

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | SATURDAY 19 | SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 32°C
Min: 26°C
Rainfall: 0.5 mm

Forecast: A thunderstorm in spots in the evening; otherwise, considerable cloudiness

No contempt proceedings against actor Suriya

Chennai: The Madras high court on Friday declined to initiate criminal contempt proceedings against well-known actor Suriya for his comments against the judiciary made in the light Neet. Earlier, a row erupted after Suriya said the court functioned virtually, but asked students to appear for Neet, prompting a Madras High Court judge and an advocates association to seek contempt action against him, while six former judges took a stand against it. ■ P4

Paytm app back on Google Play store

New Delhi: Google on Friday restored the Paytm app on its Play Store after removing it for a few hours for violating its policy on sports betting activities. The app was back on the Google Play store on Friday evening after the Softbank-backed Paytm removed the 'cashback' feature from a recently-launched game on the application. ■ P7

Omandurar govt hospital bags award

Chennai: The Government Medical College in the Omandurar Government Estates in Chennai has won a first prize given by the Consortium of Accredited Healthcare Organizations (CAHO), India's premier body of accredited healthcare organizations dedicated to improving the quality and safety of healthcare services.

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CM asks for more seats under BPO promotion scheme



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Duplantis high over 26-yr-old Bubka bar



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AIADMK decides to sort out internal differences

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

The top brass of the AIADMK went into a huddle on Friday, apparently in a bid to resolve the internal differences within the party particularly the issue relating to finalisation of the next Chief Ministerial candidate, and finally decided to convene the executive committee on Monday (September 28).

The impromptu meeting

Executive committee meet on September 28

on Friday was called by the party convener and Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam through a communication issued on Thursday. Even as the meeting was on, supporters of both Panneerselvam and Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami had gathered at the party headquarters premises.

Posters hailing both the leaders were put up and slogans raised when the leaders emerged from the meeting indicated the bone of contention was the Chief Minister's post. While Palaniswami's supporters called him the 'permanent chief minister', Panneerselvam was hailed as the 'political heir of Jayalalithaa'.

The meeting was attended only by prominent leaders of the party, not numbering more than 50. ■ P4

Army finds prima facie evidence against its troops

Srinagar, Sept. 18: The Army has found "prima facie" evidence its troops "exceeded" powers under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act during an encounter in Kashmir's Shopian district in which three men were killed in July this year and has initiated disciplinary proceedings, officials said on Friday. On July 18, the Army claimed three militants were killed in Amshipura village in the higher reaches of south Kashmir's Shopian district. — PTI ■ P5

Lok Sabha impasse ends after Thakur's apology

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 18

There was high drama in the Lok Sabha as minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur made disparaging remarks about the Nehru-Gandhi family, which led to several adjournments, as Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Choudhury called him "a chhokra from Himachal Pradesh".

Later, the proceedings resumed only at 6 pm after four adjournments, when Mr Thakur "apologised" to the House, saying he was "pained" if his words had hurt anyone, on the insistence of Speaker Om Birla.

Earlier, the trouble began when during the introduction of the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provision) Bill by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Opposition members criticised the PM-Cares fund's validity. Mr Thakur counter-attacked immediately and accused the Gandhi family of "cheating" people by pooling public money through creation of vari-

ous funds under different names. While Opposition leaders — Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tewari and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury — were critical of the PM-Cares fund during the discussion on the legislation, Mr Thakur said: "From the high court to the Supreme Court, all courts have validated the PM-Cares fund. Even children have contributed to it from their piggy banks. Nehru had set up a fund that has not been registered to date. You (Congress) only made a trust for the bene-

fit of the Gandhi family. You made Sonia Gandhi its chairman. It should be probed."

"Nehruji ordered the creation of Prime Minister's National Relief Fund in 1948 like a royal order, but its registration has not been done even till today. How did it get FCRA clearance?" Mr Thakur sought to know.

This irked the Opposition and Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury lashed out at Mr Thakur, calling him a "chhokra", demanding an apology for maligning the Nehru-Gandhi family.

IPL promises a 'happy distraction'

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

It's billed a "positive distraction", a catalyst that's going to "change the mood of the nation" and a "much-needed chaos" in the time of pandemic. The 13th edition of the Indian Premier League beginning in Abu Dhabi on Saturday is expected to grab more eyeballs than usual as the five-month delay caused by Covid-19 has whetted cricket aficionados' appetite for slam-bang action.

The IPL juggernaut had to be moved out of India, was

brand — and suffered many a nervous moment with over a dozen Covid-19 positive cases in its UAE bubble, but has marched on and is now ready to enthrall millions of fans watching from the convenience of their living rooms.

Unlike previous editions, the show begins without a glamorous opening night and boisterous crowds, but the high-octane clash between defending champions Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings promises to be a blockbuster start. The two teams had

forced to part ways with the title sponsor — a Chinese

brand — and suffered many a nervous moment with over a dozen Covid-19 positive cases in its UAE bubble, but has marched on and is now ready to enthrall millions of fans watching from the convenience of their living rooms.

Unlike previous editions, the show begins without a glamorous opening night and boisterous crowds, but the high-octane clash between defending champions Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings promises to be a blockbuster start. The two teams had

featured in the final of the last edition of IPL with CSK going down by one run.

Saturday's match will be M.S. Dhoni's first appearance in a competitive game since July 2019. The recently retired player had his task cut out, motivating the players amidst the Covid-19 scare in the CSK bio-bubble. The twin pullouts of Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh added to their pre-season drama. Despite suffering a delayed start to their training camp, the Super Kings are raring to go.

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OTHER STORIES

CS discusses monsoon readines

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

Chief secretary K Shanmugam on Friday convened a meeting at the secretariat involving officials of all concerned departments to discuss the state's monsoon preparedness. Officials of the Indian Air Force, Coast Guard, National Disaster Management Authority and the Chennai Corporation Commissioner participated in the meeting which discussed the preparedness of the state to face the NE monsoon that is likely to set in the month of October.

Aspects like details of honing the skills of personnel involved in disaster management, mock drills to train a minimum of 50 personnel at a time, health norms to be adopted in view of the pandemic, social distancing and wearing of face masks were stressed at the meeting.

Officials were instructed to take due care that the pandemic did not spread and gain intensity. They were also asked to conduct awareness camps to promote the government's concept of health and safety even to the public.

SIT to probe PM kisan scheme scam

CHENNAI: A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been set up by the Tamil Nadu police to probe the alleged irregularities in the Central government's Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi. The Crime Branch CID said on Friday that the SIT has been set up to look into allegations of a large number of ineligible farmers availing benefits of the scheme using fraudulent means. "Complaints were received that many ineligible farmers were inducted and availed the benefits through malpractices with the connivance of officials and outsourcing agencies," a CB-CID release said. Based on the complaints, 13 cases have been registered. —PTI

COUNTER POINT



Robbery attempt on woman on shared auto

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

A shared auto ride in Pammal area turned a nightmare for a 45-year-old woman on Friday. Police said Saraswathi, a government school teacher and a resident of Thiruvallur Nagar in Pammal, was almost robbed of her 7-sovereign chain in broad daylight.

According to the police, when the victim boarded the auto from Pammal to go

Ward for Covid suspects opened in RGGGH: Min

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

A 120-bed special ward was opened for admitting 'Covid-19 suspect' cases at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital on Friday by health minister C. Vijayabaskar.

The special ward is to take care of those who test negative for coronavirus but develop breathlessness due to serious lung infection. Vijayabaskar said that this was the first time such an exclusive ward was being opened in a hospital. Soon one more such ward would be opened in Truchi and subsequently in other districts also.



He said the positivity rate of Covid-19 in Chennai had gone down to 10 per cent, which was a welcome sign as the positivity rate was at 30 per cent at one point of time and added that people should be more careful now as relaxations had been brought in to the lockdown norms.

When asked about discrepancies in the numbers put out by the State government and the Central government, health sdecretary J. Radhakrishnan said that can happen because of the time lag in uploading the data.

Some time it took four days to upload the data, he said, adding that in many states it took even 10 days.

Meanwhile, the state reported 5488 infections and 67 deaths.

Chennai had 989 new cases and 16 fatalities, while some districts reported high level of infection. They were Coimbatore 543, Salem 288, Chengalpattu 265, Thiruvallur 258 and Cuddalore 254.



The old bus terminus at Vellore remains cramped for space.

— K. Senthil Nathan

SR to install solar plants on 460 acres of land

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

The Southern Railway is on a mission to become energy efficient and is making all-out efforts in tapping alternative sources of energy.

In tune with the robust policies of the ministry of railways, the Southern Railway has been cutting down on energy costs making substantial savings in this front. With the vision of becoming a 'Green mode of transport', the zone is expediting its electrification projects, thus reducing carbon emission. Besides track electrification, the Southern railway is eyeing for solar power projects and other initiatives like harnessing renewable energy through wind mills.

In a press release issued on Friday, Chief Public Relations Officer, Southern

Solar plants on vacant unused railway land will be installed with a capacity of 40 MWp will be installed along the track over Southern Railway through PPA mode. Southern Railway has identified 300 acres of vacant land and 160 acres of land alongside the track

Railway, B. Gugesan, said, "Solar panels have been installed in various locations and railway stations like Dr MGR Central station, MMC complex, Katpadi, Tambaram EMU car-shed, Mambalam, Guindy, Chengalpattu suburban stations and many other places. The zone has ambitious plans of increasing solar power generation in the coming years. It is proposed to provide rooftop solar plants of 2.69 MWp under developer mode by

solar power developer, at Perambur, and the Golden Rock workshops." Solar plants on vacant unused railway land will be installed with a capacity of around 67 MWp and capacity of 40 MWp will be installed along the track over Southern Railway through PPA mode. Southern Railway has identified 300 acres of vacant land and 160 acres of land alongside the track.

To harness renewable energy through windmills, plants have been installed in Kayathar near Gangai Kondan and Kadambur railway stations in Tuticorin district, under the Madurai division. The railway is committed to fast tracking its renewable energy projects with a vision to cut down power costs and support the cause of 'Atma-Nirbhar'.



Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami addressing the audience over video-conferencing the 29th convocation ceremony of the Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology on Friday. The convocation was presided over by chancellor Dr Mariazeena Johnson. A total of 3,190 graduands and 129 Ph.D scholars received their degrees. Among them, 20 students were awarded gold medals for their exemplary performance. Sathyabama is ranked one among the top 50 universities in India for four consecutive years by NIRF, Government of India.

CM asks for more seats under BPO promotion

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami urged the Union minister for electronics and communication Ravi Shankar Prasad, to allot 10,000 more seats to the state under the India BPO Promotion scheme.

In a letter to the Union minister on Friday, Palaniswami said the scheme was very successful in the state and had provided 7,705 seats in Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) Chennai jurisdiction (7,605 seats in of Tamil Nadu and 100 seats in Puducherry).

It had resulted in creating direct employment for 8,387 people and indirect employment for 16,774 people and the success rate of the scheme in the state in terms of commencement of operation was more than 93%, the Chief Minister said.

The scheme, which was launched to incentivize Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and

OPS for forming high-level committee to guide party

From P1

It is learnt that Pann-eerselvam had been insisting on the formation of a high-level committee to guide the party and that was also discussed at the meeting.

However, the waiting media was told that the meeting discussed the activities of the party and about its growth.

The executive committee is expected to decide on the date for holding the general council, which would take a final call on sorting out all

the issues before the release of V. K. Sasikala, the close friend of former Chief Minister J. Jayalalitha, from the Bengaluru jail.

The party leaders, it is said, want to finalise as to who would be the general secretary and who would be the Chief Ministerial candidate in the general council and ensure that Sasikala did not meddle with the party affairs once she comes back.

Though many leaders of the AIADMK had been

averring the Sasikala's return would not affect the functioning of the party in any way, the party's minorities wing secretary A. Anwar Raja said on Friday something contrary to that.

"The decision that Sasikala takes on her return will have a serious impact on Tamil Nadu politics," Anwar Raja said at Ramanathapuram after holding a local level meeting to decide on the reception to the Chief Minister when he visits the town in a few days' time.

Farmers resent Centre's three bills

G. SRINIVASAN | DC
THANJAVUR, SEPT. 18

Farmers in the district, particularly those belonging to Kumbakonam area, lodged a protest on Friday, against three alleged anti-farmers legislations of the Centre.

Farmers who participated in the monthly grievance-day meeting held by Collector M Govinda Rao through video-conferencing, wore black badges and staged a walk out for a short time against the three legislations.

The Central government introduced the three legislations in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, replacing three ordinances on reforming the farm sector, which includes dismantling the age-old mandi system.

Sundara Vimalanathan, a farmer from Kumbakonam area, said that the farming community welcomed the resignation of Union minister for food processing, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, of Akali Dal, and said that the legislations would help only the corporates.

South Korea donates one lakh masks

CHENNAI, SEPT. 18 A South Korean social welfare corporation, Anguk Zen Center, has donated one lakh health masks for free distribution to local communities in India to aid the country's fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. The consignment was handed over to TVS Motors chairman, Venu Srinivasan, who is also the chairman of InKo Centre and Goodwill Envoy for Culture and Diplomacy of the Republic of Korea.

Stalin flays AIADMK for support to anti-ryots bills

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

DMK president M. K. Stalin launched a scathing attack on the AIADMK for supporting three Central legislations that were basically anti-farmers and urged Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to never call himself a 'farmer' on stage.

Referring to the resignation of Union food processing minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal in protest against Parliament passing the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill 2020 and Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, Stalin, in a statement on Friday, said that the AIADMK had been saying that the legislations would help farmers.

He said those two bills and the Essential Commodities Amendment Bill would pledge the livelihood of farmers to the Corporate Houses and tantamount to the Centre interfering in the State's

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

The DMK had lost the faith of the people and would hence not win the next election as the party's president M. K. Stalin was hoping for, revenue minister R. B. Udhayakumar said on Saturday.

He told the media after inspecting Covid-19 prevention work at Thiru Vi Ka Nagar that the AIADMK was preparing for the elections like a student would prepare for examinations and would hence win.

affairs against the spirit of federalism as agriculture is a state subject.

The bills would also help corporate houses hoard agricultural products and essential goods and sell them for a profit, he said.

When the DMK had

He said the Chief Minister was touring every district to ensure that the people's welfare programmes were properly implemented all over the State.

But Stalin had been complaining about everything that the government was doing, Udhayakumar said, adding that he even criticized the government for announcing that the students need not appear for the arrears examinations and would be declared pass in the papers.

SRMU to switch off lights at 8 tonight as protest

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

In protest against the Central government's decision to implement the Dr Bibek Debroy committee recommendation roping in private players in the railway sector, the Southern Railway Mazdoor Union (SRMU) will conduct a unique agitation by switching off electric lights at everyone's homes between 8 pm and 8.10 on Saturday to create awareness among people.

Dr N. Kanniah, general secretary, SRMU, said the Central Government has a fancy for privatisation despite the railways earning profits.

"Indian Railways earns nearly ₹1,87,770 crore per year. However, only 27per cent of it is earned from passenger services. Due to concessions and low ticket charges, the railways is losing ₹56,000 crore every year. The Central Government is not reim-

bursing this subsidy to the railways. Therefore, the railways is taking this subsidy from the ₹1.28 lakh crore income received from the freight traffic. The Central Government should bear the subsidy/low cost fare charged by the railways," he said.

Right from 2015, the Central Government began steps to privatise the railways by forming a committee under Dr Debroy. In 2017, the Central Government even stopped the submission of a separate Railway Budget.

Meanwhile, Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said on Thursday that privatisation of the railways will create a win-win situation for the Indian railways, investors and the users. "Private investment will bring in newer technologies. It will create a competition in the railway sector, which will increase efficiency and reduce fares in the long run," Kant said.

Actor's Neet remarks unwarranted, says HC

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

Entirely agreeing with the opinion of the advocate general, declining to consent for any step to initiate a criminal contempt proceeding against film star S.Surya for his alleged criticising statement against the judiciary in the mater relating to holding Neet amid pandemic, the Madras high court has declined to pursue the matter further.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice A.P.Sahi and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy said, "This matter, therefore, in our judicious discretion does not deserve to be pursued further and we entirely agree with the opinion

expressed by the advocate general. We put on record our appreciation for the able guidance of the advocate general in promptly assisting us to deliver our opinion so as to tide over this legal complexity. We say all this only that the time has come when every citizen of this nation needs to educate himself even if curriculums do not prescribe, and the upbringing of our generations, also deserves to be tutored by all those who are possessed of such gifts to leave no stone unturned to impart the best they have to infuse civility, humility, courteousness and righteous expression amongst their fellow citizens for a better citizenry. The proceedings are thus

consigned. We direct the registry to maintain the records of these proceedings along with the order of the advocate general and the respective letters that have been referred to herein above, as part of the present proceedings".

The bench was passing orders on the letter sent by Justice S.M.Subramaniam, suggesting initiation of contempt proceedings against Surya, letters from certain section of the bar to the same effect and some letters from the legal fraternity including retired judges and couple of lawyers, requesting the court to exercise restraint and consequently not to proceed in the matter.

The bench said, "We find

that the utterances by the cine actor may have been absolutely unnecessary or even unwarranted, for being ignorant of the manner in which the entire judiciary of this state has served the interest of its citizens during this pandemic, and any such statement could have been avoided in a much more sober way, instead of an accusing tone, which though trivial in nature has raised a storm in a tea cup. A person in public life enjoys a position because of the responsibility with which he conducts himself and not by making other human activities look small for perceptibly no valid reason, but we would not say anything further, as we find that the Neet and

the dispute around it was not even a subject matter of the courts in the state of Tamil Nadu. A self-righteous person should himself be humble enough to acknowledge the contribution of others".

Disclosing the data relating to institution and disposal of cases during the pandemic period by the subordinate courts and high court, the bench said, "We only wish to point out that the judiciary was not sitting idle and was itself on trial during this pandemic, where the judges of the high court, of the subordinate judiciary, the entire staff and all stakeholders have served to the best of the capacity of the institution. This is not self praise,

but to state our humble performance of duty."

The bench said it has also perused the contents of the statement of the cine actor disclosed in the letter of the judge, his opinion, as also the other letters. A language which may, might be perfectly proper if uttered in a temperate manner, be grossly improper if uttered in a different manner: What may appear to be disrespectful may also be short of insult, and may be touching the borders of criticism. A reasonable precaution has to be taken in matters of public affairs, particularly Courts, Judges and their functioning, where fair and temperate criticism should not be contemptuous, the bench added.

OTHER STORY

COVID-19 DEATH
TOLL CLOSE TO
85,000-MARKDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 18

With 96,424 fresh cases, India on Friday recorded close to 52.15 lakh cases of Coronavirus. The number of deaths in a day was 1,174 taking the total number of fatalities due to Covid-19 to 84,372, as per Union health ministry figures. However, according to covid19india.org, the total number of cases had crossed 52.50 lakh by Friday evening and deaths were close to 85,000.

Health ministry officials said India has recorded an "unprecedented high" of single day recoveries after 87,472 persons recovered and discharged in the past 24 hours. The Recovery Rate has reached 78.86% as total recovered cases touched 41.12 lakh. India's Case Fatality Rate (CFR) currently stands at 1.62%.

"India has been consistently reporting a very high level of daily recoveries of more than 70,000 for the past 11 days. Recovered cases are 4.04 times the number of active cases as recoveries outnumber the latter by 30,94,797," they said.

Officials said 90 per cent of the new recoveries are reported from 16 states and Union Territories. Maharashtra (19,522) contributed 22.31% of the new recoveries while Andhra Pradesh (12,24%), Karnataka (8.3%), Tamil Nadu (6.31%) and Chhattisgarh (6.0%) followed with 32.8% of the new recoveries.

In view of rising cases in the city, Delhi government has announced to continue closure of schools till October 5.

Meanwhile, ministry of health and family welfare has decided to depute a high level Central team to Jammu after a high number of cases were reported from there.

Earlier, a special team had visited Srinagar Valley to review Covid management with the district collectors. The current Central team too will interact with the district collectors and health officers of Jammu and visit hospitals in Bakshinagar and Gandhinagar.

The total number of confirmed Covid cases in Jammu is 9,428. Of these, 3,196 have recovered. Covid deaths are reported to be 117.

There are 6,115 active cases in the district. The total cases one week ago were 6,878. Jammu has been reporting Doubling Time of 15.4 days, Recovery Rate of 33.9% and CFR of 1.24%.

Meanwhile, Kerala on Friday reported 4,167 new cases of Covid-19 taking the total number of infected persons in the state to 1,26,381.

Of the total cases, 90,089 persons have recovered and 35,724 patients are under treatment in various hospitals across the state.

Of the new cases on Friday, 3,849 persons contracted the infection through contact, the source of infection among 410 is yet to be traced, 48 came from abroad, 165 from other states and 102 health workers got infected. As many as 2,744 persons recovered from infection.

The state recorded 12 more deaths taking the official toll to 501.

Army admits to killing
of three J&K youths

Army finds evidence against its men in Shopian encounter

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 18

The Army on Friday admitted that three youths of Jammu and Kashmir's frontier Rajouri district who had disappeared a day after their arrival in Shopian district in July to work as labourers in a local apple orchard to earn livelihood were killed by its troops during an "operation".

It said that "disciplinary action" is being initiated by it under the Army Act against the officers and soldiers involved in the operation as the inquiry conducted by it "has brought out certain prima facie evidence indicating that, during the operation, powers vested under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) 1990 were exceeded and the Do's and Don'ts of Chief of Army Staff (COAS) as approved by the Hon'ble Supreme Court have been contravened".

It has said that the slain men's "involvement with terrorism or related activities is under investigation by the J&K police".

According to the families of three labourers Muhammad Intiaz, Abrar Ahmed Khan and Abrar Yusuf, the trio were killed by the troops in a fake encounter in Shopian's Amshipora area on July 18. A night before, the youths had informed their respective families over the phone that they had reached Shopian where they had been hired by a local fruit grower to work in his apple orchard.

After their killing, the Army had passed them off as "terrorists".

'Action taken must
be transparent'

Srinagar, Sept. 18: National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Friday said the process of disciplinary action against those found guilty of killing three young men from Rajouri in an alleged fake encounter in Shopian should be transparent.

"The families of the three murdered men had continued to proclaim their innocence. Disciplinary action initiated by the army would suggest the army agrees with the families. The

process must remain transparent & the guilty must face the full weight of the law," Omar tweeted.

He was reacting after the Army said it has found "prima facie" evidence that its troops "exceeded" powers under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act during an encounter in Kashmir's Shopian district in which three men were killed in July this year and has initiated disciplinary proceedings.

— PTI

Earlier this month, the families accused both the Army and the J&K police of dilly-dallying in the probes ordered by them separately into their complaint.

In a letter to J&K's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, they sought his personal intervention into the matter. They also demanded that an impartial and fair inquiry be held, the DNA reports made public and, if it is established that their kin are the same youth who were killed in the purported July 18 encounter at Amshipora, they be allowed to exhume their bodies so that the victims are given a decent burial by them.

Sinha had while speaking to reporters here on September 14 assured that justice would be done with the families of slain youths.

He had said, "The Army has ordered its own inquiry and the administration is doing its own probe. I want to assure that justice will be done."

J&K's DG Police, Dilbag Singh, said on Thursday that the DNA reports in the case would be made public soon.

The DNA samples of the parents and siblings of the missing youth were collected from Rajouri under the aegis of Jammu and Kashmir Police in August and subsequently sent for matching with the trio killed on July 18.

Defence spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia, said here on Friday that the inquiry ordered by the Army authorities into Operation Amshipora has been concluded.

He said that since the inquiry has brought out certain prima facie evi-

dence indicating that during the operation, powers vested under the AFSPA 1990 were exceeded and the Do's and Don'ts of the Army Chief as approved by the Supreme Court were contravened, the competent disciplinary authority has directed to initiate "disciplinary proceedings under the Army Act against those found prima facie answerable".

He added, "The evidence collected by the inquiry has prima facie indicated that the three unidentified terrorists killed in Operation Amshipora were Muhammad Intiaz, Abrar Ahmed Khan and Abrar Yusuf, who hailed from Rajouri. Their DNA report is awaited. Their involvement with terrorism or related activities is under investigation by the police."

He said, "Indian Army is committed to ethical conduct of operations. Further updates on the case will be given periodically without affecting due process of the law of the land".

Last month, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch called for investigation and prosecution into the alleged extrajudicial execution of the three labourers by independent civilian authorities, saying civilian investigations and trials "offer a degree of transparency and independence that is missing from the military justice system".

Various political parties and human rights activists in J&K too demanded an impartial probe into the alleged staged encounter.



A group of devotees pose for a selfie with the idol lord Vishwakarma during its immersion in the River Ganga after a day long worship, in Kolkata, Friday.

— PTI

Chinese intel mounts
pressure on MuivahMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, SEPT. 18

The Chinese government has not only been snooping on over 10,000 Indian individuals and organisations through a global database but its Intelligence agencies have been working in the northeast to rope in rebel leaders to create "internal" unrest and delay the ongoing peace process in the region.

Disclosing that Chinese Intelligence agencies wanted NSCN (I-M) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah to delay the settlement of ongoing Naga peace talks, authoritative security sources told this newspaper that the Union government had prior input about the ongoing attempt of China.

Informing that the action of Chinese agencies coincided with problem in Galwan Valley in June, security sources said that it was almost the same time when NSCN (I-M) general secretary after agreeing on all the major issues suddenly changed his stand and started raising some of the irrelevant issues about the interlocutor.

Asserting that the ministry of home affairs had

● **REPORTS STATE** that the Chinese Intelligence agencies have been working in the northeast to rope in rebel leaders to create 'internal' unrest and delay the ongoing peace process in the region.

● **SECURITY SOURCES** disclose that Chinese Intelligence agencies wanted NSCN (I-M) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah to delay the settlement of ongoing Naga peace-talks.

such inputs of China trying to create problems in the northeast, security sources claimed that Chinese agencies have very strong connection with NSCN (I-M) leaders who had been taking shelter in China since 1966 before the ceasefire agreement was signed.

Claiming that intelligence inputs were corroborated with NSCN (I-M) general secretary taking hostage to Naga peace process by raising some rhetorical issues, security sources said that all these started in June. The NSCN (I-M) also started laying more stress on demand for a separate flag and constitution once again

in June.

It is significant that the Centre had outrightly rejected the demand of a separate "flag and constitution" in October 2019.

Apart from the civil society groups, all the stakeholders of Nagaland including NNPGs have said their discussion with the Centre has concluded and the "agreed position" has been signed.

The Forum for Naga Reconciliation, which is leading the voice for reconciliation between NSCN(IM) and NNPG, are also saying that it is time for these two Naga political groups to meet and take forward the unfinished task of reconciliation. Meanwhile, NSCN (I-M) chairman Q. Tuccu, vice president Tongmeth Wangnao and 13 others have also reached New Delhi to join general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah in the ongoing informal talks but differences among the rank and file of the NSCN (I-M) was quite visible as its chairman Q. Tuccu and his team has been living at a separate location in New Delhi. However, the Centre has facilitated accommodation for both the chairman and the general secretary at one place.

Fashion designer found
dead at Kolkata residenceRAJIB
CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, SEPT. 18

Renowned fashion designer Sharbari Dutta, who earned accolades for her creations in Bollywood and Tollywood, was found dead with a leg injury and blood on face at her home in South Kolkata under mysterious circumstances early Friday. She was the daughter of Bengali poet Ajit Dutta.

While her Facebook profile shows May 7, 1957 as her date of birth reflecting her to be aged 63, the Kolkata Police, however, found it 78 actually after talking to her family members.

Dutta's body was recovered by her son Amalin, also a fashion designer, and daughter-in-law Kanaklata from

the ground floor bathroom of their two-storeyed residence on Broad Street at around 12.30 am.

Amalin and Kanaklata, living at the first floor, said they went down to search for Dutta at the ground floor, where she used to stay, after getting calls from the members of a photoshoot team which failed to connect with the fashion designer repeatedly throughout Thursday.

Dutta, who created 'Shunyia' fashion label, had plans to go out with the team on Friday to choose a location for a photoshoot.

Though cardiac arrest looked as the cause of her death in the initial findings of the doctors at Calcutta National Medical College and Hospital where the body

was taken, blood stains on her face and an injury mark on her left ankle prompted them to send the body for post mortem.

The city police also started a probe after finding Amalin was unaware of his aged mother's whereabouts for long hours despite his presence at the same house.

Kanaklata told the police she last saw her mother-in-law on September 16 evening.

The mother-son relation was not reportedly well following a tiff about a family property at Ahmedpur in Birbhum.

But Amalin said, "We had good relation. I did not see her on Thursday as I was very busy in my work. I thought she was busy too."

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that our client intends to purchase the property described hereunder: The legal heirs of Late Mr. Govindasamy Reddy, Mr. G.Venkatesan & 5 others partitioned the Schedule Property along with other properties. However, Legal Heir Certificates of Late Mr. Govindasamy Reddy are not available, hence notice is being given for any claims or objections for the Schedule Property.

All persons having, claiming any right, title, claim, or interest in respect of the Schedule Property or to any part thereof are hereby requested to intimate to the undersigned in writing at the address mentioned below of any such claim accompanied with all necessary supporting documents within 10 days from the date of publication hereof, failing which it shall be presumed that there are no claims and that claims, if any, have been waived off and our client shall proceed with the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Agricultural Land measuring 80 Cents (41 + 39), in S.No.22/2A, (as per Patta S.No.22/2A1 Part) at No.132, Periya Mullaiyovai Village, Ponnen Taluk, Thiruvallur District, within the Registration District of Chennai North and Sub-Registration District of Thiruvotiyur.

M/s. AAV Partners, Advocates
Nos 74, 76 & 77, II & III Floors,
Sukh Sagal, Marshalls Road, Egmore,
Chennai - 600 008.
Mobile No. +91-98410 50440

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No: PCMM/CLW/Dankuni/E-Procurement/20-21/14 Dated:16-09-2020. PCMM/CLW/DKAE on behalf of the President of India invites electronic bids from established reliable manufacturer for supply of the followings. The following E-Tender/s is/are for supply of materials for manufacture of Electric Locomotive. The Prospective/likely suppliers are requested to look up the website www.iirps.gov.in. These are E-Tenders; only electronic offer bids shall be accepted. For detailed instructions please refer to website. **Sl., Tender No., Description of Stores, Qty., Due On, Tender Cost** are as follows : (1) **34202596A**, 1] Illuminated Push Button- 1 to CLW Specn. No.CLW/ES/3/0072/E. 2] Illuminated Push Button-2 to CLW Specn.No -CLW/ES/3/0072/E. 3] Illuminated Push Button Emergency Flasher Light, to CLW Specn.No-CLW/ES/3/0072/E. 4] Illuminated Push Button Reset Vigilance Control to CLW Specn.No - CLW/ES/3/0072/E. 5] Illuminated Push Button For Configuration InSB1 to CLW Specn.No -CLW/ES/3/0072/E. 6] Illumination Push Button ConstantSpeed Control to CLW Specn.No -CLW/ES/3/0072/E.7] Illuminated Push Button ForFailure Acknowledge to CLW Specn.No -CLW/ES/3/0072/E; As per Tender Doc., 09.10.2020, 0.00; (2) **34202565C**, Contactor Filter On/Off And Adaption [ContactorType-1] to CLW Specn.No.CLW/ES/3/0086/A; As Per Tender Doc., 09.10.2020, 0.00; (3) **34202542**, Contactor For Main Compressor And Bur-1/2 (Contactor Type -3) To CLW Specn. NO. CLW/ES/3/0095/C or latest; As per Tender Doc., 14.10.2020, 0.00; (4) **34202611A**; Fuse Auxiliary, 415/110V along with Base with Micro Switch as per CLW Drg./Specn.No.CLW/ES/3/0092/C; As per Tender Doc., 20.10.2020, 0.00, (5) **34202526**, Earthing Switch For VCB with locking arrangement to CLW Specn. NO. CLW/ES/3/0010/D or Latest; As per Tender Doc., 12.11.2020, 0.00. (6) **34202699**, Contactor Auxiliaries IN HB-1 & HB-2 to CLW Specn. NO. CLW/ES/3/0201/C; As Per Tender Doc., 16.11.2020, 0.00 (7) **34202739**, Fire Detection Equipment along with Connector in SB2 as per Spec. No. CLW/ES/3/0057; As Per Tender Doc., 10.12.2020, 0.00; (8) **34202740**, MaximumCurrent Relay IN SB-1 as per CLW Specn. CLW/ES/3/0059/D; As Per Tender Doc., 15.12.2020, 0.00.

SIDDH-111

PCMM/CLW/DANKUNI

Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailwaysFarm Bills are protection shield,
Oppn misleading farmers: PM

New Delhi, Sept. 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday stoutly defended farm sector reform bills, asserting that they will act as a "protection shield" for farmers and accused those opposing the measures of standing with middlemen and "deceiving" and "lying" to peasants.

With Opposition parties dubbing three bills, passed by Lok Sabha and now to be tabled in Rajya Sabha, as "anti-farmers" and the BJP ally Shiromani Akali Dal quitting his government to protest them, Modi refuted their criticism, and said these laws will unshackle farmers by allowing them to sell their produce anywhere by negotiating a better price.

He asserted that the government purchase of farm produce will remain, adding that the mechanism of minimum support price will continue in the same way it always has.

At a virtual event to launch several rail projects in Bihar, Modi said his government is committed to



● **THE PRIME MINISTER** stoutly defending farm sector reform Bills said these laws will unshackle farmers by allowing them to sell their produce anywhere by negotiating a better price.

● **HE SAID** his govt is committed to providing farmers appropriate price through the MSP.

providing farmers appropriate price through the MSP, and asserted that no government has done as much for the farming community as the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in its six years in power since 2014.

Farmers of the country are aware and can see who

are standing with middlemen, who "pocketed" profits meant for them, and opposing new opportunities being provided for them through these measures, he said.

The Prime Minister said the Congress had also promised in its manifesto what his government has now done through these bills, as he attacked the Opposition party for fanning protests against these proposed legislations.

Without naming it, he launched a blistering attack on the Congress, saying those who remained in power for decades are trying to "mislead" farmers and "lying" to them on the agriculture bills.

Lok Sabha had passed two bills on Thursday and another bill earlier with the government asserting that they will open new avenues for farmers by unshackling them from existing mechanism and allowing them to enter into agreements with private parties to sell their produce.

— PTI

19 SEPTEMBER 2020

Does the govt wish grief upon farmers?

Turning the farmer to a landless labourer, with no crop set aside for their family's own food security, dependent on the mercy of an artificial "market", while the corporates does easy business, nay profiteering, seems to be the singular sinister motive of these bills. The Opposition must build more pressure on the government so that it has no choice but to withdraw them.

IPL's here to entertain

There is no reason to believe the elaborate bio-bubble set up in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah will be any less secure. It is the responsibility of the millionaire stars of the game to follow the strict protocols, including not sharing water bottles and umbrellas not being allowed to be the friendly repository of the bowlers' caps, sunglasses, etc. Every detail has been fastidiously put down in the book of the new normal and the least expectation is there will be quality cricket even if the players have to learn to do without the adrenaline rush of cheering in stadium spectators. A captive TV audience in millions of Indian households will be too happy to stay tuned.

G. Babu
ayakumar

Why NEET wreaked havoc on Tamil Nadu youth alone

Why NEET wrecked havoc on Tamil Nadu youth alone

Since those doctors from poor homes did not aspire to go abroad or win the Nobel Prize through research or work for a corporate hospital, they worked in public health centres or set up cheap clinics in villages, inspiring local children, who always found in doctors a role model for emulation. Seeing


With teachers, parents, relatives and the local community often turning cheerleaders of the high scorers in their race to storm Hippocrates citadel, students came under pres-

For example, Vignesh, the boy from Elanthankuzhi in Ariyalur district who jumped into a well and killed himself a few days before the examination, had to travel 10 km to Jeyamkondan to take a print out for the NEET hall ticket. He would have changed two buses to reach his examination centre, 110 km away from home, in Tiruchirappalli. He had seen his father selling pro-

The realisation that NEET was to ensure that medical education was for children from elite, urban and privileged backgrounds has now sunk into the minds of children in rural hinterland. Once it does, they will not aspire for it. And of course will not think about suicide.



A reign of obstinacy and self-centredness



Shobhaa De

positioning — a monumental error is being made. The monumental ego is not bothered to consult the people, or sanctioning such a project. An announcement is made, and awarded to an infrastructure major after the fact. This is hardly the point. Whoever bags the contract (₹899 crores) will no doubt do a competent job. But, if there is some house for our parliamentarians. The question of corruption is this: does India need a swanky new Parliament House? For the sake of the redundancy of the project looms an even larger question: why?

Whosoever bags the contract will no doubt do a competent job and create a handsome house for our parliamentarians. The more important question is this: does India need a swanky new Parliament House?

The timing to get this project up and running is incredibly insensitive. Forget the tanking of our economy during the pandemic — so many countries are dealing with Covid-driven economic crises.

now going to be a gigantic national emblem. No quarrel with that. Approvals for the Central Vista project? Ummm... no problem boss. Those will be given *phataphat*. Those who have any issues with the plan — well, too bad. Cribbing will get you nowhere.

The Minister to get this project up and running is incredibly insensitive. Forget the tanking of our economy during the pandemic or the economic damage done by Covid-19 and economic crises. But here in our own back yard, we have a Prime Minister admitting his government does not possess the data on the deaths of migrants who many died on those roads, desperately attempting to reach the distant plantations and foot. India is still riddled from Covid deaths, with experts telling us we have not peaked so far. Health remains one of our biggest concerns. Our health care centres falling short of oxygen cylinders and ICU beds. Can we really afford to spend on a new Parliament House during this dark and dire times?

For all the proclamations of austerity and simple living, what citizens have seen is the arrogant strut of the peacock. Nobody in the PM's circle lives modestly. Not even the PM himself. Crores of taxpayers' hard-earned money is spent on ensuring elected representatives live life kingsize — with sprawling homes and lavish perks. Their body guards then throw indulgences. Citizens are large hearted enough to say, "Be comfortable — *Khaan, peevay*."

jiyo." But hello! Spare a thought for us, less privileged beings too. By digging up those beautiful lawns to build this House of Vanity is like rubbing our noses into the dirt thrown up by bulldozers uprooting magnificent trees and going into the bowels of what is public property — which rightfully belongs to all of us.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrated a landmark birthday this year. He is 68, and has an excellent age for reflection and introspection. One wonders that he will have time to tell him when he presides over such a redundant process. India can barely afford to fritter away at this critical stage. Heritage, respected, even by those determined to rewrite the history of the country, of Rajpath, cannot be arbitrarily trifled with or based on the whims of one man. India lost one of its most valued cultural heritages on September 11, 2002, a week, on September 16, 2002, when the 16th Kapiya Vatsyayan was a grand and formidable intellectual and a highly respected scholar. He wrote many books. She passed away at the age of 91. Her obituary was buried away into obscure corners of our dailies. The front page was reserved for the news — like Tata Projects Ltd emerging as the largest shareholder in the new Parliament House building project, beating Larsen & Toubro to it. There is something about shifting perspectives, doesn't

It?
Mirza Ghalib said it all
in the aftermath of 1857
"Bazeechaye atfal ha
duniya mere aagey...
Hota hai shabe-roz
tamashaa mere aagey..."
Meanwhile, Happy
70th Birthday, Naren
draji! Your birthday pre
sent will be delivered by
July 2022. Mubarak!

Readers can send
feedback to
[www.shobhaade
blogspot.com](http://www.shobhaade
blogspot.com)

LETTERS

JOB LOSSES

The staggering data of 6.6 million white-collar job losses and over 5 million jobs lost of industrial workers as surveyed by the CMIE is not only worrisome but pathetic. The government is yet to acknowledge the issue of the erosion of the labour force with only government employees safe, their monthly salary remaining unaffected till date (66 lakh white collar jobs lost, Sep.18). That said, it is a million-dollar query as to how the professionals and the industrial workers are going to be compensated or paid compensation for the time that may, as opined, the government can't remain 'mum' over post-Covid job losses.

E.S.Chandrasekaran,
Chennai

NEROS FIDDLE

I AGREE with every sentence of your editorial with regard to the grand plan of the government to build a monumental structure to be called 'winning the existing Parliament. I remember that the civil and structural engineers of the country had opined that the existing Parliament is strong enough to last for nearly 25 plus years thus expressing opinion against construction of a new one at a whopping cost of hundreds of crores in this cash starved period of the government due to corona, a reliable solution for which still appears to be elusive. I also do not know how far the new Parliament building to be built will improve the quality of our democracy and law and order.

Nagarajan Iyer, Coimbatore

NEW NORMAL OF LEARNING

APROPOS The article *Online Learning: Aids* (Sept. 18). The natural effects of the strain in mind and body obviously reflects upon an individual's behaviour pattern. These online class studies don't seem to be fruitful while there were four students who had lost their lives with the inability to cope with this stress. The most real hard scenario is facing the education sector. While the crux of the issue is based on the new learning process, the educational institutions and parents should support their wards and not have high expectations in terms of their outcome. Considering some children are unable to muddle through even normal, one can only imagine the grasping capacity through mobile learning. The irony is that there was

learning. The irony is that there was a time when we used to tell our wards not to use mobile phones in schools and now its the other way round where the new normal of learning demands a mobile phone.

Jacqueline Netto, Chennai

Jacqueline Netto, Chennai

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,845.82	-0.34
Nifty 50	11,504.95	-0.10
S&P 500*	3,305.47	-1.54
Dollar (₹)	73.45	0.27
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.39	-0.007
Euro (₹)	87.07	-0.12
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,672▲224	0.42
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.72	-0.58
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.014	-0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.686	0.004

Fan-makers want GST lowered to 5% from 18%

Fan manufacturers sought lower GST rate at 5 per cent on fans, saying the existing 18 per cent tax is "adversely" impacting the industry. "The current GST rate standing at 18 per cent is adversely impacting the industry as well as the entire supply chain, from distributors to end-consumers," said Atul Jain, chairman, Indian Fan Manufacturers Association (Ifma). A lower GST slab would make the fans more accessible, Ifma said.

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■ Bid to stop China goods entry via trade bloc
Govt tightens vigil over Asean route

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

In a move that will check Chinese products being routed through Asean countries, the government has decided to strictly enforce production of 'certificate of origin' for every imported item claiming free and preferential trade concessions. Further, the government said it will engage with the Asean countries to review gaps or imbalances in the free trade agreement (FTA). The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has made some changes in the declarations made by importers while claiming free trade and preferential trade duties. These changes will come into effect from September 21. Whenever such claims are made, documents pertaining to the certificate of origin of every item will have to be mandatorily uploaded on eSanchit and the 'invoice reference number' should be declared in the supporting document table for the item. "If imported goods are transported directly from the country of origin and not through another country, then the certificate of origin code itself can be given in the transit country field. In case of transport through a different country then the country code of that country should be indicated in the transit country field. A self-declaration that the items qualify as originating goods for a prefer-



ential rate will have to be made by the importer in the bill of entry." Further, the certificate of origin must be defaced before the out of charge (OOC) at the port of import. From September 21, marking defacement of each certificate uploaded for a bill of entry will be mandatory, without which OOC would not be allowed by the system. "With effect from 21 September 2020, businesses availing benefits of FTA would be required to comply with the revised bill of entry format declaring additional particulars in relation to FTA benefits, and will be required to upload the copy of certificate of origin on the customs portal. While the intent of the government is clearly to curb wrongful claim of concessional customs duty by routing the exports to India through preferential trade countries, practically, compliance even by genuine importers at short notice will be challenging," said Abhishek Jain, tax partner, EY. According to K. Unnikrishnan, deputy director general, Federation of Indian Export Organisations, the government has made the rules stricter in order to check Chinese goods getting routed through FTA and PTA countries. "Import of some of the automotive parts from FTA countries with components coming from China as part of the global value chain may become tougher," he said. The commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said India is engaging with the 10-member Asean to review the free trade agreement. In the India-Asean Economic Ministers Consultations held on August 29, officials will determine the scope of review. "Provisions are envisaged to periodically address any gaps, shortcomings and imbalance. India proposes to suitably use these provisions," Goyal said. The Asean-India Trade in Goods Agreement came into force on January 1, 2010.

Select high frequency indicators move up

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, SEPT. 18

Providing more hope of recovery, some of the high frequency indicators, including electricity consumption, digital payments, real estate purchases in select cities and railway freight volumes have moved closer to pre-Covid levels in the first half of September. E-way bills generated by businesses and transporters in August were also higher sequentially. Electricity consumption over the seven-day period ending September 16 showed the country consumed more power during the period compared to a similar period in the previous year, said a Kotak Institutional Equities report. In digital payments, daily average UPI and IMPS transaction values recorded an all-time high in September. NETC-Fastag transactions are at pre-Covid levels. The e-waybills generated in August numbered 4.87 crore, valued at over Rs 13.85 lakh crore. The numbers stood at 4.76 crore and 4.27 crore in July and June, valued at Rs 13.66 lakh crore and Rs 12.40 lakh crore, respectively, GSTN data showed. Railway freight volume was up in September compared to the same period last year. Volumes also have returned to February 2020 levels. But container volumes in most ports declined in September.

Paytm back in Play after ousted by Google

New Delhi, Sept. 18: Google on Friday restored the Paytm app on its Play store after removing it for a few hours for violating its policy on sports betting activities.



The app was back on the Google Play store on Friday evening after the Softbank-backed Paytm removed the 'cashback' feature from a recently launched game on the application. "Update: And we're back!" Paytm said in a tweet. On Friday morning, Google removed the Paytm app—which facilitates use of wallet and payments bank services—from the Play store. However, users who had already downloaded the app could continue using the services. "The app was blocked for violation of Play policies—a clarification of our policy was released earlier today ahead of the IPL tournament," Google said in an e-mailed response, adding that only the app availability on Play store was impacted. Google, in a blog post earlier on Friday, said it does not allow apps facilitating sports betting and will remove such apps from the Play store. These policies are in place to protect users from potential harm, it added. "We don't allow online casinos or support any unregulated gambling apps that facilitate sports betting. This includes if an app leads consumers to an external website that allows them to participate in paid tournaments to win real money

or cash prizes, it is a violation of our policies," the blog post said. Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma said the company has already removed the scratch cards which offered the cashbacks, complying with Google's concerns. Stating that Google was not allowing it to acquire new customers by blocking Paytm's promotion, Sharma said India needs support for further growing the startup ecosystem. "The app was blocked for violation of Play policies—a clarification of our policy was released earlier today ahead of the IPL tournament," Google said in an e-mailed response, adding that only the app availability on Play store was impacted. Google, in a blog post earlier on Friday, said it does not allow apps facilitating sports betting and will remove such apps from the Play store. These policies are in place to protect users from potential harm, it added. "We don't allow online casinos or support any unregulated gambling apps that facilitate sports betting. This includes if an app leads consumers to an external website that allows them to participate in paid tournaments to win real money

"Unfortunately, Google believes this to be a violation of its policies and has unlisted the Paytm Android app from the Play store," the spokesperson said. The spokesperson added that the cashback feature has been removed and confirmed that the app has been restored on the Play store. Google, in its blog post, had said that when an app violates its policies, it notifies the developer of the violation and removes the application from Google Play until the developer brings it into compliance. "And in the case where there are repeated policy violations, we may take more serious action which may include terminating Google Play Developer accounts. "Our policies are applied and enforced on all developers consistently," said the blog post by Suzanne Frey, vice president-product, security and privacy, Android. There is often a surge in launches of such apps before major sporting tournaments like the IPL. The latest season of the Indian Premier League is scheduled to start from September 19 in the UAE. —PTI

WORLD

China flies 18 military aircraft near Taiwan during US talks

Unusually large show of force in response to US envoy's visit to Taipei

Taipei, Sept. 18: The second high-level US envoy to visit Taiwan in two months began a day of closed-door meetings Friday as China conducted military drills near the Taiwan Strait after threatening retaliation. China's military sent 18 planes including fighter jets over the Taiwan Strait in an unusually large show of force on Monday as a US envoy held a day of closed-door meetings on the self-governing island claimed by China. Undersecretary of State Keith Krach, who handles the economic growth, energy and the environment portfolio, held talks with Taiwan's minister of economic affairs and the Cabinet's vice premier. He was due to meet with business leaders over lunch and dine with President Tsai Ing-wen later on Friday. In response to Krach's visit, the Eastern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army held combat exercises near the Taiwan Strait, at least the second round of war games this month aimed at intimidating supporters of the island's independent political identity. "This is a legitimate and necessary action taken in response to the current situation across the Taiwan Straits to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity," said China's defense ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang. In a brief message on its microblog, the Eastern Theater Command said the exercises involved naval and air force units in the Taiwan Strait aimed at gauging their ability to carry out joint operations. China on Thursday con-



Taiwan's foreign minister Joseph Wu meets with US Undersecretary of State Keith Krach in Taipei, Taiwan on Friday.

— AP

demned Krach's visit and warned it could retaliate. It views Taiwan as part of its own territory and strongly opposes any type of formal interaction between other countries and the self-ruled island democracy. Krach's trip follows a visit in August by US health secretary Alex Azar, the highest-level U.S. Cabinet official to make the trip since the U.S. switched formal relations from Taiwan to China in 1979. It is one of a series of moves by the Trump administration to strengthen relations with Taiwan, including stepped-up arms sales and support for the island's participation in interna-

tional forums. Before Krach's arrival, the US ambassador to the United Nations, Kelly Craft, had lunch Wednesday with Taiwan's top official in New York, in a meeting she called historic. On Saturday, the last day of his visit, Krach will also attend a memorial service for former President Lee Teng-hui, who led the island's transition to democracy and died at age 97 in July. Tensions between Washington and Beijing have already reached high levels as the governments spar over the coronavirus pandemic, trade, technology, Hong Kong and the South China Sea. The frequency of

Chinese exercises near Taiwan recalls the last major crisis between them in 1995-96, when China fired missiles near the island and held war games in a bid to intimidate voters in Taiwan's first direct presidential election. Those actions were largely seen to have backfired. Taiwan said Chinese warplanes entered its airspace over two days last week during large-scale war games that it called a "serious provocation to Taiwan and a grave threat to regional peace and stability." Such actions by the PLA threaten the entire region, it said, calling on the international community to respond. China has

increasingly relied on military threats and diplomatic isolation to pressure Taiwan. That follows the apparent failure of its efforts to win over the island's 23 million people to the prospect of political unification under the "one country, two systems" framework in place in China, with a large majority of Taiwanese favoring maintaining the status quo of de facto independence. China cut contacts with Taiwan's government following Tsai's 2016 election. She was reelected by a large margin this year while her Democratic Progressive Party maintained its majority in the legislature. —AP

FBI chief warns Russia actively targeting Biden

Washington, Sept. 18: FBI Director Christopher Wray on Thursday warned that Russia is interfering in the 2020 US presidential elections with a steady stream of misinformation aimed at Democrat Joe Biden as well as sapping Americans' confidence in the election process. Moscow is also attempting to undercut what it sees as an anti-Russian US establishment, Wray told the Democratic-led House of Representatives' Homeland Security committee. He said his biggest concern is a "steady drumbeat of misinformation" that he said he feared could undermine confidence in the result of the 2020 election. Wray's testimony follows an August 7 warning by the director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center that Russia, China and Iran were all trying to interfere in the November 3 election. Wray said the FBI is increasingly worried about possible violent clashes between ideologically-motivated extremist groups before the November election. The FBI is keeping a close eye on groups who have faced

off in protests in cities such as Portland, Oregon, and Kenosha, Wisconsin. In those places, anti-racism and anti-police groups have squared off with right-wing and white nationalist activists who are often armed. Wray also told lawmakers that antifa is an ideology, not an organization. Wray did not dispute that antifa activists were a serious concern, saying that antifa was a "real thing" and that the FBI had undertaken "any number of properly predicated investigations into what we would describe as violent anarchist extremists," including into individuals who identify with antifa. Hours after the hearing, US President Donald Trump took to Twitter to chastise Wray for his statements on antifa and on Russian election interference. Referring to antifa, the President wrote: "And I look at them as a bunch of well funded Anarchists & Thugs who are protected because the Comey/Mueller inspired FBI is simply unable, or unwilling, to find their funding source, and allows them to get away with "murder". Law & Order!." —Reuters/AFP/AP



US BANS WECHAT, TIKTOK CITING RISK

Washington, Sept. 18: The US will ban the use of WeChat Sunday to "safeguard the national security of the United States." The Chinese app TikTok will also be banned by Nov. 12, but Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said early Friday on CNBC that access to that app may be possible if certain safeguards are in place. "At the President's direction, we have taken significant action to combat China's malicious collection of American citizens' personal data, while promoting our national values, democratic rules-based norms, and aggressive enforcement of US laws and regulations," Ross said in a prepared statement. The government said its order, previously announced by Trump in August, will "combat China's malicious collection of American citizens' personal data." The government previously said that using and downloading the app to communicate won't be a banned transaction, although messaging on the app "could be directly or indirectly impaired" by the ban, and people who use it for messaging won't be subject to penalties. —AP

US court turns down H1-B plea by Indians

Washington, Sept. 18: An Indian-American federal judge has turned down an appeal by 169 Indian citizens who had challenged the proclamation of President Donald Trump that barred foreign nationals on H-1B specialty occupation visa from entering the US till the end of the year.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

US District Judge Amit P. Mehta of US District Court for the District of Columbia said that Indian citizens, who are now trapped abroad during trips to India when borders closed, are unlikely to win their case contesting the travel ban proclamation of Trump. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Hari goes down, stays in 5th place

Chennai: Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna maintained his joint fifth place in the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament even as American Wesley So climbed to the top spot ahead of world champion Magnus Carlsen.

Competing in the last three rounds of the Rapid event, Harikrishna started well with a win over American player Jeffery Xiong in 66 moves. After a draw against another US player Hikaru Nakamura, the India number was outlasted by So in 69 moves on Thursday. The win allowed So to take the lead after nine rounds of the Rapid competition with two days of Blitz events to come.

Carlsen crashed to a 46-move defeat at the hands of Russian Alexander Grischuk.

So is in sole lead with 13 points followed by Carlsen (12) and the two Russians Ian Nepomniachtchi and Alexander Grischuk on 10. — *PTI*

CSS ties up with MSD Academy

Chennai: The Centre for Sports Science (CSS) of the Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education & Research in Chennai has announced the launch of MS Dhoni-CSS High-Performance Centre in its campus. The CSS signed an agreement with MS Dhoni Cricket Academy of Aarka Sports Management Pvt Limited.

"The centre would serve as a hub for all M.S. Dhoni cricket academies in India and abroad to offer hi-tech sports science-based services apart from regular cricket training activities," the CSS said in a release.

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CLASH OF TITANS

Dhoni fresh and determined as IPL begins today

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 18: His sabbatical from the game has done Mahendra Singh Dhoni a world of good, Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming said on Friday, asserting that the enigmatic skipper is "mentally engaged and determined" to encounter the challenges of a "tactically different" IPL.

Dhoni's CSK will take on Rohit Sharma's Mumbai Indians in the tournament opener on Saturday. Fleming, a former New Zealand captain, stressed that his team's experience of winning big matches will come in handy during the next 53 days.

Dhoni retired from international cricket last month after being on a break for over one year and when asked about the 39-year-old's preparedness for the IPL, Fleming said, "It has been no different. He's very fit and mentally, he's been very engaged and determined."

"In some ways the break can work for the experienced and older players that we have. MS is fresh and ready to go," Fleming said in a pre-tournament interview to CSK's official website.

The three-time champions are banking heavily on their 35-plus players, including Dhoni himself, Shane Watson, Dwayne Bravo, Kedar Jadhav, and Imran Tahir to name a few.

"...experienced players identify key times and that's why they've done so well in their careers. They can turn games, absorb pressure or just sum out the situation. That's what experience is about and that's why we value it so highly," said Fleming.

"And that's why we've been able to get over the line in so many close



Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (left) and Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma in this file photo.

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 28
- Mumbai Indians won: 17
- Chennai Super Kings won: 11

MEETING IN 2019

- Mumbai Indians defeated Chennai Super Kings by 37 runs at Mumbai (League)
- Mumbai Indians beat Chennai Super Kings by 46 runs at Chennai (League)
- Mumbai Indians beat Chennai Super Kings by 6 wickets at Chennai (Qualifier 1)

- Mumbai Indian beat Chennai Super Kings by one run at Hyderabad (final)

FOR THE RECORD

- Rohit Sharma who scored 4898 runs at an average of 31.60 in 183 innings of 188 matches for Deccan Chargers and Mumbai Indians is the third highest scorer in IPL behind Virat Kohli (5,412 runs in 177 matches) and Suresh Raina (5,368 runs in 193 matches).
- Dwayne Bravo who claimed 147 wickets in 131 innings of 134 matches, needs just three wickets to become the fifth bowler to take 150 wickets in IPL.

— **S. PERVEZ KAISER**

games because the key player has been one with a lot of experience. And you also mix that with skill. You are conscious of having a skilful side and adding youth when we can and with that get the balance pretty right."

Starting against a quali-

ty side like MI is certainly exciting for Fleming, who wants his men to have a crack at the defending champions after their agonising last-ball loss in the previous edition.

"The first game is always full of anxiety, nerves and excitement, and CSK-MI

has added extra excitement and pressure and we enjoy that. We've earned the right to play the first game by playing well last year, and given the way the final finished last year, it's nice to have another crack at MI.

"They (MI) are a very

Live on TV

Mumbai vs CSK
from 7.30 pm
on Star Sports 1, 2

good side and it gives you a good gauge as to how the pre-season has gone and the areas that need improvement. You get a good idea after the first game as to where your team is sitting."

With the home advantage of playing seven games at Chepauk gone, Fleming is bracing up for a very different tournament tactically where adaptability will be the key.

"I see this season is going to be very different tactically. With no real home ground advantage here, we've got to be very good at adapting to the conditions in each ground."

"We've got three different grounds to assess and each ground has its own character and nuances and we've just got to be good enough to pick the right team and get the right game plan to match that. It's like every game is an away game," he explained.

Assessing the track correctly at Abu Dhabi is another factor considering it is slightly different in nature from Dubai and Sharjah. "It's one of the challenges of having to travel to Abu Dhabi, we've got to have to be very good on the day to have to assess the wicket and pick the right combination. One of the big challenges for IPL teams is to get the combinations right."

"Picking the right side for the right conditions is one of the great challenges and we've got a good record at that," he added.

— *PTI*

Duplantis high over 26-yr-old Bubka bar

Rome, Sept. 18: Swedish pole vault star Armand Duplantis eclipsed Ukrainian legend Sergey Bubka's 26-year mark, setting a outdoor new pole vault world record of 6.15 metres (20 feet, 2 inches) at the Diamond League meeting in Rome on Thursday.

Duplantis bettered the mark of 6.14m (20 feet, 1 1/2 inches) set by Bubka in Sestriere, Italy, in July 1994.

The 20-year-old succeeded on his second attempt in a competition he dominated in perfect warm and windless conditions, but without spectators to celebrate in an empty Stadio Olimpico.

Duplantis already holds the world indoor record of 6.18m (20 feet, 3 1/4 inches).

"I think I'm still up in the clouds right now. It's a surreal, super crazy feeling," said the US-born athlete.

Ukrainian Bubka broke the world record on 17 occasions in the 1980s and

● The 20-year-old Swede succeeded on his second attempt to clear 6.15 metres, bettering the world record of 6.14m set by pole vault legend Sergey Bubka in July 1994.

1990s, famously edging the mark up by one centimetre on no fewer than nine occasions between 1988 and 1994 so he could collect a bonus each time.

Duplantis was a child prodigy who broke age-group records on his way to joining the pole vaulting elite. He chose to compete internationally for Sweden, his mother's home country. He won the silver medal at last year's world championships.

Born and raised in Louisiana, Duplantis is a photogenic new star in athletics.

— *AFP*



Armand Duplantis of Sweden clears 6.15 metres to set a new men's pole vault world record during the IAAF Diamond League competition at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on Thursday.

— *AFP*

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