

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SATURDAY 5 | SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 31°C
Min: 24°C
Rainfall: 0.5 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aavani 20
Tithi: Thrithiyai
Star: Revathi
Rahukalam:
9 am to 10.30 am
Yamagandam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.46 am
Zohar: 12.14 pm
Asar: 3.21 pm
Maghrib: 6.21 pm

Isha: 7.32 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.17 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 8.30 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 9.00 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+83,313)	(+1,063)
40,16,437	69,632

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,976)
TN: 4,51,827 7,687

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,66.54,546

DEATHS

8,76,140

COUNTRIES
AREAS WITH
CASES **213**

worldometers.info

Odisha BJP MLA arrested, released on bail

Baripada (Odisha): A BJP legislator of Odisha, Prakash Soren was arrested on Friday for allegedly abusing and physically assaulting an assistant executive engineer at the Circuit House here and was later released on bail, police said. Soren, MLA from Baripada, was arrested on the basis of a complaint lodged at the Town police station here by the assistant executive engineer in Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Mayurbhanj Superintendent of Police Smit P Parmar said.

3 militants killed in Baramulla encounter

Srinagar: Three militants were killed and an Army major and two policemen injured in a day-long fire fight in Pattan area of Jammu and Kashmir's north-western Baramulla district on Friday.

COUNTER

POINT



No classes today, dad... our school website has been hacked by someone!

Centre moves HC for review order to publish draft EIA in 22 languages

New Delhi, Sept. 4: The Centre has moved a plea in the Delhi High Court seeking review of its direction to publish the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) in all the 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, saying that official documents are required to be published only in Hindi and English. The law does not require

notifications to be published in local languages, it has contended.

A bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan on Friday issued notice to the environmentalist, on whose plea the high court had issued the direction, and sought his response by September 23. Appearing for the Environment Ministry, — PTI



STATE | 3

SC dismisses plea of TN judicial officers



WORLD | 4

Biden vows that US will address racism, slavery

SPORT | 6

Messi to stay at Barcelona



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Wear mask or pay up ₹200, says new law

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

The government has fixed the fines for various violations on Covid-19 prevention norms, which include a fine of ₹200 for individuals not wearing face-masks covering the nose and mouth, following the Governor Banwarilal Purohit promulgating an ordinance on Friday to amend the Tamil Nadu Public Health Act.

The other fine amounts specified in the order are: ₹500 for violation of quarantine measures as ordered by the appropriate authority, spitting in public, failure to maintain social distancing in public places or gatherings and non-adherence to guidelines in containment zones (₹5,000 for vehicles or commercial establishments.) Violation of standard operating procedures in salon, spa and commercial establishments will attract a fine of ₹5,000.

The ordinance aimed at making violations against lockdown and social distancing measures, taken to contain the spread of Covid-19, as compoundable offences and prohibiting the acts of violence against the persons implementing lockdown and social distancing measures, a Raj Bhavan notification said.

Though the government had been taking lockdown and social distancing measures to contain the spread of Covid-19 and communicating it to the public, 'a section of persons/institutions/shops do not follow it, putting themselves and others at risk of spreading infections,' it said.

DC CORRESPONDENTS
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Friday met with his Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe in Moscow in a first high-level political contact between the two countries who are involved in a four-month tense military stand-off in the Ladakh sector.

The two sides discussed the current military stand-off and the ways to bring down tensions between the two nuclear armed countries.

It was the Chinese side which requested for a meeting with Mr Singh who is in Moscow to attend the joint meeting of the heads of defence ministries of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The meeting started at 9:30 pm (IST) at Hotel Metropol in Moscow. Defence secretary Ajay Kumar and Indian Ambassador to Russia D.B. Venkatesh Varma were part of the Indian delegation.

Reports said Mr Singh told the meeting that peace and security in the



Defence minister Rajnath Singh with his Chinese counterpart General Fenghe in Moscow on Friday. — DC

region demands a climate of trust, non-aggression, peaceful resolution of differences and respect for international rules.

Earlier, Chinese state owned *Global Times* said that the meeting would help the two countries enhance communication in defence, control the situation and avoid the recent stand-off at the South Pangong Tso escalating into a wider clash.

External affairs minister S. Jaishankar has previously held telephonic talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the border standoff.

Meanwhile, foreign ministers of the five BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)

‘Kill zones’ await PLA in Ladakh

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 4

Several vantage points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh — particularly the ridgelines, hilltops and other strategic heights towards the north and south of Pangong Tso, which are in complete control of the Indian Army — are being turned into ‘kill zones’ to kill or capture the enemy. Sapper units of the Army are said to have been tasked with creating multi-

● **For the Indian Army, which has been “playing with landmines” along the LoC with Pakistan for decades, the move at the LAC was necessitated to tame the PLA of China**

ple obstacles for the adversaries, should they resort to any misadventure. Laying anti-personnel mines every few metres is one of the key obstacles.

For the Indian Army, which has been “playing with landmines” along the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan for decades, the move at the

LAC was necessitated to tame the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China. For the PLA, though, dealing with these kill zones will be a first as, unlike Pakistan, they are not used to encountering deadly obstacles on the borders with India. Well-informed sources

told *Deccan Chronicle* that with the Army taking full control of many strategic heights around Pangong Tso from where they are keeping a close watch on the movements of the PLA, tactical measures are being taken to thwart the enemy designs. It is here that the vast experience the Army gained over the decades while dealing with Pakistan along the LoC, one of the most heavily mined zones in the world, came in hand.

India’s caseload up by 1 mn in 13 days

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4

The Supreme Court on Friday rejected a plea by the six Opposition-ruled states of West Bengal, Maharashtra, Jhar-khand, Punjab, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh seeking a review of its order allowing the holding of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and exams for admission to engineering and medical courses in view of the pandemic Covid-19.

A three-member bench said: “We find no merit in the review petitions and the same are dismissed.” A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, B.R. Gavai and Krishna Murari, which considered the pleas in-chamber, also rejected the applications seeking listing of the review petition in the open court.

New Delhi, Sept. 4: India's Covid-19 caseload hurtled past the 40-lakh mark on Friday night, just 13 days after it crossed 30 lakh, while the total number of recoveries too surged to 31,06,921, according to data from states and union territories.

Union health ministry data updated on Friday showed a single-day spike of 83,341 infections, taking the country's Covid-19 caseload to 39,36,747 while the death toll climbed to 68,472 with 1,096 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours.

However, by night, reports showed India's Covid-19 caseload at 40,10,877, death toll at 69,546 and recoveries at 31,06,921. The tally has been compiled as per information provided by the states and Union territories.

India is the third worst-hit nation by the pandemic in terms of Covid-19 cases and fatalities after the US and Brazil.

The Union health ministry on Friday said a total of 30,37,151 people have recuperated from coronavirus infection taking the national recovery rate to 77.15 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate has further declined to 1.74 per cent.

The higher number of recoveries has also led to a steady enhancement in the difference between the recovered and active cases of infection, and this difference has crossed 22 lakh, as on date.

This has ensured that 8,31,124 active cases, which is the “actual caseload” of the country, currently comprises only 21.11 per cent of the total cases — PTI



Locals gather near a private firecracker unit after a fire broke out in it, in Cuddalore district, on Friday. — PTI

7 women killed in cracker unit blast

A. ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

Seven women, including the owner of a firecracker unit, were charred to death and two others sustained serious burns when the unit was gutted in an explosion in Kurungudi village near Kattumannarkoil in Cuddalore district on Friday. The unit had opened after the Corona pandemic lockdown to make fire crackers for Deepawali.

According to sources, the unit was owned by Gandhimadhi, 57, who has been into the business for three decades. The license of the unit had expired in March and they had applied for renewal.

Gandhimadhi had brought in the seven women workers to perform a puja before commencing work. A fire broke out in the premises and exploded with a huge noise. Soon the concrete structure, including the roof and the walls, collapsed.

The other victims have been identified as U. Chitra, 45, M. Raasathi, 50, N. Latha, 42, P.

Malarkodi, 25, R. Rukmani, 38 and R. Rathnamal, 60, all hailing from Kurungudi.

While five women died on the spot, two others succumbed to burns at the Kattumannarkoil Government Hospital. The condition of two others is said to be critical.

The limbs of the victims were severed and flung far away in the impact of the blast. A few of them had suffered over 80 per cent burns and were charred beyond recognition.

CPM state secretary K. Balakrishnan demanded that the state government to increase the compensation provided to the victims from ₹2 lakh to ₹10 lakh.

“The authorities must ensure that such incidents do not take place in the State,” he said. “The authorities must ensure that fire crackers units do not function in residential areas and that they meet all legal norms.”

Collector Chandra Sekhar Sakhamuri and Superintendent of Police M. Sree Abhinav visited the spot. The police said they were ascertaining the cause of the accident.

COMPARTMENTAL EXAMS

What’s your plans for Class 10, 12 students, apex court asks CBSE

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Central Board of Secondary Education to place before its plans for holding exams for the students who have got “compartments” in Classes 10 and 12 or those who wish to appear for improving their performance over the results already declared for the papers in which the exams were cancelled in the wake of the Covid pandemic.

A bench comprising Justices A.M. Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna asked the CBSE file the details of its

plan to hold exams in the latter part of September as the board told the court that instead of the earlier 575 centres this time there will be 1,278 centres, and only 12 students would be seated in one room, against the usual 40.

The court said it would hold a further hearing on September 10.

The CBSE lawyer told the court all precautions will be taken to shield the students appearing for these exams from the Covid pandemic. Lawyers for the petitioner students urged the court they be spared from sitting for the exam due to the worsening Covid situation.

Sputnik V shows results but WHO says vaccine by mid-next year

London/Geneva, Sept. 4: Patients involved in early tests of a Russian coronavirus vaccine developed antibodies with “no serious adverse events”, according to research published in *The Lancet* Friday, but experts said the trials were too small to prove safety and effectiveness.

Russia announced last month that its vaccine, named “Sputnik V” after the Soviet-era satellite that

was the first launched into space in 1957, had already received approval.

In the *Lancet* study, Russian researchers reported on two small trials, each involving 38 healthy adults aged between 18 and 60, who were given a two-part immunisation.

Each participant was given a dose of the first part of the vaccine and then given a booster with the

● **The report said the data showed that the vaccine was “safe, well tolerated, and does not cause serious adverse events in healthy adult volunteers”**

second part 21 days later. They were monitored over 42 days and all developed antibodies within the first three weeks.

The report said the data showed that the vaccine was “safe, well tolerated, and does not cause serious

adverse events in healthy adult volunteers”.

The trials were open label and not randomised, meaning there was no placebo and the participants knew they were receiving the vaccine and were not randomly assigned to different

treatment groups.

The report said the 76 participants of these trials would be monitored up to 180 days, adding that a more rigorous phase 3 clinical trial was planned with the involvement of 40,000 volunteers “from different age and risk groups”.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organisation said it does not expect widespread vaccinations against Covid-19 until the middle of next

year.

None of the candidate vaccines in advanced clinical trials so far has demonstrated a “clear signal” of efficacy at the level of at least 50 per cent sought by the WHO, spokeswoman Margaret Harris said.

“We are really not expecting to see widespread vaccination until the middle of next year,” Harris told a UN briefing in Geneva.

— Agencies

SHORT TAKES

Spl train services from Monday

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

The Southern Railway has said special train services will commence in the state from September 7.

Among others the Southern Railway will operate train no 02675/02676 Chennai - Coimbatore - Chennai Superfast Inter-city special, 02084/02083 Coimbatore - Mayiladuthurai - Coimbatore Janshatabdi special (Except Tuesdays), 02679/02680 Chennai - Coimbatore - Chennai Superfast Express special, 02673/02674 Chennai - Coimbatore - Chennai Superfast Express special, 06795/06796 Chennai Egmore - Tiruchirappalli - Chennai Egmore Special (via Main line).

The train No. 02605/02606 Chennai Egmore - Karaikkudi - Chennai Egmore Superfast special, 02635/02636 Chennai Egmore - Madurai - Chennai Egmore Superfast special, 02637/02638 Chennai Egmore - Madurai Chennai Egmore Superfast special, 02693/02694 Chennai Egmore - Tuticorin - Chennai Egmore Superfast special, 12637/12638 Chennai Egmore - Madurai Pandian Express and 12673/12674 MGR Chennai Central - Coimbatore Cheran Express.

American Exp DART lab launched at IIT-M

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

The American Express Data Analytics, Risk and Technology (DART) Laboratory was inaugurated at the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) on Thursday. The lab aims to become a world-class hub of research in risk analytics and behavioral sciences by leveraging Machine Learning or Artificial Intelligence (ML/AI) and related technologies.

The lab will explore a range of verticals with emphasis on manufacturing, finance, healthcare, operations management and smart cities. Manoj Adlakha, senior vice-president and CEO, American Express Banking Corp., India, said the lab would focus on risks that originate from human behaviour and decisions.

Mask is a must



Traffic cops help a biker wear a mask at Anna Arch signal in the city on Friday.

— DC

Covid test for senior citizens turns dicey for GCC volunteers

T. SUDHEESH DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

Though the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has been taking steps to get all senior citizens with co-morbid conditions tested for Covid-19, the field volunteers, deployed by the GCC to identify the elderly people, are facing tough times to convince the family members.

The GCC introduced the Covid-19 test for senior citizens with co-morbid conditions with a view to avoid risk of possible infection. But there are many cases in which family members refused to take the volunteers seriously.

When Divakar, a volunteer in Porur near Ramapuram, tried to convince elderly women, their family members were not willing to follow his instruction claiming

that senior citizen's health condition was perfect.

The volunteer said it was very difficult to convince people in some cases.

"But we will continue to insist on undergoing tests as it was ultimately for their welfare. In some cases family members do not want to send their parents for tests fearing they may get infected at testing centres. If they are adamant, we will leave the case," he said.

But a family member, who refused to take tests for his elderly mother with a co-morbid condition, said that he was not against taking tests for his mother but he did not want to take the risk.

"My mother's health condition is stable. How can the authorities guarantee that testing centres are safe and secure? Though we told the volunteer who came home that our mother was okay, he

was insisting on us to go for a test. There are many people who had no symptoms testing positive for Covid-19. But nobody knows the reason for the infection," he said.

Another family member in Ramapuram, who didn't allow his mother to undertake the test, alleged that volunteers were insisting for the test as they were getting extra honorarium if they achieve their target. "Many people who have no symptoms were sent for a test and eventually declared Covid-19 positive. Once they send healthy people for a test, I am sure the result will be positive. There is no clarity in the process of test," he said.

Meanwhile, Sasikala, zonal officer, said that the corporation had not made Covid-19 test for seniors mandatory.

"Each volunteer has been assigned 100-150 houses to create awareness on Covid-19 and identify senior citizens with co-morbid conditions. They insist on taking the test and avoid future complications if they are asymptomatic. It's the duty of volunteers to disseminate information on the virus and infection. It will be better for the senior citizen to get themselves tested. So people should cooperate," she said.

HC grants interim bail to life convict for treatment

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

The Madras high court has granted interim bail for three weeks to a 38-year-old life convict, who is suffering due to pancreatitis in head of pancreas, to enable him to take treatment including surgery.

A division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and V.M. Velumani granted the interim bail on an appeal filed by Prakash @ Appaiyaa @ Dass, now lodged at Central Prison, Vellore, which sought to suspend the sentence imposed by the additional district and sessions court, Hosur, by order dated February 20, 2020, and to enlarge him on bail.

The bench said this petition has been filed to suspend the life sentence imposed on the appellant for having murdered Chinnanna on February 16, 2020, in connection with a land dispute. After appreciating the evidence, the trial court imposed life imprisonment.

For bursting crackers on Deepavali

Aspiring cop denied recruitment gets reprieve

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

An aspiring candidate to the post of Grade II Police Constable, who was denied recruitment on the ground that he has suppressed material fact of his involvement in a criminal case relating to bursting of crackers on a Diwali day, got reprieve with the Madras high court quashing the order, refusing appointment and directing the authorities to consider his candidature for appointment to the post of grade II police constable.

Justice VParthiban passed the order while allowing a petition from A.Ba-

laji, challenging an order of the Superintendent of Police, Dharmapuri District, dated April 9, 2020, rejecting his candidature to the post of grade II police constable.

The judge said, "In the conspectus of the above discussion and narrative, this court has no hesitation in allowing the writ petition. The impugned order of the Superintendent of Police, Dharmapuri district, is hereby set aside and the respondents (authorities) are directed to consider the claim of the petitioner for his appointment to the post of grade-II police constable, jail warder and fireman in

the appropriate post as per his rank and eligibility without reference to the involvement of the petitioner in the criminal case as indicated in the impugned proceedings, if he is otherwise fit in all other aspects. The authorities are directed to pass appropriate orders in compliance with the above direction within eight weeks".

According to petitioner, after he successfully completed the written and physical test and at the final stage, his candidature was rejected on the ground that he had suppressed material fact of his involvement in a criminal case for bursting

crackers during Deepavali time in 2018 in his application form. Since it was a bailable offence, no arrest was made, hence he was completely unaware of the registration of criminal case against him at the time of filling of application, while applying for appointment to the post of Police Constable Grade-II etc. in response to the Notification-2019. Apart from the allegation of bursting of crackers during Diwali festival, there was no other allegation of any deviant conduct against him, he added.

The judge said mere bursting of crackers by an individual that too during

festival time, can be termed as a criminal offence at all, was for the competent court to decide. However, for the purpose of the issues on hand, can the incident land the petitioner in an irretrievable situation, wherein he was debarred from seeking a recruitment to the police force by applying the so-called strict standards of discipline and high degree of integrity. In this regard, the submission of the Additional Advocate General may look attractive, apparently though. But the said submission pales into insignificance, when the facts of this case were juxtaposed to the

application of the Rule with the fossilized mind set of the jaded authority. It looks like, the Recruitment Board was only looking for candidates conforming to the Victorian standards of conduct and discipline.

Such utopian expectation was a matter of pretentious and wishful idealism, divorced from mundane pragmatism. Bursting of crackers was an integral part of the Deepavali festival, having its root to a hoary and hallowed civilization unique to this land, and was celebrated by all age groups across the nation with great fervor and ardour.

COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



Aries: A young relative will ask for career counselling. Finances will be satisfactory. Those with medical problems should focus on health.



Taurus: A get-together will keep everyone cheerful. Use modern techniques to enhance professional profiles. Your reputation will receive a boost.



Gemini: Long-pending projects may gain momentum and be completed on time. Avoid confrontations. You may start some new projects.



Cancer: Your income will multiply manifold. Hurdles will be removed and progress is assured. You may be prey to negative thoughts and family disputes will lead to loneliness.



Leo: Some of you will come into contact with eminent and influential people. Eye-trouble and allergies are indicated. The domestic scene will be harmonious.



Virgo: Long-delayed plans may finally succeed. Businessmen should avoid new ventures and partnerships. Those in uniformed services should exercise restraint in sensitive situations.

You share your b'day with

Michael Keaton, is an American actor. He has appeared in a variety of films ranging from dramas and romantic comedies to thriller and action films, such as Spider-Man: Homecoming.



Libra: An excellent day for those in show-biz. Avoid important long-term decisions. Students should revise their lessons. Your health may not be robust. Restrict journeys.



Scorpio: You may be anxious about your health, but your fears will be unfounded. Those with romantic inclinations need to cast their net wider.



Sagittarius: Health is excellent as adopt a balanced lifestyle. You may overdo things in order to impress a lover. Be serious about an approaching exam or competition.



Capricorn: Don't get swayed by other's opinions. Avoid making significant investments and speculation. Some of you may suffer from digestive disorders.

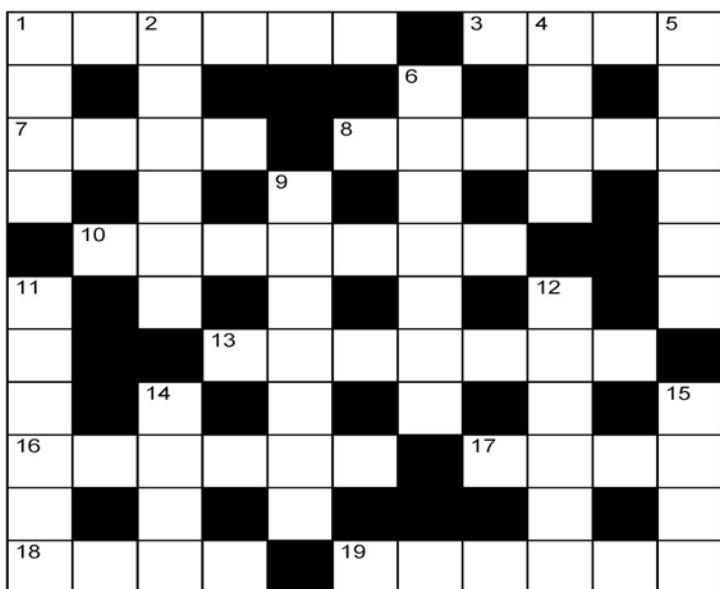


Aquarius: Home atmosphere will be tense. Your efforts to gain money will be successful. A one-sided affair could bring disappointment.



Pisces: You want to enjoy the finer pleasures in life. Pull out your favourite CDs, and dance wherever you are! You will create memories to cherish forever. Control your spending by purchasing only essential items.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

- Go beyond (6)
- Shape (4)
- Uncommon (4)
- Weigh (6)
- Flexible (7)
- Trampled underfoot (7)
- Size increase (6)
- Confront (4)
- Relieve (4)
- Away (6)

Down

- Cereal heads (4)
- Ring (6)
- Not restricted (4)
- Wretchedness (6)
- Futile (7)
- Provide a commentary (7)
- Language (6)
- Partial refund (6)
- Beer ingredient (4)
- Finest (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 1. Currently, 6. Sides, 7. Depot, 9. Oars, 10. Renege, 12. Prefer, 14. Beat, 17. Doubt, 18. Acute, 19. Oppressed.

Down: 2. Under, 3. Rose, 4. Nodded, 5. Lapse, 6. Snooped, 8. Theatre, 11. Jester, 13. Equip, 15. Exude, 16. Bass.

Word Mine

C
S
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T
E
C
O
R
L

TODAY'S RATINGS: 25 AVERAGE: 27
GOOD: 30 OUTSTANDING

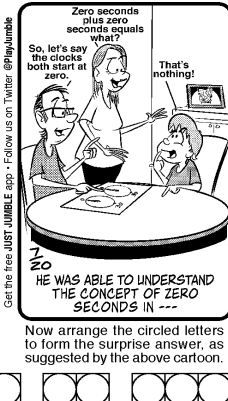
How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

North: A K B S L
East: A B C
South: A B C
West: A B C
Center: A B C
Diagonal: A B C
Other: A B C
Opening lead: J

jumble

PLAAH
PIYML
LONREL
TRABET

Answers tomorrow



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

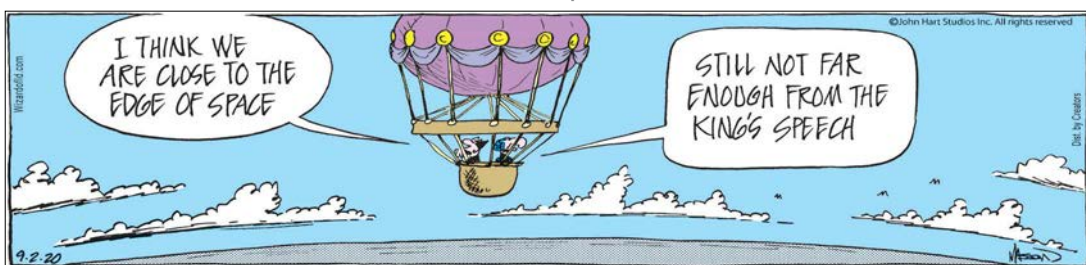
Answers tomorrow

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



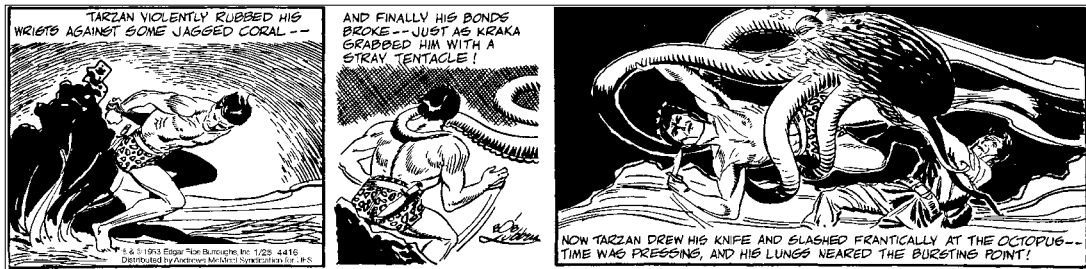
BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



bridge

PHILLIP ALDER

ONE A FAVORITE, ONE AN UNDERDOG

Zac Efron, an actor and singer, said, "I'm very competitive by nature. And I like to be the underdog. It's the best way to win. To come from behind and win is a great feeling!"

In today's deal, how should South play in both six clubs and seven clubs after West leads the diamond jack? South's two-club response was natural and game-forcing. Then, after Blackwood revealed that all four aces were held, South had a close decision whether to settle for six clubs or jump to seven clubs.

At Bridge Base Online, one pair bid six and one bid seven. The declarer in the small slam

played perfectly. He took the first trick with his diamond ace and returned a diamond. He was able to ruff his third diamond on the board, draw trumps and discard the heart queen on the second high spade from the board.

The declarer in the grand slam took a no-chance line. He won with his diamond ace, played a club to dummy's nine and took the losing heart finesse to go down two. But even if the finesse had

worked, South still would have had a diamond loser to eliminate. He needed spades 3-3 and clubs 2-2 - a massive 14.5% chance. He should have ruffed a spade in his hand, drawn trumps ending on the board and discarded his losers on the high spades. Lucky, lucky, lucky!

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SHORT TAKES

SC dismisses plea of TN judicial officers

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed the plea of eight judicial officers of Tamil Nadu, seeking to be considered for appointment as judges of the Madras high court.

They also sought direction to return the list of names already recommended by the collegium of Madras high court for appointment as judges. The grievance of the petitioners (judicial officers) was that despite being the senior most in the cadre of district judges, they have been overlooked and their juniors now recommended for elevation to the High Court as judges. A bench of Chief Justice S. A. Bobde and Justices A. S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian said “We are of the considered view that the claim of the writ petitioners is wholly untenable and the writ petition is misconceived. Hence, the writ petition is dismissed”.

—PTI

Six held for selling ganja

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

Six persons selling ganja to school and college students in Kovilambakkam were arrested on Thursday evening. A total of 2.5kg of ganja, four motorbikes and a car were seized by the police.

The arrested persons were identified Dilip, 25, Kumaran, 20, of Kovilambakkam, Jesintha Kumar, 20, Sanjay, 19, Thirumurugan, 25, and Shaheen Mohammed, 27, from whom the contraband was seized.

Following a tip-off that ganja was being sold to the students at Kovilambakkam and a few other places in the locality, the police formed a special team and launched a hunt for the peddlers. On Thursday evening, they found a few school and college students approaching a parked car. Police surrounded the car and arrested Dilip and Kumaran while selling ganja.

Based on the information they provided, the police arrested other four persons. During the inquiry, police found the group smuggled ganja from Andhra Pradesh and supplied it in various places. They will also deliver the ganja to customers' houses within 30 minutes of the order. All were arrested and remanded in judicial custody.

Committee to study NEP

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

The state government has appointed six academics to the committee, headed by the Principal Secretary of Higher Education, Apoorva, which would go through the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, released by the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development, and made recommendations that could be adopted. The members are S. P. Thiagarajan, P. Duraisamy, both former vice chancellors of Madras University, K. Pitchumani, vice chancellor of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, N. Rajendran, vice chancellor of Alagappa University, M. Krishnan, vice chancellor of Madurai Kamaraj University and S. Thamaraiselvi, vice chancellor of Thiruvalluvar University.

Now, politicians set eye on Kanyakumari bypoll

Nainar Nagendran seeks to contest from Kumari

ARULOLI M | DC
KANYAKUMARI, SEPT. 4

BJP election in-charge for Kanyakumari zone, Nainar Nagendran, has thrown his hat in the ring for Kanyakumari constituency bypoll, as the Lok Sabha secretariat has officially announced the constituency vacant, following the death of its elected Congress MP, H. Vasantha Kumar.

Though Nainar Nagendran said he knew there were seniors in the party, obviously referring to Pon Radhakrishnan without naming him, he added, “I will be happy if the party gives me a chance to contest the by-election in Kanyakumari constituency.”

Nainar Nagendran

“Pon Radhakrishnan remains the unchallenged leader within the BJP in Kanyakumari district. The party high command will never yield to Nagendran's pressure tactics, and Ponnar will be our undisputable candidate for the by-election”

though settled in Tirunelveli, said he was born and brought up in Kanyakumari district, and was familiar with the field.

Supporters of Pon Radhakrishnan see this statement as an initiation by Nagendran, given his post as ‘state election in-charge’ for 11 districts in Kanyakumari zone. “Pon Radhakrishnan remains the unchallenged leader

within the BJP in Kanyakumari district. The party high command will never yield to Nagendran's pressure tactics, and Ponnar will be our undisputable candidate for the by-election,” hoped a Kanyakumari district BJP functionary, who added that Nagendran's style of functioning will not work out in Kanyakumari constituency, where caste and religion plays a major role unlike other constituencies in the state.

The by-election fever has caught the Congress camp also, where Ruby Manoharan introduced by Vasantha Kumar in Nanguneri in the election last year, is said to have started lobbying to get party ticket for the con-

stituency. But, Vasantha Kumar's loyalists prefer his elder son Vijay Vasanth for the seat, who is also said to be interested in the contest.

Former Nagercoil municipal chairman, Ashok Solomon, and former Kanyakumari east district president, Robert Bruce, is also reportedly willing to get party ticket to contest the by-election.

Commenting on the situation, the sitting Vilavancode Congress MLA S. Vijayadharani, who expressed her willingness to contest in the Kanyakumari Lok Sabha election in 2019, said, “If it is not a problem to give a sitting MLA chance to contest the bypoll in Kanyakumari constituency, why not it be me?”

Bus breakdown



Passengers and traffic policemen push a government bus to the roadside after it developed a technical snag near Periyar bus stand in Madurai on Friday. — DC

Fear grips residents as bomb attacks spurt in suburbs

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

The recent spurt in the use of country bombs in the city suburbs has created panic among residents. The latest of this kind happened on Thursday night in Chengalpet district, where there had been two country bomb attacks.

In the first incident, a 37-year-old DMDK functionary was attacked by an armed gang. According to the police, Raja Sekar, a resident of Madhakovil street in Perumbakkam near Pallikaranai is the deputy secretary of the DMDK in St Thomas Mount zone.

Police sources said that Raja Sekar was standing outside his house at around 9.30 pm on Thursday when an armed gang of 10 men in five two-wheelers arrived there and hurled three-country bombs on him and at his residence. He escaped unhurt as the bomb hurled at him did not go off. However, the other two bombs damaged the front portion of his house.

After the attack, Raja Sekar ran but the gang caught and attacked him with deadly weapons.

Police said that the gang fled the spot when they saw people gathering. Raja Sekar was rushed to a private hospital nearby, by his neighbours, where he is being treated for his cut wounds.

Pallikaranai police were informed about the attack. Mount DC Prabhakaran and a team of police from the Pallikaranai police station arrived at the crime scene and inspected the spot. Forensic experts were called in to collect the bomb samples.

During preliminary investigation, it was learnt that Raja Sekar was attacked by his rival Arul, also a resident of Perumbakkam. The duo had previous enmity over a land dispute. Recently, Raja Sekar and his accomplices attacked Arul in a public place, and to seek revenge, Arul planned and executed the bomb attack with his friends.

Pallikaranai police registered a case and arrested eight persons soon after the attack. They are Arul, 28, Arun, 27 of Perumbakkam, Vignesh, 20 of Thiruvanniyur, and five others. Police are conducting inquiries.

Just an hour after the first attack, country

bombs were hurled into the house of a lawyer in Vengaivasal in Chengalpet. The house of Manonithi, a lawyer and a DMK functionary, was damaged by an unidentified man on the same night. Police secured a CCTV footage of the incident.

The CCTV camera installed in the area recorded the incident that happened around 10:30 pm. A man who came in a red Swift car hurled country-made bombs inside the house. The reason for the second attack is not known and police have formed a special team to probe the incident.

The dangerous trend of bomb culture was under control for some time in the city and suburbs and suddenly there has been an increase in the bomb attacks due to gang rivalry or previous enmity. It may be noted that earlier this week, Ashok Kumar, a resident of Chengalpet, and his friend, Vignesh, a history-sheer were travelling in a two-wheeler with explosives to attack a rival gang, when the country bomb they kept in the bike exploded. One of them lost all fingers on his right hand while the other lost his eyesight.

Cop found dead in police quarters

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

A police head constable was found dead inside the police quarters in Chengalpet on Friday. His body was recovered by police in a decomposed state.

The deceased identified as Pazhanivasan, 41, attached to the Guduvanchery police station, lived with his family in the Chengalpet police quarters.

Pazhanivasan was an alcoholic and owing to this, his wife and children left him and went to their native place in Karur four months back. Since then Pazhanivasan lived alone at the house. Meanwhile, on Friday, a few neighbours in the police quarters alerted the Chengalpet Town police about a foul smell emanating from the head constable's house.

Police found Pazhanivasan's body in a decomposed state and sent it to the Chengalpet government hospital. Investigation is under way to ascertain the reason for his death.

Trio attempts to set car afire

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, SEPT. 4

Police arrested two teenagers for allegedly damaging and also attempting to set afire a car owned by Karthick (45) of Selvanagar, president, Gandhi Nagar village president, at suburb Selvanagar under Thiruverumbur limits, on Thursday night.

Police said, Karthick saw his friend Singaravelu's son, Sanjay, in the company of some local youths, and warned him to keep away from their improper company. Coming to know of this, the youths identified as Kiran (17), Nagarajan (17), and Pramod (17) of Gandhipuram area, went to Karthick's house and damaged his car and attempted to set it afire by spraying petrol.

Hearing an unusual noise, Karthick came out of his house, and the three fled the spot.



A worker disinfects a train compartment in Coimbatore on Friday. — DC

Governor, politicians condole death of women

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

Governor Banwarilal Purohit led the state in paying condolences to the families of the seven women who died due to an explosion at a fireworks factory at Karungudi village near Kattumannarkoil in Cuddalore district on Friday.

“I am shocked and grieved to hear about the explosion,” he said in a statement, adding “I offer my deep condolences to the families of those who are mourning the loss of their near and dear ones. I join the people of Tamil Nadu in praying for the early and complete recovery of the injured admitted in hospitals.”

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced a relief of Rs 2 lakh to each of the fami-

lies of the seven women and expressed his condolences.

In a statement he said relief work had been initiated by the government and that he had deputed his industries minister M. C. Sampath and the Cuddalore district collector to coordinate the operations.

DMK president M. K. Stalin expressed regret over the fact that the women who had started work only the previous day after being without any income for five months due to the lockdown died in such tragic circumstances.

Urging the government to ensure that safety measures in fireworks factories all over the state should be increased to prevent recurrence of such mishaps, CPM State secretary K. Balakrishnan said.

He wanted the government to pay a compensation of Rs 10 lakh to each of the families and said that an enquiry should be instituted into the accident. Since the Deepavali season was nearing the government should monitor the functioning of all fireworks companies and take stringent action against those violating norms.

Working in the fireworks industry was a risky proposition but still people do it for the sake of livelihood, said Dr Anbumani Ramadoss, youth wing leader of PMK.

In a statement, expressing condolences to the families, he wanted the government to pay a compensation of Rs 25 lakh to each of the deceased women's families and Rs 10 lakh to each of the injured workers.

■ As the two were lying in a pool of blood on the roadside, motorists crossing the stretch rescued them and admitted them to the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital

area. His son, Venkatesh (18), worked with his father in the same shop.

A couple of days ago, Venkatesh and his friend Lawrence (20), were standing near

Mill Mariamman temple, when a six-member motorcycle gang, armed with sickles, assaulted the duo and fled.

As the two were lying in a pool of blood on the road-

side, motorists crossing the stretch rescued them and admitted them to the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital (CMCH), and are in the ICU in a critical condition.

Police identified the gang as Suji Menon, Ashwin, Shiva, Gowtham, Rajesh and Vijay from Kannappan Nagar, and have launched a search for the gang. Investigations are on.

Gang assaults duo with sickles in Kovai

ANANTH MATHIVANAN | DC
COIMBATORE, SEPT. 4

Police have arrested a group of six youths on charges of attempt to murder, and assaulting two persons with sickles near Rathinapuri, allegedly over a prolonged enmity.

Police said, Karthikeyan, a scrap merchant residing at Rathinapuri - Thillai Nagar, owned a shop in the same

Loan torture: Couple's immolation bid foiled

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, SEPT. 4

Tension prevailed here for a while on Thursday, when a village panchayat president and her husband attempted to immolate themselves inside a Kerala-based financial institution, where they pledged their jewels, at suburb Kartur near here.

Police said, Srinidhi, president, Thirunedungulam panchayat, pledged her 165-gm jewel and obtained a jewel

■ The finance company had asked her to pay three months interest along with penalty and interest

loan of ₹4.5 lakh from the private finance company. Following the moratorium announced by the Centre, she did not pay interest for three months.

But, the finance company had asked her to pay three months interest along with penalty and interest.

Protesting against this, Srinidhi and her husband Sathishkumar went to the finance company and attempted to torch themselves.

On information, Thiruverumbur police rushed to the spot and brought both sides to the police station, and settled the issue by asked the finance company to cancel the penal interest and collect only routine dues, which was accepted by both, police added.

Teacher's Day greetings from leaders

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

Governor Banwarilal Purohit, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, leader of the Opposition M. K. Stalin and PMK youth wing president Anbumani Ramadoss were among those who greeted teachers on Teacher's Day.

“Every year, the birth anniversary of noted philosopher, educationist

and former President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan is celebrated as Teacher's Day across the country,” said the Governor in his statement, adding: “Education transforms a human being into a wholesome whole, a noble soul and an asset to the universe. Universal brotherhood in its true sense becomes the sheet anchor for such education.”

“On the occasion of

Teacher's Day, I have great pleasure in extending my felicitations to all our teachers in Tamil Nadu and wish them greetings and success in all their noble endeavours,” Purohit said.

The state government, in recognition of the importance of education, had been giving awards named after Dr Radhakrishnan to teachers every year, the Chief Minister said wishing all teachers.

He also mentioned the ‘Dream Teacher’ awards given away by the state government to teachers who excelled in using the computer in teaching, those who improved enrolment in schools and teachers who were good at management of schools.

Greeting all teachers, Stalin said that it was during DMK more teachers were appointed. Even now his party opposed the provisions that went against

the interest of teachers in NEP 2020, he said, adding that the DMK would also strive for the welfare of the teaching community.

Ramadoss, who said that teachers were like ladders, taking students to a higher plane while they remained where they were, said teachers should excel not just in academics but also create good students with lofty ideals in life.

DECCAN Chronicle

5 SEPTEMBER 2020

Ladakh flareup: Only way out is diplomacy

The fresh Chinese provocations in eastern Ladakh in the past week made a region already tense over the past four months even more volatile, as troops of the People's Liberation Army attempted fresh incursions on the southern banks of Pangong Tso last Saturday night but had to retreat as the Indian Army put up stiff resistance. The Indian Army occupied most of the area's hilltops and dominant heights to deter future misadventure by the Chinese forces, that have moved in thousands of additional troops in the Chusul sector, which Army Chief Gen. M.M. Naravane visited on Thursday as part of his tour of forward areas. With both armies having deployed thousands of troops, tanks and armoured vehicles, Ladakh is more of a tinderbox than ever, and cooler heads are needed to ensure it doesn't erupt again. And despite a lot of talk about the Army being given a "free hand" and of the "military option not being ruled out", the realisation seems to be dawning on both governments that a political or diplomatic solution may be the only way out. With defence minister Rajnath Singh in Moscow for a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting, his Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe has sought a one-to-one discussion on the sidelines, which might take place late on Friday. New Delhi hopes such a meeting, which would be the highest-level physical encounter between the two countries since the crisis erupted in May, might pave the way for a faster de-escalation process on the ground in Ladakh.

While the external affairs ministry's spokesman on Thursday squarely blamed Beijing for the current standoff, saying it was a "direct result" of China trying to "unilaterally change the status quo" at the LAC, foreign minister S. Jaishankar categorically said the "way out" of the current "difficult" situation is "through diplomacy". Acknowledging while India and China had a long history which was "very good in some parts, very indifferent in some parts and very difficult in some ways", he added that "this was not the easiest of times in the relationship", given the "seriousness of the current situation or the actual challenges of the boundary question". Perhaps responding to China's overtures to keep trade and commerce on track despite the flareup, after India's intensified ban on Chinese-linked apps and entities, Mr Jaishankar emphasised that "the reality is that whatever happens on the border will impact the relationship, you cannot separate it". He will have a chance to take the diplomatic process further as he meets Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi in Moscow next week when the two attend a SCO meeting. In a signal to Beijing to stick to the path of dialogue, Mr Jaishankar said at the launch of his book *The India Way* on Thursday: "Both sides must understand that it's in their own interest to reach an accommodation." With Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat, among others, emphasising a bigger role for the Quadrilateral, which includes the United States, China hit back over US deputy secretary of state Stephen Beigum's reference to Beijing's "outsized" claims in the Galwan Valley, and said: "China and India have the ability to resolve their border disputes bilaterally. We don't accept countries outside the region pointing fingers." If it is really serious, New Delhi and Beijing should be able to move forward.

Facebook's cleanup act

Under fire for promoting hate speech, Facebook has baffled the Indian government and the Opposition locked in a two week long battle of outrage by its swift damage control — with twin deft manoeuvres — a confident, if anodyne, statement proclaiming its non-partisan ethic and a quick ban on T. Raja Singh aka Tiger Raja, the Telangana MLA and *gau raksha* campaigner who is a known offender — he has followers numbering in lakhs and has opined Muslims are "traitors" and Rohingya Muslim immigrants "should be shot" while threatening to destroy mosques.

Hailed as a win by secular citizens, however, this apparent U-turn by Facebook goes against its own earlier line dutifully trotted out by its executive Ankhi Das who said this action risked losing users and would damage the company's business prospects. Significantly, Facebook has backed Das' freedom of opinion following revelations that she herself shared anti-Muslim content even if she later apologised for it post the expose. That had led to the Congress Party accusing Facebook of interfering in India's democratic process and going soft on ruling party members. By not iterating a comprehensive policy change while sidestepping specific accountability, Facebook also leaves the door open for future violations even as it turns a blind eye to countless ongoing ones — even as this controversy raged, over in West Bengal, Murshidabad MP Arjun Singh was falsely claiming on the same platform that a Kali temple deity had been burnt by "members of a particular community" though the priests, themselves, asserted that the fire was an accident. It is indeed fortunate that he has been named and shamed.

India's Parliament thus lost the chance to make Mark Zuckerberg answer to its people as the United States Congress did post the 2018 Cambridge Analytica data mining scandal that resulted in Facebook paying a US \$5 billion fine following a year-long investigation. Facebook banned Cambridge Analytica from advertising on its platform, saying that it had been deceived. Most recently, it has committed to restricting political advertisements on its platform in the week preceding the US presidential elections and will remove misinformation related to voting. It is even going to pay users to deactivate their accounts ahead of the polls. New Delhi surely missed that bus.

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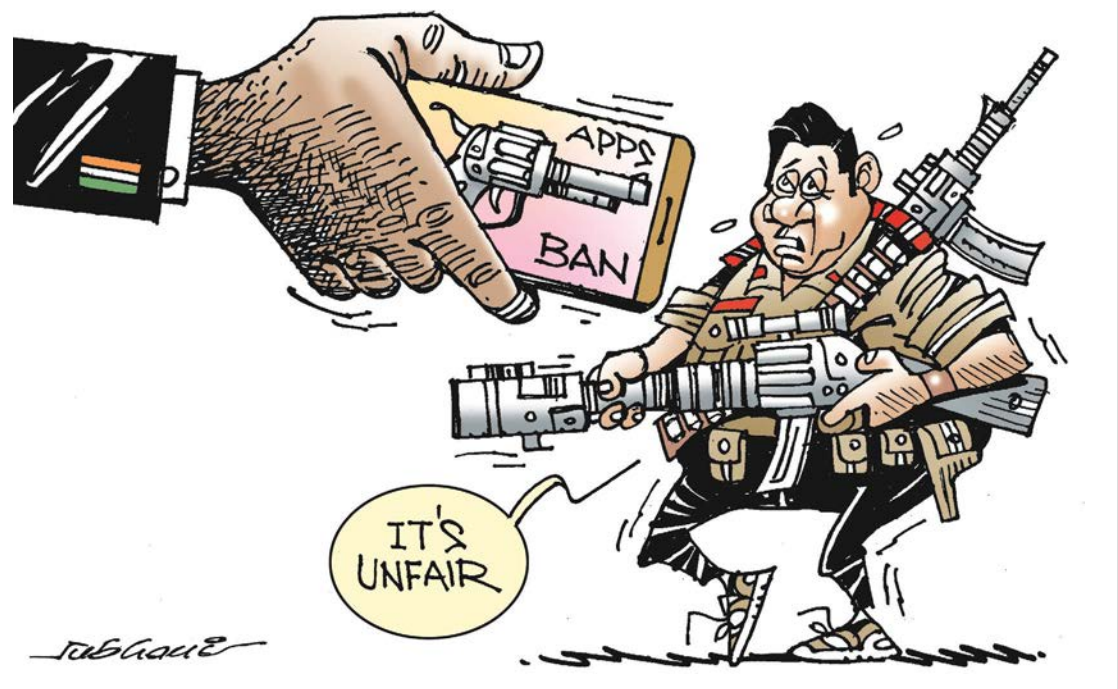
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Subhani



Chana Kisney Khaaya.. Rasode Mein Kaun Tha?



Shobhaa De

I am in my most aggro Kokilaben mood. Rewind to a highly successful 2010 TV soap titled *Saath Nibhana Saathiya*, which featured a ma-in-law from hell — Kokilaben. Along came Yashraj Mukhate, an engineer and music producer from Aurangabad, who picked up a line from the serial and turned it into a Kokilaben rap that attracted 2.8 million views on Instagram. Voila — *Rasode mein kaun tha?* went viral. And I watched it over and over again to distract myself from the blah during Mumbai's most loved Ganesh Festival, which was a total washout this year, because of the Covid-19 restrictions. This is the aftereffect of the GDP debacle, which has set India back by a staggering 24 per cent. Oooooops! I find myself oscillating between Kokilaben screaming "*Mein thi? Tu thi?*" to mouthing the demented rantings of a television anchor, "*Mujhe drugs do, drugs do, charas do, ganja do...*" These are the two unchallenged champions of last week's meme fest. I am not the only citizen under unbearable stress right now. Going by the disastrous state of affairs in India right now, citizens across the board are in urgent need of mind-numbing drugs — bring them on! How much more can they cope with, while also coping with Covid *ka bhayanak* crisis?

I am looking for some soothing peacock therapy. You know what that means, right? If Prime Minister Narendra Modi can seek solace in the company of a beautiful peacock and a couple of geese, hey... maybe that's the solution to

India's myriad and insurmountable problems. In the concrete jungle called Mumbai, finding the elusive national bird poses a challenge. Most of us, cooped up in cramped spaces, do not have the luxury of pampering hungry peacocks strolling across our vast lawns. Our beloved Prime Minister lives the grand life worthy of his grand position, in a grand mansion where stunning peacocks and well-fed geese roam. A few kilometres away, there may be undernourished children of jobless parents wondering where their next meal is coming from. There is nobody to feed their open mouths or care about their emaciated frames. Different strokes for different folks.

Our trendsetting PM has already unveiled his many masks. The Covid masks, I mean. He prefers to cover his mouth and nose with colour coded, handwoven *angavastrams*, that change daily. It's possible that they have been commissioned and sourced from master weavers across India. The same weavers who are staring at their silent looms, with no orders to keep them from starvation. Their livelihoods have been doubly hit, now that our wise and wonderful PM has disbanded the Indian handicrafts and handloom boards, which so far had been doing a stellar job of providing steady incomes and finding markets for our weavers. Without those committed office-bearers to manage the weaving communities spread across our 28 states, one wonders what the future holds for these gifted people? I guess, there is no cause for worry. Our

stylista PM can keep countless weavers in business just by himself, going by his frequent costume changes while feeding birds on his property. The elaborately staged photo shoots have enchanted his fans across continents who cannot get enough of his sartorial statements. The professionalism invested in getting the camera angles and lighting are being admired as well. When I first saw the pics, I assumed it was a fashion shoot for the leading men's lifestyle/fashion magazine *GQ* — the theme being, "Where peacocks gather..." But no! These shots were from our dynamic PM's personal album, to be generously shared with his fawning followers. An apt comparison between this shoot and the one which was widely shared by Haile Selassie, the Ethiopian Emperor, feeding lions while his country faced famine. This comparison was pointed out in a brilliant critique ("Compliant and Complicit" by Sankarshan Thakur, which was published in *The Telegraph*. The wonderfully written essay made me sigh with longing for those days when journalists and political commentators did what they are supposed to do — write ferociously. And make readers think.

At a dinner for eight (with Covid protocols in place) this week, I found myself sharing a table with some *bhaktis*, who kept saying they were not *bhaktis* but genuine admirers of our fabulous Prime Minister. These are successful Gujarati businesspeople, living in tony neighbourhoods. It emerged during the course of the conversa-

tion that they read nothing! Knew little about history. And were culturally illiterate to boot. But did they have opinions! All it needed was a few pointed questions about the tattered state of our economy, to get them to start frothing at the mouth. I figured — why waste my precious breath... and switched to a topic they were eager to pounce on — the sensational Sushant Singh Rajput investigation. One of the men present did not know what "ED" stood for! So even that topic was a dead loss. When I mentioned an article in an American scientific publication which stated baldly that India "was in denial about the Covid-19 crisis...", these folks changed the topic and spoke about how expertly and ably our Prime Minister was steering India towards new goals, new horizons. It's great to stay optimistic during a crisis — but for that to be termed "optimism" one has to first admit there is a crisis! The same people had sons and daughters in America (their high dollar salaries were disclosed in awestruck terms by proud parents), who had declared their intention of never coming back to the country of their birth! If our future was this amazing, why were their children turning their backs on India? *Jawab hai?*

The reason why that silly dialogue *Rasode Mein Kaun Tha* went viral is simple. At a time when citizens are struggling to come to terms with India's desolate and arid financial landscape, and no salve has been offered by the Prime Minister after the minus 24 per cent GDP drop, all that we have is humour. Black humour! But jokes and memes and birds and masks cannot fight the biggest battle confronting us — a harsh, unforgiving winter of our discontent.

Readers can send feedback to www.shobhaade.blogspot.com

LETTERS

APPS BANNED

After due thought process, the government has banned 118 more apps as one of the several other far-reaching economic measures to show our angst at China's muscle flexing tactics at our eastern border. When our Army is engaged with the enemy, it is unethical to use Chinese apps for our pleasure and pastimes, even though banning may achieve little from economic perspective. We are aware of the super power clout and its influence with our neighbours, still we have to show China its place and act to say we mean business when it comes to our national interests.

Parthasarathy Mandadi
Tirupati

RESTORE ZERO HOUR

THE DECISION of the Modi government to suspend question hour in the upcoming truncated monsoon session of Parliament scheduled to begin from September 14 is retrograde. Parliament occupies a special and unique place in the annals of democracy for the pivotal role it plays in enabling its members to hold the government accountable for its actions even while giving them larger space to raise issues of public importance. Parliament is not just a forum for transaction of government business. At a time when the nation is grappling with host of public health and economic challenges wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic which merits productive discussion and debate in Parliament, the suspension of zero hour will only virtually shut the door for the Opposition to raise questions and hold government to account for its handling of pandemic and its resultant devastating impact on country's economy. It is hoped the ruling dispensation at the Centre would pay heed to the demand for the restoration of zero hour and let the Opposition to raise questions of public importance and ensure monsoon session more productive and meaningful.

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

ABE'S RETIREMENT

THE NEWS of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's retirement from his post due to ill health is really sad. It is stated that he has been suffering from colitis of intestines for a long period which he bore with mere will power during his entire tenure till the stage reached when the PM felt that he cannot effectively discharge his duties any longer with the disease overpowering him and taking away his strength to continue in PM Office. A soft, gentle and suave leader as he is known among international political personalities he was very friendly with India. Let us all wish him a healthy and happy retirement life in the years to come.

R. Advaita Iyer, Coimbatore

S.B. Shashank



Early childhood education is hit the worst during pandemic times

The Covid-19 pandemic, unprecedented in its spatial extent, has hit every aspect of human life across the world. Political and geographic boundaries have lost their meaning, and even the remoteness of islands have not deterred it from marching ahead. As long as the fury of the calamity lasts, unabated and unchallenged, its effect will keep rattling all mankind. While the divide based on income differentials will continue to determine the gravity of its impact on individuals, however temporary that impact may be in some cases, young children all over are turning out to be the worst sufferers, as recent reports suggest.

According to a Unicef report released in June 2020, there are 28 million children in India, who otherwise could have gone to *anganwadis* but for their closure due to the pandemic health risk and have been at home for the past six months. These children, in general, belong to the economically disadvantaged sections of society, but it's also true that those enrolled in private institutions, mostly in urban and semi-urban areas, such as nursery or KG schools, are

not better off either. What early childhood education intends to impart is to develop social and emotional skills of compatibility and conflict, which won't happen except in the company of other children. Instead of technology-leveraged remote learning, it requires a physical environment which grows listening, speaking and interacting for the healthy mental growth of a child. Digital accessibility and affordability, to some extent, can compensate for proficiency in literacy and numeracy but the overall growth of a child happens best in the company of peers. Why early childhood learning is so important in the growth of children and its effect on lifestyles has been documented in various studies and reports that show that it is directly linked to a child's seamless and confident migration to primary school and further transition to secondary education, a reduced probability of being school dropouts and attaining life skills and higher education. That's the reason why deprivation of early childhood development carries a risk on the lives and future of children cutting across the economic divide or digital divide. On the extent

of deprivation of early childhood care and education, another Unicef report says that worldwide nearly 40 million children, of which 22 million are from South Asia alone, have missed out on learning in the critical pre-primary school year as Covid-19 has shuttered all early education facilities.

The new National Education Policy document that was released last month, amid the pandemic crisis, undoubtedly emphasises the government's resolve to give renewed focus to this critical aspect of child development. Though the report candidly admits that crores of children, and more so those belonging to socio-economically disadvantaged sections, are deprived of quality early childhood care, it provides a roadmap on curriculum design, infrastructure development, technology use and capacity infusion. But these are long-term solutions with primary focus on achieving sustainable development goal SDG 4.2, which is about a commitment to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood education so that they are ready for Class 1 as a stepping stone for primary education.

Every species survives because it cares for its offspring. This is true for human beings as well. A solution to the obstruction posed by the current pandemic is not easy to find. The strategy, therefore, must be on mitigating the effects of this obstruction. On the education front, countries across the globe are grappling with back-to-school plans. Many in Western countries are seriously considering it as a viable choice as they are worried about the loss to society due to missing childhood. In a vast country like India, one solution may not fit all. There will be different solutions for rural areas, urban areas and metropolises for the purpose of restoring early childhood learning. In rural areas, where open spaces are available, active community support will help in organising small groups of neighbourhood children to keep them engaged with day-to-day activities like listening, speaking and learning while maintaining a safe distance. Home-based technology tools such as smartphones, radio, television and cable networks can be used, depending upon digital accessibility and affordability. In urban and metro setups where open

spaces are hard to find, the neighbourhood grooming of one or two children by an older person can be adopted for this purpose. Though group activities may be difficult to perform, such grooming will keep children engaged and save them from neglect due to the closure of pre-schools.

Like all other pandemics in the past, Covid-19 will also become history one day, thanks to human ingenuity. But young children who have lost their formative years of learning should not become victims. This needs to be pre-empted by early action. Anything done too late will be too little. The lack of finance should not be allowed to come in the way. A study by James Heckman, a Nobel laureate in Economics and an expert in the economics of human development, shows that investment in early childhood yields better returns and offers a cost-effective strategy even during a budget deficit.

The writer, a serving IAS officer, is director in the department of women and child development of the Delhi government. The views expressed here are personal.

SSR case: NCB arrests manager, Rhea's brother

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 4

After the Bandra-based drug peddler's revelation of arranging drugs for Rhea Chakraborty's brother Showik, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) arrested him along with late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's house manager Samuel Miranda after grilling them throughout the day on Friday.

The arrests came close on heels with raids conducted at their residences earlier in the day by the NCB from where the officials seized electronic gadgets and scores of documents.

The officials had summoned Showik and Miranda for questioning after completing searches at their residences. The action came after peddler Abdul Basit Parihar revealed he supplied narcotics substances to Showik. Parihar was earlier arrested and produced before the Esplanade court and sent to NCB custody till September 9 for further investigation. The NCB first arrested Zaid Vilatra, who is also a Bandra-based peddler. Vilatra's links with Rhea and Showik are being probed.

The officials said that his questioning revealed Parihar, whose direct connection with Showik has now come to the fore.

"The data from seized gadgets will be retrieved to dig deeper into the suicide probe. The documents will be scanned to understand if any of them are related with the case," said an officer privy to the probe. Statement of Parihar and Vilatra has revealed some

CCB ARRESTS SANDALWOOD ACTRESS RAGINI

VINAY MADHAV | DC
BENGALURU, SEPT. 4

After grilling her for over six hours, the City Crime Branch (CCB) sleuths have arrested Sandalwood leading actress Ragini Dwivedi on Friday evening, in connection with the drug menace that has rocked the Kannada film industry.

The CCB also arrested Rahul, who is friend of another Sandalwood actress Sanjana Gulrani. Rahul was taken to the house of Sanjana for panchanama.

The day-long drama, after the CCB sleuths led by inspector Anjumala Naik had taken Ragini into their custody for questioning ended with her arrest. She is the third person being arrested in connection with Sandalwood drug links and the first Kannada actress to be arrested.

The two lawyers, who had come to her flat in Yalahanka and later to the CCB office had approached the court, seeking anticipatory bail for Ragini. However, by evening, the court dismissed the anticipatory bail. The CCB sleuths decided to arrest her and seek her police custody. Besides, there is no way Ragini can get bail till Monday.

more names and the agency is now probing the larger nexus involving the brother-sister and other celebrities.

Customs to probe links between Kerala gold scam, B'lore drug case

Kochi, Sept. 4: The Customs department has decided to investigate the alleged links between a key accused in the Kerala gold smuggling case and a prime accused in the Bengaluru drug trafficking, even as a political slugfest erupted between the Congress and CPI(M) over the issue.

Sources said one of the arrested people in the gold smuggling is suspected to have links with a prime accused in the Bengaluru drug trafficking case.

They said the Customs will move an application in Court seeking to further investigate the man, who is currently in judicial remand, in view of his alleged contacts with

the key drug trafficking case accused.

"We would like to know the nature of contacts between the arrested persons in the two separate cases," an official said.

Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala demanded an investigation into CPI(M) state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan's son's alleged link with a key accused in the Bengaluru drug trafficking.

Stepping up his attack against CPI(M) over the issue, Leader of Opposition in the Kerala Assembly, Chennithala, on Friday said it was reported that drug trafficking accused Mohammed Anoop and gold smuggling accused

Ramees had contacted over phone several times. Addressing a press conference in Thiruvananthapuram, he claimed Kerala CPI (M) secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan's son

Bineesh Kodiyeri has admitted that he had connection with Anoop.

"It is a serious issue. What is the link between the gold smuggling case and drug trafficking case and how is the drug trafficking case accused connected with Balakrishnan's son? All these things should be investigated," Chennithala said.

Reacting to Chennithala's allegations against his son,

Balakrishnan said efforts were on to create a smoke-screen on the issue and it would not succeed.

He said Bineesh would not enjoy his protection, if he has any role in any crime.

"Let the central agencies probe everything related to the case. Chennithala should hand over to the investigating agencies if there is any evidence in his possession," Balakrishnan told reporters.

He said if Bineesh is found guilty of any crime, he should be punished. "He should be hanged, if he deserves to be hanged. Nobody is going to protect him if he has done anything unlawful," Balakrishnan said.

— PTI

Covid spread shows mild decline in Hyderabad

DC CORRESPONDENTS
SEPT. 4

Hyderabad: Fewer Covid-19 cases showed up in the GHMC area on Thursday, with the health department reporting 247 cases in its Friday bulletin. This past week, beginning August 28, the GHMC area was reporting cases in the mid 300s and 400s.

Fresh cases of Coronavirus infections in the state, found between Wednesday and Thursday evening, were 2,478, according to the bulletin, taking the caseload to 1,35,884. There were 10 more deaths, and the toll stood at 866.

AP registers 10,776 new Covid cases, 76 deaths

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh registered 10,776 new Covid-19 cases, rising tally to 4,76,506 and 76 deaths

taking toll to 4,276 in the last 24 hours. Among new confirmed Coronavirus infections, East Godavari has registered 1,405.

Kerala's Covid-19 tally crosses 80,000

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Friday recorded 2479 new cases of Covid - 19 even as 2,716 persons recovered from the disease.

The total number of cases in the state has crossed 80,000 mark and the active cases stood at 21,268.

Karnataka has 9,280 new cases, 116 deaths

Bengaluru: Karnataka on Friday reported a spike of 9,280 new cases of Covid-19 and 116 related fatalities, taking the total number of infections to 3,79,486 and death toll to 6,170, the health department said.

HC seeks NIA's reply on Navlakha's bail plea

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 4

The Bombay high court on Friday issued a notice to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), seeking its response to a bail plea filed by activist Gautam Navlakha, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-alleged Maoist links case. The HC directed the NIA to file its reply by September 15.

A bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and M.S. Karnik was hearing a plea filed by Navlakha, challenging a special court order of July 12 this year that rejected his plea for statutory bail.

Navlakha had sought statutory or default bail before the special court on the ground that he had been in custody for over 90 days, but the prosecution had failed to file a chargesheet in

the case within this period.

The NIA, however, had argued that his plea was not maintainable. It had also sought an extension for filing of chargesheet and the special court had at the time accepted the NIA's plea seeking extension of 90 to 180 days to file the chargesheet against Navlakha and his co-accused, activist Dr Anand Teltumbde. Navlakha, lodged in Navi Mumbai's Talaja jail, had surrendered before the NIA on April 14 this year. Between Aug. 29 and Oct. 1 in 2018, Navlakha had been kept under house arrest. According to police, the activists had made inflammatory speeches and provocative statements at the Elgar Parishad meet held in Pune on December 31, 2017, which it said triggered violence the next day at Koregaon Bhima in the district.

Sena slams Kangana for her 'PoK' remark

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 4

A day after Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut compared Mumbai to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the war of words intensified between Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut and the actress on Friday. Mr Raut said that she should not come back to Mumbai if she is afraid of the city police.

"This is an insult of the real Rani of Jhansi, who was a brave daughter of Maharashtra," he said. "Can't I react to the comments criticising Mumbai police and the state of Maharashtra? What is PoK? Kangana should tour that place first and the situation prevailing there," Raut said. In a tweet, Ranaut had recently asked "why is Mumbai feeling like Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir?" and tagged a report where Raut had purportedly said she should not come back to Mumbai if she was afraid of the city police.

"If people who have nothing to do with the city malign it and its police, the state government and the home minister should take action, or else the morale of the police will take a beating," Raut told reporters.



Tibetan community people greet Indian Army soldiers on their arrival at Panthaghati Chowk en route to Line of Actual Control amid the India-China border tension, in Shimla on Friday.

— PTI

WORLD

Biden vows that US will address racism, slavery

Prez candidate met Blake's family ahead of his Wisconsin trip

Kenosha (US), Sept. 4: Joe Biden told residents of Kenosha, Wisconsin, that recent turmoil following the police shooting of Jacob Blake, a person of colour, could help Americans confront centuries of systemic racism, drawing a sharp contrast with President Donald Trump amid a reckoning that has galvanised the nation.

"We're finally now getting to the point where we're going to be addressing the original sin of this country, 400 years old ... slavery and all the vestiges of it," Biden said at Grace Lutheran Church, where he met with community leaders after a private session with Blake and his family.

The visit marked the former vice president's first trip to the battleground state of Wisconsin as the Democratic presidential nominee and was a vivid illustration of the contrast he offers to Trump. While Biden spent more than an hour with the Blake family, Trump didn't mention Blake during his own trip

Portland protest suspect shot dead by police during arrest

Washington, Sept. 4: A far-left activist suspected of killing a right-wing protester in Portland was shot dead by police in Washington state as they tried to arrest him, local law officials said.

The man, identified in US media reports as Michael Forest Reineohl, was killed as he ran from four officers on Thursday evening, a spokesman for the Thurston county sheriff's office, southwest of

Seattle, said on Friday.

A regional task force was watching the apartment of a "homicide suspect", who left the building and approached a vehicle "as officers attempted to apprehend him", Lieutenant Ray Brady said.

The man appeared to be armed and officers fired several shots into the vehicle before the man fled, Brady added. Several more shots were then fired.

The presence of a

weapon has not been confirmed, Brady said.

The US Marshals Service confirmed officers fired at Reineohl, who was pronounced dead at the scene, according to the Washington Post.

The Oregon city of Portland has seen more than three months of rolling protests against police brutality and racism that were sparked by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May.

— AP

Frenchman to livestream his death in right-to-die case

Dijon, Sept. 4: A Frenchman who is suffering from an incurable condition said on Friday he plans to livestream his death on social media as he refuses to take food, drink or medicine after President Emmanuel Macron turned down his request for euthanasia.

Alain Cocq, who suffers from a rare condition where the walls of the arteries stick together, said he believed he had less than a week to live and would livestream his death on Facebook from Saturday morning.

He had written to Macron

asking to be given a substance that would allow him to die in peace but the president wrote back to him explaining this was not allowed under French law.

Cocq, 57, has used his plight to draw attention to the situation of terminally-ill patients in France who are unable to be allowed to die in line with their wishes.

"Because I am not above the law, I am not able to comply with your request," Macron said in a letter to Cocq, which the patient published on his Facebook page.

"I cannot ask anyone to go



Alain Cocq, suffering from an orphan disease of the blood, rests on his medical bed in his flat in Dijon, north-eastern France.

— AFP

beyond our current legal framework... Your wish is

to request active assistance in dying which is not currently permitted in our country," said Macron.

In order to show France the "agony" caused by the law in its current state, Cocq said he would broadcast the end of his life on his Facebook page which he believed would come in "four to five days".

He said he hoped his struggle would be remembered and "go down in the long term" as a step forwards in changing the law. He would halt all feeding, drinking and treatment from Friday night.

Macron said in his letter

that "with emotion, I respect your action." And the president added a handwritten postscript, saying: "With all my personal support and profound respect."

An Elysee official said that Macron wanted to hail Cocq's commitment to the rights of the handicapped.

Right-to-die cases have long been an emotive issue in France.

Most polarising was the case of Vincent Lambert who was left in a vegetative state after a traffic accident in 2008 and died in July last year after doctors removed life support following a long legal battle.

— AFP

Ships, boats try to douse tanker fire off Lanka, 1 dead

Colombo, Sept. 4: A Panamanian-registered oil tanker burned out of control for a second day off Sri Lanka on Friday as authorities confirmed a Filipino crew member was killed in an explosion in the Indian Ocean.

Sri Lankan navy and Indian coastguard vessels fired water cannon at the blaze on the *New Diamond*, which issued a distress call on Thursday after its engine room exploded.

The fire had not spread to the 2,700 tonnes of crude and 1,700 tonnes of diesel the tanker is carrying, Sri Lanka's navy said.

"Preliminary information

from the ship's crew confirmed that a Filipino seaman on board had died in a boiler explosion," the navy said in a statement. All but one of the 23-member crew — 18 Filipinos and five Greek nationals — were rescued. The tanker was about 60 km from Sri Lanka's east coast when it sounded the alert and during the night drifted 10 km closer. Sri Lanka on Friday thanked India for its support. "We are receiving support from India and thankful to them," Sri Lanka's Army chief Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva told reporters.

—AFP PTI

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TENDER NOTIFICATION	
Empanelment and appointment of manufacturers Zone-wise for supply of Packaging Tapes as per the specifications indicated in the tender schedule to be utilised for Packing of rice in Jute bags through AP e-Procurement platform.	
All the interested Manufacturers may visit www.apscscl.in & www.aapeprocurement.gov.in to view and download tender documents on free of cost. Interested Tenderers should be registered in website www.aapeprocurement.gov.in and should also obtain Digital Signature Certificates from any Certifying Authority in India to submit bids. The details and procedure for obtaining Digital Signature Certificates are mentioned in the website www.aapeprocurement.gov.in or contact the helpdesk of ap e-procurement portal : 08645-246370/71/72/73/74. Last date for registration and completion of formalities for the e-auction shall be up to 15.09.2020 at 5 P.M and the tentative date of online e-reverse auction through ap e-procurement platform would be 18.09.2020 at 3.00 pm onwards.	
Sd/- VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR	



SHORT TAKES

Hami dominates in second practice

Monza, Italy: Championship leader Lewis Hamilton topped the times ahead of team-mate Valtteri Bottas as Mercedes continued their emphatic domination in Friday afternoon's second practice for this weekend's Italian Grand Prix.

The six-time champion responded to the Finn's quickest lap in opening practice in the morning by clocking a best lap in one minute and 20.192 to outpace him by 0.262 seconds.

Lando Norris grabbed third place for McLaren with a late flying lap that was nearly nine-tenths adrift of the leading pace, ahead of Pierre Gasly, who was fourth for Alpha Tauri, both men having overcome reliability issues during the session. Behind the top four, Max Verstappen was fifth for Red Bull ahead of Carlos Sainz in the second McLaren and Daniil Kvyat, in the second Alpha Tauri. — *AFP*

Anunoby rescues champs Raptors

Miami: OG Anunoby drained a buzzer-beating three-pointer as the Toronto Raptors resuscitated their NBA title defense Thursday with a 104-103 victory over the Boston Celtics.

Kyle Lowry, tasked with inbounding the ball with half a second on the clock and the Raptors down 103-101, lofted a perfect arcing pass over Boston's towering Tacko Fall to Anunoby on the opposite sideline.

Anunoby set his feet and fired, and the Raptors narrowed the deficit in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference semi-final series to 2-1. — *AFP*

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CSK CONUNDRUM

Team undecided on Raina, Bhajji replacements

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

The back-to-back pull-outs of Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh have created some holes in the Chennai Super Kings squad, but the team management seems to be in no hurry to call for replacements.

"Captain M.S. Dhoni said it can be decided over this weekend," said a team source.

Given the bio-bubble restrictions, mandatory quarantine period and series of tests, flying in replacements is going to be a tedious process. CSK, however, feel they have enough time. Super Kings are likely to take on Mumbai Indians in the opening match on September 19.

Young Ruturaj Gaikwad, one of the two CSK players who tested Covid-19 positive and is currently in quarantine, is set to fill in at the No.3 slot instead of Raina whose return to the Dubai bubble is highly unlikely.

CSK have a bunch of spinners in Ravindra Jadeja, R. Sai Kishore, Piyush Chawla, Karn Sharma, Imran Tahir and Mitchell Santner. The part-time bowling of Kedar Jadhav is now the only off-spin choice for CSK.

Harbhajan's absence is not a big blow as the Punjab veteran hasn't played competitive cricket since the conclusion of 2019 IPL.

There are a few replacement options available for Chennai. Manoj Tiwari, a part-time off-spinner, and all-rounders Yusuf Pathan and Lalaj Saxena have been spoken of as potential candidates.

Former India cricketer Deep Dasgupta believes Lalaj is the frontrunner.



M.S. Dhoni and Shane Watson enjoy breakfast with teammates as their quarantine ended on Friday.

"All three (Manoj, Yusuf and Lalaj) deserve to be there. Lalaj is a good all-rounder and CSK might be looking at him. I have a feeling that Raina might come back. So I won't be surprised if they go with just one replacement. I think, CSK should look at Lalaj as Bhajji's replacement. He has a lot of experience," said Deep on an *ESPNews* show.

CSK start training, finally

Meanwhile, the team led by Dhoni finally began their training at the ICC Academy in Dubai on

Friday. Barring Deepak Chahar, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Lungi Ngidi and Faf du Plessis, the rest of the squad sweated it out under the lights. While Deepak and Ruturaj are fit and will be able to join training after clearing the necessary tests.

The duo who are currently staying in a separate hotel have to complete the 14-day quarantine that began on August 28.

HARBHAJAN PICKS FAMILY OVER CASH-RICH LEAGUE

New Delhi, Sept. 4: Senior off-spinner Harbhajan Singh on Friday became the second high-profile name to pull out of this year's Indian Premier League owing to "personal reasons", saying he has informed the Chennai Super Kings team management about his decision.

The 40-year-old, who has been a part of CSK during the past two seasons is currently in Jalandhar

with his family and requested privacy.

"I have informed the CSK management about my decision to pull out of this year's IPL. I have decided to take a break due to personal reasons in these difficult times. I expect that everyone would respect my need for privacy," Harbhajan, who was bought by the franchise for ₹2 crore this season, said on Friday.

— *PTI*

Messi to stay at Barcelona

Barcelona, Sept. 4: Lionel Messi ended speculation about his future at Barcelona by announcing on Friday that he would reluctantly stay for another season rather than tackle his career-long club in court.

A week after saying he wanted to leave the Liga side, and with a contract row still raging, the 33-year-old six-time player of the year gave the news Barca fans were hoping for.

In doing so, however, the Argentine forward took a big swipe at the club's hierarchy.

"I wasn't happy and I wanted to leave. I have not been allowed this in any way and I will STAY at the

club so as not to get into a legal dispute," he was quoted as saying by Goal.Com.

"The management of the club led by (president Josep Maria) Bartomeu is a disaster.

"I told the club, the president in particular, that I wanted to leave. They knew this since the start of the past season. I told them during all (of the) last 12 months. But I will stay here because I don't want to start a legal war."

By remaining at the Catalan club for the fourth and final year of his contract Messi is in line for a 63 million pounds (\$83.38 million) loyalty bonus and will be able to leave without a transfer fee. — *AFP*

India's Nagal goes down to Thiem

New York, Sept. 4: Sumit Nagal's trademark fighting spirit was on display throughout but it was not enough to get past world number three Dominic Thiem, who notched up a straight-set victory over the Indian in the US Open men's singles second round here.

Nagal lost 3-6, 3-6, 2-6 to the second-seeded Austrian, who celebrated his 27th birthday with a commanding performance at the Arthur Ashe Stadium here on Thursday.

Thiem, this year's Australian Open finalist, had said that he has seen videos of Nagal's game and knew that he has a ripping forehand. Well prepared, he came out with a clear strategy of not giving many balls on the forehand side of the Indian.

"Thank you 2020 US Open. Lots to learn. Going to keep working hard! Thanks for all the support

everyone," Nagal later tweeted.

Nagal came into the contest after giving India a rare singles main draw match win at a Grand Slam but it was always going to be a daunting task for him to challenge someone who has made two French Open finals.

Early exit for Murray

Andy Murray said he would keep trying to win Grand Slams after crashing out of the US Open second round in straight sets to 15th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime on Thursday.

The former world number one was demolished by the 20-year-old Canadian 6-2, 6-3, 6-4 inside Arthur Ashe Stadium in 2hr 8min.

But Murray said he was pleased with how his metal hip coped in his first Grand Slam outing since the 2019 Australian Open, when there was talk of him retiring.

— *Agencies*

LIVE RICH FINANCIAL Chronicle

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	38,357.18 -1.63
Nifty 50	11,333.85 -1.68
S&P 500*	3,410.34 -1.29
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)*	42.59 -1.48
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.930 0.034
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.666 0.044

* As of 9:30 PM IST

GoAir to add over 100 flights, starting today



GoAir announced the addition of over 100 new flights in its domestic network, including from its base Mumbai besides other cities such as Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai, starting September 5. The airline, in a release, also said it expects the capacity to reach 45 per cent of the pre-Covid-19 level by September 21 and by October 15 to 60 per cent of what it was operating prior to the pandemic.

₹1,350-cr buyout routed via MTR Foods Norway's Orkla to take over Eastern

Mumbai/Bengaluru, Sept 4: The Meeran family that runs leading spices maker Eastern Condiments has agreed to sell its majority stake to Norwegian packaged food major Orkla for over Rs 1,350 crore, the family said in a statement.

The Kochi-based Eastern Condiments sells a variety of spices, pickles and veg and non-veg ready-to-eat items under the brand name of Eastern and is the largest exporter of spices from the country.

Under the agreement, the Meeran brothers—Firoz and Navas Meeran—who now own 74 per cent in the company, will sell 41.8 per cent to Orkla, which owns MTR Foods.

The acquisition will be done through MTR, and the Norwegian company will also buy out the McCormick Ingredients SE Asia, the foreign investor in Eastern that owns 26 per cent. It will take the ownership in the first step of the transaction to 67.8 per cent for Rs 1,356 crore, valuing Eastern at Rs 2,000 crore. Later, when Eastern is merged with MTR, the Meerans will exit Eastern by selling their remaining 32.2 per cent and in return will get 9.99 per cent of the merged entity, the statement said.

The deal completion or merger is expected to be over in 15 months.

The domestic spices industry is around Rs 22,000 crore and has been



annually clipping at 13 per cent over the past eight years ended March 2020.

After the deal, Eastern will be merged with MTR, and Orkla hopes to double its sales in India with the Eastern deal. MTR, under Orkla, has grown five-times since 2007.

"Following the completion of these transactions, a merger application will be filed with the intention of merging Eastern into MTR," the statement said. It added that "the merged company will be jointly owned by Orkla and the two brothers Firoz and Navas Meeran and will own 90.01 per cent and 9.99 per cent, respectively."

Eastern has seven production facilities in four states and employs close to 3,000 people.

Orkla is a leading supplier of branded consumer goods and concept solutions to the consumer, out-of-home and bakery markets in the Nordics, Baltics and selected mar-

kets in central Europe and India.

Listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange, Orkla employs 18,350.

The acquisition expands Orkla's already strong presence in the country's food and spices segment through MTR Foods, which it had acquired in 2007 and is a fully owned subsidiary now. With this move, Orkla hopes to double its sales in the country. Navas Meeran, chairman of Eastern, said, "Orkla is known for its strong, local brands and holds leadership positions across multiple FMCG categories in several markets. Together with MTR, and as part of Orkla, we will have a stronger platform for our successful operations."

Anshul Agarwal, executive director at Avendus Capital, said Eastern and MTR combined have significant synergy potential in terms of product portfolio and geography.— *PTI*

Voda Idea to raise ₹25,000 cr

New Delhi, Sept. 4: Beleaguered telecom operator Vodafone Idea on Friday approved plan to raise up to Rs 25,000 crore through a combination of equity and debt instruments to keep the company afloat.

The decision came days after the Supreme Court directed telecom operators to pay 10 per cent of total adjusted gross revenue (AGR)-related dues this year, and rest of the payments in 10 instalments, starting next fiscal year.

The fund-raising will throw a lifeline to cash-strapped VIL, which has suffered massive losses, as it has been losing subscribers and average revenue per user and faces outstanding AGR dues of about Rs 50,000 crore.



In a filing on Friday, Vodafone Idea said its board has approved raising of funds through a combination of equity and debt instruments and that the total fund-raising will not exceed Rs 25,000 crore.

The company will consider fund-raising through global depository recei-

pts, foreign currency convertible bonds, convertible debentures or warrants.

The fund-raising plans are subject to shareholders' nod and other statutory approvals. The proposals will be taken up at the company's annual general

meeting on September 30. The filing mentioned, "issuance of unsecured and / or secured, non-convertible debentures up to an aggregate amount of Rs 15,000 crore, by way of public offering or private placement basis or otherwise, in one or more tranches".

Recent reports had suggested that Verizon and Amazon may invest over \$4 billion into the company, but Vodafone Idea had on Thursday clarified that there is no such proposal currently before the board at yet.

Vodafone Idea's overall AGR dues stood at over Rs 58,000 crore, of which the company has paid Rs 7,854 crore to the Department of Telecom so far

— *PTI*

Retail loses over ₹20 L cr business

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

Unorganised retail has lost Rs 19 lakh crore of business in the past five months of lock-down restrictions. Organised retail too has lost almost Rs 1.3 lakh crore during the period.

The retail trade has been going through a rough path in the past five months. Two months of lock-down was followed by unlock restrictions. Further, lower appetite for non-essential purchases amidst economic uncertainty, minimal footfalls and customer preference of online channel has led to a loss of Rs 19 lakh crore for the unorganised trade.

According to the Confederation of All



India Traders, the unorganised retailers lost about 5 lakh crore of business and Rs 4.5 lakh crore in the lockdown months of April and May. Unlock-1 from the month of June did not bring any respite as the loss still stood around Rs 4 lakh crore. By July it was Rs 3 lakh crore and in the month of August it came down to Rs 2.5 lakh crore. Cait had

conducted a survey of retailers in 20 cities.

Similarly, organised retail has met with a loss of around Rs 1.3 lakh crore in the past five months as 55 per cent of the business has been lost. These are largely non-essential items, which hardly have any takers in the post-Covid times, said Kumar Rajagopalan CEO,

Retailers Association of India. Closure of malls too has hit the business of organized retailers.

Praveen Khandelwal, secretary general of Cait, said, "Many shops have already closed and we expect at least 20 per cent or 1.4 crore retailers may end up winding up."

According to him, the entire supply chain is under financial stress as the payments due to vendors in February-March for the supplies bought in November-December are still pending.

According to a report by Retailers Association of India and Anarock Capital, 70 per cent of organised retailers anticipate business recovery in more than 6 months and 20 per cent in more than a year.