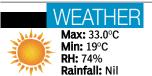
THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA **ANANTAPUR | FRIDAY | 11 SEPTEMBER 2020**



Forecast: Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 33/19 ºC



DEATHS

(+96,760)

(+1,213)76,304

covid19india.org STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,534)(+11)TS: 1,50,176 927 (+10,175)(+68)AP: 5,37,687 4,702

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,82,14,209 **DEATHS**

> worldometers.info/ coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana **Tithi:** Bhadrapada Bahula Navami till 4.18 am (Saturday) Star: Mrigasira till 3.19 pm Varjyam: 12.03 am to 1.43 am (Saturday) Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.22 am; 12.37 pm to 1.26 pm Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon **HIJRI CALENDAR** Muharram 22, 1442 AH

PRAYERS Fajar: 5.31 am **Zohar:** 12.26 pm **Asar:** 4.28 pm Maghrib: 6.05 pm **Isha:** 7.21 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.08 AM MOONSET TOMORROW 11.34 PM **MOONRISE** TODAY 11.45 AM

COUNTER



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

RJD's Jha is Oppn pick for RS Dy chief

New Delhi: Various opposi-

tion parties on Thursday decided to field RJD leader Manoj Jha as their joint candidate for the September 14 election of the Rajya Sabha deputy chairman, sources said. He will file his nomina-

tion papers on Friday in presence of leaders of opposition parties. Jha will contest against the NDA's nominee Harivansh of the JD-U. which is a prime opponent of the RJD. Harivansh was the RS deputy chairman till his previous term was over. He has since been re-elected from Bihar. - PTI



WORLD 5

Trump downplayed Covid threat not to create panic

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

immediately.

borders was closely linked to development of

bilateral ties between the two Asian giants and

that China must de-esca-

late by disengaging its

troops to restore the

April status quo in the

Ladakh sector. Jaishankar was also

expected to have empha-

sised to his Chinese

counterpart that India

wanted peaceful resolu-

tion of the border dis-

pute but was prepared to defend its territory

against aggression. India has been empha-

sising that there should

be no unilateral altering of the Line of Actual

The meeting took place

on the sidelines of the

Shanghai Cooperation

Organisation (SCO) for-

eign ministers meeting

in Moscow. This is the

second high level meet-

Control (LAC).

September 5.



BUSINESS 7

RIL becomes India's first \$200-b company

India to China: Peace linked to ties

SPORTS 8

Mum Victoria makes US Open semis



deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle, google.com/+deccanchronicle

CHARIOT FIRE CASE HANDED OVER TO CBI

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has decided to hand over the investigati-on into the blaze that destroyed the chariot of the Antarvedi Lak-shmi Narasimha Swamy temple to the CBI, in keeping with the policy of transpa-rency in governance.

The Chief Minister has instructed the Director General of Police (DGP) to hand over the case to the premier investigation agency.

Following the instruc-tions, the DGP's office has written a letter to this effect to the Union home ministry.

> Page 2: How could TD trust CBI now: YSRC

NGT APPOINTS PANEL TO ASSESS OIL POLLUTION

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, SEPT. 10

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) appointed a joint committee to ascertain air, sound, soil and water pollution caused on account of the oil and gas explorations of ONGC and GAIL along the KG Basin.

The committee will comprise of senior officials from the ministry of environment and climate change, the Central Pollution Control Board, Chennai, the AP Pollution Control board, the East Godavari District collector and an expert on petroleum from Andhra University college of engineering, Visakhapatnam.



Air display of the first batch of IAF's Rafale aircraft in an arrow formation followed by Jaguar and SU-30 aircraft during the former's induction ceremony, in Ambala on Thursday.

cheon meeting together with Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov as part of Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral cooperation in which views were exchanged.

The trilateral luncheon meeting highlighted how the Russians are trying their best to the two Asian giants towards a compromise in order to avoid a devastating war in the Ladakh sector. All three ministers were photographed standing next to each other and smiling, with the Russian foreign minister holding centrestage as the host, a symbolism that was not lost.

Some observers feel a ing between the two countries after defence resolution may begin if at all only after a meeting between Prime minister Rajnath Singh met his Chinese counter-Minister Narendra Modi part Gen. Wei Fenghe on and Chinese President Significantly, earlier Xi Jinping that could take place in Moscow on the sidelines of a SCO in the day, the Indian and Chinese foreign

India, Japan in deal to back each other's aircraft, ships

KUMARASWAMI | DC

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

announcement, the pact will provide the armed forces of the two countries access to each other's bases and ensure that either country's defence platforms, including ships and aircraft, will be able to use the other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies. including fuel and spare

Japanese Ambassador in India Satoshi Suzuki and Indian Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar signed the pact on behalf of their countries. Both the leaders welcomed the inking of the pact, which Japan referred as the so-called "Acquisition and Cross-Servicing

ther enhance the depth of defence cooperation between the two countries and contribute to peace in the Indo-Pacific region". Observers are seeing the

agreement between India and Japan as a "huge strategic signal" by both the countries, which share territorial disputes with China. It may be noted that India already has similar defence logistics support pacts with the US, France, Singapore, South Korea and Australia and is expected to ink one soon with Russia as well.

They also agreed to "work closely in security, economy, and economic

INDIA OCCUPIES **FINGER 4 HEIGHTS** AT PANGONG LAKE

New Delhi, Sept. 10: The Indian Army has occupied heights over-looking Chinese Army positions at Finger 4 along Pangong lake.

"Indian Army has occupied heights overlooking the Chinese Army positions at Finger 4 along the Pangong Tso. These operations were carried out along with the preemptive actions to occupy heights near the southern bank of Pang-ong Tso," a source told the news agency ANI. The Chinese Army had

occupied the heights from around April-May and had refused to disengage from there and other friction points in eastern Ladakh. The Indian Army has occu-pied them now along with the Green Top. Meanwhile, both the

armies held interactions at the Brigade-Commander level and Commander officer-level in Eastern Ladakh. "Interactions are aimed

at keeping the communication lines simple," an Indian Army source said. In the past few days, India outflanked China by taking control of strategic height near Pangong lake's southern bank. It also thwarted an attempt by the Chinese Army to transgress into Indian areas near Chushul in Ladakh which is near the south-ern bank of Pangong Tso. India and China are

engaged in a stand-off since April-May over transgressions by the Chinese Army in many

19.7% in 9 districts have Covid: Survey

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

The phase II of Sero surveillance carried out in nine districts indicated a 19.7 per cent Covid-19 prevalence in the state.

State health authorities carried out Sero-surveillance-II in Srikakulam, Vizianagram, Visakhapatnam, West Godavari, Guntur, Prakasam, Prakasam, Chittoor and Kadapa, Kurnool from August 26

For each district, 5,000 persons including male and female, from urban and rural areas and from containment and non-containment zones were randomly chosen. Their blood samples were col-lected and tested for presence of specific antibodies, which indicated whether they were infected with Covid-19 but show no symptoms of the infection, which was cured without using any treatment.

Accordingly, prevalence of Covid-19 in percentage terms was Srikakulam 21.5 per cent, Vizian-agaram 30.6 per cent, Visakhapatnam 20.7 per cent, West Godavari 12.3 per cent, Guntur 18.3 per cent, Prakasam 17.6 per cent, Kadapa 19.3 per cent, Chittoor 20.8 per cent and

Kurnool at 28.1 per cent. State health and family welfare commissioner K. Bhaskar briefed media persons about the results of sero surveillance here on Thursday.

> ■ Page 3: Infection may decline soon: Survey

JAGAN OFFERS 13 SERVICES TO FARMERS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday said doubling the income of farmers is his govern-

ment's top priority. He announced 13 kinds of services at Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBK) across the state in order to provide infrastructural cushion that farming sector needs.

He also discussed with officials about setting up of multi-purpose facilities for the farmers and ways to strengthen Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.

Full report on Page 2

CENTRE RULES OUT ROLE IN CAPITAL ISSUE

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

The Centre has made it clear that it has no role to play in fixing for providing financial assistance for the creation of facilities.

The Centre has filed an additional affidavit in the Andhra Pradesh High Court stating that though the law has implied a single capital for AP, the General Clauses Act states words in singular shall include plural and vice versa.

Full report

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ZERO I MARKS Van cleaner helped change papers

JNTUK charges student, five staff with answer sheet fraud

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 10

A student and five others, including three personnel of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University-Kakinada (JNTUK), were charged with fraudulent replacement of answer sheets during the examination period.

The JNTUK internal committee inquired into the matter, gathered prelimi-nary evidence on the case and lodged a complaint with Sarpavaram police station

for further investigation.

According to sources, a B.Tech student of a private college in Vizianagaram was allotted an examination centre in Visakhapatnam district last year. After writing the examination, the student gave the answer sheet to the invigilator concerned, came home, prepared another booklet which was given to him by a broker, and gave it to the broker with all correct

answers. After completing the examination, the papers are car-

chosen by the university, taking all safety and security steps. The broker who was terminated from an engineering college Srikakulam, with experience in the evaluation department, in connivance with the cleaner of van (carrying answer scripts) replaced the answer sheets while the papers were being

ried to an evaluation centre.

■ Page 3: Student's mistake unravels fraud

transported

SHORT TAKES **ANANTAPUR TO AMARAVATI ROAD** NOW IN NHDP: MP

DC CORRESPONDENT JAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

YSR Congress MP Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu has said that Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari has positively responded to his request for development of Anantapur-Amaravati greenfield express highway under the National Highways Development Programme (NHDP). The MP said on Thursday that he had written a letter to the Union minister in this regard. Mr Devarayalu said that Hy-

derabad-Visakhapatnam and Nagpur-Vijayawada Expressways were included in the mega expressway programme. Anantapur-Amaravati greenfield expressway was conceived in 2016 at an estimated cost of ₹27.600 crore with an objective to accelerate industrial development and generate employment in drought-hit Rayalaseema, the MP said.

YSRC CHALLENGES LOKESH TO PROVE GRAFT CHARGES

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

Refuting the allegations of graft made by Telugu Desam leader Nara Lokesh, YSR Congress has dared him to prove the charges levelled against 40 ruling party MLAs.

YSRC Legislator Jogi Ramesh termed the allegations as baseless and challenged Lokesh to prove them. He claimed that the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government works with utmost transparency and all 151 MLAs stood by the people even during the Covid-19 pan-

IUMLAP SEEKS PROTECTION OF **WAKF PROPERTIES**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

The Indian Union Muslim League AP has sought protection of wakf properties and registration of Muslim religious places.

IUMLAP state president Sk Basheer Ahmed on Thursday said that majority of Muslim religious places were not registered with the government. The IUMLAP submitted a memorandum to deputy chief minister S.B. Amzath Basha in this regard.

Mr Basheer Ahmed said that there were numerous Muslim religious places like masjids. madarsas, idgahs

shadikhanas, peerla chavidi ashukhanas, etc in the state. He said the government should create a data base of these places with all details like place, door number, electricity service numbers, boundaries, details of structure with geo-tagging.

MAN ARRESTED FOR TRYING TO CHEAT YSRC MLA

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

An imposter, posing as a top CMO official, tried to dupe YSRC Chilkaluripet MLA Vidadala Rajani. The MLA quickly realised that there was something fishy and lodged a complaint with the Pattabhipuram police, who tracked the cheat. identified as Thota Balaji Nai du, to Paravada of Visakhapatnam with the help of his ph one calls. He was soon arrest ed by the Paravada police.

He introduced himself as Babu Jagajivan Rao working as a top official in the secre-

tariat at Velagapudi. Claiming that the government had released Rs 2 crore to each Assembly constituency to help the kin of Covid victims, the imposter asked the MLA to select eight families for ₹25 lakh loan with 75 per cent subsidy. He demanded ₹50,000 as bribe from each beneficiary for sanctioning the loan. The insisted on immediate payment of the entire amount of ₹4 lakh through Real Time

Gross Settlement (RTGS) Ms Rajani suspected that there was something amiss as Balaji Naidu mentioned that the Chief Minister directed him to take the names of the beneficiaries through the MLA for payment of the amount. She immediately called police on another phone and

alerted them about the cheat. The police said that earlier Balaji Naidu tried to cheat YSRC MLC Zakia Khanum. Guntur urban SP R.N. Ammi Reddy said that the Pattabhipuram police registered a case and started investigation.



People from various sections of life join the members from the North Andhra Representatives Association during a protest against the government demanding three capitals for AP state near GVMC Gandhi Statue Junction in

Govt to provide 13 types of services to farmers at RBKs

CM says doubling farmers' income is his government's priority

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy stated that doubling the income of farmers was his government's priority and would do whatever was needed to achieve the goal.

He announced setting up facilities for 13 types of services at Rythu Bharosa Kendras such as warehouses, drying platforms, collection centers, cold storage rooms, custom hiring centers, primary processing centers, assaying equipment, janata bazaars, bulk milk cooling units, cattle sheds, aqua infra, procurement centers and e-marketing.
Reviewing with officials

the status of agriculture and RBKs with officials at Tadepalli on Thursday, he

CENTRE RULES OUT

ROLE IN AP

CAPITAL ISSUE

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

The centre has made it

clear that it has no role

to play in fixing capitals

in AP except for provid-

ing financial assistance

for the creation of essen-

tial facilities. The centre

nas illed an additional

affidavit in the AP High

Court on Thursday stat-

ing that though AP

Reorganisation Act, 2014

section 6 and also sec-

tion 94 (3) and (4) read

with the 13th schedule of

the act, have implied a

single capital for AP, sec-

tion 13 of the general clauses act, 1897, states

that in all central acts

and regulations, unless

there is anything repug-

nant in the subject or context, worlds in singu-

lar shall include plural

home affairs undersec-

retary, Lalita T. Hedaoo,

in her additional affi-

davit filed in the court

said that the section 94

(3) and (4) of the act has

provided for financial

assistance by the centre

to AP and not for decid-

ing a capital for the

Informing the court

Constitution of

that under Article 3 of

India, there is provision for creation of new st-

ates and other related

manners, Hedaoo ruled

out any provision in re-

spect of capital laid do-

wn in the article. In her affidavit, she mentions

that repeated objection-

able and uncalled for

aspersions against the

centre by the petitioner

Union ministry of

home affairs under-

secretary, Lalita T.

Hedaoo, in her addi-

tional affidavit filed in

the court said that the

section 94 (3) and (4)

of the act has provid-

ed for financial assis-

tance by the centre to

AP and not for decid-

ing a capital for the

newly formed state.

Hedaoo ruled out any

capital laid down in

the article.

provision in respect of

was condemnable.

newly formed state.

Union ministry of

and vice versa.

mpt to make agriculture sustainable, the government of Andhra Pradesh decided to set up multipurpose facilities. Mr Jagan also discussed the steps to be taken to strengthen Primary Agricultural

Credit Societies (PACS). The CM said, "A total of 13 types of facilities would be set up next to RBKs at an estimated cost of ₹6,000 crore. It was decided that all the necessary propos-als for setting up of multipurpose facilities should be sent to NABARD through state co-operative bank (APCOB) for further action.

He directed the officials take steps to strengthen Agricultural Credit Šocieties financially. He told the officials to study pros and cons of set-

at warehouses and prepare a report.
The Chief Minister

emphasized the need for providing infrastructure facilities to strengthen RBKs and said there should be quality in material, seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides in RBKs. "Farmers can sell their produce across the country through e- marketing platforms and Janata Bazaars should be made available for the farmer to sell his produce, he said.

Mr Jagan said e-cropping would make it easier to pay insurance premi-um for crops and to pro-vide farmers a minimum remunerative price and compensation in case of crop loss. He directed the officials to implement policies which will help

affirmed that in an atte- ting up of Janata Bazaars the farmers to double their income. He asked the officials to prepare a report on constructing warehouses, and Janata Bazaars and aqua works. He said the e-marketing platform should be ready by next Kariff. He directed the officials to prepare plans for Janatha Bazaars, scheduling and secondary processing and then focus on minimum support price to crops

The government signed an MoU with Amul and other companies to provide employment opportunities to women. He claimed that installation of meters is necessary for supply of quality power to farmers and the money would be directly credited to farmers' bank accounts and there will be no burden on them.

MINISTER SEEKS

CENTRE'S HELP FOR

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC

Industries and IT minis-

ter Mekapati Goutham

Reddy has appealed to

the Union government

to extend support for key

projects, infrastructure

and overall development

As part of his mission

to promote AP as a desti

nation for industries. Mr

Goutham Reddy met Un-

ion ministers Anurag

Thakur, Manusukh Ma-

ndaveeya and Piyush

Goyal in New Delhi on

He urged Mr Anurag,

minister of state for fin-

ance, to extend financial

support to establish a

Skill Universities in AP.

He also invited him to

meet industrialists in

the state. In his interac-

tion with Mansukh

Mandaviya, he sought

funds for infrastructure

such as national high-

ways to connect ports

drug park and two

AP DEVELOPMENT

NELLORE, SEPT. 10

Of AP.

Thursday.

TD an obstacle to development, says chief whip

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC

Gadikota Srikanth Reddy Telugu accused Desam of creating obstacles in everything that the state government is doing for people, fearing it will bring a good name to Chief Minister Jagan

Mohan Reddy. Speaking to reporters at the party office in Raya-choti on Thursday, Srikanth Reddy pointed out that while the state government has made English as medium of instruction to develop government schools on par with

KADAPA, SEPT. 10 in courts. He asked whether TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu is senaing his grandson to a Telugu medium school.

He demanded that all Telugu Desam leaders. who have filed cases in court against English being the medium of instruction, should pull out their children and grandchildren from English medium schools and admitted them into Telugu medium schools. He accused TDP leaders of enacting drama and asked them whether children of poor should not be educated in English medium schools.

YOGI VEMANA VARSITY SIGNS MOU WITH WORLD FORUM OF EDUCATION

Kadapa: Yogi Vemana University (YVU) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the World Forum of Education, Bengaluru, through mode

Thursday. Vice-chancellor of the university Prof Muna-gala Surya Kalavathi said

facilities at global level. World Forum Education.

YVU is the first university in AP was first to sign an MoU with the

help large section of stu-

dents and faculty through

the mutual exchange of

expertise, resources and

Mr Goutham Reddy him about their plans to set up three ports and 10 fishing harbours under Maritime Board. He also pointed to the

and harbours.

commitment of the Centre to develop a major port.

No leads yet on gutting of chariot in Antarvedi

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC

The police investigation on the gutting of the chariot in the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha swamy temple in Antarvedi has not come to a conclusion vet.

Additional police forces are on strict vigil in the village and also in the Konaseema region in general. Nobody is being allowed to go to Antarvedi and the police are preventing passersby along the route to Antarvedi.

The endowment department's additional commissioner. Ramachandra Mohan, has been appointed as special officer at the temple to coordinate and oversee issues pertaining to the reconstruction of the chariot. It is learnt that a computer operator and a security guard were suspended at Antarvedi temple on Thursday.

The Jana Sena Party has given a 'Chalo Antarvedi' call. However, the Eluru range DIG, K. V. Mohan Rao, made it clear that nobody would be allowed in Antarvedi as Section 144 and Section 30 are in force. He said that if the party leaders or workers try to come, the police will not allow them. He said a scientific research and investigation is going on in the gutting incident and no law and order problems would be entertained.

Expressing concern over the gutting incident, BJP and Jana Sena party leaders took up resentment fasts for one hour in their respective houses and party offices.

BJP state president, So-

mu Veerraju, along with leaders R. Sridevi, Bommala Dattu, A. Ramakrishna Rao and others took up resentment fasts at BJP office in Rajahmundry on Thursday. Veerraju alleged that the state government was not responding though the attacks are being done on Hindu temples. He said that the party would not keep silent if such attacks go on further. BJP leaders Pydah Krishna Mohan, Pydah Bhavan Prasad, Y. Ramkumar and M. Subba Rao, BJP former president, Y. Malakondaiah and others participated in the stir in their respective houses. The BJP Kakinada parliamentary district president, Ch. Ramkumar, said that BJP workers took up the stir in all mandals. Jana Sena lead ers K. Durgesh, P. Venkateswara Rao and others took up their stir at their houses at Rajahmundry and

Kakinada respectively. Kapu corporation chairperson, Jakkampudi Raja, visited Antarvedi temple and inquired about the incident. He said that the government was taking the issue seriously and the police officials are on duty to nab the culprits. However, he said that the opposition parties were unnecessarily making the issue controversial

Former MLA and Telugu

Desam leader, Vanamadi Venkateswara Rao (Kondababu), expressed concern over the Antarvedi incident and demanded that the government conduct an impartial probe without attributing it to beehive hunters and mentally-ill persons. He said that during the YSRC government, several attacks are taking place on Hindu temples and prayer hous-

CM TOOK SWIFT ACTION IN CHARIOT GUTTED ISSUE, SAYS BOTSA

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

Municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanaryana said that the Jagan government came out with a welfare calendar and was strictly following it by direct transfer of money to the beneficiaries. He alleged that the previous Telugu Desam government had gone back on its promise to waive agriculture and DWACRA loans.

He said that it was objectionable that BJP and TD were resorting to provocative speeches in the Antarvedi temple chariot burning case. Accusing TD leader Nara Lokesh of misleading the people, the minister said one should not forget the fact that CM Jagan's swift response following the incident funds released for a new chariot.

YSRC: HOW COULD TD TRUST CBI NOW

Officials informed that a GO to this effect will shortly be issued on the matter. Opposition parties and Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu had been demanding a

CBI probe.
The CM has taken the matter of the fire seriously and while the state police have been trying their best, there was criticism from political and other groups casting aspersions on the government. No one would be spared and stringent action political opportunism.

would be taken against those involved, irrespective of their position, was the government stand.

Meanwhile, YSRC MLA and party spokesperson Ambati Rambabu stated that there is no negligence of the government in the Antarvedi incident as the government had initiated swift measures. He said earlier Naidu had no confidence in CBI and had banned the agency during his tenure but now he is distrusting the AP police and had started believing the CBI which shows his

Minister blamed for attacks on temples

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC

President of AP Sadhu Federation Srinivasananda Saraswati on Thursday blamed endowments minister Vellampalli Srinivas for 'attacks' on Hindu shrines in the state.

Speaking to reporters here, he said 27 attacks had taken place on temples during the last 15 months. Demanding resignation of the minister, Saraswathi said most of the temples in the State were losing valuable lands to encroachers and strongly condemned the arrest of 37 BJP leaders who went to Antarvedi to stage a protest over the burning of 62-year-old chariot. Convener of Save Simh-

achalam, Turaga Sriram

mhachalam temple lands were being grabbed by unscrupulous elements. He warned that if the government failed to free the lands from the crutches of the land grabbers, he would call all the Kar Sevaks from across the country to join him to save the temple lands.

Meanwhile, BJP leaders staged a silent protest at the Visakhapatnam city party office condemning the burning of the chariot. Former Visakhapatnam MP K. Haribabu carried a placard which said 15 temples were attacked during YSRC regime and 17 under TD rule. The pla-card of MLC PVN Madhav said YSRCP government enhanced Holy Land tour funds from Rs 40,000 to Rs 60,000, but no funds for

Chariots at TTD-run temples secure: CVSO surveillance at all the

AVINASH P SUBRA-MANYAM | DC

Chief vigilance and security officer of TTD Gopinath Jatti has said that special surveillance steps have been made for the protection of chariots in the 49 temples across the country. The CVSO and Tirupati Urban SP Avula Ramesh Reddy reviewed security arrangements for the protection of temples and the ensuing annual Brahmotsavams

Speaking to reporters later, Mr Jatti said that the TTD vigilance wing in coordination with the police department made elaborate security arrangements including round-the-clock CCTV

As the ACB disclosed the

names of government offi-

from September 19-27, at a

Thursday at Tirumala.

held Annamaiah Bhavan on

meeting

TTD-run temples across the country, he explained. Since it has been decided that annual Tirumala Brahmotsavams would be held in 'ekantham' in view of the prevailing Covid-19 restrictions, only devotees with online Srivari darshan tickets

SP Ramesh Reddy said CC cameras were installed at all TTD temples, mutts etc., to ensure protection to the holy places

would be allowed to visit

Tirumala.

"Any activity by individ uals or social media aimed at disturbing communal harmony and peace will be dealt strictly," he added while appealing to the public to call on WhatsApp No: 80999 99977 if they came across suspicious movements, if any, at temples and other vital

Officials demand probe fearing trouble from fraudsters

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

Several government officials who received calls demanding money from fraudsters claiming to be from ACB, have appealed to the state government to order a thorough probe to find out how they managed to get their private phone numbers and also

details of their families. Kurnool police have found a gang of eight persons, including the kingpin Jaya Krishna, hailing from different parts of Anantapur, who were threatening government officials to expose them for their corrupt deals if they

failed to pay up. The police arrested six of them on September 1 and sent them to judicial remand at Anantapur district jail in Reddipalli. Jaya Krishna from Pedda Kottala village of Uravakonda mandal in Anantapur district, and another accused, who was a bank account holder, are absconding. Based on confessions.

police said that all the gang members were having criminal records and some having also served jail terms. The main accused, while in jail, teamed up with fellowinmates and soon after release on bail, they began blackmailing government officials. The modus officials. The modus operandi was to identify government departments notorious for high-level corruption and search for the mobile numbers of officials on the internet. Armed with a list of numbers, they used to call up the officials claiming to be from ACB and tell them about their corrupt deals

 The police found out 18 targeted government officials by the gang; two of them succumbed to Covid-19.

 ACB officials ask people to call on toll free no. 14400 to lodge complaints about graft.

demand money to avoid further inquiry on them.

They managed to get three SIM cards with fake credentials. They also got two persons having bank accounts in Canara Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank in Karnataka and offered them 10% commission to return money credited their accounts. Contrary to their calculations, these bank accounts helped the police to zero in on the culprits.

The ACB had recently disclosed the names of government officials who paid how much money to the

gang based on confessions from both the culprits and also from the officials.

However, there are several government officials who received such threatening calls from the gang members and they managed to avoid paying the money for some reasons. A senior government official said,

"I have received a few calls claiming to be from ACB. Initially, I failed to attend the call as I was otherwise engaged. I got a text message claiming to be an ACB official message. When I returned the call, there was no response.

cials who paid bribes to the gang, many officials shared similar experiences. Sources said that they confessed within themselves that the gang members not only accessed their private mobile numbers but even had procured information

about their family members. Sources maintained that an official shared his bitter experience with his colleague by saying that the gang member demanding money even mentioned that his wife was sick causing a big shock to him as to how the health status of his wife could be

known to a stranger. The gang also targeted officials on the verge of retirement threatening to expose them if they were not paid the money as was

the case with the municipal commissioner from Palamaneru in Chittoor district.

The government officials are a worried lot as they are getting calls from the police as their numbers were found in the call data of the mobile phones of the accused to enquire whether they paid money to the gang. They have made a fervent appeal to the state government to order an inquiry to find out how their personal details are being leaked out and even suspected moles in their departments.

A senior official from ACB said, "We wonder as to why not a single official called us when somebody claiming to be from ACB began demanding money. We also maintain a toll free number where complaints can be lodged.

IN BRIEF

APSP constable

dies as gun misfires

Kurnool: An APSP police head constable died after his gun allegedly misfired at APSP second battalion ground here on Thursday. The deceased was identified as Solomon Raju, 49, a native of Vaddeman village in

Nandikotkur. A 1992 batch constable, he was posted at second battalion under the control of the APSP DIG Venkateswarlu

IV Town police station CI Srinivasa Reddy said that the incident occurred while he was cleaning his gun around 9 am while on duty. It misfired and bullets pierced into his body and he died on the spot.

He said that the body was sent to Kurnool government general hospital for post-mortem. A case has been registered and investigation is on, the CI added. The deceased survived by his wife and two chil-

48-hr spl drive for

issuing rice cards

Kadapa: District collector Chevuri Harikiran said that new rice cards should be obtained free of cost by volunteers within 48 hours at the village and ward secretariats. On Thursday, he conducted a surprise inspection of the village secretariat at Valluru Mandal headquarters

along with Joint Collector (Development) Saikanth Varma. The Collector said that the concerned authorities had directed the village and ward secretariats to provide all kinds of services to the people within the stipulated time. As part of the Navasakam, all those who have

old ration cards are requested to take the rice cards free of cost through the respective village and ward secretariat volunteers. For this, a special drive is being organized for 48 hours in the respective secretariats across the district. These new rice cards will also help to benefit from the YSR insurance scheme, he said.

Officials open one

gate at Srisailam

Kurnool: With the water level rising in the both Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers, officials opened one gate at the Srisailam dam to let out water on Thursday The Priya-darshini Jurala project on the Krishna river is discharging 1,16,570 cusecs of water into the Srisailam reservoir. The Srisailam dam received a total of 1.48 lakh cusecs received till Thursday evening. The reservoir is brimming with water at its full reservoir level of 885 feet. It has 215.8070 tmc ft of water, which is its total capacitv. With this, officials released 1,53,653 cusecs of water including

Taskforce arrests

3 smugglers

84,225 cusecs to the

Nagarjunasagar.

Tirupati: The red sanders antismuggling taskforce on Thursday arrested three smugglers, including a minor boy and seized 20 red sanders logs from their possession near

Pavuralagutta area the Bakarapeta forests in Chittoor district. According to the task-force DSP Venkataiah, the task force team led by RI P. Bhaskar had started the combing operation in Bakarapeta forest area

during late hours on Wednesday. When the team reached Pavuralagutta area in the early hours on Thursday they encountered a group of smugglers carrying red sanders logs and other implements. On sighting the taskforce team, the smugglers abandoned the

logs and fled deep into forests. However, the team has managed to arrest three Tamil Nadu based smugglers including a 16year-old minor boy. They were identified as Srinivasulu (36). who served jail-terms twice in connection with red sanders smuggling cases and Jaya

Amjad Basha donates plasma

Kadapa: Deputy Chief Minister and Minority Welfare Minister S.B. Amjad Bhasha and Joint Collector (Development) Saikant Verma said that every one who has fully recovered from Covid-19 should give plasma and save the lives of another. Deputy CM Amjad Basha inaugurated the plasma therapy centre at RIMS Hospital

on Thursday after which he donated plasma. He said that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the state officials to set up the plasma therapy centres in all Covid centres. As part of the initiative, he opened a plasma centre at RIMS Hospital to save more patients from infection. With Covid cases increasing by the day, people are getting panicked in all districts of Andhra

Kavi Samrat remembered



Telugu language-lovers pay tributes to statue of Kavisamrat Viswanatha Satyanarayana on the occasion of 125th birth anniversary celebrations at Lenin Centre in Vijayawada on Thursday.

No respite from rising number of Corona cases

EG continues to lead with hightest no. of cases at 1,412

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

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

Thursday's Covid-19 bulletin reported that out of 72,229 samples tested, 10,175 were found infected with coronavirus.

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

East Godavari continues to lead the state with the highest number of new infections at 1,412, followed

in West Godavari, 968 in Chittoor, 838 in Guntur, 823 in Nellore, 664 in Srikakulam, 576 in Kadapa, 545 in Krishna, 516 in Vizianagaram, 482 in Kurnool, 422 in Anantapur and 404 in Visakhapatnam. East Godavari registered the highest number of

cumulative infections in the state with 72,497, fol-lowed by 50,182 in Kurnool, 47,548 in Anantapur, 47,248 in West Godavari, 46,469 in Chittoor, 43,147 in Guntur, 42,436 in Visakhapatnam, 41,041 in Nellore, 34,090 in Kadapa, 33,607 30,372 rakasam, Srikakulam, 26,196

Vizianagaram, 19,959 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries. The rate of recovery of

Covid-19 infection patients

has been good in East

Godavari at 59,292, folby 45,338 Anantapur, 42,209 in West Anantapur, 36,072 Visakhapatnam, 34,898 in Guntur, 34,800 in Nellore, 25,866 in Kadapa, 23,436 in

Srikakulam, 18,157

16,697 Prakasam, Vizianagaram, 16,578 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries. Among deaths of Covid-19 infected patients, Chittoor, Kadapa and Nellore registered nine each, followed by seven each in Krishna and Prakasam, six Anantapur, five each in East and West Godavari, four each in Srikakulam

Vizianagaram. Chittoor registered the

Guntur and

and Visakhapatnam, two in

one in

tive deaths at 504, followed by 446 in Guntur, 442 in East Godavari, 405 in Kurnool, 391 in Anantapur, 376 in West Godavari, 369 in Nellore, 351 in Prakasam, 341 in Visakhapatnam, 330 in Krishna, 282 in Kadapa, 279 in Srikakulam and 185

in Vizianagaram. The state health authorities have discharged 10,040 Covid-19 infected patients after recovery.

AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 82,041 samples in JNTUK smelled a rat. per million population and has registered a Covid-19 positive rate at 12.27. Maharashtra has tested 39,152 samples and has a positive rate at 19.78 and Telangana has tested 48,106 samples with positive rate at 7.81, showing that AP remains the most responsible and proactive state in

negligence of the duty as

Drought-like situation in north AP dals in the district, 32 have Atchutapuram mandals crop is drying up. As there

season in the north Andhra districts, the farmers of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts have been experiencing drought and dry weather conditions in the ongoing kharif season. The farmers in the three districts have lost hope as the crops are drying.

Vizianagaram district is facing almost drought-like situation. Out of 34 man-

LOCKDOWN TIMINGS

RELAXED IN NELLORE

Nellore: The district autho-

rities relaxed the timings of

the partial lockdown in fo-

rce in Nellore following ap-

peals made by the traders

citing traffic jams and crow-

According to a release from

the district collector, shops

remain open from 6 am to

4 pm instead of from 6 am

and establishments will

to 1 pm henceforth.

and some people forums

ding in the market places

due to restricted timings.

dais, 19 nave deficit rainfall

and five scanty rainfall. In Visakhapatnam, the main vegetation activity mandals. including Hukumpeta Araku. Madugula, G. Madugula, K. Kotapadu, Anandapuram, Bheemili, Paravada, Sabbavaram, Nakkapalli and Payakaraopeta are facing deficit rainfall.

Visakhapatnam Urban

been suffering deficit and are also facing trouble due are no water sources, only scanty rainfall. In to scanty rainfall. In 50 per cent of other crops Unprecedented in any Srikakulam, out of 38 man-Visakhapatnam district, 15 have been sown against the mandais face a rainfail

> The Vizianagaram district administration has started damage control measures and directed officials to create awareness among farmers to turn to alternative crops.

Paddy is being cultivated in 1,22,997 hectares every year. This has been limited to 77,000 hectares. Due to poor rainfall, even this

total extent of 1.8 lakn hectares.

Proposals have been sent to commissioner of agriculture for alternative crop planning and seeds. The district resource centre is conducting training programmes with farmers on alternative crops as a part of drought relief measures, said joint collector, Vizianagaram, Dr G.C.

Infection may decline soon: Survey

From Page 1

He said that the surveillance would be conducted for all communicable diseases to find out their prevalence among the people to help the government come up with plans to handle them.

A similar survey was carried out on Covid-19 to find out its prevalence among the population. He said that as the

prevalence rate could go up to some level, it would come down gradually as was the case with Krishna district during the first phase of sero survey as its prevalence peaked and started coming down subsequently.
Referring to the highest

percentage of prevalence in Vizianagaram district at 30.6 per cent, he said that they were expecting the rate to come down

gradually in the district. Similarly, as West Godavari showed only 12.3 per cent of prevalence, they were expecting the cases to go further up in the days to come, he said and added that accordingly, they would plan to conduct more Covid-19 tests and arrange beds in hospitals and also recommending people to go for home iso-

Collector wants health official suspended, arrested

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 10

In yet another case of high- handedness on frontline Covid-19 healthprofessionals, Guntur collector I. Samuel Anand kicked up a row by directing a senior health official to suspend a doctor and ordered the police to arrest him.
Dr Somla Naik, working

Nadendla Narasaraopet division, complained about lack of adequate beds for Covid-19 patients in government hospitals to admit them and provide treatment, during a review meeting

chaired by the collector at

Narasarsopeta in Guntur

district. The collector had expressed his displeasure over the rise in number of Covid-19 cases especially in rural areas and had asked health officials

highlight any problems. When Dr Naik complained about lack of beds, the collector lost his cool and said that when 1,300 to 1,400 beds were lying vacant, how the doctor could say that no beds

Dr Naik was reportedly trying to explain that dur-ing the recent visit of a joint collector, they were instructed not to keep anyone with Covid-19 symptoms in home isolation and shift them to the government hospitals. They did so, which filled

up the vacant beds.
When the collector instructed officials to shift all 60-plus Covid-19 infected people to hospitals for treatment, Dr Naik allegedly informed him that as higher officials were giving different directions, they were getting confused as to which instruction to follow. He said that they were finding it difficult to get beds to admit the patients in hospitals. The repeat statement of

lack of beds resulted in arguments between the two. At this juncture, collector Anand directed the district medical and health officer to place Dr Naik under suspension. When Dr Naik reportedly questioned the collector for issuing such a directive, collector Anand instructed the police to arrest the doctor on

the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

As the collector was repeatedly asking the police to arrest Dr Naik, the medical officer left the meeting. Anand directed revenue authorities to lodge a complaint against Dr Naik, The police later escort-

ed Dr Naik to the Narasaraopeta DSP office and made him to wait there for some time. The doctor returned home some Narasaraopeta DSP M. Veera Reddy said, "As we have not received any complaint on Dr Naik, we have not booked a case and not arrested anyone

Reacting to the incident, AP Government Doctors Association state convener Dr D. Jayadheer said, "We condemn the highhandedness of the Collector on the medical officer. The collector has no right to issue directions to arrest Dr Naik. If there are any issues, a departmental inquiry can be ordered and action can be taken if he is found guilty of violation of

Student's mistake unravels fraud

From Page 1

However, by mistake, the student also pinned the hall ticket to the answer sheet. During the evalua-tion, the additional controller of examinations

The university appointed an internal committee to inquire into the matter and the committee found the involvement of the three outsourcing personnel of the university and three other personnel, including the driver and cleaner of the vehicle and also an employee of an affiliated college. The university suspended the three outsourced personnel for they were route officers confidential securing

The JNTUK registrar lodged a complaint with the Sarpavaram police, seeking an investigation of the matter and the involvement of other individuals mentioned in the internal committee.

Sarpavaram police station house officer, R. Govindarajulu, said that a case was registered based on the complaint given by the JNTUK and is being investigated. However, many of the

answer sheets have been tampered in such a way and the role of four engineering colleges in north Andhra districts are sus-

58 get recruited under **APCOS in V'nagaram**

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 10

Vizianagaram Education department appointed 58 outsourced employees through Andhra Pradesh Corporation Outsourced Services (APCOS) and presented the orders to the job

achievers on Thursday. While handing over the appointment letters, appointment Collector, Vizianagaram Dr M. Hari Jawaharlal said that 100 per cent transparency was being maintained while recruiting various posts.

According to the need of the education department in the district, 58 people have been recruited for various duties. The department recruited the persons through APCOS ensuring complete transparency, the Collector said.

The appointed APCOS

employees would work as nonteaching staff in KGBVs and at Mandal Resource Centres in the

district, the Collector

added. The Collector also claimed that the administration has collectively worked in the recruitment of village secretariat employees and other category recruitments without any corruption allegations.

According to the government directions, the district administration would follow the directions with absolute transparency, he

District Educational Officer Nagamani said that the department had informed the APCOS about the need of outsourced persons for various jobs. The APCOS has selected

and appointed the personnel, she added.

PESO ASKED TO CHECK SAFETY AT STORAGE FACILITY

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 10

The AP Pollution Control Board has asked the Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organisation to inspect the safety parameters as mentioned in the Ammonium Nitrate Rules of 2012 at the Sravan Shipping and Services Pvt Ltd, the stevedores company that handles storage and evacuation of ammonium nitrate.

In his letter to the chief explosive officer of Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation, last week, the member secretary of the pollution control board, Vivek Yadav said that the ministry of environment and forests on October 30, 2008 gave consent to Sravan Shipping and Services to store 20,000 tons of ammonium nitrate in its three located Chukkavanipalem Visakhapatnam. The AP Pollution Control Board also gave consent on April 6, 2018 to handle the same quantity.

However, the Board found that the Sravan Shipping had failed to meet the safety standards and asked the management to stop handling ammonium nitrate until further orders. Invoking rule 18 of Manufacture, Store and Import of Hazardous Chemicals, 1989, the board sent a letter to Visakhapatnam Port Trust not to engage Sravan Shipping and Services in handling the ammonium nitrate till further notification.

The secretary said the Board also requested the Visakhapatnam-based deputy controller of explosives to ascertain the adequacy of safety measures at the shipping company warehouse to store 20,000 tons of ammonium

NGT INITIATIVE The committee will submit report before Nov. 17, 2020 Cases cross 50K Panel to check ONGC, GAIL pollution in Kurnool district

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 10

The national green tribunal (NGT) appointed a joint committee to ascertain air, sound, soil and water pollution caused on account of the oil and gas explorations of ONGC and GAIL along the

Krishna-Godavari Basin. The committee will comprise of a senior officer from the ministry of environment and climate from thecentral pollution control board, Chennai, a senior officer as deputed by the chairperson of the pollution control board, the East Godavari District collector or a sen-

ior officer not below the

tor or sub-divisional magistrate and an expert on petroleum engineering from Andhra university college of engineering, Visakhapatnam.

The committee will submit its report on or before November, 2020. Venkatapathi Yenumula filed a petition in NGT against the oil companies, alleging that there used to be the usual phenomena of oil leakage in the pipelines established by these units causing damage to agricultural land and also

affecting water bodies. The units are not following the pollution control mechanisms which prevent such leakages and there is no proper maintenance of pipelinescarried out by them which causes frequent oil and gas leakages, causing deaths. The applicant stated and

said that though the district collector reviewed frequent gas leakages in the district and certain directions were given to ONGC as well as GAIL authorities to take proper precautionary measures to avoid them in the future, no action has been taken by the oil companies and similar incidentsoccurred on May 18 and August 21 in 2020.

The applicant also alleged that they are discharging untreated effluents into nearby water bodies and the seashore causing water pollution as well as marine pollu■ The NGT stated that the committee is at liberty to co-opt any other expert in the field of petroleum engineering to assist in preparing the report, especially on offering advice on safety measures to be taken to avoid such things in future

tion, affecting the marine ecology. Instead of discharging treated effluents into the deep sea, following the conditions of environmental clearance, they are discharging them onto the seashore and shallow sea causing pollution in the sea water which affects marine life and indirectly affects the

livelihoods of the local fisherpeople.
The NGT stated that the

committee is at liberty to co-opt any other expert in the field of petroleum engineering to assist in preparing the report, especially on offering advice on safety measures to be taken to avoid such things in future.

The NGT directed the committee to ascertain as to whether the pollution control mechanisms provided by the oil companies are adequate and, if not, what are the upgradations and improve-ments required to minimise or avoid such incidents in future and also to prevent pollution, damage and death of human and marine life.

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, SEPT. 10

Kurnool reported zero Covid deaths on Thursday, a trend reversal, on a day when the total number of positive cases crossed the 50000 mark. The district has been witnessing a steady rise of positive cases since April.

The first Covid case was reported on March 28; the 100th on April 17, 10,000th on July 25 and 20,000 on August 4. However, in just a fortnight. it shot up from 40,000 to 50,000. Now the people have lost count, said State Covid special special officer Dr C. Prabhakar Reddy. He added that more than the virus itself, it was the fear of

Covid that has killed people.

Meanwhile, the recoveries

district collector G. Veera Pandian. Testing and early isolation of suspects has helped the administration to reduce fatalities, said DMHO Dr Rama Giddaiah.

have been increasing sub-

stantially in the past few

days, while positive cases are

going downward. This is a

healthy development, said

Presently there are 4,438 active cases while 45,338 have been discharged since recov-

ery. Veera Pandian said that the administration is ready to tackle any kind of situation

and 104 and 108 ambulances were available at every mandal. And there was no issue at all to arrange oxygen and ICU facilities to severely affected people, he added.

SHORT TAKES **2 SOG JAWANS KILLED IN ENCOUNTER**

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 10

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

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

of a Maoist.

On a tip-off from Intelligence input, an operation was launched on Kalahandi-Kandhamal border September 8. Two composite teams of SOG and District Voluntary Force (DVF) had participated in this operation. Following heavy firing from the Maoists, a team of SOG and DVF had retaliated, said an official statement issued by

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

LUKEWARM OPENING DAY FOR RLYS SPL TRAINS

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

than 100 per cent occupancy. While Indore Jn Bg Railway station to Howrah in West Bengal showed an occupancy of 108 per cent, the Shramik Express from Valsad station to Muzaffarpur in Bihar showed occupancy of 179 per cent, according to data provided by the national transporter. Though the Indore to Howrah train was over booked, the train in the reverse direction had only 15 per cent occupancy.

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

INFANT TRAFFICKING GANG **BUSTED IN MP**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY I DC BHOPAL, SEPT. 10

Indore police on Thursday busted a newborn babies trafficking gang, took two people including a woman into custody, and rescued a 10-day-old infant from them.

Acting on a tip off by a nongovernment organisation (NGO), a team of women police sealed a particular area in Indore and foiled the bid by the two accused, identified as Bablu alias Tejkaran Thakkar and Shilpa Telang, to sell the infant to an unidentified person who managed to escape from the spot, police said.

"We have rescued the baby. Investigation is on to find out the biological parents of the child", Indore district additional superintendent of police Manisha Pathak said.

According to the police, the two accused were trying to sell the baby for ₹1.20 lakh to their

'client'. "Both the accused are health workers. We suspect that they steal newborns from hospitals", a senior police officer from Indore told this newspaper on the condition of anonymity. Interrogation of the two accused would unearth the entire network of child trafficking in the state,

he added.

Tibet under electronic surveillance

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

VIKRAM SHARMA I DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

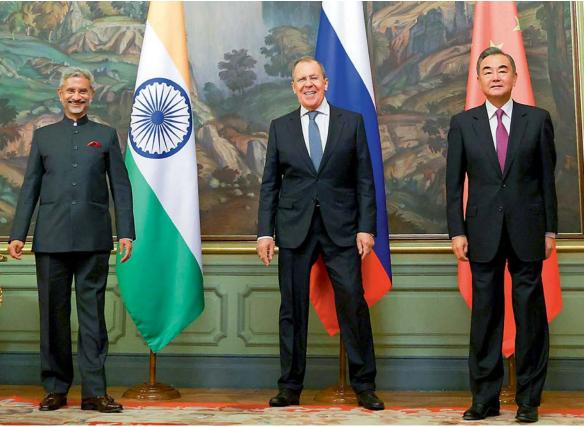
Sitting in Dharchula of Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand, repeated calls to locals in Purang town in the Tibet Autonomous Region using a Nepal Telecom SIM card do not materialise. Even if some calls go through, Tibetans at the other end either disconnect the call or the line would go blank after a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

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

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

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

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



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

THE FALLOUT

 Tibetans living close to the Indian borders and otherwise are under massive electronic surveillance following tensions between India and China

 Ever since the Galwan valley clashes, surveillance has been increased on Tibetans and many of them who remained in close touch with Indians are now incommunicado

Indians residing close to the borders in Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh and other areas share a good rapport with Tibetans

In Tibet, human rights abuses include disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions, forced abortions and infanticide

According to one report, 87,000 deaths have been recorded in Lhasa alone between March 1959 and September 1960

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

no communication. Threats from the PLA have ensured that people keep to themselves lest they invite the wrath of PLA, whose brutality against Tibetans is well known. For the PLA, places like Purang are significant as they are not only close to the borders with India and Nepal, the Mansarovar lake and Mount Kailash are located towards the north of this

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

Indian SIM cards do not work here due to poor connectivity and many locals in Dharchula use Nepal Telecom SIM cards to talk business with Tibetans. It is not only Purang that PLA is worried about. Sources say that the

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

"Tibetans living close to

Army on alert along LoC after ISI uses drones

Srinagar, Sept. 10: A of Jammu region. quadcopter used by The Chinese-made drone Pakistani spy agency ISI weighed about 17.5 kgs in Jammu and Kashmir has necessitated alert along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Valley as the Army believes it could be used for dropping weapons for terrorists.
General-Officer-in-

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

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

and had a payload of 5.5 kg including a sophisticated US-made M4 semi-automatic carbine and seven Chinese grenades. Four batteries, a radio signal receiver and two Global Positioning Systems were

also recovered.

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

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

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

Besides strict electronic surveillance, Indian agencies have learnt that due to the heavy mobilisation of forces on the Chinese side, many Tibetans have been asked to evacuate and relocate to areas far away from the borders. In Tibet, not following the diktat of the PLA has led to disappearances, torture, arbitary arrests and even killings. Denial of freedom of speech and the Internet is a constant.

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

Kangana Ranaut episode HC 'surprised' at lack of state over for Sena, says Raut

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, SEPT. 10

after dav Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) demolished illegal constructions at Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut's office. Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday said that the issue was over for his party.

However, the actress has continued her vitriolic against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray calling him an example of nepotism and accused him of turning Shiv Sena into 'Sonia Sena ' 'The Kangana Ranaut

episode is over. We have even forgotten it. We are now busy with our government and social work," Raut said after meeting the Chief Minister at his residence Chief Matoshree.

Raut also denied his party has a role in the demolition carried out by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation in Kangana's office at Pali Hill in Bandra.

"The action at Kangana Ranaut's office is done by the BMC. It has no con-

THE ACTRESS has continued her vitriolic against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray calling him an example of nepotism and accused him of turning Shiv Sena into 'Sonia

nection with Shiv Sena. You can talk to the Mayor or the BMC Commissioner on it," he

Shiv Sena-ruled BMC had razed illegal alterations at Kangana's office on Wednesday. However, the Bombay High Court later ordered a stay on it. Meanwhile, Kangana

has continued with her outburst against the Chief Minister calling him prime example of nepo-tism and accusing him of misusing the power. Just like Wednesday, she posted a series of tweets too on Thursday targeting

Thackeray.
Terming the MVA government in Maharashtra as a 'milavat Sarkar,' she accused Uddhav of compromising on its identity. 'The ideology on which Shri Balasaheb

Thackeray built Shiv Sena, today they have sold the ideology for power, becoming Sonia Sena from Shiv Sena. The goons who broke my house behind my back, do not call them a civic body Don't insult the constitution."

"Your father's good deeds can give you wealth, but you have to earn respect, you will shut my mouth, but my voice will echo in a hundred millions after me, how many mouths will you shut? How many voices will you suppress? Till when you will run away from the truth, you are nothing but an example of dynasty," she said in

another tweet. Referring to Shiv Sena's alliance with the Congress, Kangana said Uddhav has turned it into a "Sonia Sena".

The actress had found herself in controversy after criticising the Mumbai police and comparing Mumbai with Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK). It had evoked a sharp response from Raut who asked her not to visit Mumbai.

control over electronic media KALPESH MHAMUNKAR | DC

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

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

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

The bench also made the Narcotics Control Bureau and the Enforcement Directorate

THE BENCH made the NCB and ED, the central agencies that are currently probing cases related to actor's Sushant Singh Rajput's death, as parties after one of the petitioners alleged that the agencies were 'leaking' probe related information to the press and the public.

(ED), the central agencies that are currently probing cases related to the actor's death, as parties after one of the petitioners alleged that the agencies were "leaking" probe related information to the press and the public.

The bench, however, refused to implead actor Rhea Chakraborty as respondent in the case. "We do not see any reason to implead Chakraborty, an accused who is presently in judicial cus-

tody," it said.

The petitions, filed by activists, and eight retired senior police officers, allege, among other things that several TV channels were running a parallel probe into the

case and that they were running a malicious cam-Mumbai police through their current reportage in the case.

On September 3, another bench had heard the same pleas and had passed an order urging the press to show restraint while covering the developments of Sushant Singh Rajput's death case.

On Thursday, senior advocate Milind Sathe, who appeared for the former police officials, told the bench that despite the order, TV channels were continuing with their slander against the Mumbai police. Sathe submitted transcripts

from news broadcasts whereby, channels had insinuated that the Mumbai police had been assisting or shielding the accused, and the "drug CJ Datta told advocate

Sathe that he shouldn't be bothered by what a news anchor was saying. He, however, added that the court hoped and trusted that the spirit of the order dated September 3 would be kept in mind by TV news channels.

The Union government, meanwhile, pointed out the petitioners should have approached the Press Council of India, a statutory body which regulates the print media, and the News Broadcasting standards Authority (NBSA) with its grievances against the TV news channels. At this, the bench noted that the NBSA wasn't a statu-

tory body.
"We are surprised that the state has no control over the electronic media. Why should it (TV news) not be regulated in case they may have serious ramifications," the bench

SAFETY I FIRST Kerala is witnessing a huge spike in Covid-19 cases and also experiencing heavy rainfall

Pinarayi convenes all-party meeting on byelections

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

Close on the heels of Kerala government writing to Election Commission of India to cancel the forthcoming byelections to Chavara and Kuttanad Assembly constituencies, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has convened an all-party meeting on Friday to arrive at a consensus on

The EC has announced casting their votes in 172

that the polls to the two seats would be held along with Bihar elections in November. In a letter written to EC, Kerala chief secretary Vishwas Mehta has listed out the reasons for reconsidering the decision to hold by the by polls in the two constituencies. The chief secretary has

pointed out that going by the voting percentage in Kuttanad assembly seg-ment in the last Lok Sabha polls, at least 1.17 lakh voters are likely to turn up for

THE OPPOSITION Congress-led UDF is not averse to cancelling the Assembly bypolls. The Opposition says that even if the two MLAs are elected, they would get just four months term as the next Assembly elections are due in April 2021.

polling stations. Similarly, 1.32 lakh voters are expected to exercise their franchise in 163 polling stations in Chavara.

With the state witnessing a huge spike in Covid-19 cases over the last couple of weeks, social distancing will be at risk in these polling stations. The state has also been experiencing heavy to very heavy rainfall during the south west This is a cause of con-

cern especially in Kuttanad constituency where many areas are below sea level and prone to floods and water logging. Hence arranging logistics for polling would

be a major problem.

The state government has also apprised the EC of the huge pressure under which the officials of police, revenue, local bodies and various govern-ment departments are working as Covid-19 warriors. It is because of their relentless work that the state could contain the virus in the first two phas-

On the political front, the opposition Congress-led UDF is not averse to cancelling the Assembly

bypolls. The Opposition says that even if the two MLAs are elected, they would get just four months term as the next Assembly elections are due in April 2021.

Apart from Covid-19 threat, the elections will also put a huge financial burden on the government especially at a time when the state's economy is in

dire straits. The UDF, however, wants the local bodies poll also postponed by a few weeks elections to the 1.000-plus local bodies including corporations, municipalities, panchayats are scheduled

to be held in October. The BJP on the other hand is for cancelling hand Assembly However, the party wants the local bodies poll as scheduled. All these issues will be discussed in detail at the all party meeting on Friday.

The government will try to arrive at a consensus before going to the EC or at least a month. The again.

IN BRIEF

Quake strikes

New Jersey

New York: A magnitude 3.1 earthquake struck in East Freehold, New Jersey, early Wednesday morning, the US Geological Survey reported. Residents took to social media to express their shock at the rare occurrence. Hundreds of people as far away as Philadelphia and Long Island, New York, contributed to the USGS' "Did You Feel It?" map, reporting only weak or light shaking and no damage. "It would be very surprising for us to see anything more than you know, damaged shelves or picture frames falling off of windows," said Robert Sanders, a geophysicist with the survey. The USGS said the earthquake happened about 2 a.m. and was centered 1.25 miles south, southeast of the centre of East Freehold.

Greece rescues

151 migrants Athens: Greece's coast guard says a rescue operation was launched overnight after a yacht carrying more than 150 migrants was found in distress in bad weather northeast of the Aegean island of Amorgos. The coast guard said Wednesday a nearby cargo ship picked up 151 people from the yacht during the search and rescue operation Tuesday, in which coast guard and Greek navy vessels also participated. A witness on board the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged cargo ship said they saw one person swimming away from the yacht, but gale force

rescue operations Wednesday morning, the coast guard said. It said the cargo ship was transporting the migrants to Turkey. Thousands of people fleeting war or poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia arrive on Greek islands each year in an attempt to make their way into Europe.

winds in the area were ham-

pering any further search and

Probe on if netted

shark killed surfer Canberra: Authorities will investigate whether a dead tiger shark caught in a net off an Australian beach killed a surfer, an official said Wednesday. Nick Slater, 46, was fatally mauled on Tuesday off popular Greenmount Beach on the Gold Coast tourist strip in a rare attack off a beach pro-tected by shark netting. His death is only the second fatal shark attack at one of Queensland's 85 beaches that have been protected by nets and drum lines since as early as 1962, the state government said. The first was a 21-yearold swimmer who was mauled by more than one bull shark off a netted beach on North Stradbroke Island, north of the Gold Coast, in 2006. Qu-

eensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said a large tiger shark had been found since Slater's death tangled in a net off Greenmount Beach, "Further investigations will be conducted to discover if there is any link between it and the fatal attack," Palaszczuk said. Before nets were put in place, the last fatal shark attack was

2K HOMES WRECKED IN N. KOREA

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

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

Maysak "destroyed or inundated" more than 2,000 houses and tens of public buildings in the affected regions, the official KCNA news agency said, while 60 kilometres of roads and 59 bridges collapsed, with over 3,500 metres of railway roadbeds "swept away".

Natural disasters tend to have a greater impact in the North due to its creaking infrastructure, and the country is vulnerable to flooding as many mountains and hills have long been deforested.

The damage obliged the authorities to "change the direction of our struggle after comprehensively considering the year-end tasks that were underway", Kim told a top committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea,

according to KCNA. It did not give specific details.

Trump downplayed Covid to avoid panic: Woodward

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

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

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

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

BELARUS OPPN

DEATH THREAT

Kyiv, Sept 10: A promi-

nent opposition activist

who resisted her forcible

expulsion from Belarus

by ripping up her pass-port accused Belarusian

authorities Thursday of threatening to kill her

amid their efforts to end

a month of protests

against the country's

authoritarian president.

said in a formal complaint released by her

lawyer that agents of

Belarus' state security

committee put a bag on her head and drove her

to the border with Ukra-

ine before she fought her

removal from Belarus

"They threatened to kill me," Kolesnikova

said. "They stated that if

I refuse to leave the ter-

ritory of Belarus volun-

tarily, they will get me

out of the country any-

way — alive or in frag-ments." She demanded

that the nation's Inves-

tigative Committee pro-

be the KGB officers on

charges of abduction, illegal detention and threats of killing.

Opposition activists

came under increasing

pressure this week as

Belarus marked a month

since massive demon-

strations broke out agai-

nst President Alexander

Lukashenko's reelection

The opposition rejects

the results of the coun-

try's Aug. 9 election, and

the protesters demand-

ing Lukashenko's resig-

nation represent an un-

precedented challenge to

his 26-year rule. Kolesn-ikova is a leading mem-

ber of the Coordination

Council created by oppo-

sition activists to push

to a sixth term.

and was jailed.

Kolesnikova

Maria

LEADER GOT

Justice Dept. push into Don case could prompt dismissal

Attorney General William move is likely to have an Barr on Wednesday defancillary benefit for ended the Justice Depart-Trump in delaying the ment's move to intervene case, but administration in a defamation lawsuit against President Donald lawyers have a tough task at hand trying to argue Trump, even as experts that the president was were skeptical of the fedacting in his official eral government's effort capacity when he denied to protect the president in a seemingly private dispute. The Justice Depar-Carroll's allegations last year, experts say. tment's action is "a normal application of the law. accused him of raping her The law is clear. It is done frequently," Barr said at an unrelated news confer-

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

air. "That's always tougher

than the touch. You don't

have to touch things. Right? But the air, you just breath the air and that's how it's passed," he said.

'It's also more deadly than

even your strenuous flus."

As per the book, Trump

insists to Woodward he would triumph over the

Covid-19 pandemic and

at a New York luxury department store in the 1990s — has anything to do with the scope of his White House duties. The department's move

is likely to have an ancillary benefit for Trump in delaying the case, but administration lawyers have a tough task at hand trying to argue that the president was acting in

the economic calamity.

"Don't worry about it, Bob.

OK?" Trump told Woodward in July. "Don't worry about it. We'll get to do another book. You'll find I

was right." Facing criticism that he lied to the

country, President Trump

on Wednesday defended his decision to downplay

the dangers posed by the

pathogen, refuting allegations that he lied to the people of the country. "The fact is, I'm a cheerleader for this country, I love our country and I don't want people to be frightened," he said. "I don't want to create panic, as you say. And certainly, I'm not going to drive this country or the wor-

he denied Carroll's allega-

tions last year, experts say.

"I wouldn't make such an

argument, and if a presi-

dent approached me to do

said Stuart Gerson, who

led the Justice Departm-

ent's Civil Division in President George H.W. Bush's administration

when Barr was attorney

The president gets sued

general for the first time.

all the time and is defend-

ed by the government," Gerson added, "but those

are for lawsuits that have

to do with actions in his

official capacity as the

president. This isn't anything like that."

The Justice Departme-

nt's action is consistent

with the expansive view of

executive authority it has

taken under Barr.

ld into a frenzy.'

it, I would say, 'Don't,'

WH: PREZ NOBEL NOMINATION HARD-EARNED

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

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

Pompeo: Moscow 'poisoned' Navalny

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

"And when they see the effort to poison a dissi-dent, and they recognise that there is a substantial chance that this actually came from senior Russian officials, I think this is not good for the Russian people," he told conserva-

tive host Ben Shapiro. Navalny, the most visible critic of President Vladimir Putin within Russia, fell violently ill last month as he took a flight in Siberia. He was flown for treatment to Germany, where doctors said he was poisoned. Pompeo reiterated that the United States and its European allies all wanted Russia to "hold those responsible for this accountable" and said Washington would also try to identify the perpetrators.

"It's something that we'll take a look at, we'll evaluate, and we'll make sure we do our part to do whatever we can to reduce the risk that things like

CAMPAIGNER FOR NAVALNY BEATEN UP

Moscow, Sept. 10: Uniup an activist campaigning for hospitalised Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny in the Urals city of Chelyabinsk, his colleagues said Thursday.

Alexei Baraboshkin, the local coordinator for Navalny, was "assaulted by unknown attackers" late Wednesday after receiving threats for several weeks, his campaign office wrote on Telegram. It posted a picture of him with a bruised and bleeding eye. Navalny is being treated in Germany for poisoning with Novichok in an incident that has sparked international condemnation and the threat of sanctions against Russia.

-AFP

this happen again."

despite President Donald Trump's comment last week that he had seen no proof that Navalny was poisoned. Trump has sought warmer relations with Putin.

Covid risk pauses Assange hearing

iLeaks founder Julian Assange's extradition from Britain to the United States was suspended Thursday because one of the lawyers may have been exposed to the Co-ronavirus. District Judge Vanessa Baraitser ordered the proceedings adjourned until Monday while a lawyer representing the US government is tested for the virus.

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

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

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

Court hears Nawaz surrender review

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 10:

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

ruption reference.

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

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

directed to present arguments over admissibility of the plea and adjourned the hearing till September 15. Meanwhile, NAB has challenged **SACKED OVER FAKE LICENCES** Islamabad, Sept. 10: Three officials of Pakis-

3 PIA OFFICIALS

tan's Civil Aviation Authority have been sacked for their alleged involve-ment in the fake flying licence scandal in the country's national carrier, Pakistan International Airlines, according to a media report on Thursday. A fourth CAA employee obtained a stay order from a court against the possible decision to sack him, the Dawn newspaper reported.

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

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

Iran war games amid US tension

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

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

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

• THERE IS a hint at the threat of military conflict amid tensions between Iran and the US, which has sought to extend a years-long United Nations weapons embargo on Tehran that is due to expire in October.

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

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

Sayyari's comments Iranian state television hinted at the threat of millater acknowledged the

Khorfakkan.

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

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

Subsequently, the court Avenfield reference in Nawaz Sharif's bail in return.

for a new poll.

Journalists are watching digital screenings, virtual red carpets in their pyjamas due to Covid Tiff opens, beams on thousands of laptops globally



SUPARNA SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

The annual Toronto International Film Festival (Tiff), which serves as the diving board for big Hollywood and European films eying the Oscars, opened on Wednesday on a thousand laptop-screens across The 45th edition of Tiff is the first of its kind — a hybrid in the times of Coronavirus.

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

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

screenings, virtual red carpet events in their pyja-

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

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



Alma Poysti as Tove Jansson in Finnish film Tove.

tion of Vikram Seth's 1993 Tiff, considered the most ls (amongst the high-brow

international film festiva-

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

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

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

starring Kate Winslet.

And there is, of course, Chaitanya Tamhane's Ma-

rathi film, The Disciple.

Chronicle

11 SEPTEMBER 2020

Heed advice, announce rapid relief and stimulus

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

A survey conducted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) serves as a reality check on all-is-well claims being made by officials and ministers. The survey claimed demand continues to be weak. In fact, 41 per cent of the companies, which participated in the survey, reported that their sales in August 2020 were less than 50 per cent of their sales in August 2019. Another 21 per cent said sales in August 2020 were between 50 and 75 per cent of the sales recorded in August 2019. Fifty-six per cent companies have reported that unlocking of the economy did not improve their order books, while 49 per cent companies reported cash-flow issues. Automobile sales figures show that people don't have confidence in the economy. While car sales were relatively less impacted with people preferring safe personal transport in the pandemic, two-wheeler sales — that show the aspirational middle class is performing — have plunged by 28.7 per cent and commercial vehicle sales have more than halved reflecting the poor outlook of the economy. India is a consumption-driven and domestic-focused economy. So a weaker demand could have a highly adverse impact on people's jobs, companies and also exchequer. The Narendra Modi government, however, ignored the advice of several well-known economists to announce financial stimulus to kickstart the Indian economy. Dithering of the government to announce steps to ring-fence the economy from Covid-19 lockdown impact led to a 24 per cent contraction in the GDP in the quarter ended on June 30. Though government-paid economists believe in a V-shaped recovery, most banks and rating agencies have forecast an economic contraction of 10 to 15 per cent. State Bank of India believes that annual production of the country would be 10 per

cent less this fiscal year, which means at least 10 per cent of jobs will vanish.

Commenting on the government's complacency, former RBI governor

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

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

Do animals have rights?

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

George Orwell famously wrote in *Animal Farm* "all animals are equal but

some animals are more equal than others". This literally holds true in nature, where might is right for the sustenance of food chains and ecosystems, and in economies to which agriculture, fisheries, food processing, leather and dairy are intrinsic.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017, notified by the NDA 2.0 government, for instance, became unsustainable in law for this very reason, and the ban on the sale of cattle for slaughter that breached the people's fundamental right to livelihood was

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

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

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Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph. 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax:

Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580 Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51;

Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325 Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph:

080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552. Coimbatore: 77. Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255

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Vulnerable India faces crucial House session



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

arliament will onvene on the 4th of September, five days before the constitutional stipulation of 180 days expires. Article 85 of the Constitution stipulates that there should not be a gap of more than six months i.e. 180 days between two sessions of Parliament.

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

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

The question that the country is asking is why

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

However, in China, the virus has been all but

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

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

ty of the ill-conceived and

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

23rd of March, 2020, are still valid. Another issue that has assumed menacing proportions is the question of GST compensation to the states. When the GST framework was being negotiated from 2015 to 2017 the NDA/BJP gov-ernment had promised the states that in return for giving up their subsovereign taxing powers states would be compensated to the extent of 14 cent compounded growth in revenue using 2015-16 as the base year for revenue estimation. This was to be done calculating the difference between that figure and the actual GST collections in a particular year till 2022. This arrangement was put in place to smoothen the implementation of the GST regime and compensate states for shortfalls in revenue collection as a consequence of such execution. The central government is now reneging on this sov-

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

ereign commitment to the states. This constitutes a sledgehammer

assault on the federal structure of the nation. Parliament would naturally be very agitated for Article 1 of the Constitution states that

India that is Bharat shall be a Union of states. However, the most crucial issue that will domi-nate Parliament is the continuing Chinese aggression and occupa-

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

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

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

LETTERS

CHINA MACHINATIONS

China taking up cudgels against India can be construed as action on behalf of our perennial enemy Pakistan. It is the presence of US forces in South China Sea that deters China from venturing out for an all-out war with India. The phased withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan can pose a threat to our country.

D.S.P. Rao Kakinada

GRAFT CHARGES

Mutual bashing has become the order of the day in AP. We have a Tamil Nadu-like situation where two regional political parties are ruling the roost while the national parties are put on the back burner. As such it is common to hear the Opposition party level allegations against the ruling regional party. While in power they cannot take action against the opposition but start barking the moment they are out of it.

Govardhana Myneedu Vijayawada

VIZAG COVID CARE

It is heartening to read that Visakhapatnam district stood first in the state in operation and maintenance of Covid-19 hospitals (DC, Sept.10). Upkeep of ICUs, oxygen beds and hygiene made the grade. Credit goes to doctors and paramedical personnel. Other hospitals must comply with the test parameters to achieve the target in future. Dr C. Ghanshyam Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN Chronicle **Hijackers extend** deadline

BERNE, SWITZERLAND,

Sept. 10 The International Red Cross Committee Committee Committee announced early today that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine has delayed its ultimatum for the proposed exchange deal for the liberation of more than 400 passengers of three hijacked airlines. The Geneva-based committee told the Swiss National News Agency it had word from its special negotiator in Amman, that the ultimatum originally set for 0830 hrs IST today was delayed indefinitely. The message was relayed to the Swiss Foreign Ministry and to the three other countries involved — the US,

Bhattacharyya



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

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

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

reel in developing world". Those talking of war have no idea of the economic disaster it will inflict. India's ruling class has never fully understood, or effectively dealt with, the Communist Party of China, and wishful thinkers actually hoped the CPC would offer a magic wand for India's economic uplift. That was never to be: ever since 1971 at least, when Henry Kissinger and his boss Richard Nixon reached out to Beijing, China's focus was firmly set on America. No matter that the CPC constitution's original 1954 preamble clearly named the US as "enemy number one

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Politically, too, it will create huge turbulence. The month-long 1962 war destroyed Jawaharlal Nehru. One

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

Britain and West Germany.

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

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

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













FINANCIAL

Chronicle

ANANTAPUR | FRIDAY | 11 SEPTEMBER 2020

quick

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,840.32	1.69
Nifty 50	11,449.25	1.52
S&P 500*	3,406.29	0.22
Dollar (₹)	73.45	0.12
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.56	-0.29
Euro (₹)	86.91	-0.34
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,391▲287	0.54
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.59	-0.20
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.053	0.064
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.710	0.007
* As of 9:30 PM IST		

Peak power demand crosses last year's level

Peak power demand is back to normal as it has touched 174.33 GW on Wednesday, surpassing the highest level of 173.15 GW in September last year, showing spurt in commercial and industrial activities. The peak power demand met had level of 173.15 GW on Sept. 9 last year, as per the power min-istry data. Peak power demand met is the highest energy supply during the day.

Citi to have first woman CEO of a Wall Street bank



Citigroup said Jane Fraser would succeed Michael Corbat as the bank's next chief executive. making Fraser the first woman to lead a Wall Street bank. Fraser is currently head of Citi's global consumer banking division, a major part of the bank that includes checking and savings accounts but also Citi's nuge credit card business. She's been with Citi for 16 years. Fraser will be the first woman head of Wall Street's big six banks.

Ravi Raju to head Nomura's wealth management biz



Nomura, Asia's global investment bank, said it has appointed Indianorigin Ravi Raiu as head of international wealth management. In this newly created role, Raju will be responsi-

ble for expanding Nomura's wealth management business in Asia ex-Japan. Raju will be based in Singapore.

Australia allows import of Indian pomegranates

India will now be able to exportpomegranates to Australia for the first time if certain biosecurity conditions are met, a senior diplomat said. The development comes after the completion of an import protocol for fresh pomegranates from India, which followed an import risk assessment involving significant collaboration and discussion between Indian and Australian authorities.



■ Govt awaits opportune time to enter market

26 PSUs chosen for divestment

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

It is official now. The government has revealed that 26 public sector undertakings (PSUs) have been chosen for privatisation as of now. Out of the shortlisted PSUs, 23 have received the Cabinet approval recently. The move is part of the government's efforts to meet its ambitious Rs 2.1lakh crore divestment target for the current fiscal.

Responding a right to information (RTI) query sought by Chandigarh-based activist Aman based activist Aman Sethi, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam), under Ministry of Finance, on

August 24 said, "There are 26 public sector undertakings in the list as on the date so far in which the Government of India is pursuing strategic divest-

The activist raised two specific queries; the percentage of more shares the government plans to divest; and if Uco Bank is also included in the sell-off list. The Dipam responded that the percentage of shares would be decided according to the market conditions and that no information was available with the department about the Uco Bank issue.

Sensing heightened risk to revenue from the economic slowdown and the evolving pandemic conditions, the government has set a disinvestment target



LINED UP FOR SELLOFF

- Project & Development India Engineering Projects India
- Pawan Hans
- B&R Company
- Central Electronics
- Cement Corp India (Nayagaon unit)
- Indian Medicine & Pharmaceuticals Corporation Salem Steel Plant, Bhadrawati
- Steel Plant, Durgapur Steel Plant Ferro Scrap Nigam
- NDMC, Nagarnar Steel Plant
- Bharat Earth Movers
- ▶ Bharat Petroleum Corporation Shipping Corporation of India Container Corporation of India
- Nilachal Ispat Nigam
- Hindustan Prefab Bharat Pumps and Compressors
- Scooters India
- Hindustan Newsprint Karnataka Antibiotics &
- **Pharmaceuticals** Bengal Chemicals and
- Pharmaceuticals
- Hindustan Antibiotics Indian Tourism Development
- Corporation
- Hindustan Fluorocarbon

Source: Dipam

of Rs 2.10 lakh crore for the 2020-21 fiscal. Of this, Rs 1.20 lakh crore is to come from disinvestment of public sector undertakings and another Rs 90,000 crore from stake sale in other financial institutions. In July, finance minister

Nirmala Sitharaman had announced privatisation of about 23 public sector companies, which had already received cabinet approval. Elaborating disinvestment

plans, the minister had said the government wanted to sell stake in public sector companies when it would fetch the right price.

"There are already nearly 22-23 such PSUs which have been cleared by the Cabinet for disinvestment. The intent is clear that at least for those which had already been cleared by the Cabinet, we will have to disinvest," the finance

India to take ₹30 L cr hit from Covid in medium-term

SANGEETHA G

The pandemic would have caused a perma-nent loss of Rs 30 lakh crore to the economy in the medium-term. This is much higher than the loss suffered by several other countries in the Asia-Pacific, finds Crisil.

The rating agency expects the pandemic to have caused a permanent loss of 13 per cent of real GDP over the medium-term. In nominal terms, this amounts to Rs 30 lakh crore. The loss is far higher than a 3 per cent permanent hit to GDP in Asia-Pacific economies, other than China and India, estimated by S&P Global in

Catching-up with the pre-pandemic trend value of real GDP would require average real GDP growth to surge to 13 per cent annually for the next three fiscals- a feat never before accomplished by India. Crisil has also revised

India's real GDP growth forecast for fiscal 2021 to -9 per cent from -5 per cent projected in May. "With the pandemic's peak not yet in sight and the government not providing adequate direct fiscal support, the downside risks to our earlier forecast have materialised,"it said, adding, that if Covid-19 were to peak out in Sept.-Oct., GDP growth could turn mildly positive towards the fiscal end.

Over 85% MSMEs still face liquidity crunch

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

Despite Rs 1.61 lakh crore getting sanctioned under Emergency Credit Line (ECLGS), more than 85 per cent of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are still facing liquidity crunch.

As per the finance ministry data, till September 3, a total of Rs 1,61,017 crore or 53 per cent of the Rs 3 lakh crore ECLGS scheme has been sanctioned by different banks for the MSME sector reeling under the slowdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Of this, disbursements stood at Rs 1,13,713 lakh crore or 37 However, these loans

have been sanctioned for only those MSMEs which already had a loan outstanding with the banks. Of the total 6 crore MSMEs, 85 per cent do not have access to the formal banking system. The large majority has been facing issues even before the pandemic. The pandemic further enhanced their liquidity crunch. Among the MSMEs having access to formal credit, those who had a loan outstanding at the time of lockdown only were eligi-ble for additional credit," said Meghna Surya-kumar, founder and CEO

of Crediwatch. The finance ministry data says that 41 lakh accounts have been sanctioned loans and 24 lakh have received it. The data does not specify the number of MSMEs which have been sanctioned or received credit. Even if



each account is counted as an MSME, only 6.8 per cent of the MSMEs have received the additional

credit.

"In the first half of this fiscal, hardly any new loan has been disbursed to new MSMEs. New entrepreneurs with fresh loan requirements too are looking at fast sanction and disbursal of loans with 2 per cent interest subvention. I hope and pray the banks announce some special loan schemes for the second half of this fiscal. Liberal loan programmes for existing MSMEs outside the institutional credit domain as on February 29, 2020 should be immediately planned and announced," said Rajive chairman,

IamSMEofIndia. Suryakumar finds a ray of hope coming from the fintech space. According to her, a few fintech players like Lendingkart and Capital Float have started financing the MSMEs outside the purview of formal banking. "Currently, their presence is quite small. But in the next five years, they would be financing a larger share of the unbanked MSMEs. The ongoing digitisation process will provide these MSMEs access to digital credit," she said.

In order to get there, MSMEs will have to first survive the pandemic.

RIL's market cap crosses \$200 billion

FC BUREAU MUMBAI, SEPT. 10

Reliance Industries Ltd's market valuation crossed the \$200-billion mark on Thursday after the company's shares closed over per cent higher. RIL is the first domestic company to achieve this milestone.

During the day, the company's market valuation jumped to Rs 15,84,908 crore (\$215.75 billion) on the BSE.

The stock of the country's most valuable company rose by 7.10 per cent to close at Rs 2,314.65 on the BSE. Intraday, it jumped 8.45 per cent to a record high of Rs 2,343.90.

On the NSE, the shares gained 7.29 per cent to close at Rs 2,319 after hitting a lifetime high of Rs 2,344.95, up 8.49 per cent. In the previous session

too, the share had closed with nearly 3 per cent

At close of trade on the BSE, RIL's market valuation rose to Rs 14,67,350.26 crore (\$199.74 billion). Strong buying interest

iwas seen in the stock after the company secured Rs 7,500 crore investment in its retail business from US-based PE firm Silver Buying was further pro-

pelled after news emerged that RIL has offered a \$20 billion stake in its retail business to US retail giant Amazon.com.

The Sensex gained 646 points or 1.69 per cent on Thursday closing at 38,840.32 while Nifty-50 gained 171.25 points or 1.52 per cent to close at

FPIs were net buyers of equities worth Rs 838.37 crore on Thursday.

Flawless 102-carat stone could fetch \$30 mn



JILL SERJEANT SEPT. 10

One of the world's rarest diamonds, about the size of an egg or a large lollipop, is going up for auction next month and is expected to fetch \$12 million to \$30 million.

Sotheby's said on Thursday that the 102.39carat diamond, a flawless white sparkler, was the second-largest oval diamond of its kind to be offered at auction. The largest, a 118.28-carat diamond, set a record \$30.8 million price when it was sold in 2013.

Only seven such diamonds, known in the trade as D colour flawless or internally flawless white diamonds, over 100 carats have previously been sold at auction. "More and more people

have come to understand that something billions of years old and of the size of a lollipop can store as value as a Rembrandt self-portrait or a Basquiat," Gary Schuler, worldwide chairman of jewellery at Sotheby's, said in a statement.

"Diamonds of this calibre and size have sold anywhere between \$11.9 million and \$33.7 million, said Quig Bruning, head of Sotheby's New York jewellery department. Sotheby's said the gem

was cut from a 271-carat rough discovered at the Victor Mine in the Canadian province of Ontario in 2018 and cut and polished for more than a

Two of the most famous large diamonds—the Kohi-Noor and The Cullinan 1- belong to the British monarchy and form part of the British Crown

-Reuters

India's fuel demand dips most since April New Delhi, Sept 10: India's fuel demand in

August posted its biggest decline since April as local lockdowns put brakes on economic activity and transportation, official data showed on Thursday. troleum product sales fell to 14.39 million tonnes in August, down 7.5 per cent over the previous month and about 16 per cent from a year earlier, data from the oil min-Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) showed. The decline in August

was the sixth consecutive year-on-year slide. Fuel demand had slumped by a record 48.6 per cent in April to 9.4 million tonnes as the government imposed a nationwide lockdown in an attempt to curb the spread of coron-

It recovered in the subsequent two months but has been falling again since July, on a monthly basis. Sale of diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country, fell 12 per cent to 4.84 million tonnes in August from 5.51 million tonnes in the previous demand for diesel declined by 20.7 per cent. Petrol sales fell 7.4 per cent yearon-year to 2.38 million tonnes although it rose 5.3 per cent from 2.26 million tonnes in July as commuters preferred ariving to using public transportation. LPG sales were down five per cent year-on-year to 2.2 million tonnes. while kerosene demand fell 43 per cent to 1,32,000 tonnes. Month-on-month, the sale was almost flat. Industry sources said reaching pre-COVID-19 sales may take at least 3-4 months. There is likely to be a pick-up in demand with the onset of the festive season in October-November but reaching pre-COVID-19 levels would not be before new year, they said.

Oil minister
Dharmendra Pradhan had
previously stated that
sales would return to normal by festival season but the local lockdowns being imposed in several states has prolonged the return to normalcy Naphtha sales at 1.07 million tonnes was down 16 per cent over July demand.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday launched Rs 20,050-crore Thursday On an annual basis, the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada (PMMSY) to boost production and exports in the fisheries sector as part of the government's aim to double farmers' income. Through video confer ence, the Prime Minister launched several other initiatives in the fisheries and animal husbandry sectors in Bihar, a state which is heading for the assembly polls in

> Modi launched a mobile app e-Gopala that will provide solutions to farmers on livestock related issues and inaugurated Semen Station with state-of-theart facilities in Purnea with an investment of Rs 84.27 crore on 75 acres of land made available by the Bihar government. After the launch, the

October-November.

Prime Minister interacted with farmers focusing on the livestock and fisheries sector. The PMMSY is a flagship scheme for focused and sustainable development of fisheries sector in the country with an estimated investment of Rs 20,050 crore for its implementation during



2020-21 to 2024-25 as part of Aatmanirbhar

package.
The investment of Rs 20,050 crore under PMMSY is the highest ever in the fisheries sec-tor, the PMO said on

Wednesday.
Out of this, an investment of about Rs 12,340 crore is proposed for beneficiary-oriented activities in marine, inland fisheries and aquaculture and about Rs 7,710 crore investment for fisheries infrastructure.
The PMMSY aims at

enhancing fish production

PM launches ₹20,000 cr fisheries scheme

by an additional 70 lakh tonne by 2024-25, increasing fisheries export earnings to Rs 1 lakh crore by

AVANTI FEEDS SEES CENTRE'S BLUE REVOLUTION BOOSTING BIZ ASHUTOSH JOSHI

Avanti Feeds Ltd, one of India's biggest exporters of seafood, says the government's ambitious plan to promote fisheries will boost its business. The Hyderabad-based

company, in which Thai Union Group Pcl holds a 24 per cent stake, recommends farmers should group together to benefit from the scale of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promised invest-ment. The so-called blue revolution has an outlay of about Rs 20,000 crore (\$2.7 billion) on infrastructure, including cold storage and processing facilities, and Modi on Thursday rolled out an app for farmers to get market information.

"Ultimately, the backbone of this industry is the farmer, if you support him, everything will grow," Avanti Feeds's joint managing director C. Ramachandra Rao said on a call with ana-

roadster version R in

India that was launched

at Rs 18 lakh. Similar to

the R, the GT too is being

brought to the country through the CBU route. Deliveries of the new

bike will start by the end

The new Rocket 3 GT is

liquid-cooled engine

from the R that pro-

and a mas-

sive 221Nm of torque.

powered by the same 2,500cc, three-cylinder,

of this month.

lysts late Wednesday. The programme is part

of Modi's stimulus to revive the economy from a coronavirus-induced slump. It aims to more than double per capita consumption of fish in India to 12 kg by March 2025, and targets to generate about 5.5 million jobs.

Avanti Feeds, which exports more than twothirds of its shrimps to the US, is looking for supply contracts with other countries, including China. For the three including months through June, about 26 per cent of its exports were to Asian countries, with China being the major destina-

'We are working with Chinese importers to develop value-added products," Alluri Nikhilesh, executive director at the company's frozen foods units, said on the call. "China can become a dominant importer in the next few years."

—Bloomberg

Maserati unveils supercar after 15-yr gap

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, SEPT, 10

Italian super sports carmaker Maserati, owned by Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, on Thursday unveiled the new MC20, its first supercar in 15 years, in Modena.

Maserati's last supercar, the MC12, which cost almost \$800,000 was stopped being produced in 2005 after making only 50 units and bought by that few globally. In 2018, one MC12 sold at an RM Sotheby's auction for \$2.5

million.

Prices for the new MC20 car, which will be available globally next year, will start at about \$210,000. The supercar's production launch is scheduled for the end of this year, and Maserati is already accepting orders.



"The MC20 is more than a supercar. It's set the cornerstone to build Maserati for the future," Maserati CEO Davide Grasso said.

The new halo model will also offer electric, convertible and motorsport variants in beginning in With a body made large-

ly from lightweight car-

bon fiber and aluminum.

the new Nettuno engine, a

630 horsepower V6 with

torque of 730 Nm, delivers

0-100 km/h acceleration in under 2.9 seconds and a top speed over 325 km an hour. This engine signals Maserati's return to producing its own power units after a hiatus of more than 20 years.

The Maserati MC20 is part of a long-term plan by Fiat Chrysler to rebuild Maserati's once strong reputation for performance. "It was critical of our

strategy to start this new era with the launch of a

The compa

TRIUMPH ROCKET 3 GT BIKE **LAUNCHED AT ₹18.4 LAKH** ny already offers the

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, SEPT, 10

British superbike manufacturer Triumph Motorcycles, on Thursday launched its ultimate tourer, the all-new Rocket 3 GT in India priced at Rs 18.40 lakh at pan India

showroom. Well, that price is almost equivalent to a brand new Honda

sports car," Grasso said, adding that "a sports car that will bring us back to

China's mobile shipments down **15.6% in August**

Shanghai, Sept. 10: Smartphone shipments in China fell 15.6 per cent in August compared with a year earlier, government data released on Thurs-

day showed. The numbers show consumer demand for hand-sets in China remains low, and that companies such as Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, Xiaomi Corp and Apple Inc will have a tougher time than before convincing customers to buy their latest products.

Phone makers shipped 24.4 million handsets in July, down from 33 million a year earlier, according to the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology,

backed think tank. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Natl badminton

camp called off

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

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

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

raging pandemic. However, top players, who are mostly from Hyderabad, were against the idea and voiced their reluctance to stay at the academy to SAI in a video con-

Vaccine will not guarantee Games

Laussane: Amid uncertainty about planning the Tokyo Olympics, IOC president Thomas Bach said that progress with vaccines and rapid testing for Covid-19 would not be the complete answer for staging the rescheduled Games.

"They will not be the silver bullet but they can greatly facilitate the organisation of the Games," Bach said after an **International Olympic**

Committee board meeting. Bach declined to speculate on the Tokyo Olympics being held without fans. "We don't know how the world looks like tomorrow. So how can you expect from us to know how the world looks in 320 days from today?" Bach further added - AP

Jonty to coach Sweden post IPL

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

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

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

said in a statement. Rhodes said he is excited about the fresh challenge he will face in a country not known for its cricket. "I am really excited to relocate to Sweden with my family and work together with the Swedish Cricket community," Rhodes said. - PTI

Panghal bats for formative coach

New Delhi: Asian Games champion boxer Amit Panghal has requested the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to allow the inclusion of his formative coach Anil Dhankar in the ongoing national camp in Patiala. Panghal said he has sent across his proposal formally to both SAI and the Sports Ministry but hasn't got any response so far.

done that. I am waiting for some response, haven't got any as yet. The last mail that was sent by me to the ministry was on Monday," Panghal said. Panghal has regularly credited pleaded for a Dronacharva

"I can only request and I have

Dhankar for shaping his career in the early years, and had even award for the coach. - PTI



England vs Australia 1st ODI from

5.30 pm on Sony Six, HD **FORMULA ONE**

Italian Grand Prix Practice-1 from 2.25 pm: Practice-2 from 6.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

Women's Doubles Final from 9.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 2, HD

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VICTOR AZARENKA

Serena, the other Mum, too into US semis

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

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

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

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

"At that point I was fighting so hard. I was just try-ing to do everything I can whether righty or lefty,'

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

"I never give up and you know I just gotta keep going," Serena futher

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

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

serving, I just tell myself, I don't care if my arm falls off, I'm going to keep serv-

ing," she said.
Serena is looking to match Margaret Court's record for the most number of singles Grand Slam

It has been more than three years since she won her 23rd at the 2017 Australian Open — when she was already pregnant with daughter Olympia. Serena has come close since, reaching four major

finals only to come away empty handed. In the last four she will renew her rivalry with

Azarenka who demolished Mertens 6-1, 6-0 in just 1hr 13 min. Serena defeated

Azarenka in the final of the US Open in 2012 and

The last few years of Azarenka's career have



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

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

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

"I enjoy the moment no matter what it is. I take as it comes, Azarenka told reporters. "It took me a long road to come nere with

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

THE RESULTS

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

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

she further added. draw. In the men's Russia's third seed

Medvedev downed compa-

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

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

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

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

SINNER DOWNS PHILLIPP IN GENERALI OPEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I had a great feeling from the first moment on," said the Austrian. Fifth seed Alexander Zverev of Germany faces

Spain's 20th seed Pablo Carreno Busta in the competition's other semi-final.

The disqualification of Novak Djokovic for accicial with a ball during the last 16 means the US Open will crown a first-time Grand Slam winner on

Smith sings Virat praises, says best

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

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

Smith, who is currently in England for the threematch ODI series against the hosts starting from Friday, said this during an Instagram session with

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

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

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

Smith, who is set to represent Rajasthan Royalist in IPL 2020, said India's KL Rahul and Sanju Samson watch out for.

ACU ARRIVES IN DUBAI TO KEEP IPL IN CHECK

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

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

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

fans to approach players.

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

Morgan and team set to take on Oz

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

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

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

was driven by their pace attack.

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

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

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

Pascal Siakam (right) of Toronto Raptors drives on Kemba Walker of Boston Celtics during their NBA conference semifinal playoff game in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, on Wednesday. Raptors won 125-122.

Lowry scores high as **Raptors bully Celtics**

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

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

weight boxing matchup.
The defending champion
Raptors equalised the best-ofseven Eastern Conference semi-

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

Meahwhile, Kawhi Leonard finished an assist shy of his first playoff triple-double and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Denver Nuggets 96-85 in Game 4 to move a step closer to their first Western Conference finals. Leonard garnered 30 points, 11

rebounds, four steals and two blocked shots. Reserve Montrezl Harrell added 15 points to help the Clippers take a 3-1 lead. They can close out the Nuggets on

NUMBERS GAME AUSTRALIA-ENGLAND IN ONE DAYERS SUMMARY OF RESULTS Aus won Eng won

Australia 25 71 45 **England** 70 35 22 South Africa **Emirates** West Indies **Total** 149 62 Day/Night matches 70 43 25 Last five matches

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

Australia: 70 in 25.2 overs at Birmingham 04-06-1977 **England:** 86 in 32.4 overs at Manchester 14-06-2001 HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORI Australia: 161* Shane Watson at Melbourne 16-01-2011

England: 180 Jason Roy at Melbourne 14-01-2018 **BEST BOWLING PERFORMANCES** ■ Australia: 7-20 Andy Bichel at Port Elizabeth 02-03-2003

England: 6-45 Chris Woakes at Brisbane 30-01-2011

- S. PERVEZ QAISER

Dhoni braces for another IPL hit in adversity



Hemant Kenkre

Silly Point f a question were to be

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

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

the game speak for them-selves. With three

Dhoni's record as a capmany pros notched therein tain in the short formats of outweighing the cons.

three

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

Thala (the Head) as he is

called can do no wrong

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

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

Raina has weighed heavily

on the probable combina-

tion of the team, the with-

of Harbhajan

drawal

according to CSK fans. To Singh (due to personal reasons) must have put the yellow fellows a few more steps back. CSK fans have yet to assimilate what it would mean for their favourite team to take the field without Chinna Thala (little head) as Raina is fondly referred to. Both Raina and Harbhajan get a lot to the undisturbed table of CSK,

in different ways. With 5368 runs scored in twelve editions of the IPL, the left hander stands second on the list of top scorers, 44 runs behind Virat Kohli and above Rohit Sharma who follows at number

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

heavy with seniors playing

a youthful game. In 2018, Dhoni led CSK to their third IPL victory, the team coming back after a

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

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

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

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