

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | MONDAY 7 | SEPTEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



Max: 32°C  
Min: 24°C  
Rainfall: 1 mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvati:** Aavani 22  
**Tithi:** Panchami  
**Star:** Bharani  
**Rahukalam:**  
7.30 am to 9 am  
**Yamagandam:**  
10.30 am to 12 noon

### PRAYERS

**Fajar:** 4.47 am  
**Zohar:** 12.12 pm  
**Asar:** 3.21 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.16 pm  
**Isha:** 7.28 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 6.16 PM**

**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM**

**MOONRISE TODAY 9.45 PM**

**MOONSET TOMORROW 10.33 AM**

## CORONA COUNT

### CASES

(+91,723)  
42,02,562

### DEATHS

(+1,008)  
71,687

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,783)  
TN: 4,63,480 7,839

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,72,18,590

### DEATHS

8,85,958

### COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

215

worldometers.info

## NCB grills Rhea in Sushant case

**Mumbai:** The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Sunday grilled actor Rhea Chakraborty from noon to evening in connection with the drugs case pertaining to Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide. The central agency summoned her early in the day adhering to which she appeared at the agency's office in Ballard Estate, South Mumbai. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), who is probing the suicide to ascertain the motive behind the actor's extreme step, meanwhile grilled the late actor's sister Neetu at the DRDO guesthouse on Sunday, where the visiting team has set up their base. The NCB officials grilled Rhea on the lines of the disclosures made by her brother Showik, Rajput's former house manager Samuel Miranda and arrested drug peddler Abdul Basit Parihar. The probe has revealed that Parihar supplied drugs and Showik facilitated its procurement. **Full report P4**

## COUNTER

## POINT



We will supply everything... junior artistes, technicians, costumes, drugs...



## NATION | 3

**PBJP releases poster seeking justice for SSR**



## WORLD | 4

**Nirav Modi extradition trial to resume**

## SPORT | 7

**Serena enters US Open last 16**



## Super Sunday



The first Unlock Sunday witnessed youngsters thronging the playground at Gopalapuram flouting all physical distancing norms. Some of them were found without masks.

— DC

# Faulty GST failed states, poor, even Centre: Rahul

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi lashed out at the Central government on Sunday over contraction of the economy and linked it with a “faulty GST”. “Another big reason for record GDP contraction is the Modi government’s Gabbar Singh Tax (GST). Many have been badly affected by this — lakhs of poor families, crores lost their jobs, states’ economy was affected,” he tweeted. In a video, which he shared in the post, Mr Gandhi says: “GST was the second biggest attack on the unorganised sector. GST was UPA’s idea — one tax, intended to simplify the system. NDA’s GST was different — four different types of tax slabs, up to 28 per cent tax. It has become complicated. Small enterprises cannot pay this amount. These four slabs are only meant to help the privileged, the country’s most powerful businessmen.” He further added in the video, “NDA’s GST has left states at the receiving end. The Centre is not able to pay the states. The GST

# ‘A little knowledge is a dangerous thing’

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

As Congress leader Rahul Gandhi continued his attack on the Modi government over the “historic downfall” in the country’s GDP, claiming that the Good and Service Tax was one of the major causes for it, the BJP on Sunday hit back saying “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing” and asked when will the Congress leader stop lying. Reminding the former Congress president that he had to once “apologise” to the Supreme Court for one of his lies, the ruling party claimed that the Congress leader wants to

have a tax regime where airplane and slippers are taxed the same and essential commodities and services which have no tax are brought under the tax regime. Mr Gandhi had earlier claimed that demonetisation was the first attack on the informal sector in the economy and that the GST was an absolute failure. India’s GDP shrank by almost 24 percent in the first quarter over which the government face severe criticism. However, the BJP has claimed that the contraction in the GDP was from April to June, when the country was under complete lockdown.

is not just a failure, it’s an attack on the poor.” In the last couple of days Mr Gandhi has been doing a series of videos attacking the government over its policies. The former Congress president, in his third

video of the four-part series, also accused the government of allowing 15-20 businessmen of having the clout to manipulate tax payments, but farmers, labourers and small businesses not having similar leverage.

# Covid daily caseload crosses 90K

**New Delhi, Sep 6:** India’s COVID-19 tally of cases went past 41 lakh with a record 90,632 people being infected in a day, while 31,80,865 people have recuperated so far pushing the national recovery rate to 77.32 per cent on Sunday, according to the Union Health Ministry data. The total coronavirus cases mounted to 41,13,811, while the death toll climbed to 70,626 with the novel coronavirus virus claiming 1,065 lives in a span of 24 hours in the country, the data updated at 8 am showed. The COVID-19 case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection has further declined to 1.72 per cent. There are 8,62,320 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises

## 32 lakh patients recover but case fatality ratio drops to 1.72 per cent

**New Delhi, Sep 6:** With a record 73,642 patients having recuperated in a day, India’s COVID-19 recoveries have surged to nearly 32 lakh, pushing the recovery rate to 77.32 per cent while the case fatality rate, one of the lowest globally, has further dropped to 1.72 per cent as on date, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday. There are 8,62,320 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country accounting for only 20.96 per cent of the total case-

load, it highlighted. “The spike in the daily recovered COVID-19 patients continues in the country. For the second successive day, India has clocked a record recovery of more than 70,000 patients in a single day,” the ministry said. A total of 73,642 patients have recovered and been discharged from either home or facility isolation or hospitals in a day, according to health ministry data updated at 8 am. — PTI

20.96 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated. India’s COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh

mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and it went past 40 lakh on September 5.

# From T-shirt to social media a message keeps Tamils busy

**G BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 6

I don’t know Hindi, get lost. This crypt message evolved into a Tamil hashtag and trended on Twitter the whole of Sunday, besides setting Facebook and Instagram afire, after a photograph of two film personalities in T-shirts was uploaded in a tweet with the words ‘Deep in discus-

sion, good things coming our way’. Music director Yuvan Sankar Raja’s white tee had the words ‘I am a Tamil speaking Indian’ emblazoned in English and Tamil while the red shirt of Tamil film actor, Shirish, had the words ‘Hindi theriyadu podal!’ (I don’t know Hindi, get lost). Shirish, who tweeted the picture, was the hero of the Tamil film



Metro and Yuvan, who retweeted it, is also the son

of music legend Ilayaraja. ‘Interesting,’ said one of the early responses from DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, evoking comments attacking the DMK and supporting the learning of Hindi. One user uploaded an old video of DMK President M K Stalin reading out a Hindi speech and another video showed AIADMK late leader J Jayalalithaa addressing a

meeting in Hindi. Even the comments on Yuvan’s page were mixed, some supporting the idea of opposing Hindi and others a bit scurrilous on the music director. But within hours, the Tamil hashtag meaning ‘I don’t know Hindi, get lost’ started trending with tweeple across the world posting comments, replies, memes, videos and cartoons.

Though it was the Tamil speaking people who pushed the hashtag to the top of the trending list, along with other hashtags like #StopHindiImposition and #TamilSpeakingIndia, there were others who joined in. ‘I am from Bihar. My mother tongue is Magali, not Hindi! & I am against imposition of Hindi!’ tweeted @Kaushik\_Raz.

## Littigant in basic structure case Bharati is no more

**Kasaragod, Sept. 6:** Kesavananda Bharati, a petitioner in a case that led to the Supreme Court evolving the celebrated doctrine of basic structure of the Constitution, died here on Sunday. Police said the 79-year old Kerala-based seer Kesavananda Bharati died at the Edaneer Mutt here due to age related ailments. He had challenged a Kerala Land Reform Act nearly four decades ago. — PTI

## IPL SCHEDULE

# Mumbai Indians will take on CSK in IPL inaugural

**C. SANTHOSH KUMAR**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 6



After much delay, the BCCI finally unveiled the fixtures of the Indian Premier League season 13 on Sunday. A high-profile clash between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians will open the tournament in Abu Dhabi on September 19. Mumbai are the defending champions. The rivalry between Mumbai and M.S. Dhoni’s three-time champions CSK is the most revered in the cash-rich league. A clutch of Covid-19 positive cases in the bio-bubble and some ambiguity in health regulations between Dubai and Abu Dhabi delayed the announcement of the schedule. Despite suffering a series

make it to the opener. Their 14-day isolation period gets over on September 11 and they have a series of tests to clear before joining the bio-bubble. The schedule has been released only for the round-robin stage of the tournament. In all, Abu Dhabi will host 20 round-robin games, Dubai 24 and Sharjah 12. Matches will start at 7:30pm IST (6pm UAE time). On double-header days, the first match will begin at 3:30pm IST (2pm UAE time). The BCCI has also put in a disclaimer on the schedule, saying it is “subject to change for any reason”. The clause suggests the IPL is wary of a situation wherein a team(s) is/are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. ■ P7

# ₹6 cr of PM Kisan scheme swindled

**ZAKEER HUSSAIN & AUSPIN BAYLIS | DC**  
SALEM, SEPT. 6

The Crime Branch-CID has arrested two persons and booked 52 others in connection with the embezzlement of Rs 6 crore allotted under the Prime Minister’s Kisan Samman financial assistance scheme for farmers across many districts. The police has got 14,000 fake bank accounts frozen while the government dismissed a temporary employee Bethanayakkanpalayam agriculture office from service. The scam was detected Kanchipuram, Tiruvanna-malai, Villupuram, Kallakurichi, Salem, Cuddalur, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Namakkal and Vellore districts. The PM Kisan Samman scheme provides Rs 6,000 to farmers in three installments a year through the

agricultural department. “The culprits uploaded fake accounts in the name of farmers,” an officer in the agriculture department said. “We assume a sum of about Rs 6 crore has been embezzled of which Rs 1.50 crore has already been withdrawn. We have got all such accounts frozen, and are in the process of retrieving the money.” It is found that 14,000 people in Salem district were involved in the fake registration, of which 5,000 are from other districts. The government transferred Salem district joint director, (ariculture), Ilangovan, to Trichy Irrigation Management Training Centre. Perambalur district joint director Ganesan is transferred to Salem. The case is being investigated in 20 regional agriculture offices in Salem district alone.







## SHORT TAKES

## AMBULANCE DRIVER HELD FOR RAPE OF PATIENT

Pathanamthitta, Sept. 6: A 19-year-old woman Covid-19 patient was allegedly raped by an ambulance driver while shifting her to a first line treatment centre near here, police said on Sunday.

Taking note of it, the state women's commission registered a case on its own into the incident, which drew wide condemnation from the Opposition Congress and BJP, even as health minister K.K. Shailaja said strict instructions had been given to take strong action against the culprit.

"This is an unfortunate incident. We have given strict directions to take strong action against the culprit," she said in Thiruvananthapuram.

The ambulance driver Noufal (29) was taken into custody on Sunday based on a complaint by the victim's mother to the hospital authorities and the police.

## UJJAIN TEMPLE TO OFFER 'PURE MILK' TO STATUE

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, SEPT. 6

The ancient shrine of Mahakaleswar in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh is planning to raise cows to meet the demand for milk in the wake of the recent directive by the Supreme Court to offer only pure milk to the jyotirlinga in the temple.

The temple administration is working out a plan to procure 150 Gir cows and to raise them in the shrine to make their milk available to the devotees to offer to the jyotirlinga, worshipped in the sanctum sanctorum of the eighteenth-century shrine.

"The temple administration is mulling over procuring Gir cows, a famous breed in India, to raise them in the gaushala or cowshed of the temple to meet the demand for pure milk in the shrine," temple administrator, S.S. Rawat, told this newspaper on Sunday.

According to him, around 1,000 litres of milk is being offered to the jyotirlinga by devotees every day.

The temple can build its captive reserve of pure milk to make it available to the devotees by raising the cattle breed, a senior temple administrator said.

## GANJA SMUGGLERS THRASH HOME GUARD TO DEATH

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 6

A home guard died after allegedly being thrashed by a group of ganja smugglers near Chaulimendi under Balimela police limits in Odisha's Malkangiri district on Sunday.

According to reports, more than 100 persons disguised as kanwariyas were carrying the contraband using slings.

Acting on a tip-off, the police on Saturday night intercepted them near Chaulimendi for search.

The accused attacked the cops, during which home guard Banabasi Maharana was grievously injured. The accused fled the spot after assaulting the cops.

The victim was rescued and rushed to the Mathili Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries on Sunday morning while undergoing treatment.

## SHEIKH HASINA PAYS TRIBUTE TO MUKHERJEE

Dhaka, Sept. 6: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday paid rich tributes to India's former president Pranab Mukherjee and said he was a true friend of Bangladesh, as the country's Parliament adopted a condolence motion over his death.

He was a true friend of Bangladesh since our 1971 Liberation War, Hasina told the maiden session of Parliament called for the second time since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The country's Parliament adopted a condolence motion to mourn the demise of Mukherjee and several distinguished Bangladeshis who died recently.

Mukherjee, 84, died on Monday in New Delhi following a 21-day battle with multiple ailments.

The former president was cremated with full state honours on Tuesday.

## Steady increase in TS Covid nos

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 6

Coronavirus cases are increasing at a steady rate in Telangana state, with 2,574 reported on Saturday. The 24-hour period from 8 pm on Friday to 8 pm on Saturday also saw nine more succumbing to Covid-19. While the total positive cases stood at 1,40,969, the fatalities were at 886, according to the daily Covid-19 bulletin released by the state health department on Sunday.

More than 10K cases for 11th day in AP

Vijayawada: Registration of above 10,000 Covid-19 positive cases per day in Andhra Pradesh continued on the 11th consecutive day on Sunday with registration of 10,794 new virus cases during the past 24 hours.

With this, the total number of Coronavirus cases in AP has reached 4,98,125 on Sunday among which 99,1689 are active cases, 3,94,019 patients have recovered and 4,417 patients have died.

Kerala tally crosses 3K mark for the first time

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Sunday reported its highest ever single-day spurt in coronavirus cases with 3,082 people testing positive for the pathogen and 10 related fatalities, taking the total infection count in the state to 87,840.

Fifty health workers were among those infected by the virus. With 10 more deaths the toll rose to 347 in the state. State Health Minister K K Shailaja in a release said out of the new patients, 56 reached the state from abroad, 132 from other states and 2,844 contracted the disease through their contacts.

Karnataka has 9,319 cases, 95 deaths

Bengaluru: Karnataka on Sunday registered 9,319 fresh Covid-19 cases and 95 related deaths, pushing the total infections to 3.98 lakh, the health department said.

The total number of infections comprise 2.92 lakh discharges, whereas there were 99,266 active cases in the state.

## Territorial Army units deployed along LAC

In addition to HP-Ladakh Scouts, SFF

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD SEPT. 6

With situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh hotting up leading to massive deployment of forces — especially those well-versed with the art of survival in inhospitable terrains and harsh weather and fight the enemy — Territorial Army (TA) battalions, comprising people from Ladakh are the latest addition in the troop deployment at strategic points to thwart any designs of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China. The TA had played a key role alongside the Army in the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars.

The TA units, sent recently to the strategic heights to assist the Army, are in addition to the deployment of two Mountain Divisions from Bareilly and Himachal Pradesh — Ladakh Scouts, Special Frontier Force

● **TERRITORIAL ARMY** is a unique concept wherein any citizen can join the force while continuing with their main profession and serve the Army when required. During peace time, these units are used for mundane tasks.

besides the existing three divisions of 14 Corps apart from the Indian Air Force — making it the first of its kind deployment at the LAC, post the 1962 Sino-India war.

Each division has between 17,000 and 20,000 soldiers. Recently, the Army has put on hold the premature retirement of thousands of JCOs and jawans, who have been asked to be ready for deployment at short notice. The TA shot to prominence after cricket stars like Kapil Dev, M.S. Dhoni, Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin

● **WHILE TA** has been supporting the Army in carrying out anti-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir, this would be the first time that they have been given bigger operational roles in the ongoing stand-off with the PLA. Known as the 'citizen's Army' wherein any citizen can volunteer to join the TA and serve the Army when required, the TA units form the second line of defence.

Pilot and some from the South Indian film industry joined the force and underwent training.

Sources told *Deccan Chronicle* that the "home and hearth" units of the TA, which was raised on the concept of the "son of the soil," is coming in handy at this crucial time. The soldiers in this force are locals who are well-versed with the terrain and geography of the area and have the required survival skills. During peace time, these units, though well-trained, are used for mundane tasks within Army establishments.

While the TA has been supporting the Army in carrying out anti-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir, this would be the first time that they have been given bigger operational roles in the ongoing stand-off with the PLA. Known as the 'citizen's Army' wherein any citizen can volunteer to join the TA and serve the Army when required, the TA units form the second line of defence.

"Since the unit comprises Ladakhis, who are tough, intelligent and know the region like the back of their hand, it was decided to deploy them at various heights," sources said.

Raised in October 1949, the size and task of TA has increased manifold over the years. It now has a strength of about 45,000 and sources said there are major plans in the pipeline to further make the TA strong and give bigger roles.

## THACKERAY GETS THREATENING CALL, SECURITY BEEFED UP

Mumbai, Sept. 6: An unidentified man allegedly called up Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's personal residence 'Matoshree' in Bandra here, saying that he was calling from Dubai on behalf of fugitive underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, a police official said on Sunday.

The caller rang up twice around 10.30 pm on Saturday, following which the police beefed up security at Thackeray's bungalow located in Kаланagar Colony, the official said.

"Someone called up on 'Matoshree' phone number two times on Saturday night and said Dawood Ibrahim wanted to talk to the CM. However, the telephone operator did not transfer the call to the CM," the official said.

"The caller did not reveal his identity, but only said that he was calling from Dubai on behalf of Dawood Ibrahim. Both the calls were received around 10.30 pm," he added. — PTI

## Offering prayers



Devotees offer prayers at the Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah after it reopened in New Delhi on Sunday, during Unlock 4.0. Union minister for minority affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi was among the people who paid obeisance to Sufi saint at Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia . — PTI

## K'TAKA LABOUR MANTRI TESTS +VE FOR COVID

Bengaluru, Sept. 6: Karnataka Labour Minister A. Shivaram Hebbar on Sunday said he and his wife have tested positive for the Covid-19 and would be under treatment in their home itself being asymptomatic.

"Me and my wife underwent Covid-19 test and have been found positive for the virus. Since there are no symptoms of Covid-19, we decided to remain in home quarantine on doctors' advice and are getting treatment at home," Hebbar tweeted.

## TS Assembly session starts today

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 6

At least 12 persons were found to be Covid-19 positive during the Coronavirus tests conducted at the Assembly on about 650 persons including legislators, Assembly staff, police personnel and journalists ahead of the monsoon session of the legislature that will start on Monday.

The names of those who tested positive were not released, but they will not be allowed inside the legislature when the sessions resumes.

It was expected that the

session will continue for 19 days, a final decision will be taken at the Business Advisory Committee meeting which will meet on Monday. The House will adjourn on the first day after passing condolence motions to mourn the death of former President Pranab Mukherjee, TRS legislator Solipeta Ramalinga Reddy and nine others. Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy on Sunday issued a bulletin dispensing with the Question Hour on Monday.

Meanwhile, all arrangements were made for the monsoon session. Wearing

a mask has been made compulsory, and visitors will not be allowed to witness the proceedings.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has instructed ministers to ensure that issues such as Covid-19, and the fire that claimed nine lives at the Srisaillam hydel power project are discussed thereabout.

The House is expected to witness debate the power sector, the new Revenue Act and the construction of projects by the AP government under the Rayalaseema lift irrigation scheme.

Discussion is likely on

injustice meted out to the state while implementing the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the financial and economic losses due to the financial policies of the Centre.

Meanwhile, Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka announced that the Congress will demand that the government discuss the shortage of facilities, equipment, doctors and paramedical staff in government hospitals to treat Covid-19 patients.

He told the media that the Congress will raise issues pertaining to agriculture also in the house.

## NCB grills Rhea in Sushant case

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, SEPT. 6

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Sunday grilled actor Rhea Chakraborty from noon to evening in connection with the drugs case pertaining to Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide. The central agency summoned her early in the day adhering to which she appeared at the agency's office in Ballard Estate, South Mumbai. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), who is probing the suicide to ascertain the motive behind the actor's extreme step, meanwhile grilled the late actor's sister Neetu at the DRDO guesthouse on Sunday, where the visiting team has set up their base.

The NCB officials grilled Rhea on the lines of the disclosures made by her brother Showik, Rajput's former house manager Samuel Miranda and arrested drug peddler Abdul Basit Parihar. While the probe has revealed that Parihar supplied drugs and Showik facilitated its procurement, the latter has claimed to have done that at the behest of his sister Rhea, a claim made by househelp Dipesh Sawant too in his statement.

The agency was also provided with the chats and text messages exchanged between Rhea and other suspects in which they discussed the procurement of narcotics, by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is probing the alleged money laundering involved in the suicide. The NCB used these premises to summon Rhea to question her on the procurement, consumption and peddling of narcotics.

"Rhea kept denying the charges despite being put up with relevant material supporting it. She may be confronted with other arrested accused as a part of the investigation," said an officer privy to the

## NCB RAIDS B'LURU CORPORATOR'S HOUSE FOR SON

VINAY MADHAV | DC BENGALURU, SEPT. 6

While the Bengaluru police are busy with the Sandalwood drug link case, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) raided the house of a Bengaluru corporator in connection with drug racket involving suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

The NCB raided the house of Mahalakshmi Shripura ward corporator, Keshavamurthy, who belongs to the Congress, in search of son Yashas, who is said to be involved in drug supply to Mumbai celebrities.

According to NCB regional officers, they had issued a notice to Yashas on September 2, to appear before NCB officials in Mumbai. His name cropped up when the NCB was investigating the drug angle in Bollywood. One of the accused, Mohammed, mentioned Yashas' name.

Yashas was in contact with Mohammed and was organising parties in Goa and Mumbai. He has close contacts with Hindi film actors. The NCB had asked Yashas to appear before them before September 7.

investigation.

Sawant was produced before the holiday court on Sunday that remanded him to the NCB custody for further investigation. The officials said that he has also stated that he saw Rajput smoking up while he worked there.

The CBI's confrontation was on the lines of her and other family members knowing of the dead actor's psychological condition and allegedly suggesting medication without prescription.

## AHEAD OF POLLS, BJP RELEASES POSTER SEEKING JUSTICE FOR SSR

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, SEPT. 6

A BJP poster campaign seeking justice for actor Sushant Singh Rajput, has created a flutter in poll-bound Bihar.

Opposition parties are of the view that posters and pamphlets have been released to influence voters ahead of the assembly elections scheduled in October-November this year.

Talking to reporters in Patna, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) spokesperson, Mrityunjay Tiwari, said, "Tejaswi Yadav was the first to demand a CBI probe into the case but

never used it for political reasons. It's tragic to see BJP doing politics over someone's dead body."

Dismissing the opposition's allegations, BJP leaders in Patna said that the posters were released by the art and culture wing of the party and has nothing to do with politics. According to BJP spokesperson, Nikhil Anand, "Sushant is the son of the soil who represented Bihar in Hindi cinema. His untimely death has been a shock to all of us which is visible not only in the Bihar but globally. Bihar BJP has stood by the demand of justice for the late actor."

## MARITAL | DISPUTE

Varsha reportedly stayed with her husband only 18 months

## Mohanty filed divorce petition: Lawyer

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 6

The controversy surrounding BJD MP, Anubhav Mohanty, allegedly harassing his actress wife Varsha Priyadarshini, took a new twist on Sunday after the lawmaker's legal counsel informed the media that his client has filed a divorce petition in the court of principal judge, Family Court, Patiala House, New Delhi, seeking a divorce.

"My client has filed a

divorce petition under Section 13 (i)(a) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 on the grounds that the marriage between the two has never been consummated and as such no child was born. Though the couple got married on February 8, 2014, Varsha stayed with her husband only for 18 months. The married life was full of cruelty, tyranny, misery, harassment and suffering for Anubhav and his family members," Ashwini Dubey, the legal counsel of the lawmaker, told a local television channel here

over the telephone from Delhi.

In his divorce petition, a copy of which is with this newspaper, the respondent (Priyadarshini) fears the pain while thinking about having sexual intercourse. As such, she never allowed the petitioner (Anubhav) to consummate their marriage. Whenever the petitioner tried to even touch the respondent, she never allowed it. This behaviour made the petitioner uncomfortable and unhappy. The petitioner never felt he was married as the respondent never gave

him the pleasure of being married, reads the petition.

The petition says that the respondent did not allow the petitioner to establish a physical relationship on their first night after marriage and clearly told the petitioner that she is going to take three-four months to get comfortable and would allow physical relations only then. The petitioner appreciated the feelings of the respondent and gave her time to become comfortable.

The content of Anubhav's divorce is in

sharp contrast with the allegations levelled by Varsha.

In a petition filed before the sub-divisional judicial magistrate court, Cuttack, Varsha has charged Anubhav with domestic violence.

The actress, while accusing Anubhav of being an alcoholic, has said that though she insisted on a child, the actor did not show any interest.

Varsha has demanded a monthly maintenance and an indemnity of ₹15 crore from her actor-turned-lawmaker husband.



## SHORT TAKES

BERLUSCONI  
RESPONDING TO  
VIRUS DRUGS

Rome, Sept. 6: Former Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi is responding “optimally” to Covid-19 treatment but is the most vulnerable type of patient and is in “the most delicate phase” of the virus, his personal doctor said on Sunday.

Dr Alberto Zangrillo repeated Sunday that he nevertheless remained “cautiously optimistic” about Berlusconi’s recovery. The three-time premier turns 84 in a few weeks and has had a history of heart problems that required being fitted with a pacemaker several years ago.

Zangrillo suggested Berlusconi wouldn’t be released anytime soon, recalling that the virus “requires adequate treatment and takes its time.”

SPEAKING ILL OF  
PEOPLE WORSE  
THAN VIRUS: POPE

Vatican City, Sept. 6: Speaking ill of other people and spreading gossip is worse than Covid-19 and Satan is the worst offender of all, Pope Francis said on Sunday.

When people see someone making a mistake, “the first thing we usually do is go and tell someone else about it. Gossip like this closes off the community,” the pope said in comments on a passage in the Bible where Jesus talks about what must be done to welcome back into the community those who have committed errors.

“The great gossip is Satan who always says bad things about people,” Francis said.

Satan “is a liar who seeks to divide the Church, to drive our brothers apart, so that they are no longer a community,” he added.

MOM KILLS 5  
KIDS, GERMAN  
CITY MOURNS

Berlin, Sept. 6: More than 800 people came together for a memorial for the five children who were allegedly killed by their mother at their home in the western city of Solingen, the German news agency dpa reported on Sunday.

Neighbours, friends and others mourning the deaths of the five young children lit candles Saturday night in front of the building where they had lived. They brought flowers, toys and balloons with the names of the dead children them: Melina, Leonie, Sophie, Timo and Luca, dpa reported.

“It’s hard to mourn on your own, to express your sadness,” Hans-Peter Harbecke, a neighbourhood organiser, told public broadcaster WDR. “It’s easier when you’re together, it’s more intensive as a community.” Prosecutors have charged the 27-year-old mother of the five children, who were found dead at their home on Thursday, with murder.

The killings have caused widespread shock in Germany. Investigators have said that postmortem examinations on the children, who were between 1 to 8 years old, showed signs of sedation and suffocation, but it was still unclear how exactly they died.

HEZBOLLAH,  
HAMAS CHIEFS  
MEET OVER TIES

Beirut, Sept. 6: Leaders of Lebanon’s Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas movement, both enemies of Israel, have met to discuss diplomatic normalisation between the Jewish state and Arab countries, a report said on Sunday.

They stressed the “stability” of the “axis of resistance” against Israel, the Hezbollah-run Al-Manar TV channel reported, without saying where or when the meeting took place.

Hassan Nasrallah, head of the Iran-backed Shiite Hezbollah movement, was pictured meeting Ismail Haniyeh, who heads the political bureau of Hamas, the Islamist movement that control the Gaza Strip.

They discussed “political and military developments in Palestine, Lebanon and the region” and “the dangers to the Palestinian cause” including “Arab plans for normalisation” with Israel, Al-Manar said.

The meeting comes after an August 13 announcement that the Jewish state and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to normalise ties.

While the US-backed diplomatic drive aims to boost a regional alliance against Iran, Palestinians have condemned it as a “stab in the back” as they remain under occupation and don’t have their own state.

1 killed, 7 hurt in late-night  
stabbings in Birmingham

Victims were drinking, dining at outdoor tables, UK cops launch manhunt

London, Sept. 6: UK police said a murder inquiry has been launched on Sunday after one man was killed and seven people injured in multiple stabbings overnight in the city of Birmingham.

According to reports, West Midlands Police believe the victims were picked at random and do not believe the incident was terror or gang related. While a man and a woman are battling serious injuries, the injuries of five others are not thought to be life-threatening, the force said.

A hunt has been initiated for a male suspect, who is believed to have gone on a stabbing spree, starting at Constitution Hill in Birmingham. “The events during the early hours of this morning are tragic, shocking and understandably frightening,” said Chief Superintendent Steve Graham, responsible for policing in Birmingham.

“Please be assured that we are doing absolutely everything we can to find whoever was responsible and try to understand what exactly happened. We have well-rehearsed plans for dealing with major incidents,” he said, calling on the public to remain vigilant and report anything suspicious.

The force is also calling for anyone with CCTV or mobile footage to contact the police. The police believe the incidents, which took place between 12.30 am and 2.20 am local time, are linked and are following a number of lines of enquiry.



Nirav Modi

NIRAV MODI  
EXTRADITION  
TRIAL TO RESUME

London, Sept. 6: Fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, who has been lodged at a prison in London since his arrest in March last year, is set to appear via videolink for the second leg of his extradition trial at a UK court on Monday.

The 49-year-old jeweller is fighting extradition charges related to the estimated \$2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud and money laundering case brought by the Indian government, being represented at Westminster Magistrates’ Court in London by the UK’s Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

In line with the coronavirus lockdown restrictions, District Judge Samuel Goozee has directed Modi’s appearance from a room in Wandsworth Prison in south-west London with social distancing norms in place for the part-remote setting for the five-day hearing scheduled to conclude on Friday.

Justice Goozee had presided over the first leg of the extradition in May, during which the CPS sought to establish a prima facie case of fraud and money laundering against Modi. The upcoming hearings are ear-marked to complete those arguments after the Indian government had submitted additional “corroboratory evidence”.

It will then go on to deal with the additional extradition request, made by the Indian authorities and certified by UK Home Secretary Priti Patel earlier this year, which add on the charges of “causing the disappearance of evidence” and intimidating witnesses or “criminal intimidation to cause death” against Modi. —PTI



Police forensic officers gather evidence inside a cordon on Hurst Street, following a major stabbing incident in the centre of Birmingham, central England, on Sunday.

An increased uniformed and armed response has been put in place across the city. The West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson, said: “Last night’s events are truly terrible and have shocked the people of Birmingham, the West Midlands and the country.”

“My first thoughts are with the victims and their families at this time. I have every faith in West Midlands Police who are

working extremely quickly on this investigation.”

Earlier, the police had declared a “major incident” as cordons were put up and an investigation was launched following reports of the stabbings.

A major incident describes any situation involving serious harm or a security risk to the public and covers special arrangements for all of the emergency services to work together.

West Midlands Police

said they are uncertain as to the motive behind the stabbings and are working to establish the details after they were called to reports of one stabbing just after midnight in the city centre.

Officers have set up a cordon at the junction of Hurst Street, a popular nightlife area in the city centre referred to as the Gay Village, and Bromsgrove Street. Emergency services attended and some of the

injured people were rushed to local hospitals. A heavy police presence remains in the area as officers urged people to remain calm and stay away from the area as cordons remain in place.

Many people had been seated at outdoor tables eating and drinking on Saturday evening just before the incident. The streets in the area had already been closed to traffic due to Coronavirus restrictions. —PTI

Belarus braces for new silent  
mass protest over Lukashenko

Minsk, Sept. 6: Thousands of Belarusians staged a peaceful new march on Sunday, keeping the pressure on strongman Alexander Lukashenko who has refused to quit after his disputed re-election and turned to Russia for help to stay in power.

Holding red-and-white flags and placards, protesters including many students took to the streets of the capital Minsk despite authorities mounting a massive show of force and detaining some demonstrators.

Troops, water cannon, armoured personnel carriers and armoured reconnaissance vehicles were deployed to the city centre ahead of the march and metro stations in Minsk’s centre were closed.

Unprecedented protests broke out after Lukashenko, who has ruled the ex-Soviet state for 26 years, claimed re-election with 80 percent of the vote on August 9.

Opposition rival Svetlana Tikhanovskaya says she won the vote but Lukashenko’s security forces have detained thousands of protesters, many of whom accused police of beatings and torture. Several people have died in the crackdown.

Tikhanovskaya left Belarus under pressure from authorities and took shelter in EU member Lithuania.

Belarusians have been demonstrating across the country for nearly a month even though the

Police declare Portland stir  
a ‘riot’, open fire, tear gas

Portland, Sept. 6: Police arrested dozens of people and used tear gas against hundreds of demonstrators in Portland on late Saturday as the western US city marked 100 days since Black Lives Matter protests erupted against racism and police brutality.

Police quickly declared the rally a “riot” after protesters hurled Molotov cocktails at them, and they responded with a barrage of tear gas to disperse the crowd.

At least one person was injured by the fire bombs, police said.

Officers arrested dozens

of protesters in an ensuing game of cat-and-mouse through a residential district of east Portland.

“It was Day 100 for Black Lives Matter protests in Portland since George Floyd’s murder and they wanted to prevent us from marching,” said 20-year-old protester Jay, her eyes red from the tear gas.

“It’s our constitutional right to be here and to express ourselves.” Police said people were “engaging in tumultuous and violent conduct thereby intentionally or recklessly creating a grave risk of causing public alarm.”

“This is a riot. Police are giving announcements to disperse. People are throwing Molotov cocktails,” Portland Police said on Twitter. The nightly protests were sparked by the death of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis in May.

Floyd’s death triggered similar protests nationwide, but it is in Portland — a city of 650,000 that is more than 70 percent white — that activists have remained on the streets practically every night, demanding racial justice and police accountability. —AFP

Cops swoop down on  
Hong Kong protesters

Hong Kong, Sept. 6: Nearly 300 people were arrested by Hong Kong police on Sunday as riot officers swooped on democracy protesters opposed to the postponement of local elections.

Sunday was meant to be voting day for the city’s partially elected legislature, one of the few instances where Hong Kongers get to cast ballots.

But the city’s pro-Beijing leader Carrie Lam sus-

pended the polls for a year — citing the Coronavirus — angering the pro-democracy opposition who had been hoping to capitalise on seething anti-government sentiment.

Throughout the afternoon officers were heckled by people shouting slogans such as “Give me back my vote!” and “Corrupt cops!” as officers conducted multiple stop and searches and ordered crowds to disperse. —AFP

Wouldn’t trust  
Trump’s word on  
vaccine: Harris

Washington, Sept. 6: Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris said in comments released on Saturday that if a Coronavirus vaccine is available before November’s election, she would not take President Donald Trump’s word on its safety and efficacy.

Trump faces intense pressure to curb the contagion that has clouded his re-election prospects, sparking worries his administration could rush vaccine research to fit a political timetable.

“I would not trust Donald Trump and it would have to be a credible source of information that talks about the efficacy and the reliability of (a vaccine),” Harris said.

“I will not take his word for it.” A shot against the virus that has killed over 188,000 in the US and hobbled the world’s largest economy has become another flashpoint ahead of the November 3 vote.

This week news broke that the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention asked states to sweep away red tape that could prevent a network of vaccine distribution centers being “fully operational by Nov 1, 2020.” The US Food and Drug Administration has also raised the possibility that a vaccine might be given emergency authorization before the end of trials.

Trump dangled the possibility in front of supporters last week at the Republican National Convention saying the US “will produce a vaccine before the end of the year, or maybe even sooner.” However, Anthony Fauci, the country’s leading infectious disease expert, said on Thursday that the initial results of vaccine trials could come in “November or December.”

Fauci said that being ready in October, before the election, is “unlikely, not impossible.” White House spokeswoman Kayleigh McEnany denied any pressure to get the vaccine out before vot-

EX-FBI AGENT  
LABELS U.S.  
PREZ AS ‘CRUEL’

Washington, Sept. 6: Peter Strzok spent his FBI career hunting Russian and Chinese spies, but after news broke of derogatory text messages he had sent about President Donald Trump, he came to feel like he was the one being hunted.

There were menacing phone calls and messages from strangers, and anxious peeks out window shades before his family would leave the house. FBI security experts advised him of best practices — walk around your car before entering, watch for unfamiliar vehicles in your neighbourhood — more commonly associated with mob targets looking to elude detection.

“Being subjected to outrageous attacks up to and including by the president himself, which are full of lies and mischaracterisations and just crude and cruel, is horrible,” Strzok said in an interview.

“There’s no way around it.” A new book by Strzok traces his arc from veteran counterintelligence agent to the man who came to embody Trump’s public scorn of FBI and his characterisation of its Russia investigation as a “witch hunt.”

The texts cost Strzok his job and drew vitriol from Trump. But even among Trump critics, Strzok isn’t a hero. His anti-Trump texts on a government phone to an FBI lawyer gave Trump and his supporters a major opening to undercut the bureau’s credibility right as it was conducting one of the most consequential investigations in its history. —AP

ers head to the polls.

“No one is pressuring the FDA to do anything,” she said Thursday. “The priority here is saving lives.” —AFP

Navalny case curbs  
likely on Russia

Berlin, Sept. 6: Germany, the current head of the European Union, will discuss possible sanctions against Russia over the poisoning of Alexei Navalny if the Kremlin does not provide an explanation soon, its foreign minister said on Sunday.

Russian opposition leader and anti-corruption campaigner Navalny fell ill on a flight last month and was treated in a Siberian hospital before being evacuated to Berlin. Germany said last week there was “unequivocal evidence” that President Vladimir Putin’s top foe had been poisoned using Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok.

“We have high expectations of the Russian government to solve this serious crime,” Heiko Maas told German daily Bild. “If the government has nothing to do with the attack, then it is in its own interest to back this up with facts.”

If Russia does not help clarify what happened “in the coming days”, Germany will be compelled to “discuss a

response with our allies,” Maas said.

The crime against Navalny was a violation of the international Chemical Weapons Convention and there must be an appropriate response, he said. “When we think about sanctions, they should be as targeted as possible.” Western leaders and many Russians have expressed horror at what Navalny’s allies say is the first known use of chemical weapons against a high-profile opposition leader on Russian soil.

The Kremlin has denied responsibility for the attack and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Germany is yet to share any findings with Moscow’s prosecutors.

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on Sunday accused Germany of stalling efforts to probe the Navalny case.

“Berlin is stalling the process of investigation for which it’s calling. On purpose?” she said on Facebook. —AFP

SPACE | MISSION  
Spacecraft was launched on board a Long March-2F carrier rocket on Friday

## China’s reusable spacecraft lands successfully

Beijing, Sept. 6: China’s reusable experimental spacecraft, which was launched into orbit two days ago, successfully returned to its predetermined landing site on Sunday, according to the official state media.

The spacecraft was launched on board a Long March-2F carrier rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Friday. The successful return marks an important breakthrough in china’s

research on reusable spacecraft technology, which will provide a more convenient and economical way for the peaceful use of space, state-run CGTN TV reported.

Chinese military officials, who were tight-lipped about the launch earlier, said there were many firsts in this launch. “The spacecraft is new, the launch method is also different,” they said.

An official, quoted by the Hong Kong-based South

China Morning Post on Sunday, declined to comment on the details of the

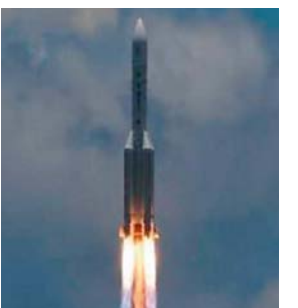
mission but suggested “maybe you can take a look at the US X-37B.”

The X-37B is an unmanned space plane that operates like a smaller version of the space shuttle, which is launched by a rocket and cruises back to earth for a runway landing.

It has flown four classified missions to date, carrying secret payloads on long-duration flights in Earth orbit, the Post report said. Friday’s launch comes weeks after

China launched Tianwen-1, the country’s first Mars mission, from Hainan in late July.

The China National Space Administration said its spacecraft, including an orbiter, lander and rover, was performing well on its way to Mars. A month before that, China completed the network of satellites for its BeiDou navigation network, a competitor to the Global Positioning System (GPS) system of the US. —PTI



China’s reusable spacecraft aboard a Long March-2F carrier rocket. —AFP



## DECCAN Chronicle

7 SEPTEMBER 2020

### No more slogans please, we need hard measures

The war on coronavirus, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised to win for us in 21 days, gets more hopeless by the day with the daily increase in caseload crossing 90,000, a figure higher than all other nations. India added the last million to the number of infected people in 13 days, a record of sorts in pandemic history the world over. With 41 lakh infections, India is set to become the nation with the second largest number of Covid-19 patients, overtaking Brazil soon.

The nature of the pandemic has also been shifting. Those states which fared better in early stages are now becoming increasingly vulnerable. The southern states of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka see no let-up in new cases; even Kerala has started reporting cases upwards of 2,500 every day. Delhi is reported to be witnessing a relapse with the numbers increasing. Telangana's finance minister is the latest high profile person to contract the virus.

The saving grace till now has been the case fatality rate which has been quite low but experts fear that the situation could change as the pandemic moves towards the villages from cities and towns where the health infrastructure is in better shape. It is in this context that the criticism of Congress leader and former finance minister P. Chidambaram must be looked at. He has pointed out that India is the only country that has not benefited from the lockdown. When lockdown was declared, India had less than 500 cases but the number rose to 5.6 lakh when it ended on June 30.

The economic cost the nation is made to pay is going to be humongous if it cannot arrest the spread of the pandemic. The nation's GDP experienced a historic contraction by 23.9 per cent in the first quarter. It will be cold comfort to think that the period was spent mostly in lockdown. This quarter, which started with half-a-million infections, will see the number multiplied several times when it ends.

It is time the government explained to the people what its game plan was when it declared the lockdown and set a deadline to win the war, and how it all went awry. The lockdown had not only shut down the economy completely, it had also put people to untold miseries. Millions of guest workers were made to trek their way back home in villages from the towns and cities and several of them fell and died by the wayside. There was little help coming from the government; even the courts refused to see the unfolding human catastrophe in the earlier days.

It will be suicidal for the nation to return to lockdown; instead, it must launch a massive awareness campaign on the pandemic and educate the people on the need of social distancing. It must also ramp up the health-care infrastructure in the interiors. Instead of advising the resource-starved states to borrow, the government must loose its pursestrings instead. The time for hollow slogans and meaningless gestures has passed long ago.

### Kesavananda's lessons

At a time when socialism has emerged as a saviour to the suffering in a coronavirus-hit world, the Supreme Court's landmark Kesavananda Bharati judgment holds a few lessons. It was this judgment that led to the formulation of the basic structure doctrine for the Constitution, one that has been cited over and over again to settle multitudes of lawsuits having far reaching impact on our society and governance.

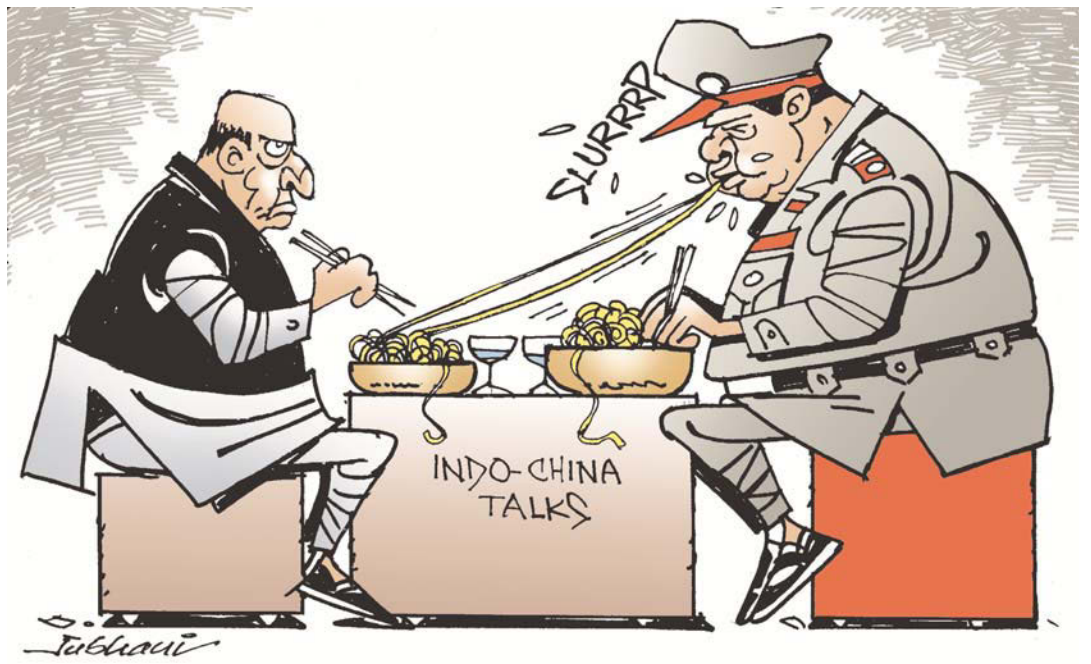
Led by then chief justice of India S.M. Sikri, the 13-judge constitution bench's 7-6 verdict in the apex court's longest trial at 68 days put much-needed curbs on a government's unbridled majoritarianism, holding the Constitution of India above it, ruling that even the Parliament cannot tamper with the basic structure of the document, in particular Part Three concerning fundamental rights. The seminal verdict included the concept of the welfare state in the ambit of that basic structure.

Today a tribalist, populist government is invoking *force majeure* to escape accountability after single-handedly decimating the economy. Its stooges have filed a petition in court to remove the words "socialist" and "secular" from the Preamble.

Few are aware that *Kesavananda (1973)* validated the constitution amendments enacted by the then Indira Gandhi government to uphold the nationalisation of banks and abolition of privy purses. The judgment also defined the extent to which Parliament could limit property rights, in order to redistribute large land holdings to cultivators.

Kesavananda Bharati, pontiff of Kasaragod's Edneer Mutt, who, at 29, contested in court the Kerala government's move, under two state land reform acts, to take partial control of his temple property, is no more. But the eponymous judgment that bears his name is a legacy critical to India's functioning as a parliamentary democracy.

Subhani



## A controversial judge with a tumultuous legacy



Faizan Mustafa & Pranav Verma



View with apprehension the attitude of judges", remarked Lord Atkin in his storied dissent in *Liversidge (1941)*, "who show themselves more executive-minded than the executive". Justice Arun Mishra has demitted office, and it is worth evaluating the implications of his tenure on the independence of the judiciary. As his critics have argued, his tenure may have contributed even more to the already alleged transformation of the Indian Supreme Court into an executive court — or, as Lord Atkin warned against, a court more executive-minded than the executive itself.

**Growing deference to the executive:** Constitutional democracies are predicated upon a natural and healthy tension between the executive and the judiciary, with the latter serving as a counter-majoritarian check upon the former. However, the first clear indication in recent years of this basic principle having come under strain was the public adulation by Justice Arun Mishra (appointed as Supreme Court judge on July 7, 2014, after the UPA government had twice blocked his well-deserved elevation) for the Prime Minister, calling him "an internationally acclaimed visionary", and "a versatile genius who thinks globally and acts locally". Justice M.R. Shah who sat on many benches with Justice Mishra too in 2018, immediately after taking over as Chief Justice of Bihar, had called Prime Minister a "model and hero". True, an overwhelming majority of Indians similarly admire Prime Minister but should a judge say so publicly is the moot question. To be fair, Justice Mishra's praises were not unprecedented by any means. It was, in fact, a grim reminder to an earlier time where the Supreme Court bent way

over backwards for the executive. When Mrs Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980, Justice P.N. Bhagwati wrote to her, that "... I am sure that with your iron will and firm determination, uncanny insight and dynamic vision, great administrative capacity and vast experience, overwhelming love and affection of the people and, above all, a heart which is identified with the misery of the poor and the weak, you will be able to steer the ship of the nation safely to its cherished goal." Interestingly, the same Justice Bhagwati in *State of Rajasthan (1977)* had favoured mass dissolution of nine elected Congress governments by the Janata government by observing that "never in the history of this country

ra also leaves behind a legacy of a liberal and frequent use of contempt threats against the Bar. In fact, long before the contempt case against Mr Prashant Bhushan was instituted, the judge threatened contempt action against senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan while the latter was arguing for Justice Mishra's recusal in the Indore Development Authority Case (2019). Justice Mishra not only threatened contempt in the midst of the oral arguments, but also promised to "see through" the conviction. On senior lawyers' objection, he offered *dandavat pranam* ie prostration in abject apology.

The Indore Development Authority Case (2019) also reignited the debate on recusal by judges when Justice Mishra steadfastly denied the plea seeking his recusal on the ground of him leading a bench which was to re-examine his own earlier opinion passed as part of a smaller bench — this raised a significant perception of bias. Lord Esher in *Allison (1894)* observed that the question is not that the judge, in fact, was biased. It is the "perception" of bias that has to be the guiding factor. The Indian Supreme Court, too, in *Ranjit Thakur (1987)*, held that judge should look at the party's perception.

**The ghost of the judges' press conference:** The year 2018 marked a watershed moment for the Indian Supreme Court when four of its senior-most judges took to the media and alleged through an open press conference, that sensitive cases were being allotted to a select few judges. The then future CJI Ranjan Gogoi, during the press conference, indicated that the assignment of Judge Loya's case to Justice Arun Mishra was one of the rea-

sons that forced the judges to go public. Justice Mishra in Bhushan's sentence order said that it must be the 'first and the last occasion that judges had gone to press' (Para 44). Justice Mishra was part of 540 benches and delivered as many as 132 judgments, which means he really worked very hard. Several matters with significant stakes for the central government came to be heard by benches which were led by Justice Mishra — these include, the Rajasthan disqualified MLAs case; the dispute over the control of Delhi government over services; the Karnataka disqualified MLAs case; the CBI director Case; the AGR dues case; Sahara papers; a total of eight cases pertaining to the Adani group. The last being Adani Power Rajasthan Ltd (2020) delivered last Monday benefitting the Adani Group with Rs 5,000 crore. He delivered a controversial judgment in *Haren Pandya (2019)* convicting the accused who were acquitted by the Gujarat high court. Justice Mishra has also held in *Davinder Singh (2020)* that sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes is permissible. His judgment in *Chebrolu Leela Prasad Rao (2020)* quashing 100 per cent ST reservation of primary teachers in ST areas was also seen as diluting the reservation scheme. The final order was eviction of 48,000 slum clusters. In many cases, Justice Mishra overlooked the earlier precedents. But Justice Mishra's judgment in *Vineeta Sharma (2020)* upholding coparcenary rights of Hindu daughters is widely appreciated.

Justice Mishra's tenure at the Supreme Court would be located in the context of the court's overtly deferential approach towards the executive, a strained relationship with the Bar, and a continuing lack of clarity in allocation of sensitive cases, all of which seem to have contributed to the tumultuous legacy that he leaves behind.

**Faizan Mustafa is a constitutional law expert. Pranav Verma is an LL.M student at Cambridge University. The views are personal.**

### LETTERS

#### DON'T TARGET ELDERS

Apropos your report, *Covid test for senior citizens turns dicey for GCC volunteers*. My mother-in-law and father-in-law who come under the senior citizens' category were forcefully made to take the swab test by health workers. They have their regular check-ups at the railway hospital and hence didn't require the test. Despite the fact, the officials carried on with the test. Subsequently, my in-laws were threatened that if they refused to co-operate, they would be forcefully taken into the ambulance. In the meantime, my in-laws went for a Covid-19 test to the railway hospital which declared them negative, obviously understood that there were no symptoms of the virus. These desperate health workers and officials were informed about this fact but the GCC insisted to stick the Covid-19 'Quarantine Notice' for three days. Eventually, it all came down to a further 14-day quarantine period. It appears weird and devastating for elderly people who are targeted and unnecessarily compelled to encounter distressful situations. The government needs to step in and take corrective steps.

**Jacqueline Netto**  
Chennai

#### KEY PLAYERS MISSING

The absence of key players like Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh may be a setback for Chennai Super Kings in the upcoming IPL-2020 and all eyes are on its 'Captain Cool' as to how he's going to manage the situation. MSD can successfully manage his resources bringing out the best in them. As we have seen in the past, MSD has brought so much from young players like Ravindra Jadeja and extracted so much from veterans like Imran Tahir as the highest wicket-taker in IPL 2019. Let's not forget that even opponents will not rule out a googly or two from CSK's 'Thala' as a form of his strategy.

**A.P. Thiruvadi,**  
Chennai

ADITYA SINHA

Editor

K. SUDHAKAR

Printer & Publisher

R. MOHAN

Resident Editor

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

**Chennai:** SP 3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai 600032. Phones: (044) 22254747, 22254748

**Coimbatore:** 77 Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore 641009. Phone: (0422) 2231255, 2231256

**Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad 500 003. Phone: (040) 27803930-4. Fax: (040) 27805256

**Bengaluru:** 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Ft. Road, Koramangala, Bangalore-560095. Ph: 08043460500; Fax: 080-22960551/52/55

**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No. 13A Beach Road, Near Kailasgiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017. Phones: (0891) 2552333/2552334, Fax (0891) 2755285

**Vijayawada:** No. C 3 & 4, Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.). Phones: (0866) 2555284/ 2555287, Fax (0866) 2555234

**Rajahmundry:** Vemagiri, Dhawleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry 533125. Phones: (0883) 2417208, 2417618

**Anantapur:** Thapovan Colony, Bangalore Bye-Pass Road, Anantapur 515004. Phones: (08554) 276903, Fax: 08554-276904

**Nellore:** Survey No. 527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatchalam (M), Chemudugunta Panchayat, Nellore. Phone: (0861) 2348581/ 82, Telefax (0861) 2348580

**Karimnagar:** Survey No. 1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagtiyala Road, Karimnagar 505 001. Phone: (0878 ) 2228908; Telefax (0878) 2224033

**Kochi:** No. 3-B, 3rd Floor, DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408

**Kozhikode:** No 6/1002 E, First Floor City Mall, Opp. YMCA Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001 Fax : 0495 4019018

**Thiruvananthapuram:** St Joseph Press Thycad post, Cotton Hills, Thiruvananthapuram-14, Ph: 0471-2735105/67, Fax: 0471-0416112 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. HSD-348/2006-08ss

G. Kishan Reddy



## NEP presents Telangana with opportunity to course-correct

A lot has been deliberated on the transformative potential of the recently issued National Education Policy (NEP). The policy that has stood out for introducing sweeping changes in school and higher education is a boon for Telangana where it will improve learning outcomes, especially for socially and economically vulnerable students.

It is important to understand the performance of Telangana in education. The performance grading index used by the ministry of education ranks Telangana at 17 out of the 37 states and Union territories in 2018-19. The broad-based metrics included learning outcomes and quality, access, equity, infrastructure and facilities, and governance processes. Telangana was ranked 30th in infrastructure and facilities and 20th in access. It also performed below-par in two other parameters — learning outcomes and quality, and access to education.

The National Achievement Survey, conducted by NCERT, too, revealed that the performance of Telangana students from classes five to eight as

poorer in comparison to students from other southern states. Even the Comptroller and Auditor General in its audit report in 2018 pulled up Telangana, where 14-26 per cent of primary school students and 21-47 per cent of upper primary school students scored less than 40 per cent between 2014 and 2017.

It is thus imperative for Telangana, which is financially well endowed, to implement the NEP.

The NEP understands the critical importance of good quality childhood care and education (ECCE). Experts believe that over 85 per cent of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of six. By bringing ECCE to the centre of education with an explicit focus on building foundational and numerical skills for every child by end of Grade 3, a quantum improvement in learning outcomes is expected. The NEP also aims for a holistic, comprehensive education as it breaks down prevailing insularity by introducing the 5+3+4+4 system of school education.

The NEP further strikes the right chord in terms of equity and access.

Schools are often regarded as the second home in a child's life and this will thus, in turn, build an inclusive and empathetic society. In both domains of school and higher education, the NEP has opted for restructuring of the system in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and recreational opportunities to prevent any form of exclusion or isolation of disadvantaged communities. The NEP aims to provide food and nutrition in terms of breakfast and midday meals in government schools. This will encourage parents of children, who often have to make their child work for their next meal, to send them to school.

Another striking example to improve equity is the attempt to include the mother tongue as the medium of both educational and vocational education. By including regional languages, in this case Telugu, as a medium of instruction, NEP 2020 strives to focus the child's energies on learning concepts rather than a new language. The NEP also acknowledges special mechanisms required to ensure that children belonging to tribal communities receive the benefits of

these interventions. The decision to promote tribal languages will contribute to their educational empowerment. Telangana has at least 10 districts with scheduled areas and children belonging to Lambada, Koya, Gond, Yerukala, Chenchu and other communities will stand to benefit.

One of the reasons for poor infrastructure and facilities of schools is lack of funds with states. The NEP stipulates the Centre and states work together to increase public investment in the education sector to six per cent of GDP. The Telangana state government's budget allocations to education for the 2020-21 fiscal saw a reduction from previous allocations. This is of major concern given that data recorded by the 2011 census shows Telangana's literacy rate as 66.4 per cent, much below the national average of 74.4 per cent.

Lastly, the NEP has proposed sea changes in higher education that will better align with the needs of a changing employment market. Telangana has a Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 36.2 per cent. The NEP issues a bold call for enhancing GER in higher edu-

cation including vocational education to 50 per cent by 2035. It also aims to enhance access by establishing more high-quality higher education institutes (HEI) in aspirational districts and special education zones containing larger numbers of social and economically disadvantaged groups. By 2030, the NEP aims to have at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in/near every district. Aspirational districts in Telangana such as Jayashankar Bhoopalpally, Kumarambheem Asifabad and Khammam will benefit.

Education is a concurrent subject and this stipulates the collaboration of both the Centre and the state to enact proposed reforms. State governments will also now need to act in a manner in which we can truly usher in the vision of India as a "knowledge powerhouse" as envisaged by the Prime Minister. This is an opportunity that the state of Telangana cannot afford to miss at any cost.

*The writer is Union minister of state for home affairs and represents Secunderabad in the Lok Sabha*



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,357.18	-1.63
Nifty 50	11,333.85	-1.68
S&P 500*	3,426.96	-0.81
Dollar (₹)	73.14	0.48
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.22	0.46
Euro (₹)	86.62	0.27
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,770▼56	0.10
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.66	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.930	0.034
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.721	0.00

\* As of Friday/Saturday

Faceless vetting of all imports by December 31

The Customs Department will roll out pan-India faceless assessment for all imported goods by October 31, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has said. While faceless assessment for import of certain goods was already rolled out in Bengaluru and Chennai ports on June 8, it was extended to Delhi and Mumbai Customs on August 3. This will now be extended in phases to all ports across the country by December 31.

Thriveni Earth bags ₹31,428 cr NTPC contract



Thriveni Earthmovers has bagged a contract worth Rs 31,428 crore from NTPC to develop and operate Talaiipalli coal mine in Chhattisgarh. "Thriveni Earthmovers... a Coimbatore-based mining company, has bagged another mine development and operation contract from NTPC on August 26, with a contract value of Rs 31,428 crore," an official said. NTPC had terminated the contracts awarded to BGR Mining & Infra.

EV charging kiosks at 69,000 pumps mullied

The Centre is mulling setting up at least one electric vehicle (EV) charging kiosk each at nearly 69,000 petrol pumps across the country to induce people to go for electric mobility. The government is also thinking of making it compulsory to install EV charging kiosks at all company-owned, company-operated petrol pumps of state refiners. Power minister R. K. Singh suggested oil ministry officials to issue an order in this regard.

Airtel launches 'unlimited' net plans at ₹499



Bharti Airtel launched 'unlimited' category broadband plans starting at Rs 499 per month, which will come bundled with subscription to video entertainment apps and high definition set-top box (STB) against refundable deposit. The move comes within a week of Reliance Jio revising broadband plans with unlimited data usage and bundling subscription fee of video entertainment apps in them.

■ Rangarajan says half the economy may do well Chances of positive growth this fiscal

New Delhi, Sept 6: A small positive economic growth in 2020-21 may not be ruled out as sectors like agriculture and essential goods and services were fully operational in the first quarter despite coronavirus-induced lockdown, according to a paper co-authored by former RBI governor C. Rangarajan.

Although many international and national agencies have projected a sharp contraction in the GDP in 2020-21—ranging from World Bank's projection of 3.2 per cent to SBI's 6.8 per cent—there are reasons to believe that the outcome may be better than these strong contractionary prospects, the paper said.

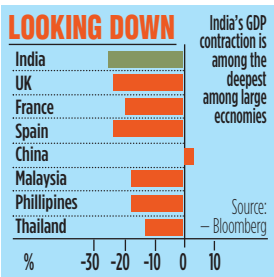
"We may note that some key sectors like agriculture and related sectors, public administration, defence services and other services may perform normally or better than normal given the demand for health services," said the paper authored by Rangarajan and India EY India chief policy advisor D. K. Srivastava.

However, the paper, titled 'India's Growth Prospects and Policy Options: Emerging from the Pandemic's Shadow' also stated that the story of the Indian economy as it unfolds under the impact of Covid-19 is disquieting.

The report said half the economy could support positive growth. It pointed out that goods and services categorised as essential



C. Rangarajan



TATA STEEL PRODUCTION BACK AT 100% CAPACITY, SAYS NARENDRA

New Delhi, Sept. 6: Tata Steel's production level has now recovered to 100 per cent as the company sees a revival in domestic demand in the current quarter led by a good monsoon and rural economy, its CEO and MD T. V. Narendran has said.

The company is now less dependent on exports compared to the first quarter, he added. Due to the lockdown,

steel makers like Tata Steel were forced to cut down their operations by up to 50 per cent in April. The players also had to turn to exports to find markets for their produce. However, with the relaxation of lockdown norms, the company ramped up its production in a phased manner. "Production is running at 100 per cent," Narendran told PTI.

goods and services in other sectors, technically called 'permitted goods and services' together with agriculture and public administration, defence and other services, may have a weight in the range of 40-50 per cent of total output. "These were fully operational even in the first quarter of 2020-21. Thus, nearly half of the economy may perform normally or better than normal over the full 2020-21," it said.

Also, given the current geopolitical situation, the government at the central and state levels have become more active in attracting investment from abroad. "Thus, a small positive growth may not be ruled out," the paper said.

India's economy has suffered its worst slump on record in April-June quarter of 2020-21, with the GDP contracting by 23.9 per cent.

— PTI

Suddenly ed-tech is hot, gets over \$1 bn from PE/VC funds

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 6

Companies in the online education space have attracted over 200 per cent more private equity and venture capital funding in the first eight months of this year compared to last year.

Between January and August this year, ed-tech companies have received a total funding of \$1,191 million across 36 deals. In the same period last year, they could garner only \$373 million across 31 deals-a growth of 219 per cent. During the entire calendar year 2019, the space had witnessed just 43 deals aggregating to \$409 million, as per data from Venture Intelligence.

The growth in investments also saw ed-tech companies increasing their share in the total venture capital funding in the first eight months of this year to 23.1 per cent against 5.2 per cent in 2019. Though the ed-tech space has seen a gradual rise of investments and share in the past five years, 2020 saw a quantum jump. In 2015, ed-tech companies had



received just \$84 million and had a minimal share of 1.1 per cent in the venture capital funding.

Emergence of newer companies to tap the opportunity in online education combined with maturing of some of the larger companies has led to the increase in the funding. However, the pandemic was a game-changer. The new education policy of the government too enhances the role of online in continuous learning.

"In this pandemic situation where every other sector is struggling to survive, ed-tech is one and only sector that has seen maximum traction from VC/PEs, and the ed-tech industry has seen the highest investments in the last 3 months. Due to Covid-19, the complete education sector has

Over ₹10 L cr loans may come up for restructuring: Bankers

New Delhi, Sept. 6: Banks may restructure loans of more than Rs 10 lakh crore, largely attributed to five-to-six critical sectors, including aviation, commercial real estate and hospitality, according to bankers.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman last week asked banks and NBFCs to roll out one-time loan restructuring scheme for Covid-19 related stress by September 15.

According to a top official of a public sector bank, it is win-win for both lenders and borrowers.

Explaining the rationale, the banker said, companies will try to save their

business from turning non-performing asset (NPA) and buy crucial time for getting cash flow back for servicing the debt.

Secondly, banks have to make only 10 per cent provision against restructured account as compared to 15 per cent if the same account turns into NPA, the official said, adding that the lure of 5 per cent conservation of capital will also push banks for recast.

Given the benefit, the official said, it is estimated that 12-15 per cent of total loan book would avail of one-time restructuring.

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are already covered under the ongoing restructuring scheme which was tweaked recently to cover those impacted by Covid-19 crisis.

A total Rs 100 lakh crore worth of loan is outstanding in the banking system.

Another banking official said nearly half of the 30 per cent of the total loan book which sought moratorium that ended on August 31 may opt for restructuring.

Companies in about half-a-dozen vulnerable sectors—hospitality, aviation, entertainment, commercial real estate and travel

& tourism—whose businesses have been impacted severely due to the Covid-19 crisis will make a bee-line for the scheme.

The K. V. Kamath committee report is expected to give financial parameters like hair cut, debt service coverage ratio, debt-equity ratio post-resolution and interest coverage ratio for recasting corporate loans for over half a dozen vulnerable sectors, the official added.

Last month, Punjab National Bank managing director S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao said about 5-6 per cent of loan book would go for restructuring as per RBI guidelines. — PTI

SBI mulls VRS for 30K staff

New Delhi, Sept. 6: In a bid to optimise its costs, the State Bank of India (SBI) has planned a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS). About 30,190 employees are eligible to opt for the scheme.

The country's largest lender has a total employee strength of 2.49 lakh, at the end of March 2020, down from 2.57 lakh in the previous year.

According to sources, a draft scheme for VRS has been prepared and the board approval is awaited.

The proposed scheme—Second Innings Tap VRS-2020—is aimed at optimising human resources and costs of the bank. Besides, by

PTI, said it will provide an option and a respectable exit route to employees who have reached a level of saturation in their career; may not be at the peak of their performance, have some personal issue or want to pursue their professional or personal life outside the bank.

The scheme will be opened to all permanent officers and staff who have put in 25 years of service or completed 55 years of age on the cut-off date.

The scheme will open on December 1 and remain open till the end of February.

As per the proposed eligibility criteria, a total of 11,565 officers and 18,625

staff members will be eligible for the scheme. The total net savings for the bank would be Rs 1,662.86 crore if 30 per cent of eligible employees opt for retirement under the scheme, as per estimates based on July 2020 salary.

"The staff member whose request for retirement under VRS is accepted will be paid an ex-gratia amounting 50 per cent of salary for the residual period of service (up to the date of superannuation), subject to a maximum of 18 months' last drawn salary," the draft report said. Other benefits like gratuity, pension, provident and medical benefits will be given to employees seeking VRS.

A person retired under the scheme will be eligible for engagement or re-employment in the bank after a gap of two years.

Ahead of amalgamation of SBI's five associates with it in 2017, the merging subsidiaries had announced VRS for their employees. In 2001 also the bank had announced VRS to optimise human resources.

However, the scheme is not finding favour with bank unions. Such a move at a time when the country is in the grip of a pandemic reflects the anti-worker attitude of management, Ashwani Rana, vice-president, National Organisation of Bank Workers, said. — PTI

Equity mutual funds see redemptions in August

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 6

Retail mutual fund investors booked profit in equity mutual funds in August too, just like in July, encouraged by gains in the broader market and need to protect their savings in times of job losses and salary cut.

Equity mutual funds have seen almost daily redemptions last month, barring a few days of net buying, as per August month data now available with Securities and Exchange Board of India. Data released by custodians to Sebi shows August saw redemptions worth Rs 8,358.68 crore from equity mutual funds, a tad lower than Rs 9,195.04 crore reported in July 2020.

In August, equity mutual funds saw redemptions on all but four trading days during the month. Only on August 31, when the equity market fell sharply due to Indo-China border stand-off and extremely negative first quarter GDP data fears, equity mutual funds turned net buyers by a sizable amount of Rs 891.58 crore, being the highest single day investment in the month.

The redemption trend remained similar to those seen in the month of July and the first day of September also saw redemption worth Rs 263.68 crore.

Monthly data to be released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India later during the week, will throw more light on equity mutual fund trends in August.

At the same time fixed income/debt mutual funds have seen investments worth Rs 24,293.21 crore in August as against Rs 31,897.85 crore in July, indicating investors are moving away from equity mutual funds but getting back to debt investment.

Debt mutual fund investments had turned negative in April (-Rs 9,797.50 crore) after Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund had closed six funds abruptly on April 23, 2020.



Financial advisers give women a ride

RONOJOY MAZUMDAR SEPT. 6

Women looking to manage their investments wisely now have another thing to worry about: whether the advice they are getting is biased.

A two-year academic study covering every local financial-planning firm in Hong Kong found consultants frequently pushed women into chancier investments than they recommended for men with similar risk appetite.

"Advisers think they can fool the women and get away with selling them advice with subpar results," study co-author Utpal Bhattacharya of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology said, suggesting that's because they perceive women to be less financially literate than men. "This is what we call statistical discrimination."

The motivation, the researchers suggest, is the financial planners saw an opportunity for commissions. The logic goes that women were less likely to be able to spot bad advice and more likely to buy products if the recommendation chimed with what they wanted to do anyway.

It's an attitude that could cost not only clients but backfire on the advisers themselves. A separate gender-bias survey from Bank of America Corp recently found wealthy female investors who have negative experiences with their financial advisers are in fact more likely than men to fire them. —Bloomberg



Vaccine-makers plan to resist Trump pressure

ROBERT LANGRETH SEPT. 6

Drugmakers are planning a public pledge to not send any Covid-19 vaccine to the FDA for review without extensive safety and efficacy data, according to people familiar with the effort.

The joint stance is seen as a bulwark against political pressure being applied on the Food and Drug Administration to get a vaccine out as soon as possible. It is likely to be announced in a multi-company statement as soon as this week. The plans, which could still change, were described by people involved in the effort on condition of anonymity.

The companies involved in the discussions include Pfizer Inc, Moderna,

Johnson & Johnson, GlaxoSmithKline, Sanofi and possibly others. All are developing vaccines for Covid-19.

The drug industry has long relied on the FDA as a gold-standard seal of approval for its drugs and vaccines, assuring patients that the products are safe and effective. But in the middle of the pandemic, the agency has made several controversial decisions to allow emergency use of therapies without rock-solid evidence they work.

A vaccine, which will need to be taken by millions of healthy people, requires significant uptake to be effective in battling down the virus in the US. One recent poll found that a majority of the public thought a vaccine approval would be



driven by politics.

Health officials inside the Trump administration have said the process will be based entirely on science, and FDA commissioner Stephen Hahn has said he would not participate if he thought a vaccine were being rubber-stamped.

At the same time, the president has accused the agency of slowing work to hurt him politically, and said he believes a vaccine will be ready before

election day on Nov. 3.

At a news conference at the White House on Friday, President Donald Trump said a vaccine could be ready "maybe even before November first" or "some time in the month of October."

"I think you're going to see results that are shockingly good," Trump said. It's not clear what Trump was talking about, since results of trials are typically kept confidential while they're ongoing, with occasional looks by a panel of experts to see if there are safety issues, or overwhelming signs a product is working or failing.

Much of the vaccine work is being done under the umbrella of the government's Operation Warp Speed, which has struck deals with drug-

makers to fund development and manufacturing.

Others in the administration, including Moncef Slaoui, the chief adviser for the Warp Speed programme, have tamped down those expectations. Slaoui told National Public Radio last week that it's "extremely unlikely" a vaccine would be ready by election day.

In an interview with the news organisation Axios last week, Eli Lilly & Co chief executive officer David Rickes said that most companies in the industry wouldn't submit a Covid-19 product to the FDA until they were confident in the science behind it. The company is developing a Covid-19 treatment, but isn't among the companies that are part of the vaccine effort. —Bloomberg



## SHORT TAKES

## Gasly wins after Hamilton penalty

**Monza, Italy:** Pierre Gasly won an extraordinary Italian Grand Prix at Monza on Sunday for his maiden Formula One success in his 55th race and the first by a French driver since 1996. Alpha Tauri's Gasly benefitted from a 25-minute red flag suspension after Charles Leclerc crashed his Ferrari. Spain's Carlos Sainz was second in a McLaren with Canada's Lance Stroll of Racing Point in third. Pole sitter Lewis Hamilton was on his way to a comfortable win before a 10-second stop-go penalty pushed the Mercedes world champion to the back of the pack. The six-time champion eventually ended up in seventh place. "It was such a crazy race and we capitalised on the red flag," said Gasly who was dropped by the Red Bull team last season. "I have been through so much in the space of 18 months, to get my first win in Formula 1 I am struggling for words." — *AFP*

## Mick grabs first F2 win of season

**Monza, Italy:** Mick Schumacher, son of legendary Formula One driver Michael, won for the first time this season in the European Formula 2 Championship on Saturday at Monza in Italy. The 21-year-old German finished 3.185 seconds ahead of Italian Luca Ghiotto with Dane Christian Lundgaard in third. Schumacher's fourth consecutive podium finish, and seventh this season, lifted him to third in the driver standings on 131 points. Schumacher had hit a wall in qualifying on Friday and told the F2 website that he had his mechanics on the Italian Prema Racing team to thank for his win. "It was a long night for the boys," he said. "They stayed up until 2am yesterday and worked on the car to get it ready. They did that and they did it in style, so I am very, very proud of them." — *AFP*

## Nuggets numb Clippers in playoff

**Miami:** The Denver Nuggets bounced back with a vengeance on Saturday, powering to a 110-101 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers to even their NBA playoff series 1-1. It was all-square between the Toronto Raptors and Boston Celtics, too, after the Raptors notched a second straight win, 100-93, to knot their Eastern Conference semi-final series 2-2 in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida. The Nuggets, routed 120-97 in game one of the Western Conference series on Thursday, turned the tables with a blistering first half in which they led by as many as 23 points. "Game one, we were tired. I hate to admit it, but we were tired," said guard Jamal Murray, who led Denver with 27 points. "We came out sloppy, came out exhausted, fatigued. We didn't make any shots, we didn't get back on defense." — *AFP*

## Heavyweights off to winning starts

**Paris:** European heavyweights England, France, holders Portugal and Belgium all enjoyed winning starts to their Uefa Nations League campaigns on Saturday even if there were signs of international rust after the coronavirus shutdown. England needed a stoppage-time penalty to beat Iceland 1-0 while world champions France saw off Sweden by the same scoreline. Portugal shrugged off the absence of Cristiano Ronaldo to thrash Croatia 4-1 with top-ranked Belgium coming away from Denmark with a 2-0 win. In Reykjavik, Raheem Sterling's last minute penalty salvaged England from another embarrassing result against Iceland. Gareth Southgate's men also survived going down to 10 men and seeing Birkir Bjarnason miss a late spot-kick for the hosts. — *AFP*

## TOUCH-AND-GO

## Will Chahar, Ruturaj make it to IPL opener?

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, SEPT. 6

They may have suffered a series of blows, with a dozen Covid-19 positive cases and player pull-outs, but Chennai Super Kings are not worried about the preparation time, or lack of it. As expected, M.S. Dhoni's team will take on Mumbai Indians in the opening match of IPL-13 to be held in Abu Dhabi on September 19.

Having started their training a week late due to extended quarantine period, Super Kings have the least preparation time going into the high-profile showdown against their arch-rivals.

CSK CEO K.S. Viswanathan, however, said Super Kings are raring to go. "A great leader on and off the field, Dhoni has navigated the team through a difficult phase. All members are in good shape and in a positive frame of mind. We have had three training sessions so far (including Sunday) and our preparation is on track. We have no worries in playing the opener," said Viswanathan.

**THROWDOWN SPECIALIST, ANALYST IN QUARANTINE**

Along with a couple of net bowlers, the team's throwdown specialist and analyst are also in quarantine. Viswanathan said the support staff, headed by Stephen Fleming, has ensured that players get adequate training in the run-up to the tournament. "We have enough bench strength. We have another throwdown specialist who is available and part of the nets."

Deepak Chahar, who is Dhoni's No.1 choice in the fast bowling department, and Ruturaj Gaikwad, considered Raina's replacement, will complete their 14-day quarantine on September 11. They will undergo two Covid-19 PCR tests, 24 hours apart. Their return to the bubble is subject to those test results. They must also undergo a cardiac screening before resuming training.

"We can't predict (when they will return) at this point of time. They have to complete their quarantine period and then undergo a series of tests. It will be touch-and-go," said Viswanathan.

Viswanathan also said the team management hasn't decided on replacements for Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh.

**CPL PLAYERS TO LAND ON SEPTEMBER 12**

Players who are currently part of the Caribbean Premier League are expected to land in the UAE on September 12. The CPL final is scheduled to be held on September 10. They have to undergo a six-day quarantine upon arrival.



Chennai Super Kings batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad.

## Dhawan hopeful of Test return

**Dubai, Sept. 6:** Out of reckoning for Test cricket for the past two years, opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan on Sunday said he has not given up on making a comeback to the Indian team and is looking at the upcoming opportunities to plot his return.

The 34-year-old Dhawan last played a Test against England at The Oval in September 2018. "I am not a part of the Test team but that does not mean I have given up all hopes of a comeback," Dhawan told TV channels during an interaction.

"Whenever I got an opportunity... like in the Ranji Trophy last year I scored a century, then I made a comeback into the one-day team, if I get an opportunity then why

not, of course."

Dhawan stroked his way to the fastest Test century by a debutant, against Australia in 2013, but has often struggled for consistency in the five-day game. In Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul, Mayank Agarwal and Prithvi Shaw, the Test team has a number of options at its disposal for opener's role, making Dhawan's case even more difficult. The left-handed batsman, though, remains optimistic.

"I will keep trying my best. The T20 World Cup is there next year, so I need to keep performing, keep myself fit, make runs consistently. "If I keep doing these, other things will automatically fall into place." Dhawan has so far played 34 Tests

and scored 2,315 runs with seven centuries under his belt at an average of 40.61.

He remains in the scheme of things in ODIs and T20Is and is gearing up for IPL 2020, to be held in UAE from September 19. The experienced Dhawan will turn out for Delhi Capitals and spoke about the challenges being faced by the players while staying in a bio-bubble amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There are challenges of being in the bubble, you do not meet new people, can't go to restaurants, we can only go to the designated areas. "But our franchise has looked after us, we are living like a family, it depends on the person how he sees the situation,"

Dhawan said in a press conference.

When asked about Delhi Capitals' chances this IPL, Dhawan sounded optimistic. "It's important we bond together and create that energy. We have a very balanced side and confident we will take the cup."

He said Shreyas Iyer has been leading the team very well. He also said the inclusion of experienced India players Ajinkya Rahane and R Ashwin will strengthen the outfit. "Shreyas led the team pretty well last year, this time Ajinkya has come in, Ashwin has come in, they are quite experienced players and I am sure they are going to share their insights." — *PTI*

## Serena survives Sloane scare

**New York, Sept. 6:** Serena Williams battled into the US Open last 16 Saturday.

Williams, chasing a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title, came from a set down to oust 2017 champion Sloane Stephens 2-6, 6-2, 6-2, in what she called an "intense" encounter on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"In that first set I don't think she made any errors, honestly. She was just playing so clean and I just said, 'I don't want to lose in straight sets'," said Williams, who will play 15th seed Maria Sakkari for a place in the quarter-finals.

The Greek player, who stunned Williams at the Western & Southern Open last month, progressed with a 6-3, 6-1 dismantling of America's 22nd seed Amanda Anisimova.

Back on the court on Saturday, Russian third seed Daniil Medvedev, Italy's sixth seed Matteo Berrettini and Andrey Rublev, all entered the last 16 with easy three-set wins.

Second seed Dominic Thiem also progressed to round four, overcoming 2014 champion Marin Cilic 6-2, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

And Canada's 94th-ranked Vasek Pospisil shocked eighth-seeded Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut and Australia's 21st seed

## ROHAN IN DOUBLES QUARTERS

**New York, Sept. 6:** India veteran Rohan Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov stunned sixth seeds Kevin Krawietz and Andreas Mies in a hard-fought three-setter to advance to the quarterfinals of the US Open men's doubles event here.

The unseeded Indo-Canadian pair on Saturday overcame a set deficit to beat the German duo 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in a second round encounter that lasted one hour and 47 minutes.

Bopanna and Shapovalov will take on Dutch-Romanian combination of Jeal-Julien Rojer and Horia Tecau in the quarterfinals. — *PTI*

Alex de Minaur upset 11th-seeded Russian Karen Khachanov.

In the women's draw, unranked Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova, playing her first tournament in three years, knocked out 18th seed Donna Vekic.

Second seed Sofia Kenin defeated Tunisia's Ons Jabeur 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. — *AFP*



Sofia Kenin of the United States returns to Tunisia's Ons Jabeur in their US Open third round match in New York on Saturday. Kenin won 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. — *AFP*

## Fresh controversy hits US Open

**New York, Sept. 6:** The US Open was plunged into controversy on Saturday after New York health officials ordered the women's top doubles pairing be withdrawn from the tournament due to possible exposure to coronavirus.

Number one seeds Kristina Mladenovic and Timea Babos were yanked from the competition after Mladenovic was instructed to quarantine for coming in contact with Benoit Paire, who tested positive for

Covid-19 last weekend.

"All persons who were identified as having prolonged close contact with the infected player will quarantine in their rooms for the remainder of their quarantine period," the United States Tennis Association said.

"Kristina Mladenovic is one of these individuals, and as the women's doubles competition has begun, the women's doubles team of Mladenovic and Babos has been withdrawn from the

US Open," it added.

The USTA said that local public health issues had issued the quarantine notices, which prevented the players commuting from their hotel to the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center.

The shock intervention came a day after health officials tried to prevent Adrian Mannarino, who had also been in contact with Paire, from playing his last-32 match.

— *AFP*

## IPL FIXTURES

M	Date	Time	Teams	Venue
1	19-Sept	7.30 pm	MI vs CSK	Abu Dhabi
2	20-Sept	7.30 pm	DC vs KXIP	Dubai
3	21-Sept	7.30 pm	SRH vs RCB	Dubai
4	22-Sept	7.30 pm	RR vs CSK	Sharjah
5	23-Sept	7.30 pm	KKR vs MI	Abu Dhabi
6	24-Sept	7.30 pm	KXIP vs RCB	Dubai
7	25-Sept	7.30 pm	CSK vs DC	Dubai
8	26-Sept	7.30 pm	KKR vs SRH	Abu Dhabi
9	27-Sept	7.30 pm	RR vs KXIP	Sharjah
10	28-Sept	7.30 pm	RCB vs MI	Dubai
11	29-Sept	7.30 pm	DC vs SRH	Abu Dhabi
12	30-Sept	7.30 pm	RR vs KKR	Dubai
13	1-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs MI	Abu Dhabi
14	2-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs SRH	Dubai
15	3-Oct	3.30 pm	RCB vs RR	Abu Dhabi
16	3-Oct	7.30 pm	DC vs KKR	Sharjah
17	4-Oct	3.30 pm	MI vs SRH	Sharjah
18	4-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs CSK	Dubai
19	5-Oct	7.30 pm	RCB vs DC	Dubai
20	6-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs RR	Abu Dhabi
21	7-Oct	7.30 pm	KKR vs CSK	Abu Dhabi
22	8-Oct	7.30 pm	SRH vs KXIP	Dubai
23	9-Oct	7.30 pm	RR vs DC	Sharjah
24	10-Oct	3.30 pm	KXIP vs KKR	Abu Dhabi
25	10-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs RCB	Dubai
26	11-Oct	3.30 pm	SRH vs RR	Dubai
27	11-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs DC	Abu Dhabi
28	12-Oct	7.30 pm	RCB vs KKR	Sharjah
29	13-Oct	7.30 pm	SRH vs CSK	Dubai
30	14-Oct	7.30 pm	DC vs RR	Dubai
31	15-Oct	7.30 pm	RCB vs KXIP	Sharjah
32	16-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs KKR	Abu Dhabi
33	17-Oct	3.30 pm	RR vs RCB	Dubai
34	17-Oct	7.30 pm	DC vs CSK	Sharjah
35	18-Oct	3.30 pm	SRH vs KKR	Abu Dhabi
36	18-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs KXIP	Dubai
37	19-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs RR	Abu Dhabi
38	20-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs DC	Dubai
39	21-Oct	7.30 pm	KKR vs RCB	Abu Dhabi
40	22-Oct	7.30 pm	RR vs SRH	Dubai
41	23-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs MI	Sharjah
42	24-Oct	3.30 pm	KKR vs DC	Abu Dhabi
43	24-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs SRH	Dubai
44	25-Oct	3.30 pm	RCB vs CSK	Dubai
45	25-Oct	7.30 pm	RR vs MI	Abu Dhabi
46	26-Oct	7.30 pm	KKR vs KXIP	Sharjah
47	27-Oct	7.30 pm	SRH vs DC	Dubai
48	28-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs RCB	Abu Dhabi
49	29-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs KKR	Dubai
50	30-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs RR	Abu Dhabi
51	31-Oct	3.30 pm	DC vs MI	Dubai
52	31-Oct	7.30 pm	RCB vs SRH	Sharjah
53	1-Nov	3.30 pm	CSK vs KXIP	Abu Dhabi
54	1-Nov	7.30 pm	KKR vs RR	Dubai
55	2-Nov	7.30 pm	DC vs RCB	Abu Dhabi
56	3-Nov	7.30 pm	SRH vs MI	Sharjah

## RCB trainer all praise for Kohli

**New Delhi, Sept. 6** Basu Shanker, the man responsible for the fitness transformation of the national team, feels India and RCB skipper Virat Kohli has returned from the long break an even fitter athlete after working on "specific physical pointers" that needed attention.

Kohli was stuck in Mumbai for five months due to the coronavirus-enforced lockdown and had his first proper hit in the nets only after his arrival in the UAE for the Indian Premier League, beginning September 19.

However, he ensured during the break that his supreme fitness level was not impacted and, in fact, it helped him skill-wise on his return to action even though he was "scared" to hit the nets.

"He (Kohli) has come back in much better shape. He is at his best weight at the moment and his movement patterns are pretty much in sync with his best self in the past," former India trainer Basu, who is now the strength and conditioning coach of Royal Challengers Bangalore, said from Dubai.

"He has taken this break as an opportunity to work

on all the pointers which needed attention from a physical point. I guess his motto to life is 'Bear the cross and wear the crown'," said the man who worked with the Indian team between 2015 to 2019.

He has worked extensively with Kohli, both at RCB and during his time with the Indian team.

Basu said Kohli was able to work on things which an international cricketer finds it difficult to do in a packed calendar. "He had the time to be very specific with his meal plans and running intervals at home. He did not have much of a choice during the lockdown and he invested on a treadmill and worked on his endurance which is otherwise not possible during a packed calendar."

"Apart from that, his customised strength work to compliment that was his mantra during the lockdown. So a combination of running and strength work and he kept it simple by just following this to the T," said Basu.

The RCB squad has been training for a week now and Basu said it is only a matter of time before the players are match ready.

— *PTI*

## BUTTLER SHINES AS ENG SEAL T20 SERIES

**Southampton (United Kingdom), Sept. 6:** Jos Buttler made a dashing 77 not out as England beat Australia by six wickets in a series-clinching win in the second Twenty20 international at Southampton on Sunday.

Victory saw England go an unbeatable 2-0 up in a three-match contest.

England, set 158 to win, finished on 158-4 with seven balls to spare. They needed 18 off the last two overs, with Australia having failed to score 19 off two overs in a dramatic two-run defeat in the first game. — *AFP*

**Brief scores: Australia 157/7 in 20 overs (A. Finch 40, M. Stoinis 35) lost to England 158/4 in 18.5 overs (J. Buttler 77 n.o., D. Malan 42; Agar 2/27).**

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