next cycle, the impact on the income of farmers was perhaps limited compared to what people working in other sectors had to face. More than half of farmers (58 per cent) reported that they got as much as the government rate for their produce.

The negative GDP growth reflects a sharp

Almost one-fourth of those surveyed (23 per cent) mentioned that they were forced to take additional loans or borrow money as they ran out of funds during the lockdown

contraction in private consumption. Declining incomes, and uncertainly about jobs and employment opportunities, was bound to have an impact on consumption patterns. A significant number of people were forced to reduce their expenditure on everyday household items during the lockdown. Almost 49 per cent people reduced expenditure on basic food items like atta, rice, grains, and pulses. Almost two-third (63 per cent) had reduced expenditure on processed items like snacks, biscuits, and sweets. Similarly, there was a decline in the consumption of FMCG goods as well. For instance, 56 per cent people reported lower household expenditure on personal care products like soap, shampoo, etc.

The declining income not only has an impact on current expenditure patterns, but also on future consumption. The uncertainties of jobs and anticipation of further reduction in salaries has led to a large number of people deferring their plans for buying expensive goods. They are also planning to reduce expenditure by not spending on items the use of which can be avoided. About 49 per cent and 57 per cent said that they would reduce expenditure on basic food items and personal care products, respectively.

While these findings are from a survey which was conducted only in rural India, it is unlikely that the situation would be vastly different in towns and cities. As Covid-19 related restrictions have eased across the country especially after Unlock 5.0, economic activity is gradually coming back on track. However, experts have alerted that economic recovery will remain slow. This makes it imperative for the government to continue taking steps for supporting citizens through various measures.

The writer is a professor at Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and a political analyst. Views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

AIADMK PREDICAMENT

The AIADMK, which is one of the strongest regional parties in India, is on a shaky wicket today, thanks to the differences within the party over the Chief Ministerial candidate for the Assembly elections to be held next year. O. Panneerselvam, Deputy Chief Minister, should understand that even a minor problem in the party will prove to be a big advantage to its arch rival DMK. The release of Sasikala can further complicate matters for the AIADMK. Reason should dawn on the AIADMK leaders to pose a united stand in the elections with Edappadi K. Palaniswami as the chief ministerial candidate. He has been doing a great job as the Chief Minister.

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

CONG ON PATH OF DESTRUCTION

THOUGH CONGRESS is opposing the Farm Products Marketing Bill tooth and nail they have not pointed out which specific clause of feature of the Bill is considered to be anti-farmer. The party is trying to make a Frankenstein monster of the Bill and describe it as a death sentence passed on the farmers. All these invectives apart, the party is indulging in law and problems like inducing the ignorant and uninformed farmers is acts like Rail Roko and siege of roads that cause immense problems to the commoners. To cap it all the party describes the burning of a tractor in full public view in Delhi as a signal of anger and resentment against the Bill. Congress appears to be trying to grab power through intimidating tactics as they could not achieve it at the Centre by legal methods of elections.

Kooduthuraiyan, Coimbatore

A SCHOLARLY GENTLEMAN

FORMER MINISTER Jaswant Singh, who passed away a couple of days ago, had a political career that lasted over three decades in which he held the key positions of finance, defence and external affairs in the BJP government headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. As a parliamentarian with diverse experience, Jaswant Singh had cordial relations with lawmakers across political parties. Though his political career was marked with several highs and a few lows, his role and decision-making in the Kandahar hijacking had been the subject of debate and dissection. Singh was known to be a scholarly gentleman in political circles, but was never one to hold back his views. He was also a prolific writer and authored several books in Hindi and English.

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

Kishwar Desai
London Diary



Lonely Gandhi at Westminster; 'working' hols the new mantra

As October 2 approaches, we had hoped that the situation in London would have improved, allowing us to at least have a ceremonial placing of flowers at the feet of the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Parliament Square — remembering him at the close of his 150th birth anniversary. The Indian high commissioner, Ms Gaitri Kumar, had also suggested that, if things improved, a few of us could gather there for a simple memorial. But it seems that now further restrictions have been announced, thanks to Covid. So we would request all those for whom it is possible to go individually to place some flowers as we cannot have any kind of formal ceremony.

Summer is behind us and the chill is settling in - bringing a fresh bout of coronavirus. In the past few years, Diwali in London had just begun to be popular, with people even celebrating at Trafalgar Square. But the year has trained us well in social distancing, meeting in bubbles, wearing masks and working from home, and so though we were prepared

for skipping the festival of lights — we thought we would at least celebrate Christmas, in a big way.

Now the infection is really serious. Two weeks ago, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson was thinking of limiting gatherings to six including children. Now no one is sure. Plans to come back to office are shelved. Infections are running in four figures per week. And not only in UK but across Europe. Schools had just opened and now they face serious problems. The Conservatives never like to bring bad news especially shutting people indoors. But Boris has to deny his normally ebullient nature and be stern. There are rumours however that he escaped for a day to Perugia for a break with Carrie Symonds, and his newborn baby.

No one thought so but Covid looks like a long term guest who is loath to go away. All around hopes of getting back to normal are dashed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, who had been spending borrowed money like there was no tomorrow, was hoping to begin cutting back in his winter budget. But it

looks like he is still Superman coming to the rescue of the unemployed and the bankrupt. But even he has begun to pose for his Instagram photos in a sombre mood. The serious visage is necessary as the Chancellor will have to tell people that the easy borrowing cannot go on forever.

People are finding ingenious ways of coping. Now that going back to the office is less likely, they have realised that working from home need not mean your local home. Now you can book short or long holidays so you can work from Estonia or Anguilla or even Perugia if you want. It is all online so who is to know? There are new travel agencies who can fix you a place where your fancy takes you. So the new lifestyle mantra is to Work from the Holiday Home. Not WFH, but WFHH.

But there are sadder changes due to the virus. London has always been a global city not just for the rich tourist but even for the traders and the artisans. The first indoors shopping centre was built in Elephant and Castle a popular area with a bus terminus as

well as underground and surface railway stations in 1965. The centre had Latin American, West Indian, Turkish and many other nationalities running shops. Next to the three level shopping centre developed a further subterranean set of shops. This shopping centre is being demolished to the great sorrow of its cosmopolitan clientele. Yes, it wasn't very posh - but the messy complex was a part of London life. A new centre is promised but it will undoubtedly be much more upmarket. Incidentally the name Elephant and Castle is derived from a Spanish princess who visited London and stayed nearby. Infanta de Castile as she was called became Elephant and Castle in London-speak. All a part of London lore.

There was apparently a "clever" shooting of a kiss in Eastenders, the popular TV show - essential in Covid times where it looked like a kiss but obviously the lips of the two actors did not meet. The couple leant towards each other - though the actual act was hidden behind a pillar, so the audience could imagine the rest. I

found the excitement over this non-kiss quite funny - as Indian cinema had in the past invented a thousand ways to "show" a couple kissing or making love - right from them sinking behind a flowerbed, to being hidden behind a tree, to two flowers leaning towards each other, to two birds flying, or the camera shyly panning away when the lovers met... it was only in recent times that outright kissing became the norm. Now it seems that while some brave actors are washing out their mouths with sanitisers before and after a kiss, others are finding some euphemisms for it... they should just take look at old Indian films, and they will find a thousand ways in which couples can have assumed to have kissed, or made love, without any physical encounter. Old Indian cinema has the answer for lovemaking in the time of Covid!

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. Her latest book, 'The Longest Kiss: The Life and Times of Devika Rani, will be out by November.

SHORT TAKES

Battery-powered masks for players

New Delhi: Claiming to be the best in ensuring optimum oxygen for the wearer, battery-operated masks designed by an IIT-Kharagpur alumni will be put on trial for India's Olympic-bound athletes by the IOA to assist their intense training. The IOA has tied up with IIT Kharagpur's Piyush Agarwal, who currently owns a startup 'PQR Technology Private Limited' and has got government funding under the 'KAWACH Mask Project'. His start-up is currently attached with IIT Delhi. IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta said that the battery-operated masks, which cost around ₹2200 each, will be trialled first on a few Olympic-bound athletes. If they don't face any breathing issues and after approval from the IOA Medical Commission, the masks will then be used by all the Olympic-bound athletes and others. "I was initially very guarded about resumption of training by athletes but since they have started training and we don't know when this pandemic will end, we have to think about the best way possible and this idea of masks which seems safe for intensive training struck us," Mehta said. — PTI

Schumacher son is closer to F1

Maranello, Italy: Michael Schumacher's son, Mick, will have an official Formula One drive during a race weekend for the first time next week at the Nurburgring, Alfa Romeo and Ferrari said on Tuesday. Schumacher gets the practice drive in an Alfa Romeo on Oct. 9 on his home track in Germany as a member of Ferrari's young driver program, taking over Antonio Giovinazzi's car for the first session of the weekend. "I am overjoyed to get this chance in free practice," Schumacher said in a statement. "I'm going to prepare myself well, so that I can do the best possible job for the team and gain some valuable data for the weekend." The 21-year-old Schumacher leads the Formula 2 standings after winning races in Monza and Sochi. He won the European Formula 3 championship in 2018 and tested a Ferrari F1 car in Bahrain in April 2019. — AP

Pliskova ends Sherif dream run

Paris: Second seed Karolina Pliskova ended Mayar Sherif's fairytale Grand Slam breakthrough to set up a Roland Garros second round clash against former champion Jelena Ostapenko on Tuesday. Pliskova squandered eight set points in the opening set as world No. 172 Sherif, the first Egyptian woman to play in the main draw at a Slam, took a shock lead. However, the Czech's greater experience eventually told as she recovered to progress 6-7 (9/11), 6-2, 6-4. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Rajasthan Royals vs Kolkata Knight Riders from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

Australia Women vs New Zealand Women: Third T20 from 9.15 am on Sony Six, HD

England Women vs West Indies Women: Fifth T20 from 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

French Open: Matches from 2.30 pm on Star Sports, Select 2

FOOTBALL

Spanish League: Huesca vs Atletico Madrid from 10.30 pm; Real Madrid vs Real Valladolid from 1 am (Thursday) on LaLiga page on Facebook

Italian League: Benevento vs Inter Milan from 9.30 am; Lazio vs Atalanta from 12.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2

Champions League Play-offs: Midtjylland vs Slavia Praha from 12.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1

WWE NXT

Bouts from 5.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

BASKETBALL

NBA Finals (Game 1 of best-of-7): Los Angeles Lakers vs Miami Heat from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six

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RED-HOT SUN

Hyderabad beat high-flying Delhi for first win of season

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 29: Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Delhi Capitals by 15 runs for their first win in the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday. Kane Williamson, playing his first game of the season, smashed 41 off 26 balls after SRH were put in to bat. Openers David Warner and Jonny Bairstow made 45 and 53 respectively as SRH scored 162 for four in 20 overs.

In response, Delhi Capitals ended at 147 for seven in 20 overs with Rashid Khan taking three wickets.

Earlier, Bairstow smashed two fours and one six in his 48-ball 53 and shared two crucial partnerships — 77 off 57 balls with David Warner (45 off 33) for the opening stand and 52 off 38 balls with Kane Williamson (41 off 26) for the third wicket.

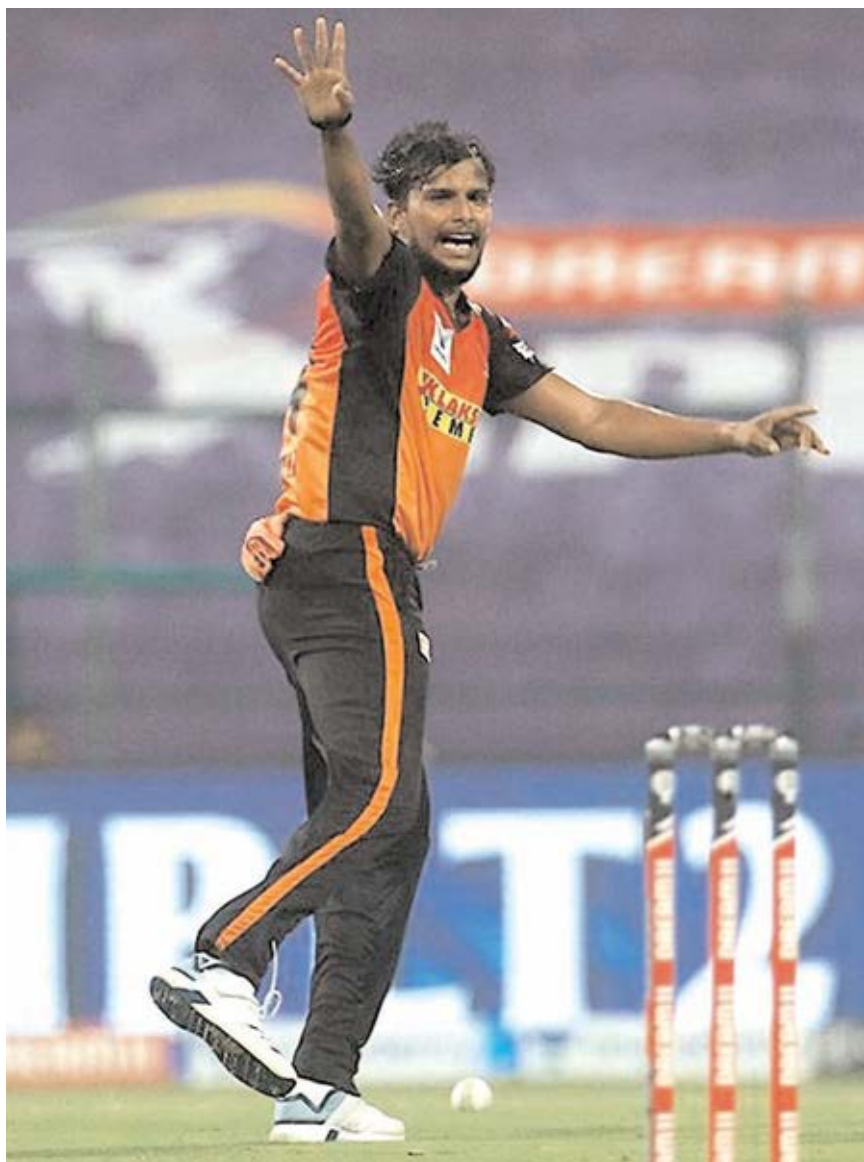
Making his IPL debut, Jammu and Kashmir's Abdul Samad (12 off 7) blasted a four and six in his useful cameo.

Warner and Bairstow were circumspect with the pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Kagiso Rabada (2/21) and Anrich Nortje maintaining their line and length.

The result was Sunrisers could only score 38 in the power-play, which yielded just two fours and a six — all hit by Warner.

Bairstow picked his first boundary in the seventh over, launching a slog sweep for a six off leg-spinner Amit Mishra (2/35). The duo tried to make up for the lack of boundaries on the slow track with their excellent running between the wickets to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Warner sent one straight over Ishant's head for his second six and then picked a four off Mishra with a reverse sweep but the



T. Natarajan of Sunrisers Hyderabad appeals against Delhi Capitals during an IPL match at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. Natarajan dismissed Marcus Stoinis. — BCCI

spinner had the last laugh as he had him caught behind with SRH reaching 82 for one in 10 overs.

Mishra returned to dismiss Manish Pandey (3) before Sunrisers crossed the 100-mark in 14th over.

Playing his first match

of the season after recovering from an injury, Williamson smashed two fours in the 16th over to take SRH to 128 for two.

Bairstow reached his fifty off 44 balls before holding out to Nortje in the 18th over. Williamson too was dismissed in the last over. — PTI

JAYAWARDENE FAITH IN SENIOR LEGS BACKFIRED

Dubai, Sept. 29: Mumbai Indians' decision to not send Ishan Kishan, who was striking the ball hard and clean, to bat in the Super Over surprised many but their head coach Mahela Jayawardene defended the tactic saying they had faith in their experienced players to do the job.

It was wicket-keeper batsman Ishan Kishan, who with his blistering knock of 99 runs brought Mumbai back in a stiff 202-run chase along with Kieron Pollard (60).

However, the match had to be decided via Super Over, where the defending champions opted to send Hardik Pandya with Pollard.

The strategy backfired as all they could manage was only seven runs off Navdeep Saini and lost the match to RCB.

Jayawardene said, Kishan felt tired after giving his all during the contest.

"If anyone could see, he (Kishan) was very tired at that moment and we were thinking that we probably need a couple of fresh guys who can go and hit the ball," he said.

"It is quite easy to say in hindsight this and that, but Polly (Pollard) and Hardik had done the job in the past in those Super Overs, two experienced guys who are capable of doing that."

"So you take a chance on these calls and it could have gone either way. If we had 10-12 runs anything could have happened," explained the coach.

Jayawardene had to admit that seven runs were too small to defend even for a bowler of the calibre of Jasprit Bumrah. — PTI

Captain Kohli all praise for Saini's Super Over heroics

Dubai, Sept. 29: Reining in the batsmen like Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya in a Super Over is no mean task and Royals Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli was quick to acknowledge a job well-done by his pacer Navdeep Saini.

Saini conceded only seven runs in the Super Over to decisively tilt the match against Mumbai Indians on Monday after both the teams finished with the score of 201 in regular contest.

"Outstanding Super Over from him (Saini), bowling against Hardik (Pandya) and Kieron Pollard. I think the longer boundary helped him gain some confidence with his yorker, because he has got the pace and then he was using the wide yorker well too," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"The guys showed real good composure to get

IPL POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	2	2	0	0	4	+0.615
Delhi Capitals	3	2	1	0	4	+0.483
Royal Challengers Bangalore	3	2	1	0	4	-1.450
Kings XI Punjab	3	1	2	0	2	+1.498
Mumbai Indians	3	1	2	0	2	+0.654
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	0	2	-0.228
Kolkata Knight Riders	2	1	1	0	2	-0.767
Chennai Super Kings	3	1	2	0	2	-0.840

Tabulated as Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points, Net Run Rate



Navdeep Saini

these two points in the bag and very crucial points at early stages of the tournament," Kohli added.

The India skipper also praised young wicket-keeper batsman Ishan Kishan and Kieron Pollard to bring Mumbai back into the game.

"It was such a roller-coaster of a game. We bat-

ted well in the first innings to get us past 200 and then the start of bowling was outstanding. They played well in the middle overs, waited for the dew to kick in. Pollard and Ishan to bat the way they did was outstanding to keep them in the game," he said.

According to Kohli, fielding is something that his team needs to work on.

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma conceded that RCB controlled nerves better than his team.

"Nothing to take away from RCB. They stuck to their plans, although we put them under pressure, they held their nerve more than us. It was a great game of cricket, we were not in the game at all when we started with the bat."

"But great innings by Ishan (Kishan) there to get us back in the game and then Polly (Kieron Pollard) was brilliant as usual," Rohit said. — PTI

Klopp wowed by Reds' early surge

Liverpool, Sept. 29: Jurgen Klopp said on Monday that he has been blown away by the standards Liverpool have set at the start of their Premier League title defence after coming from behind to beat Arsenal 3-1 at Anfield.

Goals from Sadio Mane, Andy Robertson and Diogo Jota saw off the Gunners, who had won their opening two league games of the season.

While Manchester City, Chelsea, Manchester United, Tottenham and now Arsenal have all lost in the opening three weeks of the new campaign, Liverpool have taken maximum points to lay down an early marker that they remain the team to beat in the Premier League this season.

"It's really early in the

season and with this performance it is absolutely 'wow'," said coach Klopp.

"From the first second, (it was) dominant against a team in form. We had to be careful like hell of the counter-attacks."

"The football we played was absolutely exceptional. About this game tonight, there is nothing bad to say."

The outcome of the match could have been very different, though, had Mane not escaped with just a yellow card for an elbow on Kieran Tierney after just three minutes.

Arsenal followed the game plan that had brought them two victories over Liverpool in recent months as they dropped deep then looked to play around the Reds' press when in possession.

However, unlike when



Tewatia, Samson threatens for KKR

Dubai, Sept. 29: Kolkata Knight Riders will have to bat out of their skin to stop a marauding Rajasthan Royals when the two teams clash in an IPL match at the Dubai International Stadium here on Wednesday.

Having started off as underdogs, the Royals have taken the IPL by storm, chasing down the highest tournament total 224 against Kings XI Punjab in their last match.

In two wins from two matches, the Royals have got past the 200-mark with ease. In their success, they have found two stars in Sanju Samson and Rahul Tewatia, who have outshone marquee players.

In his second coming at the Royals, little known Haryana all-rounder Tewatia has got instant stardom for his 31-ball 53 against KXIP, which helped the side chase down a record 224 with three balls to spare against KXIP.

But the season so far belongs to Samson — the wicketkeeper from Kerala. Boasting of the season's highest strike-rate of 214.86, Samson has two successive half-centuries that has once again put him in contention for a longer rope in the Indian team as a keeper-batsman.

Skipper Steve Smith has been ever reliable, striking two half-centuries, while opener Jos Buttler will be waiting to explode.

To match or even surpass the Royals, KKR have the biggest stars in Andre Russell to go along with

MARSH IN LIMBO AFTER HIS SCANS LOST IN UAE

Dubai, Sept. 29: Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh is unaware of the extent of his injury, which ruled him out of the Indian Premier League, as the reports of the scans performed on his right ankle went missing in the UAE.

This was confirmed by the cricketer himself on Tuesday.

"We don't really know what happened with the scans over in the UAE. Cricket Australia haven't been able to get their hands on them so it's bit of a weird situation," Marsh told reporters during a virtual press conference.

Marsh, who twisted his ankle while going for a

reigning World Cup winning English skipper Eoin Morgan, one of the best in limited-overs cricket.

Having started off with a familiar defeat to Mumbai Indians in their opener, Kolkata Knight Riders put up a determined show to bounce back against a sloppy Sunrisers Hyderabad. — PTI

reigning World Cup winning English skipper Eoin Morgan, one of the best in limited-overs cricket.

Having started off with a familiar defeat to Mumbai Indians in their opener, Kolkata Knight Riders put up a determined show to bounce back against a sloppy Sunrisers Hyderabad. — PTI

dived in his franchise Sunrisers Hyderabad's season opener against Royal Challengers Bangalore, is currently undergoing a 14-day quarantine in a Perth hotel.

The injury cut short his outing in the remainder of the lucrative T20 league.

"Hopefully I'll go for another scan at some point this week, if I can get clearance, and then we'll be a lot clearer on what we're dealing with."

"It's one of those frustrating injuries. I've been through a few now so I think I know how to deal with it. I moaned and groaned for about 48 hours in the UAE," Marsh said. — PTI

THE RESULTS

Fulham	0
Aston Villa	3
(Grealish 4, Hourihane 15, Mings 48)	
Liverpool	3
(Mane 28, Robertson 34, Jota 88)	
Arsenal	1
(Lacazette 25)	

they met at the back end of last season's Premier League when Jurgen Klopp's men had already won the league or the Community Shield in August, Liverpool were far sharper in pulling the Gunners out of position.

The only time Arsenal did manage to pierce the Liverpool press before half-time, they opened the scor-

ing completely against the run of play.

WASTEFUL ARSENAL PUNISHED

Liverpool responded immediately to level within three minutes as Mohamed Salah outmuscled Tierney and when his shot was parried across goal by Leno, Mane turned into an empty net.

Robertson then made amends for his previous error as Liverpool's flying full-backs combined as Alexander-Arnold's cross was this time converted by the Scotland captain.

However, where Arsenal sides of recent years might have collapsed, as they did in losing 4-0 and 5-1 at Anfield in 2018 and 2019, Mikel Arteta has instilled a new-found belief in the FA Cup winners.

— AFP