





## In AP, some babus ignore Covid threat

Senior officials in the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's Office have been getting infected with the Coronavirus one after the other. It started with CM's secretary Solmon Arokhyaraj followed by principal secretary Praveen Prakash and now it's the turn of additional secretary K. Dhanunjay Reddy. Arokhyaraj behaved in a highly responsible manner and opted for self-quarantine, he also informed other officials with whom he had interacted a few days before he tested positive about his infection. He suggested that the officials get themselves tested. Dhanunjay Reddy is the most trusted confidant of the Chief Minister and handles several important subjects. Aware that the Coronavirus is highly contagious, Dhanunjay Reddy decided to skip official duties and informed all department heads about his health status. He did not think that he is indispensable nor did he try to project that he is committed to work by coming to office, putting not only his life but that of others at risk. Is someone hearing this?

## In rankings race, one bureaucrat moves ahead

Often, we see rival political parties compete with each other to take credit for the state's progress, and its rankings at the national and international levels. In Andhra Pradesh, the story is different. It all happened after Andhra Pradesh was ranked first in the Ease of Doing Business recently. Two senior bureaucrats, Karikal Vallevan and Rajat Bhargav, claimed credit for the ranking. Bhargav worked as principal secretary in the industries department for more than six months in the YSRC government before Vallevan replaced him. As Bhargav had served for most of the time during the period which was taken into consideration for the rankings, he showed up during the celebrations. He met Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and presented him a bouquet before joining industries minister Goutham Reddy and Vallevan at a media briefing. Doubtlessly Bhargav stole the attention, leaving his colleague red-faced. Sources close to the minister said they can perceive the disinterested attitude of the incumbent head of industries at recent meetings. Does it mean the return of Bhargav to the industries department?



## KCR scores another goal against Naidu

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao once again proved that he will not lose any opportunity to target TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu, even if the Telugu Desam has all but vanished in the state. This time, KCR adroitly dribbled past a question by CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka in the Assembly over the safety of digital land records to score the goal. The CLP leader said the Dharani portal of land records could be hacked. KCR rose and said Hyderabad has become a safe destination and has its own geographical advantages. In KCR's words, some experts told then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi about the advantages of placing servers in Hyderabad to store ultra-secret and crucial data in Hyderabad. The city is in a non-seismic zone and faces little threat of natural calamity. That, KCR said, is the reason IT companies looked to Hyderabad. It was due to Rajiv Gandhi that Hyderabad became an IT destination, but "somebody" claims that he made Hyderabad an IT hub, KCR said. Whether or not this answered Mallu Bhatti's question is another matter, but "somebody" may still be looking for a quick riposte.

## Cong outsmarted by fleet-footed TRS

Congress members of the Telangana state Legislative Assembly appear to have failed to understand the strategy of the TRS while conducting the monsoon session of the Assembly. The government had indicated on August 17 that it would hold the session from September 7. Later the government indicated that all major issues including Covid-19, the fire mishap at the Srisaillam hydel project, achievements of the government in the power sector, the New Revenue Act, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) devolutions and the illegal construction of projects by the AP government would be taken up for debate. The Business Advisory Committee of the Assembly decided to hold the session for 18 working days. The ruling party took up all the issues listed, except the one on water disputes between the two Telugu states in the first eight days. The House was then adjourned sine die, citing the threat of Covid-19. Congress leaders alleged that the government had run away, afraid of facing the Opposition in the House, instead realising that the ruling party had clearly ambushed them.



## LEISURE

### BRIDGE | Susanna Gross

Dealer South		NS vulnerable	
		♠ 10 6 5	
		♥ 6 4 3	
		♦ Q 7 4 2	
		♣ K 7 4	
♠ A 3	♥ K J 7 4	♠ K J 7 4	
♥ J 7	♦ 10 9 5 2	♥ 10 9 5 2	
♦ J 9 7 6	♣ 10 3	♦ 10 3	
♣ 10 8 6 5 3	♠ A 9	♣ A 9	
		♠ Q 8 2	
		♥ A K Q 8	
		♦ A K 8	
		♣ Q J 2	
West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	All Pass	2NT

My friend Ollie Burgess has just made the bold move of quitting his job in Manchester, and moving to London to manage the Young Chelsea Bridge Club. Ollie is a fantastic player, as well as being popular and dynamic — exactly what's needed. The YC is much loved by its members, but its numbers have been dwindling in recent years. It would be a huge shame if it ever closed, not just because it attracts such a high standard of player, but also because it has a long and rich history. It first opened its doors in 1968, and for decades enjoyed a reputation as the best and most exciting club in the country. The stars of the game would flock there, and stay long into the night. I still remember the time Bill Gates, visiting London, rang and asked whether the club might find him a partner (he ended up playing with its chairman, Ian Payn).

If anyone can restore the club's fortunes, it's Ollie. Already, the Monday and Friday evening online duplicates are buzzing, and he's introduced online teaching, too. I've been lucky enough to partner Ollie many times. Here he is in action at the last Spring Fours.

West led the ♠5. East won, and returned the ♠J. Ollie did well to duck. When East continued the suit, he played low again, and West won with the ♠A. West switched back to clubs. Ollie won with the ♠Q and played ♠AK and a third diamond to dummy's ♠Q. East showed out. Instead of pinning his hopes on a 3-3 heart break, Ollie rectified the count for a possible major-suit squeeze against East: he played a fourth diamond, discarding his ♠Q. West won, and played another club to dummy's ♠K. East, down to ♠K ♥10952, was squeezed: nine tricks were in the bag.

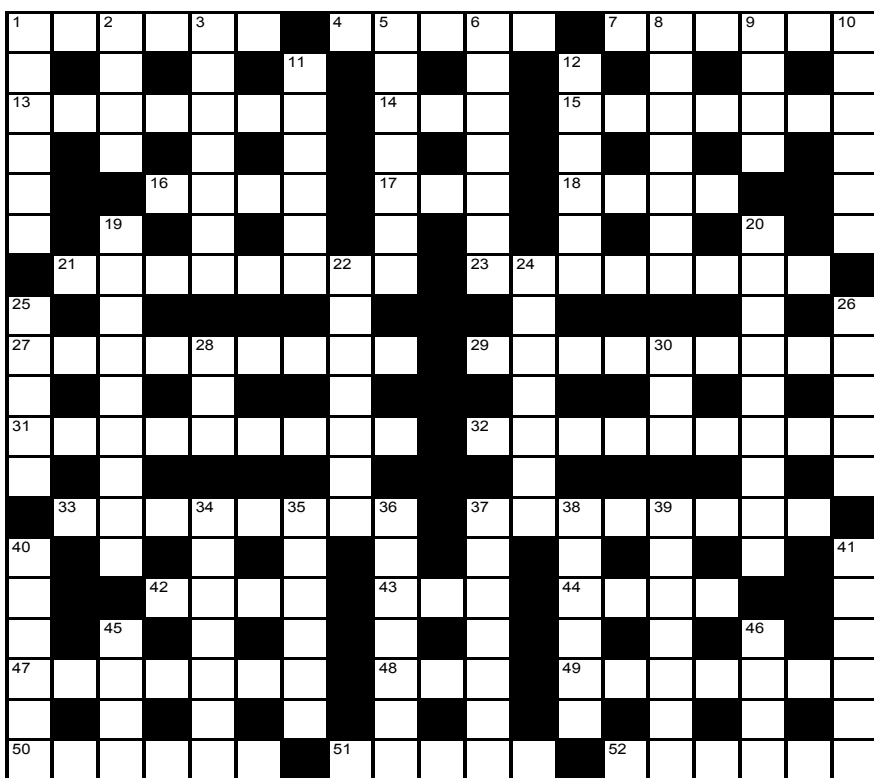
## SUNDAY CROSSWORD — 952

### ACROSS :

- Former Kiwi wicket keeper Adam (5)
- Baby beds (5)
- Proposals or bids (6)
- Flat pasta sheets (7)
- Thai language - "Ola" anagram (3)
- Ideal, utopian or flawless (7)
- Hit out at cricket (4)
- Marking fluid (3)
- up : consumed or finished the whole quantity? (4)
- Evacuating, abdicating or pulling out (8)
- Contri-bution to a cause (8)
- Retired Indian off-spinner (9)
- A son or a daughter; even a lamb or a colt? (9)
- Expressed with frankness (9)
- Minute trace (9)
- Competitions (8)
- Fire-raiser (8)
- Engrave (4)
- Pair (3)
- Run with a long stride (4)
- Messenger (7)
- Of one's : belonging to oneself? (3)
- Used to be alive (7)
- In vogue or fashion (6)
- Acute anxiety (5)
- Representatives (6)

### DOWN :

- What bees collect? (6)
- Went upward (4)
- Royal emblems? (7)
- Depending, banking on, trusting (7)
- Stopped ball with bat? (7)
- Impassioned, romantic or sensual (7)
- "Been" anagram for Swiss watch manufacturers? (4)
- Easy catch (6)
- Mahara-shtra city (6)
- Economic improvement (6)
- Depiction or story or report (9)
- Advocate of com-



### SOLUTION FOR CROSSWORD - 950

P	O	P	P	C	O	N	S	E	L	G	E	L
O	U	O	I	L	N	P	I	R	E			
O	C	T	E	T	U	I	A	P	A	I	S	A
J	R	A	R	B	I	T	E	R	O	T	N	
A	D	I	E	U	N	T	E	M	P	T	E	D
G	E	F	E	T	U	B	A	A	I	E		
C	H	E	S	T	E	L	M	G	N	A	R	E
O	U	T	U	T	S	C	A	L	A	W	A	G
N	E	A	T	S	Y	L	A					
T	A	R	M	C	A	M	P	O	B	L	A	T
R	A	G	E	S	T	H	E	R	R	I	S	
A	O	C	P	E	L	E	U	T				
V	A	N	A	T	U	M	I	R	E	N	E	
E	I	N	P	R	A	Y	E	R	S	M	N	
N	A	S	T	P	I	Y	I	S	P	A	T	
E	E	O	E	A	E	R	N	T	R			
D	A	D		N	O	T	I	C	E	D		
G	A	S	S									

### WIN A PRIZE

Here's your chance to win a cash prize of ₹200 each. All you need to do is rush in your completed crossword entry to us by Wednesday with your full name and address. Mark the envelope to:

Sunday Crossword-952  
Sunday Magazine, 36, S.D. Road,  
Secbad-03

### WINNERS OF CROSSWORD 950

- Hema Kumar, Hyderabad
- Jaikanth Dubey Secunderabad

### CROSSWORD JIGSAW

K	E	Y	S		G	A	B		W	I	N	S
A	E		L		L		C		E			
N	O	O	D	L	E		E	S	T	E	E	M
G	M		A	A	L	S	T		M		I	
A	L	A	R	U	M		S	A	H	A	R	A
R	N	O	N		I		O	N		U		
O			A	D	A	M	A	N	T			
O		E	R	R		P		L	E	O		
C	U	R	S	E	D		S	E	L	D	O	M
O		E		S	U	C	K		S	D		A
U	P	C	A	S	T		A	S	S	I	S	T
R		T		C		T		T		I		
T	O	S	H		I	E		S		S		N

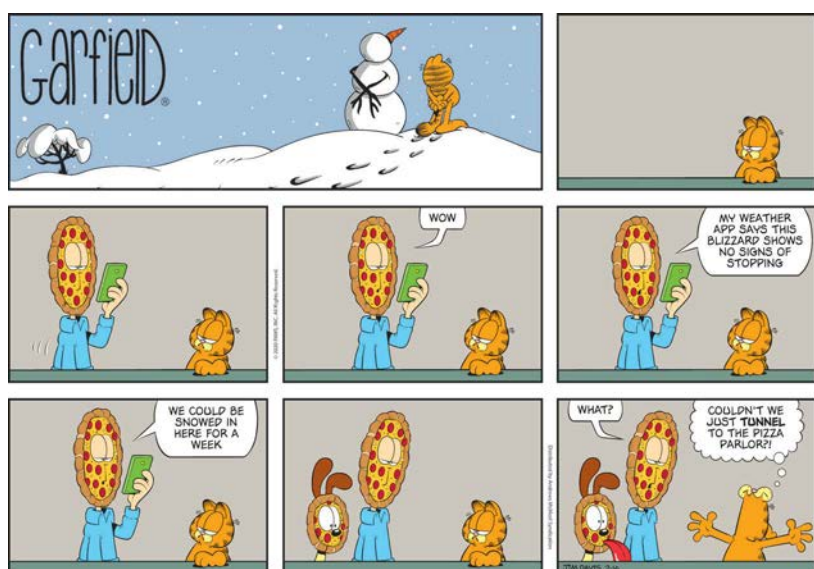
### STRIKE OUT

E	X	P	A	N	S	E		S	O	B	E	R
X	O		A	V		U		A		E		
A	T	L	A	S		O	C	A	R	I	N	A
C	Y		A		L		S		Z		D	
T	U	P	O	L	E	V		I	R	A	Q	I
G	O	D	S	O	N		S	N	I	F	F	Y
A		R	A	D		E						
R	A	D	I	O		X	I	J	I	A	N	G
L		U	R		O		A	T				
A	B	R	E	A	S	T		C	O	T	T	A
N		R		N		I	K	O				
D	E	A	L	T		C	H	O	P	P	E	R

## PHANTOM



## GARFIELD



## BLONDIE





## SHORT TAKES

HEALTH OFFICIALS,  
DCA START  
BLAME GAME

FROM PAGE 1

Incidentally, even RAT kits belonging to the government are finding their way into the black market and reaching private establishments in parts of AP.

District health authorities and Drugs Control Administration blame each other for such illegal goings on.

While district officials want evidence to take any action, DCA says Andhra Pradesh government is yet to designate a Medical Device Officer to take action against the illegal practice, even though the centre has declared Rapid Antigen Test kits as a medical device under Medical Device Rules, 2017.

MINISTER  
DEFENDS CESS  
ON FUELDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 19

Transport and I&PR minister Perni Venkatramaiah (Nani) defended levy of ₹1 road development cess on every litre of petrol and diesel.

Speaking to the media here on Saturday, the minister said that the state was facing revenue deficit ever since lockdown was imposed due to Covid-19 and the government was finding it difficult to spare funds for infrastructure development. The previous Chandrababu Naidu government collected ₹2 per liter as Amaravati cess for capital development, that never happened though it had imposed huge financial burden on the public, he said. The minister affirmed that the money collected through road development cess would be used only for the development of roads.

Accusing Mr Naidu of corrupting all the systems, he asked the Central government and Supreme Court to address the concerns raised by the YSRC in Lok Sabha on the functioning of judiciary. Suspecting Mr Naidu conspiracy behind a series of temple incidents in the state, Mr Nani vowed to conduct a thorough probe and bring the truth to light.

GOVT TO CALL  
FRESH TENDERS  
FOR R&B PROJECTSDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 19

The government has decided to cancel the tenders called for execution of roads and buildings department projects being undertaken with aid from New Development Bank. Chief secretary of R&B department M.T. Krishna Babu, addressing a press meet here on Saturday, quoted Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy as saying, "We should be transparent and we should also appear to be transparent." Hence the tenders filed by 14 companies were cancelled.

Mr Krishna Babu said that the state government decided to develop roads with the assistance from NDB and called for tenders in accordance with the norms of the World Bank. He said that NDB also expressed satisfaction over the tender process.

● Krishna Babu said that the state government decided to develop roads with the assistance from NDB and called for tenders in accordance with the norms of the World Bank.

Ministers fault  
judicial overreachDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 19

Civil supplies minister Kodali Venkateswara Rao (Nani) said that going by the recent developments, there appeared to be an overreach of independent institutions and reiterated that insider trading took place in Amaravati lands.

Speaking to the media here on Saturday, he said it was Chandrababu Naidu and his men who sought an inquiry into Amaravati deals, and now, they were trying to stall it. "All the bravado of TD weakened once the investigation process was set in motion and its leaders

pleaded for stalling it."

While asserting that the government held judiciary in high esteem, the minister did not mince words that "some institutions" in the state seemed to be arrogant. "These investigations are not about individuals or political parties but it is about the wealth of the state that was plundered by the previous government, and hence, we are answerable to the poor people of the state."

At a separate press conference, agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu stressed the need for a national debate on functions and overreach of the four pillars of

## Dwajaroohanam heralds beginning of Brahmotsavams

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC  
NELLORE, SEPT. 19

The celestial annual Srivari Brahmotsavams commenced in the auspicious Meena lagnam, between 6.03pm and 6.30 pm, on Saturday.

The archakas hoisted the Garuda flag on the Dwaja Sthambham amidst mangala vaidyams and in the holy presence of utsava idols of Sri Malayappaswamy and His consorts Sri Devi and Bhudevi. Sri Govindacharyulu conducted the ceremony as Kankanabhattar.

Legends say that the Garuda flag on the Dwaja Sthambham was a celestial invitation to galaxy of Gods, Astha Dikpalakas, Saptha Rushis, Saptha Maruttas, Pancha Bhutas and entire humanity to participate in the Brahmotsavams.

Garuda is said to be omnipresent and is the favourite vehicle of Sri Venkateswara.

AP records 8,218  
new Covid casesDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 19

Andhra Pradesh has registered 8,218 new Covid-19 cases, raising the overall tally to 6,17,776, apart from 58 deaths in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 5,302.

State health authorities released their Coronavirus bulletin here on Saturday reporting that out of 74,595 samples tested, 8,218 individuals turned out to be Covid-19 positive. Out of 50,33,676 samples tested so far in the state, 5,30,711 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 81,763 patients are undergoing treatment for Coronavirus in various hospitals.

Among the new confirmed Covid infections, East Godavari district continues to top the state with the highest number of 1,395 cases, followed by 1,071 in West Godavari, 736 in Chittoor, 693 in Nellore, 670 in Prakasam, 520 in Kadapa, 485 in Srikakulam, 477 in Anantapur, 471 in Guntur, 468 in Krishna, 462 in Vizianagaram, 451 in Visakhapatnam and 319 in Kurnool.

East Godavari has recorded the highest number of cumulative Coronavirus positive cases with 85,247 patients, followed by 56,741 in West Godavari, 54,059 in Chittoor, 53,754 in Kurnool, 52,298 in Anantapur, 48,864 in Guntur, 47,283 in Nellore, 46,508 in Visakhapatnam, 40,826 in Prakasam, 39,264 in Kadapa, 35,468 in Srikakulam, 30,978 in Vizianagaram, 23,591 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery among Covid-19 infected patients has been good in East Godavari with 72,474 getting discharged from hospitals after recovery, followed by 49,858 recoveries in Kurnool, 48,801 in Anantapur, 47,705 in West Godavari, 45,919 in Chittoor, 43,563 in Nellore, 41,714 in Visakhapatnam, 41,566



Medical staff collects the swab from a woman for Covid-19 testing at in Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

— DC

in Guntur, 34,607 in Kadapa, 29,379 in Srikakulam, 29,282 in Prakasam, 22,700 in Vizianagaram, 20,248 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

With regard to deaths during the last 24 hours, Chittoor registered the highest number of nine fatalities, followed by seven in Krishna, five each in Anantapur, Guntur, Kadapa and West Godavari, four each in Nellore, Prakasam and Visakhapatnam, and three each in East Godavari, Kurnool and Srikakulam, and one in Vizianagaram district.

Among cumulative cases of death due to Covid-19, Chittoor tops the state recording 580 deaths, followed by 492 in Guntur, 481 in East Godavari, 440 in Kurnool, 439 in Anantapur, 420 in Nellore, 414 in West Godavari, 412 in Prakasam, 384 in Visakhapatnam, 381 in Krishna, 340 in Kadapa, 308 in Srikakulam and 211 in Vizianagaram.

State health authorities have discharged 10,820 patients from various hospitals in the state after recovery during the last 24 hours.

AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 94,264 patients, registering a Covid-19 positive rate of 12.27, while Maharashtra tested 45,583 samples with a positive rate of 20.51 and Telangana tested 60,559 with a positive rate of 7.02.

DASARA FETE AT  
DURGA TEMPLE  
FROM OCT 17DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 19

Minister for endowments Velampalli Srinivas said that the government was making foolproof arrangements for Dasara festivities at Kanaka Durga temple.

The Dasara festival coordination committee meeting was held here on Saturday. The minister appealed to devotees not to bring children below 10 years of age and elderly people above 60 years to the temple during Dasara festival to be held from 17 to 25 October.

● The minister appealed to devotees not to bring children below 10 years of age and elderly people

No one should die  
due to negligence

## Goutham sore over Covid deaths in GGH

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, SEPT. 19

The industries and IT minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy has expressed his displeasure over the treatment and number of deaths because of Covid-19 in the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Nellore on Saturday.

During a review with the medical officers and senior officials of GGH, he said that everyone should be accountable for the deaths while pointing

to scores of reports over negligence in the treatment.

Stressing that most of those who succumbed to Covid-19 are poor, pointing to the treatment often given to VIPs.

Given the complaints on delay in providing oxygen to the patients costing their lives, he demanded to know the reasons for the absence of adequate alternative arrangements.

"No one should die because of our negligence," Mr Goutham

Reddy asserted lamenting over the plight of poor patients.

Earlier, the minister said that they would construct a godown in Sangam to enable the farmers to store the harvested paddy and avoid panic selling.

During a surprise visit to the paddy procurement centre in Sangam, the minister elicited information on Minimum Support Price, quality of paddy and volume of procurement from the officials and the farmers.



Collector Gandham Chandrudu and other officials inspect Kisan train on Saturday.

— DC

55 YEAR- OLD  
KILLED IN ROW  
OVER ILLICIT  
RELATIONSHIPDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, SEPT. 19

A 55-year-old man in B Kottakota mandal of Chittoor district was killed in an attack by his son's rivals on Friday night. The deceased Venkata Ramaiah of Aletivaripalle son is involved in an illicit relationship with a married woman in the village. The relatives of the woman attacked the youth and his men. Both groups lodged complaints against each other at the police station in the evening.

However, the two groups resumed their fight late in the night, and the father of the youth suffered grievous injuries. The doctors at the government hospital in Madanapalle declared him brought dead. Rural CI Ashok Kumar booked a case and commenced an investigation.

SRI CITY HOME FOR OVER 25  
PRESTIGIOUS BRANDS OF JAPANDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, SEPT. 19

During an online event held on Saturday, Mr Ravindra Sannareddy, Founder Managing Director, Sri City said, "Sri City, which boasts of a Japanese enclave and considered as a second home for Japanese businesses, will continue to work to add value to the industry and further the Indo-Japanese bilateral linkage."

"We host over 25 prestigious brands from Japan, and because of its industrial friendly ecosystem, we are confident that it would attract more and more Japanese companies," he added.

Mr Reddy was

addressing the participants in the online event organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for launching the FICCI-SAM report titled "India-Japan: Time to Seize New Opportunities" on Saturday.

He said, "Towards the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat, in line with Make in India for world policy, Sri City emerges as a highly recommended investment destination, boosting local manufacturing which, in turn, gives a fillip to creation of jobs and gets the economy of the state and region on the fast track."

## RTC PASSENGERS INJURED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, SEPT. 19

Ten passengers of an RTC bus were injured when a speeding lorry hit it on Saturday at the ADB Road under the

Peddapuram police station limits. The bus was coming towards Kakinada with 26 passengers. The injured were admitted to the area hospital in Peddapuram.



Chennur police rescues Covid patients from Haj house on Saturday.

— DC

Covid-19 patients  
rescued by copsDC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, SEPT. 19

Following the orders of the superintendent of police, K.K. N. Anburajan and DSP, Suryanarayana, the Chennur police rescued 54 Covid-19 patients from the Haj house Covid-19 quarantine centre which was about to be submerged.

Chennur police sub inspector, Naga Tulasi Prasad, and his staff came forward to rescue the patients on Saturday evening. The nearby rivulet swelled with rain water and threatened to submerge the

centre. There were 54 Covid-19 patients under treatment at this centre.

When the information reached Chennur station, Prasad, head constables Jagan Naik and Zakir Hussain, constables Nagaraju, D.V. Bhargava, Narasimulu, Rajiv Kumara, Chandrasekhar and Subrahmanyam reached Haj house immediately.

They used a rope and rescued all the 54 patients.

Anburajan announced cash rewards to all the police staff involved in the operation.

Left parties seek  
help to rain-affectedNAGESWARA RAO  
BALLEDA I DC  
KADAPA, SEPT. 19

CPI district secretary Gujjula Eshwaraya and AP farmers' union district general secretary Gali Chandra demanded that the government immediately provide relief to farmers affected by the Buggavanka and Kundu floods due to heavy rains in the district. Those who inspected the crop fields that were submerged in the Buggavanka floods near Palempalle on Saturday said that all the inland areas were inundated due to the incessant rains in the district for days last week. With the raising of the four gates of the Buggavanka Dam, large-scale floods in Rallavanka have entirely submerged the paddy fields in the Buggavanka catchment villages of Gudur, Palam Palle, Old Kadapa and Mundla Palle villages and submerged agricultural

pump sets. The drums and clothes stored by rajakas in Palempalle Dhoobi Ghat were washed away in the floods, he said, urging the government to support them. They said that 10,000 hectares of paddy, groundnut, turmeric, onion, chilli, black gram, flower gardens and mango orchards in the district was completely damaged due to the incessant rains.

They demanded that the authorities immediately collect details of damaged crops and take similar steps to compensate farmers for crop insurance investment subsidy. Several colonies in Kadapa city were inundated due to heavy rains since last night. A CPM delegation visited rain-hit low-level areas in Kadapa. The CPI district executive committee member A. Rammohan said that the corporation had arbitrarily encroached on the layouts drainage canals due to lack of proper

Floods threaten  
Nellore CityDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, SEPT. 19

An overflowing Penna River is threatening to flood low-lying areas of Nellore City following heavy discharge of water from the Somasila reservoir on Saturday evening. In fact, the reservoir had reached full capacity of 77,234 tmc ft on Saturday morning itself.

Incidentally, this is only the second time that the reservoir has become full during the entire history of the project. Significantly, during the last rainy season too, it reached its full reservoir level.

According to Somasila superintending engineer N. Krishna Rao, Somasila is receiving 1,54,583 cusecs of water from upstream areas but releasing 1,70,240 cusecs into downstream Penna River, including 11,000 cusecs to Kandaleru dam.

Revenue and police authorities have asked people living close to banks of the river to move to safer places.

Meanwhile, water resources minister Anilkumar Yadav, after a visit of Jayalaitaa Nagar area in the city, advised officials to shift people living in low-lying areas to safer places.

VENKAIAH NAIDU HAPPY OVER  
HEAVY INFLOWS INTO SOMASILADC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, SEPT. 19

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has expressed happiness over heavy inflows into the Somasila project while recalling his contribution to speed up the completion of the project in the past.

In a Facebook post on Saturday, the Vice President said the project was

designed to store 78 tmc.ft and irrigate 5,84,500 acres of land.

He said he spoke to the ministries concerned and also wrote a letter to the Chief Minister of AP YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to speed up the construction of Somasila high level canal to address the irrigation and drinking water needs of Udayagiri constituency.

BID SCHEDULE			
1. Procurement Tender Notice No. 09/2020-21/CE(GV/MC)(SE/WS)/EE-(WS&S-M)/DBI/DT-17-09-2020			
01. Number of Works	1	No	
02. Value of Works (ECV)	Rs. 857.34 Lakhs		
03. Down Loading Starting Date	18-09-2020		
04. Down Loading Ending Date	05-10-2020	@	3.00 PM
05. Last date of bid submission	05-10-2020	@	4.00 PM
06. Date of PO Opening	05-10-2020	@	5.00 PM
07. Date of Commercial opening	09-10-2020	@	1.30 PM
08. Date of TO opening	12-10-2020	@	5.00 PM
Note: For any other details required in respect of above tender notice, please contact EE-(WS) before applying for tender schedules and visit vsp @ www.approcurement.gov.in CE(GV/MC)			



## IN BRIEF

**Jayaram involved in ESI scam: TD**

**Vijayawada:** Telugu Desam general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh has claimed there is evidence of involvement of labour minister Gummanuru Jayaram in the ESI scam. He demanded on Saturday an explanation from the government as to why 'innocent' Atchannaidu was arrested, while the minister was let off. Asserting that a Benz car gifted to the minister's son by one of the accused in the scam was sufficient proof of his taint, Lokesh demanded immediate arrest of Jayaram.

**YOUTH RUSH INTO RESTRICTED AREAS**

From Page 1

Normally, the sambars and spotted deer are on the hillocks and in the forest areas. Now they are seen in downhill areas and on the roads.

Youth have catching the wild animals and selling the flesh. After losing the employment due to Covid-19, many youth are now rushing into the restricted areas for poaching.

"We have no information about the poaching of wildlife. The department has registered two sambar deaths in the past two months. However, both cases were accidents. The bodies have been recovered, district forest officer, Visakhapatnam territorial, Ananth Shankar, told *Deccan Chronicle*. The department has noticed that the sambars have coming into the human habitations and intensified the checks to conserve wildlife, Shankar added.

**EXODUS TO HELP YSRC IN VIZAG**

From Page 1

Incidentally, the changeover of Ganesh will help YSRC as it had failed to win a single seat in Visakhapatnam from the four that were at stake. The entry of Ganesh is likely to boost the prospects of the ruling party in the ensuing Visakhapatnam municipal corporation elections.

Ganesh said that he would go all out and ensure YSRC sweep in the municipal corporation elections, have its own Mayor, which would be his gift to YSRC party.

Jagan Mohan Reddy welcomed Saketh and Surya into YSRC in the presence of YSRC MP V. Vijayasai Reddy and TD rebel MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi.

Ganesh praised the Chief Minister for his guts in declaring Visakhapatnam as Executive Capital of Andhra Pradesh. He predicted that there were no chances of TD returning to power.

Welcoming the two youngsters into the party fold, Vijayasai Reddy said that TD leaders were attracted by the developmental activities and vision of Jagan Mohan Reddy and hence were embracing YSRC. He said that TD would disappear from Visakhapatnam in the coming days. Echoing similar sentiments, Vamsi said that other legislators are ready to leave TD and N Chandrababu Naidu will lose the Leader of the Opposition post.

**AMID PANDEMIC BETTING FOR IPL COMMENCES**

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 19

After a long gap, cricket lovers are enjoying the large scale of arrangements to witness the Indian Premier League IPL 2020 season. With no entertainment since March 23, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, cricket lovers are engaging in betting on the IPL matches.

After observing the seriousness of Covid-19 in the country, the IPL 2020 season is being held in the UAE. IPL is being held outside India for the first time. Even as the inaugural match between the Mumbai Indians (MI) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) is yet to begin, the betting has started in Visakhapatnam.

According to the reports from the sources, MI is a hot favourite among betters, even though the most dependable captain of CSK M.S. Dhoni is playing after he retired from Indian cricket. Along with the engaged punters, the youth have also started betting on the individual performance of the bowlers and batsmen. In the hot race, there is a big betting on M.S. Dhoni and Rohit Sharma.

**New alliance**

Vizag south TD MLA Vasupalli Ganesh along with his sons Saketh, Surya joins YSR Congress in the presence of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at the camp office on Saturday.

**TTD cannot do away with faith declaration: Naidu**

Temple traditions should not change with every govt in the state, says TD chief

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 19

Opposition Telugu Desam is against any move to do away with mandatory faith declaration to be submitted by non-Hindus visiting Tirumala, stating that they have faith in the Lord Venkateswara.

Former chief minister and TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu said here on Saturday that the TTD traditions should not change every time there was a change in the government in the state. "Any change in such long-established traditions would only hurt the sentiments of the devotees. Sanathana Dharma means something that is ancient, permanent and is followed without change down centuries," he maintained.

Stressing the need to protect the sanctity of the Tirumala temple, he asserted that the long-held TTD traditions should not be changed for the sake of a non-believer.

Naidu said that all these

● **STRESSING THE** need to protect the sanctity of the Tirumala temple, he asserted that the long-held TTD traditions should not be changed for the sake of a non-believer.

● **NAIDU SAID** that all these traditions were part of the 'Sanathana Dharma' that came down from previous generations and therefore should not be compromised for the sake of one single non-believer.

traditions were part of the 'Sanathana Dharma' that came down from previous generations and therefore should not be compromised for the sake of one single non-believer.

Former TTD board member and TD leader A.V. Ramana said any move to end the practice of taking declaration from non-Hindus would be tantamount to attack on Hinduism.

**TTD: Taking faith info from every pilgrim not possible**

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, SEPT. 19

TTD chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy on Saturday said that he had never suggested or indicated for withdrawal of the declaration by non-Hindus seeking Srivari darshan about their faith and belief in Lord Sri Venkateswara.

Reiterating that he was against any political dialogue on the holy shrine of Tirumala but had heeded to the request of media friends to respond to the charges made by the opposition leader.

"I told the press persons that Tirumala witnesses thousands of pilgrims from across the world, who have faith and

belief in Lord Sri Venkateswara.

During normal days over 80 thousand to one lakh pilgrims visit Tirumala for Srivari darshan. Among them, people of other faiths also pay a visit to seek the blessings of Lord Venkateswara. And it is humanly impossible to seek a declaration of faith and belief from all the pilgrims.

He said he only stated that neither Smt Sonia Gandhi nor late Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy had ever given such a declaration during their visit to Tirumala.

According to the memo issued by government in 2014, if anyone is identified openly as non-Hindu (based on his or her name like Esaiah, Sardar Singh,

Ahamad etc.), then the TTD authorities shall ask them for declaration.

"Several non-Hindu political personalities came to Tirumala and had darshan without signing the declaration form. Hence, I just told, AP CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy need not have to sign a declaration to prove his faith in Lord Venkateswara," he added.

As soon as his pada yatra was successfully completed he reached Tirumala on foot and had darshan of Lord again. When he won the elections with a thumping majority, he made a thanksgiving visit to Tirumala and had darshan of Lord Venkateswara before swearing-in as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

**Kona waterfalls in Anantapur attracts tourists**

HOSKOTE NAGABHUSHANAM | DC ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 19

Seasonal waterfalls have been attracting tourists in drought-hit Anantapur district. Alooru Kona in Tadipatri mandal, Kona in Yadiiki mandal and Batrepalli in Talupula mandal have turned picnic spots during this rainy season.

Aloor Kona is located about 15 km from Tadipatri town, where the waterfall flows perennially. During the rainy season, the flow is heavy and scenic. These falls are located close to the historic Aluru Sriranganatha Swamy temple that was built atop a hill in the year 1334 by Yerramraju, a chieftain at the Bukkaraya court of Vijayanagara Empire. Yerramraju also donated lands to the temple to meet temple expenses.

Next to the temple is a natural spring whose water flows down through the rocks for the whole year. At the top, there is a sculpture of reclining Vishnu on Sesa Nag, which adds to the attraction of the temple. Nagendra, a tourist visiting from Madhugiri in

● **THE YADIKI** Kona has been the biggest waterfall in the region, which flows heavily during the rainy season and attracts many tourists. Two persons had got stuck when the ventured deeper in the waterfall area. They had to be brought back to safety by rescue teams.

Karnataka, said the natural waterfall is amazing and they are happy that they have visited the temple.

The Yadiiki Kona has been the biggest waterfall in the region, which flows heavily during the rainy season and attracts many tourists. Two persons had got stuck when the ventured deeper in the waterfall area. They had to be brought back to safety by rescue teams.

Batrepalli is another waterfall in Talupula mandal near Kadiri town. It has been attracting tourists from various parts of Anantapur, Kadapa and nearby Karnataka areas. Raja, former municipal councillor from Kadiri, said the waterfall remains a major picnic spot at least for two months in a year.



Kona waterfall in Yadiiki mandal in Anantapur district which has started witnessing a lot of footfall lately.

**Kumaraswamy temple at Srisailem sparks row**

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL, SEPT. 19

Controversy is raging over a proposal to construct a temple dedicated to Lord Kumaraswamy, at Srisailem. The allotment of 20 acres of land at Elephant Pond in Srisailem Keshtram, to M/s Vision Brindavan Technologies, a private trust, is seen as an affront to the pristine purity of India's most ancient Jyotirlingas.

Religious leaders of several sects in Srisailem are upset and seek the intervention of the government to stop the trust's move. Principal advisor to CM, Ajeya Kallam is believed to be the chairman of the Kumar Swami Trust.

Taking a serious objection to proposed temple, Srisailem Jagadguru Sri Sri

● **WHEN CONTACTED**, an official of Srisailem temple said that it's true that Vision Brindavan Technologies was allotted land by the previous Chandra Babu Naidu government.

Sri Chenna Siddha Rama Panditaradhya Sivacharya Mahaswamiji said that the trust had nothing to do with Srisailem Kshetram and it's 100% violation of the shrine. "It is imperative that all the devotees of Srisailem Mallikarjuna Swamy oppose the proposal to construct Kumaraswamy temple."

He said, 'Srisailem devasthanam is Shiva Kshetram and Veerasaivas perform puja to Sri Mallikarjuna Swami according to Veerasiva Agama,

and Smarta Brahmins perform archanas to Sri Bhramarambika Devi according to Smarta Brahmin Agamas."

When contacted, an official of Srisailem temple said that it's true that Vision Brindavan Technologies was allotted land by the previous Chandra Babu Naidu government. They were allotted only two acres, not 20 acres as is claimed by peethadipathis.

"The promoters of the trust has grand plan to build a Kumara Swamy temple in Srisailem. They have constructed a small structure. They are developing a sprawling land scape," he said.

He added that any temple dwarfing the Srisailem Mallikarjuna Swami temple is bound to hurt the sentiments of devotees.



Road on the bridge near Golapalli on Kadapa - Tadipatri highway caves in as a result of heavy rainfall, on Saturday.

— DC

**Cops ordered to alert people**

From Page 1

District police personnel were ordered to alert people living near rivers and hinterland. District SP Karur Karunapathi Nagendra Kumar Anburajan said all submerged roads should be secured and closed.

Penna and Kundu, the

main rivers of the district, along with other streams and canals are also overflowing. Police officials are providing security at rivers, streams and bridges across the district while Revenue officials are taking steps to set up rehabilitation centres.

Rainfall recorded at

Kadapa 139.4; Vallur 180.2; Pendimarr 174.4; Chennur 139.8; Khajipet 140.4; Kamalapuram 177; Yerraguntla 120.8; Siddavatam 115.6; Jammalamadugu 145.2; Mylavaram 130.8; Muddanur 102.8; Proddutur 144; Chapadu 120; Thondur 144.8 and Simhadripuram 154.

## SKILL | FIGHT

**Agnikula Kshatriyas say it's unfair they were not considered for making chariot**

**Community claims right to build chariot**

VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 19

Even as the controversy over the destruction of the chariot at Antarvedi Srilakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in fire, it refuses die down, the endowments department's decision to entrust the work of making a new one to Hyderabad-based Ganapathi Acharyulu has upset Agnikula Kshatriyas, who claim to be very skilled in the field.

They said their ancestors built chariots as well as temples, but they were sidelined in the selection process.

"Our ancestor Koppanathi Krishnamma built a temple in 1823 besides donating nearly 1800 acres of land to the temple. Our community people have been participating in every seva, especially chariot seva without fail. It's unfair we were not considered for making a new chariot," said Pallava Sena State president Kollati Babu Rao. He said that nearly 200 families from Narasapuram in West Godavari and Antarvedi go to states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Rajasthan, Karnataka, etc., to build temples and chariots.

Claiming a traditional right and skill to make chariots for Antarvedi temple, Babu Rao said that endowments minister Vellampalli Srinivas Rao told him that it's too late as the work was entrusted to somebody else. The minister, according to Mr Babu Rao, was of the view that Agnikula Kshatriyas should have come forward at the time of discussion on chariot issue. Mr Babu Rao said that the government or endowment officials or the minister did not discuss the chariot issue either with Antarvedi people or his community members.

Retired chief priest of Antarvedi temple Sri Vadapalli Buchi Venkata Kali Seshacharyulu said that as per an inscription Koppanathi Krishnamma built the temple during Shalivahana Sakha in 1745 (1823 as per English calendar) and Agnikula Kshatriyas were more attached to the temple programmes.

Babu Rao further said that Agnikula Kshatriya community members were invited every year to Rudra Vanniyar Yaga in Tamil Nadu. But in Andhra Pradesh, they were deprived of any honour.

**ENDOWMENT OFFICIALS PERFORM 'POOJA' FOR BASTER TEAK WOOD**

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, SEPT. 19

The Endowment Officials started the wood processing work, meant for the building of New Chariot to Lord Lakshminarasimha Swamy Temple in Antarvedi where the chariot had been gutted recently. The officials identified the 'Baster Teak wood' in a sawmill in Ravulapalem for the New Chariot. The Endowment Department

Additional Commissioner K. Ramachandra Mohan, Regional Joint Commissioner for Endowments D. Bramaramba, and other officials of the temple reached the sawmill by 10 am on Saturday and performed Poojas to the 'wood' and started the woodworks in the sawmill. Ramachandra Mohan said that the wood had been identified in the mill, after observing different varieties in four districts.



IN BRIEF

## WEAPONS SENT BY DRONE FOR LeT MILITANTS

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, SEPT. 19

Jammu and Kashmir police on Saturday claimed arresting three Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) militants from frontier district of Rajouri and said that the weapons and cash recovered from them were sent from across the border and dropped by a drone in an area close to the Line of Control (LoC).

DG police, Dilbag Singh, who was on a visit to Rajouri, told reporters that the arrested LeT cadres were residents of Kashmir Valley who had travelled all the way to the frontier region to receive a weapon and cash consignment from across the LoC.

“Yesterday (Friday), the trio was chased by the jawans of J&K police and the Army’s 38 Rashtriya Rifles unit, after which one of them hurled a grenade at the forces which luckily didn’t explode. They were subsequently caught alive”, he said.

He added, “All the three are affiliated with the Lashkar outfit and were in touch with their handlers from across and had received weapons and cash through drones.”

The weapons seized from the accused identified as Rahil Bashir, Amir Jaan and Younis Wani include two AK 56 rifles, two pistols, four grenades and Rs. 1,00,000 cash, the police said.

The police chief reiterated that charge that Pakistan “is trying hard to keep the pot of militancy boiling in Rajouri and Poonch districts”.

He said “Also, this weapon consignment and cash were aimed at fuelling militancy in Kashmir Valley.”

He further said that this was the first attempt of aerial weapon drop on the LoC and second in the recent past as earlier one drone was shot along with weapons by the BSF on the International Border in Samba district. “We are aware of the challenge and will evolve a counter strategy to foil these bids,” he said in reply to a question.

IGP (Jammu range) Mukesh Singh said that a huge consignment of heroine weighing 7 kilograms and worth ₹7 crore was seized by the police on September 14.

“The arrest of one person from Kulgam (district in Kashmir Valley) in this connection led to the arrest of three more from Poonch district (bordering LoC) on whose integration 4 more kilograms of heroin worth ₹4 crore was recovered besides IED making material and a pen drive,” he said.

He added that in the pen drive “there were indications and training sessions as to how an IED can be prepared.”

Meanwhile, the police here said that two “terrorist associates” were arrested by it from Awantipora and Khrew areas of southern Pulwama district. “Incriminating material of proscribed terrorist outfits Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and Al-Badr has been recovered from the arrested terror associates,” the police said in a statement here.

## 41 ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL DIED OF COVID-19

**New Delhi, Sept. 19:** The coronavirus pandemic has killed 41 and infected 22,353 armed forces personnel, according to details provide by the government in Rajya Sabha on Saturday.

Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik said a series of measures have been put in place to check the spread of the coronavirus infection in the armed forces which included a campaign on preventive measures.

“The total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases amongst serving armed forces personnel is 22,353,” he said, adding 41 personnel died of the infection till date.

“In line with the international and national treatment protocols for Covid-19, armed forces hospitals have a wide array of anti-viral drugs (Favipiravir and Remdesivir),” he said.

The minister said two hospitals in the armed forces are using plasma therapy for treatment of severely ill patients.

To a separate question, Naik said the strength of women officers serving in the Indian Air Force is 1,875.

“Of these, 10 women officers are fighter pilots and 18 women officers are navigators,” he said. Naik said women fighter pilots are inducted and deployed in IAF as per strategic needs and operational requirements within the laid down policy.

## SINGLE-DAY RECOVERIES EXCEED FRESH COVID CASES

**New Delhi, Sept. 19:** “In a landmark global achievement”, India has overtaken the US and become the top country in terms of Covid-19 recoveries, the health ministry said.

The country has reported the highest number of recoveries with 42,08,431 patients having recovered from the disease so far, pushing the national recovery rate to nearly 80 per cent, while the case fatality rate has further dropped to 1.61 per cent, the ministry said.

India’s single-day recovery outstripped the number of new infections as nearly 96,000 people recuperated from the coronavirus, even as the total caseload went past 53 lakh, according to the Union Health Ministry data. -PTI

## End of an era



Decommissioned aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy, INS Viraat during its last journey from Naval Dockyard to Alang in Gujarat, where it will be dismantled, in Mumbai on Saturday. For Navy veterans who watched the huge vessel being towed away by a tug boat, it was an emotional moment as they stood near the Gateway of India, waving at the once ‘floating town’, aboard which they spent the best years of their career. The aircraft carrier served the Indian Navy for 29 years before being decommissioned in March 2017. It had served in the UK’s Royal Navy as HMS Hermes and was named INS Viraat after being inducted in the Indian Navy in 1987. Alang-based Shree Ram group bought it for ₹38.54 crore at an auction. Viraat will be dismantled at the Alang ship breaking yard. The ship will be scrapped in 9 to 12 months.

# NIA arrests 9 Al-Qaeda terrorists from WB, Kerala

Among those arrested are computer science student and guest workers

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI & PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE, SEPT. 19**

In a major crackdown on terror, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) busted a ‘Pakistan sponsored module’ of Al Qaeda and arrested its nine members from West Bengal and Kerala early Saturday for allegedly planning terror attacks in New Delhi and other parts of the country.

Among them, six accused including two college students and two migrant workers were caught during a marathon raid at their homes in various parts of Murshidabad which earlier came under the NIA’s scanner during its probe in the Burdwan blast which blew the lid off Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh network active in West Bengal six years ago around this time.

The arrested have been identified as Najmus Sakib (20), Abu Sufiyan (44), Mainul Mondal (30), Leu Yean Ahmed (32), Al Mamun Kamal (30) and Atiturr Rehman (20).

This was also the first time when such a large number of accused of terror were picked up simultaneously in the state.

Najmus is a second-year student of computer science at Basantapur Engineering College in Domkol of the district while Atiturr is a first year BA student of Karimpur Pannadevi College.

Mainul, a guest worker, had returned home at Jalangi in the district from Kerala three months ago. Like him Mamun also worked as a mason in Bengaluru earlier. But he returned home two years ago.

The NIA said that it initiated a case RC-

31/2020/NIA/DLI on September 11 after learning “about an inter-state module of Al-Qaeda operatives at various locations in India including West-Bengal and Kerala.”

It said, “The group was planning to undertake terrorist attacks at vital installations in India with an aim to kill people and strike terror in their minds. Large quantity of incriminating materials including digital devices, documents, jihadi literature, sharp weapons, country-made firearms, a locally fabricated body armour, articles and literature used for making home-made explosive devices have been seized from their possession.”

The NIA added, “As per preliminary investigation, these individuals were radicalised by Pakistan-based Al-Qaeda terrorists on social media and were motivated to undertake attacks at multiple places including the National Capital Region. For this purpose, the module was actively indulging in fund raising and a few members of gang were planning to travel to New Delhi to procure arms and ammunition. These arrests have pre-empted possible terrorist attacks in various parts of the country.”

The six accused, brought from Murshidabad, were produced at the NIA court in Kolkata which remanded them in police custody.

The arrests have come as a shot in the arm for the BJP to turn it into a major political issue and attack the ruling Trinamul Congress ahead of the Assembly elections.

From state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh to central leaders like Rahul Sinha, all tore into chief minister Mamata Banerjee’s rule.

Mr Ghosh, the

## Presence of Qaeda operatives among workers causes concern

**GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT. 19**

The arrest of three Al Qaeda operatives in Ernakulam district has set alarm bells ringing for the state Intelligence and police.

In a pre-dawn operation, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) nabbed Murshid Hassan, Iyakub Biswas and Mosaraf Hossen, all hailing from West Bengal.

What has alarmed the state police is their presence among the guest workers in Perambavoor which has the highest concentration of guest workers in Kerala.

The Al Qaeda operators were staying in Perumbavoor town and Kalamassery in Ernakulam district.

While Murshid Hassan was arrested from a labour camp at Pathalam near Kalamassery where he was staying along with five others, while Iyakub Biswas and

Midnapore MP, alleged, “This proves that the anti-national activities are taking place mostly in Bengal and Kerala. The present government here does not give importance to national security. The TMC is allowing Islamic fundamentalism for its votebank politics to stay in power. As a result the country’s security is at stake.” Mr Sinha, BJP national secretary, said, “Bengal has become a safe haven for the terrorists because of lack of actions of the present state government which should shun appease-

ment politics.” Governor Jagdeep Dhanikhar also did not miss the opportunity. Describing his role of ‘In service of WB’ he tweeted, “NIA busts Al-Qaeda module in Murshidabad, WB. DGP on this alarming affairs @MamataOfficial to me “West Bengal police firmly adheres to the path laid down by law. There is no discrimination for or against anyone in an extra legal sense.”

He added, “State has become home to illegal bomb making that has potential to unsettle

democracy. Police @MamataOfficial busy in carrying out political errands and taking on opposition. Those at helm @WBPolice cannot escape their accountability for this alarming decline in law and order.”

Rejecting the BJP’s allegations, senior TMC MP Sougata Roy, however, pointed fingers on the Border Security Force. He questioned its lack of vigil at the Indo-Bangla border which, he blamed, allowed the terrorists into the state from neighbouring country.

Subsequently, the KYC of the consignee were verified and the team reached

proceedings for at least six months. The six-month period is ending next week.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2020, seeks to replace the ordinance issued in June, was passed by a voice vote after a brief discussion. Replying to the debate, Sitharaman said the suspension of provisions will end next week.

“At the moment, amendment to the Code gives me a provision to only extend till one year. If at all, because it is coming to an end on September 25, September 24 itself we have to make an announcement about what is going to happen. But even if I do, it means by March it should be ending,” she said.

According to Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and

Chinese intelligence officer, the police officer claimed, adding the freelance journalist got “₹40 lakh in one-and-a-half years and he was getting USD 1,000 for each information”.

Sharma was arrested September 14 based on inputs from central intelligence. Police have seized classified defence documents from him, the DCP said.

He said that a Chinese woman and her Nepalese associate have also been arrested for allegedly paying Sharma large amounts of money routed through shell companies. —PTI

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## RS nod for changes to insolvency law

**New Delhi, Sept. 19:** Rajya Sabha on Saturday passed amendments to the insolvency law for suspension of fresh insolvency proceedings for at least six months starting March 25 amid the coronavirus pandemic, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman saying a decision on extending the suspension of relevant provisions will be taken next week.

In the wake of the Covid-19 situation, the government decided to suspend the provisions starting from March 25 for six months by promulgating an ordinance in June. Default on repayments from March 25, the day when the nationwide lockdown began to curb coronavirus infections, would not be considered for initiating insolvency

proceedings for at least six months. The six-month period is ending next week.

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According to Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and

Industry, the Valley’s economy alone suffered losses to the tune of over ₹42,000 crore in the past over 13 months.

“This is just a good beginning, may not all that’s needed to salvage J&K’s economy which fell off a cliff due to the post-August 5, 2019 lockdown and then ‘lockdown within lockdown’ left it in a complete shambles. It is for the first time in about 14 months that something good is being done. Let us appreciate it and hope that the Centre will also come up with a good package to bail out J&K’s economy,” said Sheikh Ashiq, the outgoing president of KCCL.

According to Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and

## Scribe was passing info to China: Cops

**New Delhi, Sept. 19:** Delhi Police on Saturday said arrested freelance journalist Rajeev Sharma was allegedly passing sensitive information about India’s border strategy and Army deployment to Chinese intelligence.

At a press conference, Special Cell DCP Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said Sharma was writing on defence-related issues for some Indian media organisations, as well as China’s *Global Times*.

He was allegedly contacted by Chinese Intelligence agents in 2016. Sharma was also in contact with some

Chinese intelligence officer, the police officer claimed, adding the freelance journalist got “₹40 lakh in one-and-a-half years and he was getting USD 1,000 for each information”.

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## J&K Govt announces ₹1,350 cr package

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## NCB busts narco ring, seizes drugs sourced from Ethiopia

**DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, SEPT. 19**

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) busted a drugs racket seizing 670 gram cocaine from Delhi that was sourced from Addis Ababa and arrested accused persons from Mumbai. The officials said that the drugs, concealed inside a thread roll, were making way to high profile users in Mumbai and the buyers are also under the scanner.

The NCB had earlier seized a parcel at the Import Custom Examination Area in Delhi, which had originated from Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. The said parcel was declared as tailoring material samples and on examination, 670 gm of cocaine was found concealed in the same.

To unearth the drug syndicate, the NCB officials replaced the contraband with a dummy as per the provisions and clearances from the NCB chief.

“The controlled delivery mechanism empowered NCB to keep the parcel delivery alive, even after seizing the contraband and replacing the same with the dummy parcel.

Subsequently, the KYC of the consignee were verified and the team reached

Mumbai. The operation was successfully executed and the consignee was apprehended from Vasai,” said an NCB official.

The accused was identified as S. Ghangale, who was found to have close association with few high-profile drug traffickers in Mumbai. The network of these peddlers operate under the guise of property dealers, construction contractors while dealing in drugs.

It has been found that the group also involves DJs and other party organizers, who are connected to the party circuit in Mumbai. The NCB is in the process of getting a transit remand of Ghangale from a Delhi Court.

Earlier the NCB conducted pan India raids and seized around three kilos of cannabis. The officials said that the operations on the Andhra Pradesh – Orissa border, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Assam and arrested 17 persons. The agency said that several teams began ‘intensive operation’ at the three locations from where 2,795 kilos of cannabis were seized. The officials apprehended the operatives of the narcotics substances which includes source, receivers and traffickers, NCB officials said.



DECCAN  
Chronicle

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Shreevatsa Nevatia

Off the beaten track

Beauty no antidote to  
Beirut's legacy of loss

I have developed a strange habit of late. An hour before I sleep, I tune into either BBC or CNN. Having caught up on the day's news, I wait for the foreign voices of TV anchors to first turn into a drone, then into lullaby. I often wake up in the middle of the night to fresh updates of Donald Trump's dangerous shenanigans, but on most days, I do not mind these rude interruptions. Even though my subconscious mind isn't well put together, it is, I tell myself, well informed. On occasion, however, my plans backfire.

A little over a month ago, on August 4, I couldn't fall asleep, no matter how hard I tried. Both the BBC and CNN had begun to flash breaking news, pictures of Beirut's historic port exploding. The television didn't make the blast any less deafening or scary. Hours before the Lebanese government could wrap its head around the cause of the explosion — a large, volatile consignment of ammonium nitrate — reports of devastation had begun trickling in. Houses, storefronts and bystanders had been blown to pieces. The CNN bureau had been destroyed. I was anguished. Beirut is my favourite city in the world.

In 2006, when Israel began pounding Lebanon with bombs, my editor called me and said, "You're going to Beirut." I was only 22, but my boss was one of those rare men who did not see inexperience when he looked at youth, he saw hunger. He was also one of those rare editors who believed that one could only make sense of affairs at home when one understood the world. A war, even if being fought between Israel and a terrorist Hezbollah, had ramifications for us all. To show that violence is futile, he believed, it needed to be widely reported. As I was parachuted into Lebanon, I knew he was right.

For my first few days in Beirut, I embedded myself with the Red Cross. I was asked to shadow Sana'a, a volunteer not much older than me. She translated the Arabic I heard and read. She spoke English with a delectable accent. She was the most beautiful woman I had seen. Even when she took me to meet Fadiya Al Ahmar, I spent more time looking at her than a nearly nine-months pregnant Fadiya, who had been caught in Israeli-Hezbollah crossfire just a few days ago. "I am taking pills to calm myself, knowing they could be dangerous in my present state. I am so frightened my milk will be poison for my baby," the 30-year-old told us. After my interview, Fadiya hugged me tight and cried inconsolably.

Driving into Dahieh, a predominantly Shia suburb in Beirut, the windshield of my car would sometimes be hit by pamphlets that Israeli aircraft would drop from the skies. "Get out or get killed," the flimsy papers would read. Lebanon's youth had begun to take this message seriously. Mohammad, a man I met in Dahieh, a Hezbollah stronghold, said he didn't want take sides in the war: "I like sitting on the fence, it takes less place." Checking into a hotel with his family, Mohammad confided he wanted to move to Europe. Bilaal, a 14-year-old, watched Macaulay Culkin's *Home Alone* once every month. All he wanted was a life in the US. Even in 2006, Lebanon was, sadly, a country you survived or escaped.

Fourteen years ago, Beirut still had wounds that hadn't healed. A 15-year long (1975-1990) civil war had left its people scarred and distrustful. Rafic Hariri, one of Lebanon's beloved prime ministers, had been assassinated in 2005. Israel and Hezbollah were only compounding Lebanese trauma. All of 1,191 civilians are believed to have died in the 2006 Lebanon War, but the number of people who left the country as a result of it is estimated to be much, much higher. In recent years, a financial crisis has brought Lebanon to its knees. With inflation above 50 per cent, the life savings of several Lebanese people have now been erased. A banking scandal has made it difficult for many to access funds or take loans.

The nostalgia of tourists and travellers is inevitably myopic. It misrepresents both the past and present. When I think of Beirut, I remember the Rauche Rocks that I could see from the city's exquisite beach. I long to return to the Roman Baths in downtown Beirut and walk past the Parisian cafes that surround Nejme Square. When I was 22, I believed that beauty and disaster could coexist, but watching the Port of Beirut being blown to smithereens, I knew that beauty is only a ruse. Rather than help us ease another's pain, it only tries to make us forget their suffering altogether. Sana'a had told me, "I don't care how bad it gets. Beirut is my home. I'll do all that I can to protect it." I imagine her fighting alone.

*Shreevatsa Nevatia is a Kolkata-based journalist and the author of How to Travel Light: My Memories of Madness and Melancholia*



Hope was never easy to find in Beirut, but the destruction of its port might make it extinct altogether

Subhani

SEAT SHARING...

How a 'friendly' media  
hurts govt's credibility

Pavan K. Varna

Chanakya's View

Rajat Sharma, who runs India TV, once told me a story about Atal Behari Vajpayee. The story deserves to be known more widely, so I hope that Rajat, who is a friend, will not mind if I share it. India TV has a very popular show called "Aap Ki Adalat", which Rajat anchors. A prominent personality from any walk of life is invited to the show, and literally put in the dock to be interrogated. Once, Atalji, as Prime Minister, agreed to be in the dock.

The interaction went off very well, or so Rajat thought. But as Atalji was leaving, he said, "Main aapse naraaz hoon: I am not very happy with you. Come and see me at my residence." Rajat was apprehensive that he had perhaps been too aggressive in his questioning, or said something that the PM did not like. In any case, at the first opportunity, he took an appointment, and was promptly given one. When they met, Atalji was gracious as ever, but told Rajat bluntly the reason for his *naraazgi* or unhappiness. "Aapne mujhe bohat aasani se chhod diya. You did not ask me the tough questions, and let me off lightly. That was not good of you."

There is a moral in this story, both for our current ruling party, and for some parts of our media. I don't think that leaders who welcome a more open interaction with the media, including sometimes unscripted — even hostile — questioning, lose their believability.

In fact, they enhance it. Similarly, if the media stops being blindly supportive of the ruling party's agenda, it does not lose its credibility. It only increases it.

I often wonder why the BJP's media managers don't understand this simple truth. It is said — apocryphally perhaps — that the BBC has a maxim: You must admit your minor truths if you want your major lies to be believed. With so many "pliant" channels openly toeing the ruling party's line, the BJP is soon going to ensure that no one anymore fully believes what these channels are saying. Intelligent media management requires the ability to propagate your point of view in the midst of a counter-viewpoint, not flat footedly have that viewpoint muted or shouted over. People from one generation before would remember when nobody believed what Doordarshan said. To get the "real" news they would tune in to BBC. But, Doordarshan was a government run broadcaster. What else could it do? That certainly is not the constraint of our non-governmental

**When open bias crosses a certain threshold it endangers its own outreach. We saw this happening in the ongoing case of Sudarshan TV's 'Bindas Bol'. The channel was rightly hauled up by the Supreme Court.**

**Nothing is worse for media management than to have a situation where even your truths are discounted or dismissed because of the lack of credibility of those disseminating it.**

media. In fact, the PM would do well to be a little more accessible to the public through interactions with the independent media, interactions that are not a one-way monologue.

When open bias crosses a certain threshold it endangers its own outreach. We saw this happening in the ongoing case of Sudarshan TV's "Bindas Bol" programme which alleged a "jihadi" conspiracy in the supposed increase of Muslim candidates qualifying for the civil services. The channel was rightly hauled up by the Supreme Court for its hateful, hurtful and dubious findings. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said: "While we respect freedom of media, let this message go to the media as well that any community shouldn't become a target. Ultimately we all exist as a nation, which must be cohesive and not against any community." The SC imposed an injunction on the broadcast of the programme, and called for a more robust mechanism for self-regulation in the media. Referring to several provisions under the law that are against hate speech and incitement of religious hatred, the Court specifically asked the regulatory powers of the News Broadcasters Association to be strengthened. At present, it felt, the NBA is "toothless", with several channels not its member and,

therefore, not under its jurisdiction.

Freedom of speech is a sacrosanct right guaranteed under the Constitution. But this freedom is neither limitless, nor is it one-sided. In a democracy, there must be space for those who wish to dissent, disagree or interrogate the viewpoint of the government. The media is a vital instrument in ensuring that such a liberal milieu of free debate and questioning exists. The BJP's proclivity to encourage and patronise only those "friendly" media outlets that unreservedly espouse its point of view, is counterproductive. I have been the official spokesperson of the ministry of external affairs, the Press secretary to the President of India, and the national spokesperson of the JD(U). Nothing is worse for media management than to have a situation where even your truths are discounted or dismissed because of the lack of credibility of those disseminating it.

Atal Behari Vajpayee was, I am sure, not averse to good media coverage of his government. All leaders, and all governments, want that. But, he was intelligent enough to understand that "good" coverage means very little if it lacks credibility. If the perception is that certain media outlets just blindly eulogise the government, more and more people will devalue what they say. Such outlets may be watched, but may not be believed. That is why he told Rajat Sharma that he should have been a little tougher in his questioning. It is something that the BJP would do well to ponder about.

*The writer, an author and former diplomat, is in politics. The views expressed are personal.*

## LETTERS

## FARM REFORMS

The three Bills, replacing ordinances passed by Lok Sabha promising to strengthen agricultural sector are seemingly good on paper. However, they could not win the confidence of a large section of farmers and the Opposition. The sale of agricultural produce is made hassle free but the guarantee for a reasonable price is not there. He can sell his produce wherever he wants, but the price will be decided by the market forces. The market will have an unopposed power over the farmer.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao  
Vizianagaram

The farmers suspect these Bills will shatter their lives and that if they are translated into laws, the farming activity will get into the hands of private people or corporates. They also have to forget their schemes like Rythu Bandu (TS) or Rythu Bharosa (AP) or PM Kisan Yojana (Central) and MSP.

Pratapa Reddy Yaramala  
Tiruvuru, Krishna district

## CARE FOR DOCTORS

All of us know how doctors are relentlessly working to treat Covid patients by putting their lives at risk (*14 does die in Covid care, no relief given, DC, Sept. 19*). If they are not taken care by the government, it means they are hardly bothered either about Covid patients or virus spreading.

Panchakarla.Govardhana Rao  
Krishna district

## PUN-FILLED RHETORIC

Shobhaa De's anguish is showing in her pun-filled rhetoric (*A reign of obstinacy and self-centredness, DC, Sept. 19*). The new edifice is now a fait accompli after the contract is awarded to Tatas to be completed in 21 months, a tall order indeed but for all the good reasons. No use cribbing now Shobhaaji. Let's enjoy the spectacle of Hindu Monolith with bated breath along with the upcoming grandiose Ram Temple at Ayodhya by July 2022.

K. Nehru Patnaik  
Visakhapatnam

## COSTLY CHEERS

It is going to be a very costly 'cheers' for all those trying to enjoy a drink or two in AP as bars open after 6 months. Understandably the state government is pursuing its declared policy of introducing prohibition in a phased manner. Just as the cost of cigarette was hiked every year to discourage smoking, the price of alcohol in AP was increased manifold resulting in alcoholics being 'forced' to spend more money for their 'addiction'.

Govardhana Myneedu  
Vijayawada

## VOICE OF GIRLS

Malala from Pakistan had won the Nobel Peace prize at 17 for her untiring efforts for girls' education. Now, on the climate change front, a Swedish teen Greta Thunberg, 16, emerged as a beacon of hope. They are young but well versed with what they do and what is to be done. Ignoring their warnings will be detrimental to our existence.

Parthasarathy Mandadi  
Tirupati

Email your letters to [info@deccanmail.com](mailto:info@deccanmail.com), [editor@deccanmail.com](mailto:editor@deccanmail.com). You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

## Kangana's vitriol corrodes Bollywood reputation

## Avenging angel

The Kangana Ranaut saga has upset and demoralised Bollywood. Already badly hurt by the Covid-19 pandemic that is depriving lakhs of their livelihood, the "drugs society" charge is hurting the entertainment industry further. Some former stars wonder why Kangana, an accomplished actress, is speaking with vengeance and making it look as if the drug menace is confined to film industry wallahs. Does it have to do with an ugly episode from Kangana's own life when a superstar and other A-listers had cornered her badly?

## Desperately seeking 'Suzy'

Others acknowledge that Bollywood cliques have occasionally concocted their own narcotic for personal consumption. These concoctions are given informal names. One mild drug was reportedly called "Suzy". Who is Suzy? Is she some style trendsetter who habitually hangs out with other A-listers? Nobody knows for sure.

## Rajnath comes second

Kangana Ranaut's Mumbai visit was followed by her war of words with co-actress-

es such as Urmila Matondkar. The media frenzy was so extraordinary that it even rattled BJP communication personnel who struggled to make space on TV news for defence minister Rajnath Singh's important statement on China. Even some anchors and channels considered sympathetic to the ruling establishment were reluctant to run political news in place of the saucy Jaya Bachchan-Kangana-Urmila saga.

## They still love Sidhu

Shiromani Akali Dal minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal's resignation from the Narendra Modi government over the new farming bill is sought to be underplayed. But informed sources say there is much more happening as part of the run-up to the early-2022 Punjab Assembly polls. While both the Akalis and the BJP have gone on record to say that all is well and that the SAD would continue in the NDA, in private conversation some BJP leaders say the SAD has become a political liability for the BJP in Congress-ruled Punjab. They recall that even in 2016, Narendra Modi and Amit Shah had contemplated breaking ties and going at it alone in the 2017 Assembly polls but Arun Jaitley had argued in favour of the SAD. Interestingly, some BJP leaders view Navjot Singh Sidhu — who had left the BJP



By WAQYANAWIS

and is currently a disgruntled MLA in the Captain Amrinder Singh-led Congress in Punjab — as an asset for 2022. You heard this here first.

## No more corridor scoops

For journalists covering the Parliament session, Covid-19 is posing problems.

Incredible as it may sound, they and officials have to get their nose drilled for RT-PCR and antigen tests on a daily basis, or each time they enter Parliament. At the functional level there are many handicaps. Senior scribes cannot meet (or run into in Parliament's corridors) leaders who used to provide valuable information, leads or just gossip.

## Waiting for Sonia

During the UPA era, Gurdeep Singh Sappal was everywhere. A political aide of former vice-president Hamid Ansari and heading Rajya Sabha TV, Sappal had wide access. Today, his independent TV venture, Swaraj Express, has conked without a trace. Sappal has not given up hope. He, like many others, is anxiously waiting for Sonia Gandhi to return and looking for a meaty role in the AICC media department or party's "War Room" at 15, Gurudwara Rakabgunj Marg. Some Congress leaders feel that if failure and insignificance act in Sappal's favour then he may bounce back.

*The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power*

Cease-fire ordered  
in Jordan

NEW DELHI, Sept. 19. Cairo Radio has announced that King Hussein of Jordan has asked his forces to cease-fire, Radio BBC reports.

Baghdad Radio announced that Palestinian Commandos have rejected the cease fire, the Radio report added. A.P. adds from Beirut: The order to cease fire, from 2130 IST, came from Field Marshal Majali and was addressed to all army, police and

security units of the Royal forces. It was broadcast by Radio Amman. Marshal Majali ordered his men to stop firing "except in dealing with sources of fire hindering your humanitarian duties." The Palestinian resistance central committee announced it would never accept a ceasefire "until we have liquidated all the murderers and all the traitors," Baghdad Radio said. Meanwhile, defections were reported to have taken place in the Palestinian guerrillas and Jordanian Government troops fighting in Amman.



## SHORT TAKES

THOUSANDS JOIN  
DEMOCRACY  
RALLY IN THAI

**Bangkok, Sept. 19:** Tens of thousands of pro-democracy protesters massed close to Thailand's royal palace on Saturday, in a huge rally calling for PM Prayut Chan-O-Cha to step down and demanding reforms to the monarchy.

The kingdom has seen nearly daily gatherings of youth-led groups since mid-July calling for the resignation of Prayut, the former army chief behind the 2014 coup, and a complete overhaul of his administration. Some are also demanding reforms to Thailand's ultra-wealthy and powerful monarchy — a once-taboo topic in the country due to its tough royal defamation laws.

The burgeoning movement, partly inspired by Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests, remains largely leaderless.

But the weekend's demonstration is organised by students of Bangkok's Thammasat University — a group that has been among the most vocal about the royal family's role in Thailand.

2 KILLED, 14 HURT  
IN SHOOTING AT  
U.S. PARTY

**Washington, Sept. 19:** Two people were killed and 14 wounded early on Saturday in a shooting at a backyard party in Rochester, New York state, police said.

Officers responding to reports of gunfire in the area found a "chaotic scene" with about 100 people running in various directions, interim police chief Mark Simmons told reporters.

"In total we have 16 confirmed victims of shooting. And I'm sad to announce that two of the 16 received a fatal wound," he said.

Those killed — one man, one woman — were both between 18 and 22 years of age, and had not been formally identified, he said.

The 14 wounded had been taken to hospital and were not in a life-threatening condition, he said. No arrests have been made so far and police could not say if more than one shooter was involved. "For our community to have to deal with this tragedy ... is unfortunate and shameful," Simmons said.

FIREFIGHTER  
DIES BATTLING  
BLAZE

**Juniper Hills (US), Sept. 19:** The death of a firefighter on the lines of a wildfire east of Los Angeles was under investigation on Friday as another blaze to the north burned homes in a small community on the edge of the Mojave Desert.

The death occurred Thursday in San Bernardino National Forest as crews battled the El Dorado Fire about 75 miles (120 kilometers) east of L.A., the US Forest Service said in a statement.

The fire erupted earlier this month from a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said. The name of the firefighter was being withheld until family members are notified. "Our deepest sympathies are with the family, friends and fellow firefighters during this time," Forest Service spokesperson Zach Behrens said in the statement.

TORRENTIAL RAIN  
HITS SOUTHERN  
FRANCE

**Marseille, Sept. 19:** One person was reported missing on Saturday and dozens faced evacuation from their homes after torrential rain hit southern France, authorities said.

The Gard region, where firefighters reported the missing person, was on red alert after as much as 350 millimetres (13.5 inches) of rain fell in parts of the Cevennes mountain range on the edge of the Massif Central.

Helicopters carried out two rescue missions and some 300 firefighters were mobilised for three further operations as some 200 people were led to safety in two villages.

The mayor of one commune, Anduze, some 70 kilometres (45 miles) north of Montpellier, told AFP around 100 houses on low ground would have to be evacuated.

The adjacent region of Languedoc was also hit by severe storms as meteorological authorities warned of more downpours to come come across much of the deep south.

## US Liberal icon Ginsburg dies at 87

Flags fly at half-mast as crucial vacancy expected to set off pitched political battle during Prez polls

**Washington, Sept. 19:** US Supreme Court Justice and liberal icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg died Friday, opening a crucial vacancy on the high court expected to set off a pitched political battle at the peak of the presidential campaign.

Affectionately known as the Notorious RBG, the 87-year-old Ginsburg was the oldest of nine Supreme Court justices.

She died after a fight with pancreatic cancer, the court announced, saying she passed away "surrounded by her family at her home in Washington, DC." Coming just 46 days before an election in which President Donald Trump lags his Democratic rival Joe Biden in the polls, the vacancy offers the Republican a chance to

lock in a conservative majority at the court for decades to come.

Trump issued a statement praising Ginsburg as a "titan of the law," but gave no indication whether he intended to press ahead with a nomination. Accolades flowed in for the pioneering Jewish justice.

"Our Nation has lost a jurist of historic stature," said Chief Justice John Roberts.

Trump's predecessor Barack Obama said in a tweet that Ginsburg "fought to the end, through her cancer, with unwavering faith in our democracy and its ideals." Biden said she was "an American hero, a giant of legal doctrine, and a relentless voice in the pursuit of that highest American ideal: Equal



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Justice Under Law." In Washington, hundreds of tearful mourners laid flowers in front of the Supreme Court, where the diminutive Ginsburg sat for 27 years — even taking arguments and issuing opinions from her hospital bed after repeated bouts of illness over the past two years.

US flags flew at half-mast on each side of the court building. People lit candles on the steps of the court while others held rainbow flags.

Among the notably young crowd was Erin Drumm, a student at the Catholic University of America.

"I came here because I think RBG represents everything that America should stand for," the 19-year-old said. "She represents the freedom to choose and respect for science and other people regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity or religion."

Taylor Gutierrez, 26, said he wanted to celebrate Ginsburg's achievements, "especially as a gay man knowing that she helped create a more equitable society for us." — *AFP*

## Water area festival

A flyboarder performs in Moscow River Channel during a SUP (Stand Up Paddle), Water area festival in Moscow, Russia, on Saturday. — *AFP*

## US envoy wraps up Taiwan visit as China sends more warpalnes

## China protests US ban on tech giants, warns of counteraction

**Taipei, Sept. 19:** A top US diplomat attended the funeral for former Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui Saturday which featured a eulogy by Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama before wrapping up a visit overshadowed by Chinese military exercises.

China sent more warplanes toward Taiwan for the second day on Saturday.

Keith Krach, undersecretary of state for economic growth, energy and the environment, was the highest-ranking State Department official to visit Taiwan since 1979 when Washington switched diplomatic recognition to Beijing.

The trip, the second high-ranking US visit in as many months, sparked an immediate rebuke from China, which balks at any recognition of Taiwan and has mounted a decades-long policy of marginalising the democratic island.

US Secretary of State

**Shanghai, Sept. 19:** China said on Saturday it had launched a mechanism enabling it to restrict foreign entities, a much-anticipated move seen as retaliation to US penalties against Chinese companies such as telecom giant Huawei.

An announcement by the Ministry of Commerce did not mention any specific foreign entities, but broadly spelled out the factors that could trigger punitive measures, which may include fines, restrictions on import-export business or investment in China, and

the entry of personnel or equipment into the country.

It covers "foreign enterprises, other organisations and individuals", it said. The launch of the "unreliable entities list" ups the ante in the escalating commercial fight with the Trump administration, which has used its own "entity list" to bar Huawei from the US market on national security grounds.

The announcement also came a day after the US ordered a ban on downloads of popular video app TikTok and effectively

Mike Pompeo accused China of "military blustering" as Beijing conducted military exercises on Friday near the Taiwan Strait

Krach's visit.

Chinese fighters and bombers crossed the so-called median line dividing the Strait and entered Taiwan's southwest air

blocked the use of the Chinese super-app WeChat on similar grounds, which prompted a threat by China to strike back.

Beijing would consider sanctions on entities whose activities "harm China's national sovereignty, security, and development interests" or violate "internationally accepted economic and trade rules".

That language closely tracks wording that Beijing has used to repeatedly denounce US actions against Chinese companies. — *AFP*

defence identification zone (ADIZ) for a second straight day on Saturday, Taiwan's defence ministry said as it scrambled fighters in response. — *AFP*

McConnell vows Sen. will hold  
vote on Ginsburg replacement

**Washington, Sept. 19:** US Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell vowed on Friday to hold a vote on a nominee that President Donald Trump names to replace late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, despite the looming November election.

Her death sets up a mammoth battle for the seat she left behind, with Trump potentially moving to nominate a new justice just weeks before the November 3 vote, and challenger Joe Biden demanding the election be held first, and the winner to

pick Ginsburg's successor. "President Trump's nominee will receive a vote on the floor of the United States Senate," McConnell, a chief ally of the president in Congress, said in a statement shortly after Ginsburg's death was announced by the court.

The move would be in direct opposition to Ginsburg's reported dying wish that she not be replaced "until a new president is installed" in January 2021.

Such a step would be unprecedented in modern times — and is certain to infuriate Democrats who

have already called for McConnell to wait to bring a nomination to the floor until at least January, when control of the White House and Senate could change.

"The voters should pick the president, and the president should pick the justice for the Senate to consider," Biden told reporters after learning of Ginsburg's death.

"This was the position the Republican Senate took in 2016 when there were almost 10 months to go before the election. That's the position the United States Senate must take today." — *AFP*

Iran vows 'hit'  
on all involved  
in US killing

**Tehran, Sept. 19:** The chief of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard threatened on Saturday to go after everyone who had a role in a top general's January killing during a US drone strike in Iraq.

The general's website quoted Gen. Hossein Salami as saying, "Mr. Trump! Our revenge for martyrdom of our great general is obvious, serious and real."

US President Donald Trump warned this week that Washington would harshly respond to any Iranian attempts to take revenge for the death of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, tweeting that "if they hit us in any way, any form, written instructions already done we're going to hit them 1000 times harder."

The president's warning came in response to a report that Iran was plotting to assassinate the US ambassador to South Africa in retaliation for Soleimani's killing at Baghdad's airport at the

beginning of the year. "We took out the world's number one terrorist and the mass murderer of American troops and many, many troops and many people all over the world," Trump said.

"Qasem Soleimani is dead. He's dead. Bad guy. Bad guy. Very bad guy. Salami rejected the report of an Iranian plot to assassinate Ambassador Lanna Marks, but made clear that Iran intends to avenge the general's death.

"Do you think we hit a female ambassador in return to our martyred brother?" the general said. "We will hit those who had direct and indirect roles. You should know that everybody who had role in the event will be hit, and this is a serious message. We do prove everything in practice." In January, Iran launched a ballistic missile attack targeting US soldiers in Iraq in response to the fatal drone strike. — *AP*

Don releases \$13 bn  
aid for Puerto Rico

**Washington, Sept. 19 (AP)** President Donald Trump announced the release Friday of \$13 billion in assistance to repair years-old hurricane damage in Puerto Rico and pledged to restore its economy, setting aside his past bitter treatment of the island and its leaders as he courts Puerto Rican voters in the US, particularly in the crucial swing state of Florida.

Trump has spent much of his administration blasting Puerto Rican officials as corrupt and inept, and he has opposed spending to rebuild a power grid and other infrastructure that was wiped out by the Hurricane Maria in September 2017. He's now portraying himself as the territory's best friend.

"I'm the best thing that

ever happened to Puerto Rico," he said at a White House press conference, "no one even close." Residents of Puerto Rico, a US territory of more than 3 million people, cannot vote in the general election.

But there are more people of Puerto Rican descent on the mainland than on the island, and they could play a key role in the November 3 vote. Former Vice President Joe Biden has also sought support from Puerto Ricans, recently releasing a recovery plan for the territory and visiting central Florida.

The region has one of the largest concentrations of people from the island on the US mainland, including many who fled the devastation of Hurricane Maria. — *AP*

FILM | FESTIVAL Lindon's French love story, *Spring Blossom* captures the shine and bounce that love brings

## What is life? It's that youthful first love, a funeral and a party

**SUPARNA SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 19**

"What is youth? A dream. What is love? The content of the dream." These unforgettable lines, by Soren Kierkegaard, appear at the beginning of director Thomas Vinterberg's Danish film, *Another Round*, which is playing at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). But it's almost as if they were written after watching another film that's playing at TIFF — 20-year-old Suzanne Lindon's French love story, *Spring Blossom*.

Lindon is the star of her film. She plays Suzanne, a bored 16-year-old girl in Paris who, on her way to

and from school, lingers a bit in a cobbled, cafe-lined square, her eyes peeled for a 35-year-old dashing actor, Raphaël (Arnaud Valois).

Boys and girls her own age don't interest Suzanne. She wants to be seen, by him.

Raphaël's parked red scooter is an indicator that he's inside the small theatre rehearsing a play. She doesn't know that he too is bored. She doesn't know that sometimes he is asked to play an Oak tree.

*Spring Blossom* follows Suzanne everywhere — when she's with her friends, at home with her parents, or out with Raphaël. The film's story, which Lindon wrote when she was 15, celebrates the

A still from the movie *Another Round*.

heady concoction of uncontrollable joy, chuckles and tingles in a young mind and body while negotiating first love. It captures the shine and bounce that love brings, as well as the overwhelming confusion before that first breakfast date, and the shy, awkward moments at that date with the sort of lyrical swaying that the young in love are prone to.

As Raphaël too begins to fall in love with Suzanne, they are locked in a moment. And just as she likes to linger in that square, Suzanne wants to linger in that moment too, sipping grenadine and lemonade.

Usually, love stories have trauma, drama, villains, loss. There is no turmoil, loss in *Spring Blossom*. Just the fear of losing that

A still from the movie *Spring Blossom*.

moment, that love.

Vinterberg's *Another Round* is about having lived those moments and then lost them to a job, a family, a house.

The film tells the story of four high school teachers of whom Martin (Mads Mikkelsen) is most obviously struck by a sadness that's taken hold of his soul.

"Am I boring?" Martin

asks his wife, and breaks down at a dinner with his friends. That's when Nikolaj (Magnus Millan), a psychology teacher, talks of Norwegian psychiatrist Finn Skårderud's claim that humans are born short of 0.05% Blood Alcohol Content, and to function at our best — physically, intellectually and emotionally — we must drink. Martin tests this theory

and his dull, confusing, rambling history classes become engaging, fun.

He tells the others, and on Nikolaj's suggestion and pretence of taking notes for research, they all begin taking a few swigs before and during work. It helps initially, to smile, to take more interest, to reconnect with themselves, and to connect with others. But there's temptation to drink more, and soon some relationships, lives begin to capsize.

Another Round is funny, sad, real, bizarre, scary, warm. And it's message is simple — life is both, a funeral and a party. That's why it ends on a glorious note, with a dance sequence by Mads Mikkelsen that will add two years to your lifespan.



## SHORT TAKES

## Hari stuns Carlsen before four losses

**Chennai:** Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna pulled off a stunning win over world champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway but suffered four losses later in the day to slip to overall sixth place in the St Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament.

Harikrishna defeated world number one Carlsen in round three of Blitz 1 in 63 moves with white pieces. He also beat lower-rated American Jeffrey Xiong but save for the two wins, he had a forgettable day as he suffered four defeats, apart from three draws. Harikrishna shares the sixth place with Armenian GM Levon Aronian with 3.5 points after the nine rounds of Blitz 1. Carlsen, who had dropped to second place behind So at the end of the Rapid event, leapt to the top spot in the standings with 18.5 points. — PTI

## Tvesa lies T-2nd at French Open

**Bordeaux, France:** Indian golfer Tvesa Malik put herself in contention with a solid three-under 68 to lie tied second after round two of the 2020 Lacoste Ladies Open De France.

As Tvesa carded 68 to get to four-under 138, Sweden's Julia Engstrom had a memorable day with a hole-in-one en route to a second round 64 (-7) which put her on top the leaderboard heading into the third and final round.

Things were, however, rather disappointing for another Indian Diksha Dagar, who after 89 in the first round, carded 85 and missed the cut by a big margin. Tvesa shares the second place with local French golfer and the 2015 champion Celine Herbin at four-under and they are four behind Julia Engstrom. — PTI

## Djoker loses cool again during win

**Rome:** Less than two weeks after getting defaulted from the U.S. Open, Novak Djokovic lost his cool again midway through a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 win over German qualifier Dominik Koepfer in the Italian Open quarterfinals Saturday.

When Djokovic was broken at love to end the second set at 3-3, he slammed his racket to the red clay in anger. With the frame broken and the strings all mangled, Djokovic was forced to get a new racket and received a warning from the chair umpire.

Djokovic had already appeared frustrated the previous game, when he glared toward the umpire following a couple of overrules and a point that was ordered to be replayed. — AP

## Lakers dominate Nuggets in Game 1

**Miami:** Anthony Davis scored 37 points and pulled down 10 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers dominated the Denver Nuggets 126-114 on Friday in game one of the NBA Western Conference finals.

LeBron James added 15 points with 12 assists and six rebounds for the Lakers, who shot out of the gate after dropping their opener in each of their previous two playoff series in the NBA's coronavirus quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida.

After a close first quarter ended with the Nuggets up by two, the Lakers seized control in the second quarter, out-scoring Denver 34-21 to take a 70-59 lead into halftime. "It took a quarter for us to kind of figure it out," James said. — AFP

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**IPL:** Delhi Capitals vs Kings XI Punjab from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

## FOOTBALL

**English Premier League:** Southampton vs Tottenham Hotspur from 4.30 pm; Newcastle vs Brighton from 6.30 pm; Chelsea vs Liverpool from 9 pm; Leicester City vs Burnley from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

**Spanish League:** Huesca vs Cadiz from 7.30 pm; Granada vs Deportivo Alaves from 10 pm; Real Betis vs Real Valladolid from 10 pm; Real Sociedad vs Real Madrid from 12.30 am (Monday) on LaLiga page on Facebook

**Italian League:** Parma vs Napoli from 4 pm; Genoa vs Crotone from 6.30 pm; Sassuolo vs Cagliari from 9.30 pm Juventus vs Sampdoria from 12.15 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

## TENNIS

**Rome Masters:** Semifinals in two sessions from 5.30 pm and 9.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

## DAZZLING DUET

## Century stand between Rayudu, Du Plessis help CSK pull off incredible win

**Abu Dhabi, Sept. 19:** Ambati Rayudu smashed a 48-ball 71 to guide Chennai Super Kings to a comprehensive five-wicket win over defending champions Mumbai Indians in the opening match of the 13th IPL here on Saturday.

Chasing 163 to win, Rayudu blasted six fours and three sixes in his blistering innings, while Faf du Plessis cracked 58 off 44 balls as CSK romped home with four balls to spare.

Earlier, Mumbai Indians posted a challenging 162/9 after Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni won the toss and elected to bowl.

The highlight of Mumbai's innings was Saurabh Tiwary's 42 off 31 balls and Quinton de Kock's 20-ball 33 at the top.

For CSK, Lungi Ngidi (3/38) was the most successful bowler while Ravindra Jadeja (2/42) and Deepak Chahar (2/32) captured two wickets apiece and Sam Curran (1/28) and Piyush Chawla (4/21) picked one each.

The shrewd Dhoni introduced Chawla into the attack and he right away dismissed Rohit Sharma (12) who always have had a problem with wrist spinners. It was a straight delivery that Rohit was trying to hit

inside out but couldn't get past Curran at the mid-off circle. — PTI

## SCORECARD

**Mumbai Indians:** Rohit Sharma c Sam Curran b Chawla 12, Quinton de Kock c Watson b Sam Curran 33, Suryakumar Yadav c Sam Curran b D. Chahar 17, Saurabh Tiwary c du Plessis b Ravindra Jadeja 42, Hardik Pandya c du Plessis b Ravindra Jadeja 14, Kieron Pollard c Dhoni b Lungi Ngidi 18, Krunal Pandya c Dhoni b Lungi Ngidi 3, James Pattinson c du Plessis b Lungi Ngidi 11, Rahul Chahar (not out) 2, Trent Boult b D. Chahar 0, Jasprit Bumrah (not out) 5. **Extras: (w-4, lb-1) 5. Total: (for 9 wkts, in 20 Over) 162.** **FoW:** 46-1, 48-2, 92-3, 121-4, 124-5, 136-6, 151-7, 156-8, 156-9. **Bowler:** Deepak Chahar 4-0-32-2, Sam Curran 4-0-23-1, Lungi Ngidi 4-0-38-3, Piyush Chawla 4-0-21-1, Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-42-2.

**Chennai Super Kings Innings:** Murali Vijay lbw b James Pattinson 1, Shane Watson lbw b Boult 4, Faf du Plessis (not out) 58, Ambati Rayudu c and b Rahul Chahar 71, Ravindra Jadeja lbw b Krunal Pandya 10, Sam Curran c James Pattinson b Bumrah 18, M.S. Dhoni (not out) 0. **Extras: (w-3, nb-1) 4. Total (for 5 wkts, in 19.2 overs) 166.** **FoW:** 5-1, 6-2, 121-3, 134-4, 153-5. **Bowler:** Trent Boult 3-2-0-23-1, James Pattinson 4-0-27-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-43-1, Krunal Pandya 4-0-37-1, Rahul Chahar 4-0-36-1.



Chennai Super Kings players celebrates the wicket of Rohit Sharma of Mumbai Indians during match 1 of season 13 of the Indian Premier League held at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates on Saturday. — BCCI

## DC, KXIP in battle of power-hitters

**Dubai, Sept. 19:** Two greats will pit their wits against each other in the background as their captains, with an ability to achieve greatness, lead their power-hitters out for an IPL match between Delhi Capitals and Kings XI Punjab here on Sunday.

Ricky Ponting and Anil Kumble are arguably two of the biggest names in cricket and the dazzling array of talent in both the teams would seek to draw inspiration from their respective heavyweight coaches in their tournament opener.

Man-to-man, Delhi Capitals seem to have a slight edge, more so in the spin department, with the trio of R. Ashwin, Amit Mishra and Axar Patel streets ahead of their counterparts from the Mohali-based side.

Spin is expected to play a big role on the UAE pitches.



Delhi Capitals' captain Shreyas Iyer (left) and coach Ricky Ponting at a training session in Dubai on Saturday.

The match, at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, will also be a face-off between skipper K.L. Rahul and Shreyas Iyer, both seen as future India captaincy material.

On the batting front, the Capitals have one of the best assortments of India internationals, comprising Prithvi Shaw, Iyer, Rishabh Pant, Shikhar Dhawan, besides West Indian

Shimron Hetmyer.

In this scenario, Ajinkya Rahane (strike-rate below 120), who was bought from Rajasthan Royals, may be left out.

The KXIP also boast of some of the finest clean hitters in the form of Chris Gayle, Glenn Maxwell and Rahul himself.

Maxwell's confidence must be sky high after his ODI series-winning century (108) against England. He also had a memorable run the last time the IPL was held in UAE, albeit partially, in 2014 when he hammered 552 runs in 16 games.

The KXIP have a dangerous opening pairing in Gayle and Rahul with Mayank Agarwal to follow. But it remains to be seen whether the 40-year-old Gayle will continue to be a regular feature at the top of the order this time around. — PTI

## NUMBERS GAME — KXIP vs DC

## HEAD TO HEAD

**OVERALL:**  
● Matches: 24  
● Kings XI Punjab won: 14  
● Delhi Capitals won: 10

## MEETING IN 2019

● Kings XI Punjab defeated Delhi Capitals by 14 runs in Mohali  
● Delhi Capitals beat Kings XI Punjab by 5 wickets in Delhi

## FOR THE RECORD

● Shikhar Dhawan, who scored 4579 runs at an average of 33.42 in 158 innings of 159 matches for Deccan

Chargers, Mumbai Indians, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals is the fourth highest scorer in IPL behind Virat Kohli (5,412 runs in 177 matches) and Suresh Raina (5,368 runs in 193 matches) and Rohit Sharma (4,898 runs in 188 matches).

● Chris Gayle is the only batsman to hit over 300 sixes in IPL. He smashed 326 sixes in 124 innings of 125 matches for Kings XI Punjab, Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bangalore. — S. PERVEZ GAISER

## Rahul vows to make it memorable

**Dubai, Sept. 19:** Kings XI Punjab skipper K.L. Rahul on Saturday said the side is motivated to making this IPL season a memorable one by playing a good brand of cricket.

The Rahul-led side will open their campaign against Delhi Capitals at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday.

"The team has been fantastic, we've been getting along great and are looking forward to playing a good brand of cricket and making this season a memorable one," Rahul said.

"We're confident, we're motivated and we are really excited to be a part of this edition of the



Indian Premier League," he added.

Rahul, who has been handed the Kings XI Punjab captaincy after two stellar seasons with the bat at the top of the order, said it will be a

challenging experience playing in the UAE without the fans but the team is ready for it.

"It is going to be a different experience this year, but we as a team are up to the challenge and

are playing for all the fans who continue to support us," Rahul said.

KXIP, who have never won the IPL, are aiming to go all the way this time with a strong squad at their disposal with the likes of Mayank Agarwal, Mohammad Shami and overseas recruits Chris Gayle, Glenn Maxwell, Sheldon Cottrell, Jimmy Neesham, the in-form Nicholas Pooran and Mujeeb Zadran.

"The team looks great and we have a top-notch line up this season. The boys have been working really hard and we have a nice balance of youth and experience in our squad," head Coach Anil Kumble said. — PTI

## SMITH, ARCHER, BUTTLER CLEAR COVID-19 TESTS

**Dubai, Sept. 19:** Captain Steve Smith along with star players Jofra Archer and Jos Buttler have cleared the mandatory Covid-19 test on arrival and are available to play Rajasthan Royals' IPL opener against Chennai Super Kings at the Sharjah Cricket ground on September 22.

The trio were part of the 21-strong contingent of Australia and England players, who arrived in the UAE from UK by a special chartered flight on September 17.

"Smith, Buttler and Archer underwent Covid-19 tests on Friday and

results are negative. So they are available for selection with quarantine duration being reduced to 36 hours," an IPL source said on conditions of anonymity.

Former Australia skipper Smith has had concussion problems and missed all three ODIs against England and his participation in the opening game is subject to clearance from both franchise and Cricket Australia's medical team.

If Smith misses the first game, Buttler could lead the side as he is one of the senior most players in the team. — PTI

## EVERTON FIRE 5 PAST WEST BROM

**London, Sept. 19:** Dominic Calvert-Lewin hit a hat-trick and James Rodriguez bagged his first Premier League goal as Everton crushed 10-man West Bromwich Albion 5-2 to extend their perfect start to the season on Saturday.

Carlo Ancelotti's side fell behind to Grady Diangana's early goal at Goodison Park.

But Calvert-Lewin equalised and James put them ahead before West Brom imploded.

Kieran Gibbs was dismissed for pushing James in the face in first half stoppage-time.

Then Albion boss Slaven Bilic was sent to the stands after storming onto the pitch for a furious rant at referee Mike Dean.

Matheus Pereira equalised for Albion after the interval, but Michael Keane restored Everton's lead and Calvert-Lewin sealed the points with his second and third goals.

Ar 23, Calvert-Lewin is the youngest Englishman to score a Premier League hat-trick for Everton. — AFP

## THE RESULT

**Everton** 5  
(Calvert-Lewin 31, 62, 66, James 45, Keane 54)  
**West Brom** 2  
(Diangana 10, Pereira 47)

## BAYERN RUN RIOT IN OPENER

**Munich (Germany), Sept. 19:** Leroy Sane said all-conquering Bayern Munich crave even more silverware after the Germany winger scored on his debut in Friday's historic 8-0 thrashing of Schalke in the opening game of the new Bundesliga season.

"We're still hungry, even though we won the treble last season. Winning our first game at home 8-0 is obviously super," said Sane after creating two goals for Serge Gnabry, who claimed a hat-trick in the goalfest.

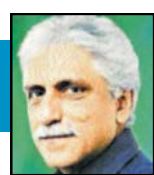
The jaw-dropping result is the highest win in an opening game of a new Bundesliga season — five weeks to the day after Bayern's 8-2 thrashing of Barcelona in the quarter-finals of the Champions League. — AFP

## THE RESULT

**Bayern Munich** 8  
(Gnabry 4, 47, 59, Goretzka 19, Lewandowski 31-pen, Mueller 69, Sane 71, Musiala 81)  
**Schalke** 0

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## This IPL could be decisive for 5 Indian star players



## Ayaz Memon Over The Top

After months of suspense, apprehension and anticipation, the IPL is finally underway. The circumstances are unusual. The tournament has been played overseas earlier too, so that it not such a severe setback, though it could impact the teams in sundry ways since players were chosen, retained or dumped based on the tournament being played in India.

What's starkly different this time is that this high-

octane tournament will be without spectators, and with a stringent protocol in place to counter the looming threat of Covid19. It remains to be seen what impact this has on the players' mood and mind.

Barring players from West Indies, England and Australia, others are also shorn of match practice since the lockdown began in March. How rusty will they be? Other factors that could have a bearing on team and individual performances are the heat

and humidity in the UAE, at least for the first half of the tournament, and the character of pitches which is unknown.

None of this, however, can subdue the excitement of the tournament being played. The IPL is a platform where talent can be showcased and careers made or consolidated. The *creme de la creme* of the world's players (barring from Pakistan) will be in action.

No player's worth can be undermined, but this season my attention will be on five Indian players, at different stages in their careers, for whom this IPL could be decisive in one way or another.

M. S. Dhoni: Recently retired from international cricket, he still remains

perhaps the biggest draw-card in the IPL. Pushing 40, how fit is he for the demanding schedule of the league? Does he still have the form to win matches off his own bat? Most important in Dhoni's case is captaincy. He commands loyalty, of that there is no doubt. But with seasoned pros Raina and Harbhajan missing, how he deploys his resources will be key. And how CSK fares this season could well determine whether Dhoni will wear the yellow jersey next season.

Virat Kohli: India's most successful captain in international cricket has been floundering to win the IPL title, though he's been spectacular with bat and is the league's highest rungetter. This is his 10th

season in the leadership role. The best RCB have achieved under him was runner up in 2016. Since then, RCB's results have been poor: bottom placed in 2017 and 2019, 6th in 2018, raising queries about Kohli's captaincy in this format. Harsh considering his captaincy record in the same format in internationals. But Kohli has certainly something to prove.

R. Ashwin: Picked for international cricket on the strength of IPL performances, became a certainty in all three formats, before losing his place in ODIs as well as T20s. A productive IPL season could bring Ashwin back in the reckoning for India in limited overs cricket. Move from Kings XI Punjab cost him the cap-

taincy as Delhi Capitals have preferred to retain Shreyas Iyer in the top position. Crafty and strong-minded, how well and swiftly he strikes rapport with Iyer and coach Ponting could define DC's fortunes as well as his own future.

K. L. Rahul: Made captain of Kings XI after Ashwin's departure, faces multiple challenges as the team seeks its first IPL title. Rahul's batting ability is hardly doubted. He's mauled the best bowlers with his rich and powerful strokeplay. Under scrutiny now to see how he tackles burden of captaincy. Managing individuals with different skillsets and temperaments can be hugely demanding. Several fine players who

have suffered under the pressure. But this is also an opportunity which can take Rahul higher in Indian cricket.

Hardik Pandya: Broke down during the ODI World Cup in 2019, Pandya's comeback to Indian cricket — in all formats — depends on how well he survives this IPL season. His all-round skills and aggressive instincts make him a matchwinner: with bat or bowling fast medium with clever variations. Add to that brilliant fielding, and it is easy to see why Hardik is so coveted by Mumbai Indians, as well as the Indian team. Whether his career graph resumes its upward trajectory, stagmates or slumps depends on his form and fitness in this tournament.