

COIMBATORE | SUNDAY 27 | SEPTEMBER 2020

Max: 33°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: 3 mm

— DC

SHORT TAKES

Man held for abetting wife's suicide

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 26

A 34-year-old man was picked up by the police in Chengalpet on Friday for allegedly abetting his 28-year-old wife's suicide and trying to pass it off as death by cardiac arrest.

The accused, Jagannathan, a resident of Murugeshwarar street in Chengalpet, had married Hemavathi, of Acharapakkam nine years ago and the couple have two children, aged 8 and 5. Sources said their married life was showing strains of late as the husband had allegedly been harassing his wife for money to buy liquor.

Jagannathan came to the house on September 24 in an inebriated condition and an altercation broke out between the couple when he attacked her. Police suspect the woman took her life on the same night. When Jagannathan noticed her hanging dead, he allegedly removed the body from the ceiling and laid it on the floor and changed her clothes and jewels. He waited till Friday morning to inform her family that she had died of a heart attack and reportedly arranged a funeral without informing her relatives.

Suspecting foul play, Hemavathi's father Kannan filed a complaint with the Chengalpet Town police who conducted a spot investigation with Jagannathan. Police found out his drama to cover up the crime.



Major fire breaks out in ICF warehouse in Perambur

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 26

A major fire broke out at a warehouse of Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Perambur, where high-value electrical equipment worth crores of rupees went up in flames on Saturday morning.

Sources said the fire erupted at around 3 am. Immediately, personnel of the fire and rescue services from Villivakkam, Koyambedu, J. J. Nagar, Egmore and Sembium

and other areas rushed to the spot and around 100 fire fighters were involved in the operation. Water tankers and foam tenders also fought the flames and brought it under control around noon.

The cause of the accident has not yet been established. Fire and rescue services DGP C Sylendra Babu visited the accident spot and supervised the operation. An investigation is under way.

Smoke engulfs a warehouse of Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Perambur, where high-value electrical equipment worth crores of rupees went up in flames. — DC

Raja's omission by BJP draws mixed response

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 26

BJP sprang a surprise when the party announced a long-awaited list of its national office-bearers on Saturday as no one from the State, including present National Secretary H Raja, was included. The major reshuffle in key organisational positions, bringing in new faces, including some seen to be strongly associated with its core ideology, was no surprise though.

The party has, however, not only excluded its leaders from Tamil Nadu, which is going to polls next year, but also it has dropped H Raja and other office bearers like AP Muruganandam and CP



Radhakrishnan. Though the party has planned to enter the State Assembly, none from the party has been included as an office bearer in the crucial national level organisation of the party. Observers believe this would affect the political fortunes of the party in the coming Assembly poll in the State.

BJP president J P Nadda, released the list of new National office bear-

His exclusion may affect the party in the coming days. However, many consider this as a wise move from Nadda as H Raja has been raking up unnecessary controversies and gone to the extent of criticising the Madras HC and the police

ers of the party ahead of Bihar polls. Keeping in mind the upcoming polls, State BJP President L Murugan had been working towards winning a few Assembly seats and many leaders of other political parties, actors and others were roped into the party to strengthen it ever since he was elevated to the post in March this year. Dropping of leaders like H Raja and not appointing any one from the State in

national organisation has surprised the party leaders.

The 62-year-old H Raja is known for stoking controversies in the State with his controversial speeches in public platforms and tweets. His exclusion may affect the party in the coming days. However, many consider this as a wise move from Nadda as H Raja has been raking up unnecessary controversies and gone to the extent of criticising the Madras high court and the police.

BJP party sources said that J P Nadda has released the list today and it is not complete yet. We can expect many from the State in the national level organisation soon, they said.

HC slams teacher for committing fraud upon court, fines him ₹50k

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 26

Slamming a Post Graduate Teacher working in a government aided school who questioned the promotion of his colleague, the Madras high court dismissed his petition ₹50,000 on him.

Dismissing the petition filed by V.Mohan, working as a Post Graduate Teacher (Maths) in the Gopalapuram Boys Higher Secondary School, Chennai, challenging the promotion given to M.Thirugnanasambandan, working as Post Graduate Teacher (Physics) in the same school, Justice V.Parthiban directed the authorities as well as the school management to initiate appropriate disciplinary action against the petitioner by calling for his explanation for indulging in vexatious pursuit with obsessive mindset to unsettle the promotion of Thirugnanasambandan.

The court found it unbecoming of a Post Graduate Teacher who is supposed to spend his energy and time towards discharge of his pedagogical function and duties, and dissipating his energy by being a 'court bird'. In such unbecoming conduct motivated by bad faith, the petitioner not only wasted the judicial time of the court but also dragged the school and education authority to respond to his mischievous and badgering litigious exercise. The disciplinary action is necessary against the petitioner, as a lesson to be learnt by him as a teacher first, before he takes lessons for his students, the judge added.

The judge directed the petitioner to pay the amount of



Rs 50,000 within two weeks, to the Chief Minister's Covid-19 Relief Fund and in case the amount is not paid within the time stipulated, the District Collector, Madras, is directed to initiate action under the Tamil Nadu Revenue Recovery Act against the petitioner for recovery of amount with interest at 6 percent after the cost became payable and till the date of realisation.

The petitioner was appointed as B.T. Assistant (Maths) on March 26, 2007 and was promoted to the post of PG Teacher on June 1, 2010. He was presently working as PG Teacher (Maths) in the school. His colleague Thirugnanasambandan was appointed as B.T. Assistant (Science) in the same school on March 26, 2008. On June 1, 2008 one Bhaskaran, who was working as PG Teacher (Science) was promoted as Headmaster and the post of PG Teacher (Science) became vacant. Thirugnanasambandan was given promotion to the post of PG Teacher in the vacancy. Questioning the same, the petitioner filed a petition and it was disposed of. His second round of litigation ended in vain but his appeal against that order was pending. While so, the peti-

tioner initiated the present third round of litigation, challenging the promotion of Thirugnanasambandan.

The judge said the promotion of Thirugnanasambandan was to the post of PG Assistant (Physics) and the post occupied by the petitioner was the post of PG Assistant (Maths) and it was not even the case of the petitioner that there was a combined seniority maintained. On the other hand, the admitted position was that the seniority was maintained subject-wise.

The court was aghast as to how the petitioner could take the jurisdiction of the court for granted and come up with the third petition seeking the same prayer. What was more shocking was, being a PG Teacher, could the petitioner think of that he can play around with the court, for advancing his malicious intent repeatedly as against Thirugnanasambandan. Nothing short of insolence or foolhardiness could be seen in the conduct of the petitioner for trifling with this court's jurisdiction, coming up with an affidavit in support of the petition, without disclosing the earlier petition filed by him and the orders passed by Single Judges and Division Bench, the judge added.

The judge said the petitioner's conduct in filing the affidavit on oath without disclosing the earlier facts of the order passed by the court dated March 7, 2018 and also the pending writ appeal amounted to playing fraud upon the court treating the judicial proceeding with cavalier respect and scant regard.



G. Babu Jayakumar

Just spamming

Why is the return of V K Sasikala so eagerly awaited? Is anyone really looking forward to it? Who actually wants her back? Can her release from jail make an impact on Tamil Nadu politics? A mishmash of such questions befuddles the mind as one hears that there are people out there wanting to know when exactly she would be let out of the Parappana Agrahara Central prison in Bengaluru, where she has been locked up since February 2017.

It becomes all the more curious when Sasikala tells the jail authorities not to reveal to anyone the dates of her proposed release from the jail even if the information was sought under the Right to Information Act. It makes it indeed intriguing that Sasikala, and of course her cohorts too, wish to keep her homecoming a secret. Does it mean that they have a lot up their sleeves?

Whatever covert plans Sasikala may have for her life and future, the common people are concerned about only one thing: Will it change the course of Tamil Nadu politics?

There are people within the ruling AIADMK party, from which Sasikala was expelled on August 21, 2017, hoping that she would come and change things upside down, while there are other leaders in the AIADMK who openly say that her return to politics would be inconsequential. Between these two extreme views has

been the muted response of senior party leaders holding on to a 'let's cross the bridge when we come to that' attitude.

All these contradictory viewpoints now evoke a certain mystique about the 66-year-old woman, who has been thoroughly vilified in the media ever since her name was bandied about in the public domain as the confidante of the late J Jayalalithaa since the late 1980s. After 1991 when Jayalalithaa first took over as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Sasikala had been viewed as her shadow, though she had not missed opportunities to be under the limelight.

The fall of Jayalalithaa in 1996, when a slew of cases were slapped on her after she lost the Assembly elections miserably, also saw the shadow tumbling and following the tainted friend through the maze of arrests, interrogation, court appearances, incarcerations etc. But it also emerged then that the shadow had not just remained a reflection of the main subject but had incorporated its own brigade of relatives. Sasikala Natarajan, who entered the life of Jayalalithaa, had then become Vivekanandan Krishnaveni Sasikala aka V K Sasikala.

Her husband Natarajan, through whom she had met Jayalalithaa, had left her in Poes Garden while a range of her other relatives had come in and they had all been running their operations together and

independently. Though the fulcrum was unmistakably Jayalalithaa, as her confidante, Sasikala was also at the pivot presiding over everything. Today, the family members are all on their own – only two of them are with her in jail – doing their own businesses and taking care of themselves.

While the erstwhile party related businesses like the television channel, Jaya TV, and newspaper, Dr Namadu MGR, are all under the control of various members of the family, TTV Dinakaran, her nephew who was the only one from the family to openly dabble in the affairs of the AIADMK, is out of AIADMK, having launched his own party, AMMK (Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam) and named Sasikala as the President. That has allowed Sasikala's old time favourites like Edappadi K Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam to run the AIADMK, perhaps with some occasional help from the BJP's men.

So, how will Sasikala's return to Chennai impact the present ruling dispensation? Though the AIADMK is now facing an internal strife with the question of the next Chief Ministerial candidate remaining unresolved, it otherwise is running on its own steam. In the coming months, ahead of the impending release of Sasikala from jail, the AIADMK might even resolve the dispute and might even strengthen the party structure providing no room for anyone to sneak in after that. If that's the case, where will Sasikala, who is not even a member of the party now, start from?

Is she expected to provide a needless additional cohesion to the seemingly disparate groups of party functionaries, who had

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anyway managed to put up a united show in running a government without any glitch since 2017? Of course, many of the leaders, including the present Chief Minister

Palaniswami, may owe their growth in the party and in the government to Sasikala. But will they be overpowered with an overwhelming sense of gratitude to fall before her and hand over the mantle of the party?

Even if that happens, she cannot become the Chief Minister for another six years, as per the law. Then, will she just preside over the party? In that case will the party stand to gain electorally? Going by past indications, Sasikala does not draw votes to the party. In fact, her leading the party could only be detrimental to its electoral prospects.

Is the BJP at the Centre, in whose hands the present AIADMK government had played puppet on many occasions, keen on installing Sasikala at the helm of the party, as many people speculate? Of course not. Sasikala was packed to Parappana Agrahara only after she started preparing the ground for her installation as the Chief Minister in 2017.

Even if one were to argue that it was the Supreme Court that gave its verdict at that moment and the BJP had no role in her incarceration, a recent development is an indicator to the BJP being inimical to her.

Very recently, the Benami Prohibition Unit of the Income Tax department attached 65 properties that were valued at over Rs 300 crore at the time of their purchase and believed to belong to Sasikala. One of the properties was a 10-ground plot of land in Poes Garden bang opposite to Veda Nilayam, the residence of Jayalalithaa from where Sasikala was running her operations since the late 1980s. After the government took over Veda Nilayam to convert it into a memorial for Jayalalithaa, a huge mansion was being built in the now attached property for Sasikala to settle down on her return from jail.

Since the IT department struck only after news of the mansion being built in Poes Garden came out in the media, the public perception is that the BJP is not inclined to support Sasikala in any way. When there is no indication of the BJP pulling strings from Delhi to help her get a head start, no sign of the AIADMK waiting with open arms to receive her and no chance of the people wanting her back, how would Sasikala's comeback impact Tamil Nadu politics? Maybe the affluent family is looking for a happy reunion.

Otherwise, from the common man's perspective, waiting for Sasikala seems to be more absurd an idea than that of Samuel Beckett's characters, Vladimir and Estragon, waiting for Godot.

The battle of versus: Consumers' choice



Sanjay Pinto

If you buy a mobile phone or a television set or furniture from a retail shop, which ends up being defective, and you decide to file a complaint before a Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, should you necessarily sue the manufacturer as well? Can the dealer pass the buck on to the manufacturer? Not at all.

The retailer of a company, acts as an agent of the Principal, who is the manufacturer; and his transactions involving company products are deemed to have been duly ratified by the Principal. When there is no privity of contract between the purchaser and the manufacturer, the dealer cannot

shrug off his liability and insist on impleading the manufacturer as well, over what in legal parlance is called 'non-joinder' of a 'necessary' party.

It is a settled position of law. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission in Radio Time Vs Sri Lila Ram Borah (2012) in a case involving a defective mobile handset, had championed the rights of the consumer:

"The purchaser who is not supposed to know the terms and conditions entered into between the retailer/dealer and the manufacturer. It is for the dealer/retailer to take steps with the manufacturing company in case of discovering the sale of a defective handset to a consumer, and ask for replacement." This decision was upheld by the Supreme Court.

Non-joinder of a party is a standard tactic adopted by dealers to frustrate consumers. In a similar trans-



action, this time of a defective computer, the National Commission in Blue Chip India Vs Dr. Chandrashekara Patial (2006) had held that in the absence of "privity of contract with the manufacturer of the computer, joinder of the manufacturer as a party in the complaint was not at all necessary." Ditto in the case of a defective video camera, where the National Commission in City Electronics & Gift Vs Sanjay Dewangan (2016) took an identical view.

This consistent stand by the highest consumer body in the country is not restricted to consumer durables but also applies to groceries.

Not shedding tears for the dealer of defective chilli seeds, the National Commission in M. Subba Rao Vs Avula Venkata Reddy (2007) reasoned that it was always "open" to the dealer "to recover the amount ordered from the manufacturer by filing appropriate proceedings, but it cannot be said that the dealer, who has sold the seeds, is not liable." Quite strangely, District and State Commissions have dismissed complaints on the score of non-joinder of parties. These are erroneous decisions and will not stand scrutiny in a higher tier.

Although Consumer Commissions are not bound by provisions of the Civil Procedure Code (CPC), Order 1 Rule 9 of the Code states that "no suit shall fail

because of misjoinder or non-joinder of parties." This was also followed by the Supreme Court in a landmark medical negligence case of Savita Garg Vs National Heart Institute (2004).

Courts have also used their discretion to add or remove parties in suits by invoking Order 1 Rule 10(2) of the CPC. Who exactly is a necessary party? A 4-judge bench of the Supreme Court in Udit Narain Singh Malpaharia Vs Additional Member Board of Revenue, Bihar (1962) had enunciated the legal principle.

"A necessary party is one without whom no order can be made effectively; a proper party is one in whose absence an effective order can be made but whose presence is necessary for a complete and final decision on the question involved in the proceeding."

Mercifully, Consumer forums are expected to eschew a hyper-technical

approach in these matters, and to lean in favour of consumers.

At the heart of such questions is the doctrine of 'dominus litus' which means the master of the suit. On this point, the Supreme Court in Mumbai International Airport (P) Ltd. Vs Regency Convention Centre and Hotels (P) Ltd. (2010) had made it clear that "the general rule in regard to impleadment of parties is that the plaintiff may choose the persons against whom he wishes to litigate and cannot be compelled to sue a person against whom he does not seek any relief."

When technicality is pitted against justice, it must give way to the latter. Retailers and dealers cannot do a Pontius Pilate with customers.

(The writer is an advocate at the Madras high court, columnist & author)

1,046 Indian nationals land at Chennai in a day

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 26

As many as 1,046 Indians stranded abroad due to the coronavirus lockdown reached Chennai in 10 repatriation flights under the Vande Bharat Mission on Friday. The Indian nationals arrived from USA, Singapore, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Thailand, Malaysia.

As many as 40 Indian nationals who were detained in Oman were also among the arriving passengers. Sources said they were detained for allegedly overstaying their visa. In some cases the agents may have cheated them or their sponsors abandoned them on arrival while others may have lost their travel documents.

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They underwent medical checkups after which they were interrogated by Immigration Officers at Chennai Airport and were then sent to the Tambaram government camp for mandatory quarantine.

On the other hand, 682 passengers left Chennai in six flights on the same day, boarding flights to USA, Singapore, Dubai, Oman and Abu Dhabi.

SHORT TAKES

₹400 crore target for crop loans in Tiruchy dtDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, SEPT. 26

The target for crop loans has been fixed at ₹400 crore for Tiruchy district during 2020-2021 as against ₹396 crores in the previous year, according to Tiruchy Collector S.Sivarasu. He said that out of Rs 396 crore crop loans for 2019-2020, a sum of ₹282 crore was disbursed to 27,790 farmers. Loans have been given to 13,111 farmers to the tune of ₹282 crores this year.

He said that 814 electricity pumpset connections are the target fixed for farming operations during the current fiscal under the tatkal scheme. He added that the Tamil Nadu Civil Supply Corporation's direct paddy purchase centres established at Alagudimahanjam, Sirumayangkudi, Ramanathapuram, Ariyur, Thirumanamedu, Komakkudi, Vaalaadi and B.Mettur have procured 43 tonnes of paddy from farmers.

Cement co ties up with payment appDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, SEPT. 26

Dalmia Cement, a leading Indian cement brand, has partnered with India's home grown financial services platform Paytm to offer cashless payment solutions to its dealers and retailers across the country.

Mr. Pramesh Arya, Executive Director and Head of Marketing, Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd. said through this association, Dalmia Cement dealers will get access to Paytm's range of payment solutions, helping them to easily accept digital payments from consumers through UPI, Paytm wallet and other popular non-cash payment methods.

The partnership aims to reach out to over 30,000 Dalmia Cement dealers and retailers across 22 states and union territories. The seamless access to Paytm for thousands of Dalmia Cement dealers will boost the digital economy, he claimed.

SATHANKULAM FATHER-SON DUO DEATHS

Nine cops charge-sheeted by CBI in custodial deaths

New Delhi/Madurai,

Sept. 26: The CBI has charge-sheeted nine Tamil Nadu policemen for murder, conspiracy and other offences in the custodial death case of the father-son duo arrested on a "fake" charge of violating the lockdown and tortured in Sathankulam police station in June this year, officials said Saturday.

The policemen have also been accused of destruction of evidence in the charge sheet filed before the Chief Judicial Magistrate in Madurai on Friday in the alleged torture and murder of shopkeepers J Benniks and his father RP Jeyaraj, who ran a mobile phone shop in Thoothukudi district. The ghastly crime had triggered a massive outrage prompting the chief minister to seek a CBI probe in the matter.

In its charge sheet, the CBI has named the then Inspector and SHO S. Sridhar, Sub Inspectors K. Balakrishnan, P. Raghuganesh, Head Constables S. Murugan, A. Samadurai, and Constables M. Muthuraja, S. Chelladurai, X. Thomas Francis and S. Veilumuthu posted at the police station. The CBI rushed to file the charge sheet as the three-month custody of the accused is getting over on September 30 making them eligible for bail, sources said.

The agency has alleged that after the torture of the two victims in the police station which led to their death, the police officials destroyed evidence and filed "fake" charges against them of violating the coronavirus lockdown by keeping their shops open beyond the permitted

time, they said.

When asked what was the motive behind the incident, the officials said the probe is being kept open. During the investigation, 9 CBI officers contracted COVID-19 while one of the accused sub-inspector died. All the remaining accused police personnel are under judicial custody, they said.

"A CBI team camped continuously at Madurai and worked untiringly in the cases, even through the odds of COVID 19 pandemic," CBI spokesperson RK Gaur said. "The CBI investigation revealed that the father-son duo were arrested in the evening of 19.06.2020 and allegedly tortured at the Sathankulam Police Station by the accused in the evening as well as in the intervening night, consequent to which both of

them succumbed to the injuries and died in the intervening night of June 22, 2020 and June 23, 2020," he said.

After investigation, a combined charge sheet in both the cases has been filed, he said. "Further investigation is continuing to look into the role of other persons in the case," he said.

Meanwhile, the Judicial Magistrate probing the incident had told the Madras High Court that the policemen thrashed the deceased father-son the whole night in the police station. "Lathis were used" for allegedly assaulting them and a table carrying bloodstains bears testimony to the grisly crime. The findings were based on a statement of a woman police personnel attached to the police station where the alleged

crime took place.

After the alleged torture, Jeyaraj and Benniks were sent to sub-jail under remand at around 2.30 AM on June 20 where they were kept as prisoner number 3636 and 3635 respectively. In the morning at around 7.45 am, Benniks complained of a wheezing problem and was taken to Kovilpatti government hospital in an autorickshaw. The doctors declared at 9 am that he could not survive, the FIR had alleged.

Two days later at around 10.20 pm on June 22, Jeyaraj complained of fever and was taken to the government hospital. In the morning at around 5.40 am the next day, doctors told the authorities that treatment failed and Jeyaraj too had died, it said.

— PTI



Police fire from 24 guns in a salute to the legendary playback singer SPB at Thamarapakkam village of Thiruvallore district on Saturday.

— DC

No death for SPB, he will live via his songs: Bharathiraja

From P1

Bharathiraja said SPB has no death and continued to live through his songs. The 74-year-old singer earned a variety of sobriquets from his fans like "Padum Nila," (singing moon), "Isai Megam" (music cloud that showered songs), "Gaandha kuralan" (Man of a magnetic voice) for his mellifluous voice.

SPB was admitted to MGM Healthcare here on August 5 after he tested positive for coronavirus. The health condition of the singer, who presented only mild symptoms during admission deteriorated on August 13 night and he was put on life support and moved to the ICU. Soon he was on Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO, a heart, lung assistance machine) as well besides the ventilator.

On August 20, when he remained critical, SPB's long time friend and legendary Tamil filmmaker Bharathiraja gave a call for a mass prayer and it evoked a tremendous response with people from all walks of life including celebrities and the general public coming together to pray for his early recovery.

A video clip of him rotating a device as part of physiotherapy also went viral following his

death. Early this month, the hospital had said that his condition warranted an extended stay requiring ECMO and ventilator support. He was declared extremely critical on September 24 and he passed away on Friday.

SPB shed radiance over country: Sonia New Delhi, Sept. 26: Congress president Sonia Gandhi condoled the demise of celebrated playback singer SP Balasubrahmanyam and hailed him as the "singing moon" who shed his special radiance over the country. In a letter to his son S P B Charan, Gandhi said she was deeply saddened by the death of SPB "who so bravely fought the cruel Covid-19 virus for over six weeks before succumbing to it".

Gandhi said Balasubrahmanyam was a shining symbol of India's rich musical and linguistic culture, singing with equal melodious and emotional power in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi. He brought joy and solace to millions of his fans, and the artistic and cultural world is much poorer and darker for his loss, the Congress chief said. "He was indeed the Paadum Nila - the Singing Moon - who shed his special radiance over our country," Gandhi said in the letter.

— PTI

WORLD TOURISM DAY

Major govt push needed to rev up Tamil Nadu tourismT. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 26:

While the world observes Sunday (September 27) as World Tourism Day in the tough time of Covid-19 pandemic, the state government remains conservative in opening up the sector to resume operations that generate hundreds of thousands of jobs.

For the last couple of months, the state government is in the 'unlock' mood, allowing more relaxations to the other sectors to operate.

But, the state tourism department has not come up with a robust plan of action despite repeated representations by the people in the industry.

The sector was hit hard by the pandemic at a time when Tamil Nadu was adjudged as number one state in attracting the most number of domestic and international tourists in the last few years.

It has been number one in attracting domestic tourists since 2016. As per the data, Tamil Nadu alone has been receiving a stride of average 34.43 crore domestic visitors and 47.25 crore foreign tourists for the last few years.

People in the industry, however, demand more impetus from the government as it still has no plan on destinations to be promoted, who can visit them and the precautions that can be taken to ensure that sightseeing is safe and so on.

M K Ajith Kumar, office bearer of South Indian MICE Association (SIMA), said that the tourism department should be more proactive in opening up the sector just like other states like Goa, Karnataka and Kerala have already done.

"We have already made many representations on the strategies to open up the sector. But the government has not come up with any decision so far except allowing some halls and hotels to open with strict restrictions. The tourism department invited us for a virtual meeting next month with



Tourists enjoy the adventure games at Dodabetta Tea Factory premises in Ooty.

— DC

Focus on adventure tourism in Nilgiris, says expertB. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, SEPT. 26

The focus should be more on promoting adventure tourism activities in Nilgiris to woo tourists to the hills, says Mr Rajeshkumar James, secretary of Citizens' Forum of Coonoor.

"Sooner or later the Covid crisis is going to end and the world will certainly plan for post-corona tourism and economic activities. Nilgiris, a premier tourist destination in the country, too needs to plan in advance to keep a fast pace on post-corona tourism promotion to put tourism-based economy

back on track," he said.

"The plea for a cable car facility had been pending for a long time in Nilgiris. It is time to make cable car project a reality in viable areas across the Nilgiris, even in rural Nilgiris, which has unparalleled beauty and serenity, to charm tourists.

While adventure tourism has just been started in Doddabetta tea factory premises in Ooty, the same can be extended to rural Nilgiris.

Mountain biking, zip line, rappelling, valley crossing, sky bridge, commando net, rope walk, hot air balloon and trekking are some of the adventure tourism

activities which can be promoted in rural belts, if possible, to make it plantation-linked tourism promotion to draw tourists to rural Nilgiris" he suggested.

Rohit Jain, executive committee member of Nilgiris Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that Nilgiris is the finest mountain locale to promote para-gliding as the new era tourists are attracted to adventure tourism activities. It is time to plan for adventure tourism promotion activities in viable rural limits to take the fruits of tourism development to rural Nilgiris, he said.

tourism sector in the state and may not see it any time soon", said Senthan

Coronavirus: Collector asks 15 districts to curb rise in casesDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 26

Chief Secretary K Shanmugam directed Collectors in 15 districts recording a steep rise in Covid-19 cases to ascertain the reasons for the increase in infections in recent days.

During a video conference meeting initiated from the Secretariat on Saturday, Shanmugam reviewed woks relating to combating the virus with the Collectors of Coimbatore, Chengalpattu, Thanjavur, Cuddalore, Tiruppur, Tiruvallur,



Kancheepuram, Erode, Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram, Vellore, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, Tiruvarur and Salem. The districts have emerged as hot spots for the past few weeks.

Tamil Nadu on Saturday reported 5,647 fresh Covid-19 cases and 85 deaths, taking the tally to 5,75,017 and death toll to 9,233. The active cases remain at 46,336. Active cases have been on the decline for the past several days.

Shanmugam directed the Collectors to find out the reason behind the increase in the number of coronavirus cases and also take necessary steps to reduce the number of deaths. Chief Minister K Palaniswami is scheduled to review work with bureaucrats and medical professionals next.

Promote rural tourism in the ethnic wayB. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, SEPT. 26

The celebrations to commemorate World Tourism Day on Sunday, are certainly not going to be enthusiastic. In places like Nilgiris, where tourism is a major driving force for the economy, the coronavirus crisis has completely ruined the opportunities of tourism. But, one has to look forward with optimism for the crisis to end and put the business back on a fast track to compensate for the losses suffered.

As the theme for this year's World Tourism Day is "Tourism and rural development", with an aim to spur tourism promotion in the rural areas by taking the fruits of tourism development to the rural people and help them make an earning besides showcasing their culture, tradition, heritage, crafts and skills to begin a new chapter in rural tourism promotion, here in Nilgiris, voices are growing louder to usher in a new era in Nilgiris by promoting rural and ethnic

tourism in a big way.

K.M. Alwaz, veteran Toda tribal leader and secretary of the Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association, said that tribes, tea and tourism make a unique tourism blend in Nilgiris. The tribal communities in the Nilgiris are very unique with their distinctive culture, tradition and, of course, distinctive crafts and culinary skills.

Be it Toda or Kota, Kurumba or Kattunayakkan, Paniya or Irula, all tribal communities in Nilgiris, living in hamlets, are vulnerable tribal communities and primitive tribes of India. "All these decades, tourism has hardly brought a paisa to them.

It is now time to plan for promoting tribal ethnic tourism in rural limits to make the tourists visit the tribal hamlets to learn their uniqueness, culture in-vivo and to taste the tribal food to appreciate their culinary skills.

The Toda embroidery, Kota pottery, honey gathering by the Kurumbas and

Amuthan of Impresario Travels.

"We haven't got any enquiries since the Covid-19 outbreak. Even though the government is actively opening up other sectors, it seems that authorities have no priority in opening up the tourism sector.

Neither invitation nor suggestions have we received from the tourism department to take effort to revive the sector which provides more than five lakh jobs in the state", he said.

K.Natarajan, a tour operator in the city, said nobody seems to care about the serious strife going on in the tourism sector. "Hundreds of tour operators and their

subsidiary businesses have been hit hard. We did hope that the authorities would be proactive in opening up the sector just like they did to other sectors. But nothing has happened so far. Individual efforts can't revive such a large sector without government backing," he said.

Mr. Amuthan pointed out that though the people in the sector had been struggling for several months, the government had not offered any solace or support to the people who got affected by lack of business. He demanded that the tourism department should launch an aggressive tourism promotional campaign policy to build up

musical instruments of other tribes stand testimony to the ancient handcraft skills of the tribes. Rural marketing facilities should be made available for the tribes to sell these products to the tourists to ensure a regular income", Mr Alwaz suggested.

Manjai V. Mohan, president of the Baduga Desa Party, a local political outfit here, said Badagas, the single largest ethnic community in Nilgiris, live in around 350 hamlets across Nilgiris. Promoting rural tourism and making arrangements to provide weekend ethnic food festivals in select Badaga villages would help the tourists to connect with the Badaga culture and access their cuisine, dairy products, farm fresh tea and other farm food that would help the tourists to purchase the hillgrown vegetables and tea fresh from the farmlands to help roll out a tourism-based rural economy.

A strong will from the government's side is needed to promote rural tourism in Nilgiris, he added.

public confidence to deal with Covid-19 crisis.

An official with the state tourism department responded that the government was concerned about the situation in the sector.

"That is why we had taken some measures for partial opening up of major tourism destinations like Ooty and Kodaikanal. But the decision on more relaxation would be taken only after consultation with the health department as the virus continues to spread in the state. The sector can't be compared with the other states as the situation is different in each state in terms of Covid-19," the official added.

CM keen on welfare reaching differently-abledDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, SEPT. 26

Chief Minister Edapadi K.Palaniswami is very particular that Government welfare measures meant for the differently abled persons reaches them without any interruption, according to State Tourism Minister Vellamandi Natarajan.

Mr Natarajan was accompanying the State Backward class and minorities welfare minister Mrs. S.Valarmathi and Tiruchy Collector S.Sivarasu while distributing ₹9.74 crore welfare measures to 472 differently-abled persons at a brief ceremony at Tiruchy on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, State Backward class and minorities welfare minister Mrs. Valarmathi explained the various welfare measures for the differently-abled saying that from 2011-2012 to now, 425 differently-abled persons who married other differently-abled benefitted to the tune of ₹51.34 lakhs as marriage assistance in the district.

Veterinary sub-centre inauguratedG. SRINIVASAN | DC
THANJAVUR SEPT. 26

The state agriculture minister R.Duraikannu inaugurated a veterinary sub-centre at Mahimalai panchayat in Ammapettai panchayat union near Thanjavur on Saturday. He said that 8,000 cattle and poultry in seven villages around the sub-centre will benefit. He distributed agriculture inputs like rotavetars and sprinklers to farmers.

SHORT TAKES

Highest single day Covid spike in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Saturday recorded the highest single day spike in Covid-19 cases with 7006 cases even as 3100 persons recovered from the infection. Of the new cases 6004 contracted the infection through contact, source of infection among 664 persons is not known yet, 68 infected persons came from abroad, 177 from other states and 93 health workers also got infected. The state has so far reported 1,67, 939 cases of which 1,14,530 persons have recovered and 52678 are under treatment at various hospitals across the state. Kerala's figure of 50,000 plus active cases is the fifth highest in the country after Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Thiruvananthapuram district reported 1050 cases followed by Malappuram 826, Ernakulam 729, Kozhikode 684, Thrissur 594 and Kollam 589.

College girl shot dead by her lover

Jaipur: A woman student was shot dead on Saturday by her lover near a college in Rajapark area of the city where she had gone to appear in graduation final year examination on Saturday, the police said. The accused identified as Vishnu Chaudhary first stabbed the girl and then opened fire at her on the road near the college. The girl was immediately rushed to SMS Government Hospital where she died, police said. "She had come from Jhunjhunu to write the exam, scheduled from 7 am to 10 am. The accused attacked her with a knife and then opened fire around 10. 30 am near the college," DCP Rahul Jain said. — PTI

2 swept away by river current in Raj

Kota: A 25-year-old man was swept away in the swelling Parvati river, along with his cousin, after they fell off a motorcycle when going to a hospital where his wife delivered a baby in Rajasthan's Baran district, the police said. The body of 25-year-old Mahendra Kavet was fished out Saturday morning, while a search is on for his 18-year-old cousin Sonu. The police said the duo fell into the river late Friday night from a bridge between Ramgarh and Mangrole in Baran district. They are residents of Bislai village in the Kishanganj police station area. Kishanganj police station SHO Rajendra Meena said Mahendra's body has been handed over to his family after post-mortem. A search is being carried out jointly by the police and the state disaster response force for Sonu. — PTI

1 killed, 6 injured in UP explosion

Mathura: A man was killed and six members of his family were injured in an explosion at their house in a Mathura village, police said on Saturday. The injured included three women and a child, police said, adding the incident took place at Surir Kalan village on Friday night. The Mathura chief fire officer has been asked to probe the incident and submit a report at the earliest, SSP Gaurav Grover said. Police said the double-storeyed house collapsed following the explosion on its first floor. All seven people were taken out of debris but not before Jogendra (25), son of house owner Babu Lal, breathed his last, the police said. — PTI

Leopard kills two, declared man-eater

Pithoragarh: A leopard, which killed two persons in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district within just a few days earlier this week, attacked and injured a man on Saturday, prompting the forest department to declare it a man-eater. Sayyad Hussain, a professional hunter from Meerut in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, has been hired by the forest department to kill the big cat. Pithoragarh DFO Vinay Bhargav said. The leopard, which had killed a 40-year-old man and an 11-year-old girl on September 22 and September 24 respectively, attacked a resident of Dhara Pani village this afternoon, he said. — PTI

Farmers continue rasta rokho stir against farm bills



Farmers shout slogans while blocking a railway track during their protest against the new farm bills, at Devi Dass Pura village, about 20 kilometers from Amritsar, Saturday — PTI

SAD, oldest BJP ally, quits NDA

Chandigarh, Sept. 26: The Shiromani Akali Dal has quit the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) over the farm Bills issue, SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal announced Saturday night. He made the announcement after holding a core committee meeting of the party here. "The highest decision-making body of the Shiromani Akali Dal core committee at its emergency meeting here tonight decided unanimously to pull out of the BJP-led NDA alliance," he said. According to a party statement issued here, he said the decision to quit the NDA was taken "because of the Centre's stubborn refusal to give statutory legislative guarantees to protect assured marketing of farmers crops on MSP and its continued insensitivity to Punjabi and Sikh issues like excluding Punjabi language as official language in Jammu and Kashmir."

The SAD becomes the third major NDA ally to pull out of the grouping after the Shiv Sena and the TDP. Mr Badal said the SAD will continue to stand by its core principles of peace, communal harmony and guard the interest of Punjab and Punjabi in general, and Sikhs and farmers in particular. He said the decision has been taken in consultation with the people of Punjab, especially party workers and farmers. Mr Badal said the Bills on agricultural marketing brought by the BJP-led government are "lethal and disastrous" for the already beleaguered farmers. He said the SAD was the oldest ally of the BJP, but the government did not listen to it in honouring the sentiments of farmers. — PTI

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J&K ENCOUNTER

BJP seeks compensation for families of 2 slain men

Jammu, Sept. 26: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the BJP on Saturday urged Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to immediately provide compensation to the families of three men who were allegedly killed in a fake encounter in South Kashmir's Shopian district in July. The men, hailing from remote areas of Rajouri district, had gone to Shopian for work but they went missing on the day the Army claimed to have neutralized three "terrorists" in a gunfight. "The Army in its inquiry into the killings at Amshipora village, prima facie, found that the soldiers involved had exceeded their powers under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), and that disciplinary action would be taken. "Also recently, the DNA samples of the labourers have matched with those of their family members," BJP spokesperson Tahir Choudhary said in a statement here. He said the families of the deceased are facing difficult times and therefore, the government must intervene. "I urge the LG to give a hearing to their families and provide compensation to them at the earliest," the BJP leader said, thanking Sinha for his "efforts and for pushing authorities for a fair probe". Choudhary said he had also submitted a presentation to home minister Amit Shah. — PTI

India aid to renovate Buddhist monasteries

Complete reconciliation process: PM to Rajapaksa

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 26

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday called on the new government in Sri Lanka to complete the reconciliation process as envisaged in the 13th Constitution amendment for the benefit of the Tamil minority living in the island and pitched for devolution of powers to the provincial councils. During his first virtual bilateral summit level talks with Sri Lankan PM Mahinda Rajapaksa, PM Modi emphasised on the implementation of the 13th Amendment saying it is essential for carrying forward the process of peace and reconciliation and urged the new Lankan regime "to work towards realising the expectations of Tamils for equality, justice, peace and dignity."

LANKA PM RAJAPAKSA made a special mention of the Jaffna Cultural Centre, a project built with Indian assistance. The centre is almost ready and PM Rajapaksa extended an invitation to PM Modi to inaugurate it.



people-to-people linkages between the two countries in the sphere of Buddhism, and will be used in constructions and renovations of Buddhist monasteries, capacity development, cultural exchanges, archaeological cooperation, reciprocal exposition of Lord Buddha's relics, strengthening of Buddhist scholarship, and supporting the clergy, said Amit Narang, joint secretary dealing with Indian Ocean Region in Ministry of External Affairs. PM Rajapaksa made a special mention of the Jaffna Cultural Centre, a project built with Indian assistance. The centre is almost ready and PM Rajapaksa extended an invitation to PM Modi to inaugurate it. The two leaders also discussed the ongoing development cooperation partnership.

Top economist Isher Ahluwalia dies

New Delhi, Sept. 26: Eminent economist Isher Judge Ahluwalia, a recipient of India's third-highest civilian award Padma Bhushan, passed away on Saturday. She was 74. An associate who worked with Ahluwalia said that she passed away on Saturday. Last month, she had stepped down as chairman of Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) due to her declining health. "The ICRIER family is profoundly saddened at the passing away of



Chairperson Emeritus Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia this morning," the think tank said. ICRIER director and chief executive Rajat Kathuria said, "I can say without an iota of doubt that ICRIER was in her DNA."

Ahluwalia was married to former deputy chairperson of Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia and is survived by her husband and two sons. She had completed her PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), an MA from the Delhi School of Economics, and a BA (Eco Hons) from Presidency College, Kolkata. Her research was focused on urban development, macro-economic reforms, industrial development, and social sector development issues in India. "Isher Ahluwalia who just passed away was one of India's distinguished economists, an MIT PhD, and author of an influential book 'Industrial Growth in India'. She built up ICRIER, a fine economic think tank," former Union minister Jairam Ramesh tweeted. Biocon Chairperson and Managing Director Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw tweeted, "Isher Ahluwalia, my dear friend and a brilliant remarkable intellectual economist passed away after a brave battle with cancer. My deepest condolences." — PTI

NCB questions Deepika, Sara Ali and Shraddha

SAURABH JOSHI MUMBAI, SEPT. 26

The NCB grilled actor Deepika Padukone for around five hours on Saturday in connection with the drugs angle involving Sushant Singh Rajput suicide probe. The agency also interrogated actors Shraddha Kapoor and Sara Ali Khan who summoned at the NCB's zonal office in Ballard Pier. The officials have also placed Kshitij Ravi Prasad, former employee of Dharma Productions, under arrest after the officials found marijuana from his Versova residence.

Deepika arrived at the guesthouse located at Colaba's Radio Club area at around 9.50am and was allowed to leave around 3.50pm. The officials stated that while she accepted the chats on narcotics, many of her answers were unsatisfactory. The investigators stated that she may be summoned again for questioning if need be. The investigators will now deeper into the details shared by Deepika, whose chats with her manager Karishma Prakash asking for hash were found by the investigators. Karishma was also

Issues from Mumbai can be shipped to Bihar, says Raut

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, SEPT. 26

Shiv Sena has taken a jibe at Bihar politicians for trying to make actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death an electoral issue. "Some issues can be shipped from Mumbai if they don't have real issues," quipped Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Saturday. "Elections in Bihar should be fought on the issues of development, law and order and good governance, but if these issues are exhausted, then issues from Mumbai can be sent as a parcel," Mr Raut said. The Sena leader's com-

ments have come on the backdrop of accusations of the BJP and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led JUD cashing in on the tragic death of the actor ahead of polls in Bihar. Congress has alleged that the BJP was 'politicising' the death of Rajput to deflect attention from the problems faced by the people in the state. Mr Raut further said that the Covid-19 has not been eradicated from Bihar. "The preparedness for the elections must be informed to voters, how one will be able to cast his votes and how politicians will be able to do the rally," he added.

present for questioning and after they were interrogated individually, the officials also grilled them jointly on certain crucial questions. Separate teams simultaneously questioned Sara and Shraddha at the zonal office after the duo reached there at 1 pm and noon respectively. The officials said Sara was

allowed to leave at around 5.30 pm and Shraddha followed around 5.55 pm. While the agency came across chats of Sharadha asking for CBD oil (which is prescribed drug), whereas, eyewitness reports had claimed Sara having visited Rajput's farmhouse at Lonavala where liquor and alleged drug parties took place.

■ 'BJP-led govt is involved'

Police paper leak bigger scam than Vyapam: Akhil

Guwahati, Sept. 26: Jailed activist Akhil Gogoi said on Saturday that the question paper leak of the Assam Police recruitment exam is a "scam" much bigger than the Vyapam scandal that rocked Madhya Pradesh a few years back, and alleged that the BJP-led state government was involved in it.



Akhil Gogoi

Mr Gogoi, the adviser of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) who is lodged in jail in two NIA cases, is being treated at the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) for different ailments after recovering from Covid-19. "This is a bigger scam than the Vyapam scandal. Not only some retired police officials or individual BJP leaders are involved, but also the entire BJP and the state government is behind this job scandal," he told reporters while being shifted from one building to another inside the GMCH complex. The Vyapam scam, unearthed in 2013, is related to irregularities in examinations conducted by the Madhya

Pradesh Professional Examination Board for admission in professional courses and state services, and nearly two dozen people linked to it mysteriously died. "By handing over the probe to the CID, Minister Sarbananda Sonowal is trying to manipulate the investigation to save the actual culprits. This entire scandal happened as they were giving jobs to their own people who follow their ideologies," Gogoi alleged. The firebrand leader also alleged that all examinations conducted by the BJP-led government so far are scandalous because only one particular agency of a "close person" has been entrusted to carry out all the recruitment processes. — PTI

Remain within mandate, Mamata tells Gov Dhankar

Kolkata, Sept 26: West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday wrote to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and said he should remain within the mandate of the Constitution, expressing anguish over his letter to the state's police chief over the law and order situation. In a nine-page letter, Ms Banerjee said that the governor's aspersions sadly consist of uncorroborated judgments and insinuations against the police and the state government.

"I was extremely upset, anguished and disillusioned on reading your captioned letter and the note addressed to the Director General of Police which was placed before me, as well as to see your Twitter post regarding the same," she said. Dhankar had written to DGP Virendra earlier this month, expressing concern over the law and order situation in the state. After a two-line reply from the DGP, Dhankhar asked the state police chief to meet him. — PTI

Manmohan deserves Bharat Ratna, says PC

New Delhi, Sept. 26: As former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh turned 88 on Saturday, greetings poured in from across the political spectrum with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi saying that India feels the absence of a PM with the "depth" of Singh. If anyone in public life alive today is deserving of the Bharat Ratna, it is "undoubtedly" Singh, said his party colleague P Chidambaram who served as finance minister and home minister under the UPA I and II governments



Dr Manmohan Singh

led by Manmohan Singh. Greeting his predecessor on his birthday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished Singh a long and

healthy life. Several Union ministers and BJP leaders, including Nirmala Sitharaman, Rajnath Singh, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Vasundhara Raje Scindia, DMK chief M.K. Stalin and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also extended their greetings. Manmohan Singh headed the UPA coalition governments between 2004 and 2014 and earlier as a finance minister under the P V Narasimha Rao government supervised

the liberalisation of the Indian economy in the 1990s. "Birthdays greetings to Dr Manmohan Singh Ji. I pray to Almighty that he is blessed with a long and healthy life," Prime Minister Modi tweeted. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi wished Singh, saying, "India feels the absence of a PM with the depth of Dr Manmohan Singh. His honesty, decency and dedication are a source of inspiration for us all." — PTI



Monika More, the first patient in India to undergo successful bilateral hand transplant on her discharge from Global Hospital, Mumbai on Saturday. She was operated by a team headed by Dr Nilesh G Satbhavi, consultant plastic, aesthetic, hand & reconstructive microsurgeon Rajesh Jadhav

IN BRIEF

CONG LAUNCHES
'SPEAK UP FOR
FARMERS' DRIVEDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI SEPT. 26

After the farm Bills were passed in the recently concluded monsoon session of Parliament, the Congress plans to mobilise public support against these Bills. The party has already written to the President not to give assent to these Bills.

The Congress on Saturday launched a 'Speak up for farmers' campaign on social media protesting the farm Bills, with Rahul Gandhi urging people to raise their voice against what he described was the Narendra Modi government's 'exploitation' of farmers.

"Let us raise our voices together against the atrocities and exploitation of farmers by the Modi government," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

"Join the Speak Up For Farmers campaign through your video," he said, tagging a video in which the party called for the withdrawal of the Bills.

The Congress has already launched its nearly two-month-long "mass movement" against the government for passing "anti-farmer and anti-poor" Bills during the monsoon session of Parliament. The party will also collect two crore signatures from protesting farmers against the proposed laws.

YEDIYURAPPA
LOST MANDATE TO
RULE: SIDDA

Bengaluru, Sept. 26: Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah on Saturday alleged that the BJP government-led by Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa has lost the people's trust to continue as he initiated the debate on the no-confidence motion introduced by him.

"You never had the mandate to rule the state. You were short of enough votes but you came up with Operation Lotus. Mr Yediyurappa is the father of Operation Lotus (a term used by the opposition to describe moves to lure legislators to BJP) in the country," Mr Siddaramaiah charged as he began the debate on the no-confidence motion.

Alleging that the government failed to provide relief to the flood affected people in 2019, Mr Siddaramaiah said the government had sought about Rs 35,000 crore relief from the Centre whereas it got only Rs 1,662 crore. According to him, relief and rehabilitation works have not been completed.

On the law and order front, Mr Siddaramaiah claimed the government failed as two people were shot dead in Mangaluru during the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act/National Register of Citizens protests. The former chief minister alleged that government failed to act on time during the recent violence in Bengaluru during which a Congress MLA R Akhanda Srinivasa Murthys house, his sister Jayanthi house and two police stations were torched.

"Had the police acted on a complaint against Naveen (MLA Murthys relative) for his inflammatory post on Facebook, the violence would not have taken place," he contended.

The ruling BJP leaders objected to the charge, leading to commotion for a while.

In the 225-member assembly, the ruling BJP has 116 members, Congress 67, JD(S) 33, BSP and nominated 1, independents 2, and Speaker (he has a casting vote). Four seats - Sira, Basavakalyan, RR Nagar and Maski are vacant.

— PTI

FSSAI mulls mandatory fortification
of edible oil with vitamins A and D

New Delhi, Sept. 26: Food regulator FSSAI is considering making it mandatory for edible oil manufacturers to fortify cooking oil with vitamins A and D, which help in boosting immunity.

"FSSAI is considering to make it mandatory to fortify edible oil with vitamins A and D so that people of India can enjoy better immunity with good health," FSSAI CEO Arun Singhal said.

He was addressing a national webinar on edible oil fortification, organised

● **VITAMINS A AND D** strengthen the immune system, which is critical in times of Covid-19 pandemic.

by the Food Fortification Resource Centre under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in association with Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, a statement said on Saturday. Fortification of edible oil will ensure that people belonging to different socio-economic strata have easy access to forti-

fied edible oil across the country, Singhal said.

"India has a very high burden of malnutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies. A huge population in our country suffer from deficiency of vitamins A and D. Lack of these vitamins in our body can have adverse impact on morbidity, mortality, productivity and economic growth," the statement said.

Vitamins A and D strengthen the immune system, which is critical in times of Covid-19 pandemic, it added. To facilitate the

industry, Singhal said FFRC will also provide the necessary technical support required to enable fortification of edible oil.

At present, 69 per cent (7.94 million tonnes/annum edible oil) of packaged edible oil sold across pan-India is fortified, the statement said.

Citing the example of Rajasthan, where fortification of edible oil is being done since 2011, Vij said there is a substantial reduction in vitamin A deficiency among children (10-19 years) in the state. — PTI

China asks ISI to up
violence in Valley

China wants focus to be shifted from stand-off along LAC

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 26

With three top security officials — chiefs of Army, Border Security Force and Central Reserve Police Force — visiting Jammu and Kashmir in the last 10 days, security grid in the newly created Union Territory is on maximum alert amid specific Intelligence reports that China had asked Pakistan ISI to further intensify violence in the Valley.

Intelligence agencies have already given specific inputs to the BSF, the CRPF and the Army as to how China wants Pakistan-based ISI to foment further trouble in the Valley to shift focus from the ongoing standoff in the Ladakh sector.

Army chief M.M. Naravane, BSF DG Rakesh Asthana and CRPF chief A.P. Maheshwari during their visit to J&K in the last few days held exhaustive security review sessions to further strengthen the anti-infiltration grid along the International Border and the Line of Control.

Intelligence reports also point towards a possibility that major attempts could be made by terror launch pads close to the border to push in both militants and large-scale weapons before the onset of winters in the Valley.

Sources in the security establishment claim that following the increased deployment and vigilance along the Indo-Pak border, terror organisations have not been very successful so far.

Officials claimed there was a clear nexus between the Pak backed terrorists and Chinese security forces evident after the

NIA detains another
terror suspectPRANMOY BRAH-
MACHARI & RAJIB
CHOWDHURI | DC
BERHAMPUR/KOLKATA
SEPT. 26

A week after arresting nine alleged Al Qaeda members, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has detained one of their aides for his questioning, again from Murshidabad.

The suspect, Shamim Ansari (25), was picked by the NIA with the help of the Border Security Force (BSF) jawans during a raid at his home at Nawdapara village in Jalangi late on Friday night.

He is a close associate of Al Mamun Kamal, one of the nine arrested last week.

NIA sources claimed that Kamal's confession of Shamim's links with him led to the raid and detention.

A villager of Nawdapara Shahajahan Mondal said that Shamim was close to Kamal and he was very religious like the latter. Both often used to collect money from the

villagers, he added. The NIA has learnt Shamim had also helped Kamal set up his Madrasa privately in the village with a plan to radicalize young minds.

It is now grilling Shamim for his association with Kamal. Shamim earlier worked in Kerala as a mason's helper. He, however, returned home last year and started working as a labourer in a local jute storage, said his mother Magfera Bewa.

"A team of BSF jawans and cops in plain clothes whisked away my son from our home in just ten minutes. They did not tell us anything when I asked them why they were forcibly taking away my son," she said.

The team also seized several booklets from Shamim's room but did not reveal what they were about, said his wife Chandaria Bibi.

BSF DIG (Murshidabad) Kunal Majumdar said, "The BSF neither arrested nor detained anyone. Our force was deployed and provided security only during the raid."

recovery of some Chinese made weapons in the Valley like Norinco/EMEI Type 97 NSR rifle and Norinco QBZ 95 rifle. These weapons are often used by the Pakistani security forces which clearly reveals a direct link between Chinese forces and Pak based subversive groups.

"All possible arrange-

ments have been made both along the border and within the Valley during the visit of these three senior officials. We are confident that a foolproof security environment will continue in J&K in the coming months and we will deal successfully with this Pakistan-China nexus," a senior security official added.

MILITANT AIDE
LINKED TO LeT
ARRESTED

Srinagar, Sept. 26: Security forces nabbed a militant associate linked to Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district and recovered arms and ammunition from his possession on Saturday.

Based on a specific input, a cordon and search operation was launched by the security forces in the orchards of village Mandigam Kralgund in the north district's Handwara, a police spokesperson said.

During the searches, a militant associate identified as Akeel Ahmad Parray, a resident of Mandigam Kralgund, was arrested, he said.

Incriminating materials, including arms and ammunition, were recovered from his possession, he added.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Parray is an active militant associate linked to proscribed terror outfit LeT, the spokesperson said.

A case has been registered and investigation has been initiated, he said.

On Friday, two militant commanders of LeT were killed in an overnight encounter with security forces in Anantnag district. — PTI

● **Incriminating materials, including arms and ammunition, were recovered from the arrested militant associate's possession.**

India's Covid tally crosses
59 lakh; Maha tops in nosDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 26

India's overall tally of novel coronavirus crossed 59 lakh on Saturday with 85,362 new cases in the last 24 hours. About 75 per cent of the new confirmed cases are concentrated in 10 states/UTs out of which Maharashtra continues to top the list with 17,000 cases, followed by Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh with more than 8,000 and 7,000 cases, respectively.

The overall deaths due to Covid-19 has reached 93,379 with 1,089 fatalities in a day. Here too, 10 states/UTs account for 83 per cent of the deaths in the last 24 hours. Maharashtra reported 416 deaths followed by Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh with 86 and 84 deaths, respectively.

Seventeen states/UTs have cases per million lower than the national average (4,278), while 23 states/UTs are reporting deaths per million lower than the national average (68).

In the last 24 hours close to 13.50 lakh tests were conducted.

Andhra Pradesh tests cross 1 lakh: Andhra Pradesh has crossed the one lakh mark of conducting Covid-19 tests per day

by testing 1,03,442 samples in the last 24 hours. Tamil Nadu tested 89,747 samples followed by Kerala with 73,818, Telangana with 69,767 and Karnataka with 67,447 samples tested.

The state health authorities in their Covid-19 bulletin here on Saturday reported that 7,293 new Covid-19 cases have been found, scaling up the tally to 6,68,751. The state also registered 57 deaths of Covid-19 patients, taking the death toll to 5,663.

Telangana reports 2,239 cases: The Coronavirus is continuing ploughing through Telangana state, with over 2,000 cases being reported on Friday. According to the state health department, 2,239 fresh cases of Covid-19 were discovered on Friday. Eleven people lost their lives to the disease, the department said.

The latest Covid-19 numbers take the total Coronavirus infections to 1,83,866, apart from 1,091 deaths.

There has been no respite from the spread of the disease, be it in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits which logged 316 fresh cases, or in rest of the state. Ranga Reddy district reporting 192 cases, Medchal-Malkajgiri

district with 164, Naglonda 141, Karimnagar 106, Warangal-Urban and Bhadrachalam 91 each, Siddipet 79, and Khammam with 73 new cases.

The other districts reported numbers similar to those over the past six days. The lowest number of cases, 12, was reported from Kurnambheem-Asifabad district.

8,811 new cases in Karnataka: Karnataka on Saturday reported 8,811 new Covid-19 cases and 86 related fatalities, taking the total number of infections to 5,66,023 and the death toll to 8,503, the health department said.

The day also saw 5,417 patients getting discharged after recovery. Out of the 8,811 fresh cases reported on Saturday, 4,083 cases were from Bengaluru Urban alone.

As of September 26 evening, cumulatively 5,66,023 Covid-19 positive cases have been confirmed in the state, which includes 8,503 deaths and 4,55,719 discharges, the health department said in its bulletin. It said, out of 1,01,782 active cases, 1,00,950 patients are in isolation at designated hospitals and are stable, while 832 are in ICU.

KERALA CROSSES 7,000-MARK IN DAILY
COVID CASES; ACTIVE CASES 52,678DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPT. 26

Kerala on Saturday recorded the highest single day spike in Covid-19 cases with 7,006 cases even as 3,100 persons recovered from the infection.

Of the new cases 6,004 contracted the infection through contact, source of infection among 664 per-

sons is not known yet, 68 infected persons came from abroad, 177 from other states and 93 health workers also got infected.

The state has so far reported 1,67,939 cases of which 1,14,530 persons have recovered and 52,678 are under treatment at various hospitals across the state.

Kerala's figure of 50,000 plus active cases is the fifth highest in the country.

Mammoth loss



Villagers sprinkle lime and salt powder on the carcass of a wild elephant which was buried by the forest department officials after it died due to electrocution at a village in Rani Reserve Forest on the outskirts of Guwahati on Saturday. — PTI

Caste played major role in Hyd
dishonour killing, says policeBALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 26

A 10-page remand report on the murder of 28-year-old Ch Yoga Hemant Kumar, submitted by the Gachibowli police to the XII Metropolitan Magistrate at Kukatpally on Saturday, makes it clear that caste equations played a key role in planning Hemant's murder.

Among the accused are D. Laxma and Archana, the parents of Hemant's wife D. Avanti, as well as her maternal uncle Guduru Yugender. They face the prospect of death penalty or life imprisonment.

Hemant was murdered in cold blood on Thursday by killers hired Yugender and to whom Laxma, agreed to pay ₹10 lakh that was eventually to find its way to the killers.

The remand report says that it was one month ago that Yugender, who was distraught at his sister

● **YUGENDER CONFESSED** that he could not see his sister and brother-in-law suffer after their daughter married against their wishes, that he, in consultation with Avanti's parents, planned the operation.

Archana and Laxma were unable to bear that their daughter had fled their house and married Hemant against their wishes in June, began plotting ways to separate the couple. If that did not succeed, then Hemant, 28, was to be killed. Hemant was cremated by his family amidst tearful scenes at the Hindu Smashana Vatika at Taranagar in Lingampally on Saturday with his father Murali Krishna performing the last rites, even as their relatives tried to console an inconsolable Avanti, and Murali Krishna's wife Laxmi Rani.

The remand report says that after he was caught by

the police, Yugender confessed to the plan and revealed how it was put in place, including the recce at TNGO's Colony in Gachibowli where the recently wed Avanti and Hemant Kumar were living. The report also lays out how Avanti's father handed over ₹1 lakh as advance to be paid to the killers by Yugender.

In his confession, Yugender informed the police that he could not see his sister and brother-in-law suffer after their daughter married against their wishes, that he, in consultation with Avanti's parents, planned the operation. This included kidnapping Avanti and Hemant from their home on Thursday afternoon and the subsequent killing of Hemant.

Among the charges the 18 accused are facing are that of murder under Indian Penal Code's Section 302 which can result in death penalty or life time imprisonment.

POST-CBI PROBE,
CPM PLANS
CAMPAIGNDC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPT. 26

A day after CBI registered an FIR and began probe into irregularities connected with Wadakkancherry Life Mission Project, the ruling CPM has decided to launch a massive state wide counter campaign from September 27 to oppose what it calls the BJP-RSS plan to use central agencies for destabilizing the LDF Government in Kerala.

CPM state secretary Mr Kodiyeri Bala-Krishnan told mediapersons that after coming to power at the Centre, the BJP had used central agencies to topple elected governments of opposition parties.

The CBI probe into Life Mission alleged irregularities smacks of a similar intervention in Kerala.

DECCAN Chronicle

27 SEPTEMBER 2020



Sheebani Sethi

Off the beaten track

No country for young women

Predictably, with the farmers' protests gaining momentum and the parliamentary process in shambles, new names have emerged in the so-called Bollywood drug mafia investigation, and some anchors who had jumped the gun now get to shrilly gloat on national TV.

Equally predictably, the named are young women. Some, conveniently, happen to be middlingly successful 'nepo kids'. One, a self-made superstar, made a five minute non-speaking cameo appearance at a den of anti-national urban naxals, aka one of the finest universities in India.

The only male public figure named so far is SSR, making one wonder if "Justice For Sushant" means tarnishing his memory and legacy. India hates its young women.

In a country which 'worships' women as goddesses, it is the young girl who invites rape by wearing jeans and eating chowmein, the young woman who invites a (dis)honour killing by daring to love a man of her choice, the young wife who invites domestic violence by not worshipping sufficiently abjectly at the altar of her husband and in-laws.

In a city named after Mumba Devi, a single woman who enters into a romantic relationship is called anything from a whore to a home-wrecker, whilst a man is the innocent victim of her wiles, even when he is married and knowingly cheats. The actor wife is blamed when a cricketer has a bad match. Women who dare to express contrarian opinions are subjected to disgusting trolling and rape threats.

A young woman who facilitated the procurement of a negligible amount of weed for her boyfriend is denied bail and continues in jail in horrific conditions on the flimsiest of charges, whilst a middle-aged man-child who has admitted to taking pretty much every drug ever invented, is celebrated in a movie in which he is played by a younger man-child. [Out of curiosity, how does one drug a grown man with weed without his knowledge and consent? Sprinkle it on his *rajma-chaawal* instead of *kasoori methi*?]

The flipside of this narrative is that our god-like *raja betas* appear to have no noticeable degree of agency, choice, sense, responsibility or self-control. It is a mystery why Indian men don't find this insulting.

For millennia, Indian women have been designated as the 'honour-keepers' of patriarchy (i.e., keep your legs and mouths shut). Often it is women who normalise and enforce misogyny. Recently, some of these "princesses of patriarchy" are being styled as feminists. Ladies, you aren't.

Feminists are not victims. They believe that all genders are equal, and every individual has a right to their own choices and opinions, without inflicting them on others. They disagree with a person without insulting them. They don't judge or insult a woman because they don't agree with her. They understand the concept of consent. They don't use rape references except when discussing actual rape. They believe that a woman can be a home-maker or the CEO of a company, as long as it is HER choice. They don't hate men, or women. They don't have to be women.

So, no. You aren't feminists. Not when you play the victim card, selectively outrage on behalf of some women but slut shame others, are self-confessed addicts but derogatorily call others 'druggies', make accusations but withhold 'proof', complain (rightly) about the abuse you receive but abuse others with abandon, have different standards for different people depending on your whims. You are high-priestesses of hypocrisy.

Here's an example of how feminism works:

A prominent Bollywood male is the subject of recent #MeToo allegations. The timing of these is as suspect as the demolition of the illegal parts of an actor's office (the tasteless and tone-deaf rape analogy that followed notwithstanding).

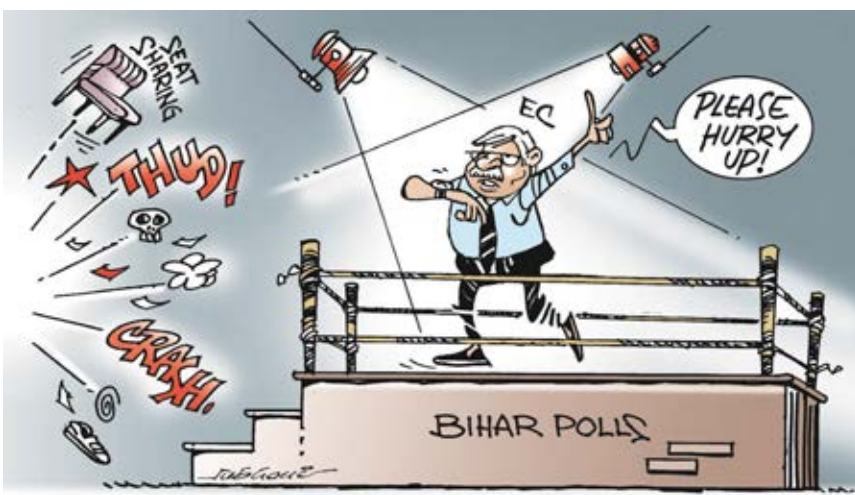
As a feminist, I say that every such charge should be investigated, and both sides heard equally. Also, if a charge is found to be trivial and baseless, there should be legal consequences for the accuser. Misusing and trivializing legal protections given to women (like dowry, domestic violence and sexual harassment laws) is an insult to the countless, voiceless women who truly need them, and to the women and men who have fought for centuries, often at huge personal risk, so that Indian women may enjoy a modicum of equality with their male counterparts.

True gender equality in India is still a long way away. So I urge the self-styled feminists to put their money where their mouths are, with objectivity, compassion, respect and non-partisanship, and help us achieve it. Otherwise India will continue to be no country for young women. And, given the recent, disgusting trolling of trail-blazing doyennes of Bollywood, no country for middle-aged or old women either.

The Indian ideal is Sati, not Kali. We forget that both, that all our deis, are avatars of the same supreme Goddess.

Sheebani Sethi is a cat-parent, reader, Trekkie, feminist, humanist, lawyer.

Subhani



Covid shadow at UN-75: Some lessons for India



K.C. Singh

Covid-19's shadow looms over the 75th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly this year. The high-level segment began September 22, with virtual speeches delivered to a near empty hall. Customarily, the first speaker was Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, followed by US President Donald Trump. The US presidential election is just days away, the outcome of which is critical for America and indeed the world.

For India, the anniversary has little cause for celebration as China, a UN Security Council permanent member, ignoring its Charter commitments, is attempting by force to alter the status quo at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the UNGA Saturday evening. The 2020 theme is: "The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism". This sounds unrealistic, the world being caught between the pandemic and the rise of nationalist-populist leaders in almost all major powers, other than perhaps Germany. It's therefore important to study what they had to say.

President Trump, days from a tough November 3 election, was naturally more geared to a domestic than global audience. Incidentally, he spoke as Bob Woodward's book *Rage*, based on extensive interviews including with the President, reached bookshops. Pulling no punches, Mr Trump called the pandemic the "invisible enemy" and "China virus". He likened US mobilisation to that during World War II, having already cost over 200,000

dead, 40 million jobs and an economic slowdown nearing recession. The \$2.2 trillion stimulus may leave behind rolling deficits. Mr Trump sought accountability from those who "unleashed the plague". While China, he alleged, locked down domestic travel, it kept international flights open, and delayed sharing sharing that the disease was communicable person-to-person and by asymptomatic individuals. Woodward recounts Mr Trump's discussion with advisers whether China, realising the likely damage to its economy, allowed international travel and thus the pandemic's spread, to level the playing field with the developed world. Mr Trump then fielded the usual claims about US economic and military growth under his watch and a swipe at the UN that it must focus on "real problems" to be effective. The US, he claimed, led in protecting human rights, which sits poorly with his handling of the Black Lives Matter protests. When Woodward pushed with: "I'm asking whether you can understand the plight, struggle, pain of people?" The reply, more dodge than revelation, was: "I'm somebody that likes to get things done rather than talk." Mr Trump cited his "America First" invocation, encouraging others to the same. It summed up his anti-multilateralism at the citadel of global governance.

Chinese President Xi Jinping was happy to fill that gap. He repeatedly referred to the pandemic, on the defensive after the US onslaught. He pledged the virus must be defeated, but must not be politicised, nor nations stigmatised. He sought "macro policy coordination" between major economies

to enable global recovery. He then waxed eloquent about helping the developing world, especially Africa, which for China is a crucial market and source of raw materials. Chinese companies control mines from Congo to Chile and Australia, cornering minerals needed for solar panels, electric vehicles, etc. The pandemic, Mr Xi argued, should teach there is no escaping inter-dependence and respect for each country's "independent choice of development path and model". He countered the crescendo for "decoupling" from China by seeking an open multilateral trading system with WTO as its cornerstone. On climate change, he promised carbon neutrality in China by 2060. Of course, he ignored that China's installed capacity for polluting thermal power is half the world's total. Even new Belt and Road Initiative projects have a mix of thermal and hydro power units. Reaffirming faith in global governance, he promised China will never seek hegemony. The speech will leave most of China's neighbours astounded at the gap between his words and China's actions.

Interestingly Russian President Vladimir Putin contested America's claim of stabilising West Asia and the Gulf by "peace deals". He said as the world changes so must the UN, but undermining it may collapse the "architecture of international organisations". In the Mideast, he sees foreign interference, not democracy and reform, with the vacuum filled by extremists, leading to an illicit trade in arms and oil. He undercut Mr Trump's sim-

For India, the anniversary has little cause for celebration as China, a UNSC permanent member, ignoring its Charter commitments, is attempting by force to alter the status quo at the LAC in Ladakh

plistic conclusion that splitting and realigning parts of the Islamic world with Israel and against Iran and its Shia national-allies would buy peace.

Amid this dissonance among major powers Pakistan's PM Imran Khan addressed the UNGA. He tried linking the UN's 75th anniversary as a time to recall fascism's defeat in Europe and focus on contemporary neo-fascism by the RSS and the BJP government in India. From that it was an easy path to claiming repression in Kashmir, and the breach of real and imaginary past UNSC resolutions. While he focused on the flow of illicit funds of Pakistan's politicians to developed nations, with his political rivals in mind, there was no mention of Pakistan's funding non-state actors and its travails with the Financial Action Task Force. His angst is understandable as the big powers aren't interested in Pakistan's Kashmir laments, except China.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi may take the high road and leave Indian diplomats to respond. He will no doubt seek UNSC reform, support equitable globalisation, as India needs investment to create employment, reiterate India's commitment to the Paris climate change accord and, like China, offer help to developing nations in fighting the pandemic. The post-pandemic world has conflated with the post-Trump world. Woodward's final words on Mr Trump are that his oversized personality and lack of trust in experts led to "the undermining or attempted undermining of so many American institutions. The failure of calming, healing voice. The unwillingness to acknowledge errors...". Facing a recalcitrant China, angry farmers up in arms and a swirling Covid, India's government should draw a lesson from this.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambksingh.

LETTERS

A MUSICAL GENIUS

India has lost an unparalleled musical icon in the death of Shripathy Panditaradhulya Balasubrahmanyam, popularly known as SPB, who strode like a colossus in the musical landscape of the country with his lilting voice which captured varied human emotions and feelings effortlessly and enthralled millions of musical connoisseurs and common man alike for more than five decades. No singer had ever before scaled greater heights in mainstream film singing as SPB did without a formal education in music. Starting his musical journey in the Telugu film industry, SPB went on to become a most popular playback singer in almost all the south Indian languages. His association with legendary musical directors such as MS Viswanathan and Ilayaraja had given innumerable songs that will live on. Singing over 40,000 songs in films across 16 languages including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi and having won multiple awards, SPB remained humility personified. Being a natural phenomenon, SPB will continue to live in our hearts with his mellifluous music.

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

WONDERFUL HUMAN BEING

IT WAS in the late '60s when SPB was slowly picking up as a playback singer. We organised a musical evening with him as the lead singer to augment funds for the social activities of Indian Overseas Bank Staff Club. As the assistant secretary of the Club, I met him for the first time in the green room when the young, blooming and budding SPB showed a very special kind of humility. Days went on and I had been watching him transforming into a super star in the music world. The best part of it is that even after five decades and even after adorning himself with all coveted awards from all parts of the world and even after creating a Guinness world record with 40,000 songs to his credit, the doyen continued to be endowed with the same humility as exhibited by him in '60s. No doubt, he was humility personified. In his demise, we have lost not only a precious icon of music but also a wonderful human being par excellence. May his soul rest in peace.

Tharcus S. Fernando, Chennai

RAHUL'S FEAT

KUDOS TO Punjab King XI Captain, KL Rahul, who led his team from the front with a century against star studded RCB. During this knock he became the first Indian to cross 2,000 IPL runs in 60 innings, just surpassing the record of legendary Sachin Tendulkar, who took 63 innings. This century is the highest individual score by a captain in IPL history. After setting a daunting target of 206, his bowlers took over to skittle RCB for 109 to garner two points to lead the table. Hope he continues to lead from the front and wish him the best in coming matches.

N. Mahadevan, Chennai

Out overnight, eight safe from loneliness, C-virus and hunger pangs

WhatsApp smarts

The eight Opposition MPs who were suspended by the Chair in the Rajya Sabha for creating a ruckus over the Farm Bills and did a subsequent 24-hour sit in, formed a WhatsApp group to keep in touch with one another. The WhatsApp group's name: "eight and safe". The only one of the eight MPs who made friends with the rest was TMC MP Dola Sen, a trade unionist MP. Congress MP Rajeev Satav, whose birthday coincidentally was on the day of the dharna, also got to cut his cake once the cameras left. Congress leader Digvijaya Singh spent the longest time hanging around with the protesting MPs. He was the first to arrange for dhoklas and sandwiches for the eight. Food came in plenty, with many leaders across the Opposition parties pitching in. The eight remained safe, too.

Priyanka's karmabhoomi

Rahul Gandhi skipped the monsoon session of Parliament and probably many within and outside the Congress did not

miss him either. In his absence, Priyanka Gandhi has been taking centrestage. There is buzz that Priyanka may go for a darshan at Pithambara Peeth at Datia in Madhya Pradesh, where crucial Assembly by-elections will be held. The Gwalior-Chambal and Bundelkhand region of the state shares boundary with Uttar Pradesh which has been Priyanka's "karmabhoomi" of sorts.

Post for Dr Kafeel

Priyanka was photographed with Dr Kafeel who was acquitted by the high court recently after a prolonged period of harassment and imprisonment by the Yogi Adityanath regime. Priyanka reportedly wants Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot to accommodate Dr Kafeel as an assistant professor in Rajasthan. Gehlot is in a dilemma. He does not want to say no to Priyanka but at the same time he is wary of any kind of communal backlash in his state.

Azad reconciled

Ghulam Nabi Azad, who has virtually been singled out among the G-23 dis-



By WAQYANAWIS

senters within the Congress, is almost certain that he is not returning to the Rajya Sabha. So, a day before the monsoon session ended a week ahead of schedule, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister got a chance to speak. Instead of beginning with the topic Azad, who is also Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House, opened his speech by saying that if the Covid pandemic continues and the winter session is postponed, this may be his last speech in the Rajya Sabha. Congress insiders say Azad's term is ending in February 2021 and he has no chance to return simply because there are no vacancies. However, Congress party leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury is all set to continue in spite of becoming Bengal party chief. Apparently the party leadership wants him to go to West Bengal in a position of power and the floor leader's position gives him that political heft, they argue.

Best woman in the job

The BJP Parliamentary Board is set to be expanded in view of some vacancies.

Many are eyeing the singular woman's slot. Ironic as it may sound, some leading lights of the BJP women parliamentarians reportedly draw comfort from the poor state of economy in the context of parliamentary board vacancy. In their wisdom, prospects of Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman making the cut have receded due to the minister's inability to accelerate the economy.

Hairy superstition

Why is Prime Minister Narendra Modi not trimming his beard? A personal choice seems to have become a subject matter of intense speculation and discussion. Some think it may have to do with a "man-nat" [a secret special prayer] where the seeker often stops trimming hair. Going by this view, the Prime Minister is seeking divine help and wishing for a coronavirus-free India at the earliest.

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

IN BRIEF

Pair charged for WH attack plot

San Antonio: Federal authorities have arrested two men on terror charges for allegedly plotting to bomb or shoot up sites including the White House and Trump Tower in New York City in attacks inspired by the Islamic State group. Jaylyn Christopher Molina, of Texas, and Kristopher Sean Matthews, of South Carolina, are both charged with conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organisation. They were arrested in different states last week. The pair had discussed travelling to Syria to fight with the Islamic State group.

Paris park after PoC who resisted slavery

Paris: The city of Paris inaugurated a public garden Saturday honouring a woman who fought for the liberation of slaves on the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe. Mayor Anne Hidalgo also announced plans to erect a statue to the woman, Solitude, at the site in northeastern Paris. It will be the city's first statue honouring a PoC woman. Amid global protests against monuments to white men linked to colonialism or the slave trade, French leaders have resisted taking down statues but pushed instead to design new monuments to more diverse, lesser-known historical figures. Solitude was born around 1772.

Astronaut to cast vote from space

Atlanta: Nasa astronaut Kate Rubins told *The Associated Press* on Friday that she plans to cast her next vote from space — more than 200 miles above Earth. Rubins is just outside Moscow in Star City, Russia, preparing with two cosmonauts for a mid-October launch and a six-month stay at the International Space Station. "I think it's really important for everybody to vote," Rubins said. "If we can do it from space, then I believe folks can do it from the ground, too." Most US astronauts live in Houston. Texas law allows them to vote from space using a secure electronic ballot. Mission Control forwards the ballot to the space station and relays the completed ballot back to the county clerk. "It's critical to participate in our democracy," Rubins said.

TERROR, N-TRADE PAK GLORY FOR 70 YEARS: INDIA

United Nations, Sept. 26: The "only crowning glory" that Pakistan has to show to the world for the last seven decades is terrorism, ethnic cleansing, majoritarian fundamentalism and clandestine nuclear trade, India said in a scathing response on Friday, slamming Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's "incessant rant" and "venom" in the UN General Assembly. "This august forum witnessed a new low on its 75th anniversary. The leader of Pakistan today called for those who incite hate and violence to be outlawed. But as he went on, we were left wondering, was he referring to himself?"

First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India to the UN Mijito Vinito said, making India's Right of Reply. The rebuttal came after Khan spoke about India's internal affairs, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Vinito walked out when Khan started his usual "diatribe" about India.

"This hall heard the incessant rant of someone who had nothing to show for himself, who had no achievements to speak of and no reasonable suggestion to offer to the world. Instead, we saw lies, misinformation, war mongering and malice spread through this Assembly," the young Indian diplomat said.

2 mn Covid deaths possible, WHO warns

Geneva, Sept. 26: Coronavirus deaths could more than double to two million without collective action against the deadly pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned, as Australia's prime minister urged any nation that develops a vaccine to share it with the rest of the world.

The number of cases worldwide has soared past 32 million, with deaths approaching one million, the global economy devastated, and major cultural and sports events disrupted. But despite the pandemic showing no signs of slowing, Japan's new prime minister Yoshihide Suga struck a defiant note Friday, saying his country was determined to hold the postponed Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

"One million is a terrible number and we need to reflect on that before we start considering a second million," the WHO's emergencies director Michael Ryan told reporters on Friday when asked how high the death toll could go. "Are we prepared collectively to do what it takes to avoid that number?"

"If we don't take those actions... yes, we will be looking at that number and sadly much higher." The pandemic has spurred worldwide efforts to develop a vaccine to help defeat



Protesters gather in Trafalgar Square in London on Saturday, at a "We Do Not Consent!" mass rally against vaccination and government curbs designed to fight the spread of the Coronavirus, including the wearing of masks and taking tests for the virus. — AFP

Covid-19, as well as efforts to try to ensure fair and widespread distribution. "Whoever finds the vac-

cine must share it... This is a global responsibility and it's a moral responsibility," Australian Prime

Minister Scott Morrison said Friday in a message to the United Nations General Assembly that

was held virtually. "Some might see short-term advantage or even profit, but I assure you...

humanity will have a very long memory and be a very, very severe judge." — AFP

Trump may announce Amy Barrett for court

Appeals court hears fight over Don tax returns again

Washington, Sept. 26: President Donald Trump is expected to announce Saturday that he is nominating Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court as he aims to put a historic conservative stamp on the high court just weeks before the election.

Trump said Friday he had made up his mind and it was "very exciting," without giving away the name, aiming to maintain some suspense around his personal announcement. But the White House indicated to congressional Republicans and outside allies that the pick was Barrett. "Well I haven't said it was her, but she's outstanding," Trump said of the Indiana federal judge. Conservative groups and congressional allies are laying the groundwork for a swift confirmation process for her, even before Trump makes the selection official in a Rose Garden ceremony Saturday evening.

They, like the president, are wasting little time moving to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, organising multi-million-dollar ad campaigns and marshalling supporters both to confirm the pick and to boost Trump to a second term. The likely shift in the court's makeup — from Ginsburg, a liberal icon, to an outspoken conservative — would be the sharpest ideological swing since Clarence Thomas replaced Justice Thurgood Marshall nearly three decades ago.

Ever the showman, Trump remained coy about his choice Friday evening as he returned from a campaign swing. When asked whether lawmakers were being told it was Barrett, Trump responded with a nod on the tarmac at Joint Base Andrews, before replying, "Is that what they're telling you?" "You'll find out tomorrow," he went on to say, flashing a wide smile. "Look, they're all great. It could be any of one them.

New York, Sept. 26: A federal appeals court tested the waters on a potential compromise, but didn't immediately rule Friday after arguments in President Donald Trump's long-running fight to prevent a top New York prosecutor from getting his tax returns — a battle that seems destined to return to the Supreme Court.

A Trump lawyer argued that a subpoena for the records is overly broad but balked when an appellate judge suggested the court might be able to alleviate that concern by limiting the scope of documents

being sought.

Trump's lawyer, William Consovoy, signalled they will be satisfied only if Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. is barred from getting all of the requested records. Consovoy is seeking to have the case sent back to a lower court that last month rejected his attempt to quash the subpoena, arguing that judge erred in his ruling. If the three-judge panel refuses to put a hold on the enforcement of the subpoena, Trump's lawyers will be forced to ask the Supreme Court to prolong the legal fight.

The high court, which ruled 7-2 against the president in July, is down to eight justices after the death last week of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The matter may not be fully resolved before the November election. Trump's lawyers appealed to the 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals after a district court judge last month rejected their renewed efforts to invalidate a subpoena that the Vance's office issued to Trump's accounting firm as part of a grand jury investigation into his financial and business dealings. — AP

PREZ: DOCUMENTS REVEAL RUSSIANS INTERFERED IN 2016 POLL FOR DEMS

Washington, Sept. 26: US President Donald Trump has alleged that a new set of documents have revealed that Russians interfered in the 2016 presidential elections on behalf of his then rival and Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton.

The alleged Russian interference in US elections in 2016 was one of the major topics for the Opposition Democrats in the first three years of Trump's presidency and also became the basis of the failed impeachment proceedings against him.

"I've been tarred with this horrible witch hunt for four years. And I didn't do it. Think of it. What would my numbers be, if I didn't go through almost four years of a Russian witch hunt that turned out to be just the opposite. They were the ones involved with Russia," Trump said while addressing a Republican campaign rally in Newport, Virginia on

Friday. "A new trove of documents ...now prove that Russia interfered in 2016. Unfortunately, it was on behalf of Hillary Clinton, not Trump. They interfered with disinformation," he said.

Trump alleged the 2016 presidential elections were interfered by the Russians on behalf of rival Clinton's campaign. "The newly released text messages make 100 per cent clear. The FBI knew that Democrats purchased Russian disinformation targeting me, your favourite president, which then formed the basis for the witch hunt," he said as he praised several *Fox News* anchors for standing by him during those days.

Trump also accused the Democrats and the Russians of spying on him and his campaign. "It was a whole big disinformation campaign," he said amidst cheers and applause from his audience. — PTI

Ukraine crash: Toll climbs to 26

Moscow, Sept. 26: Searchers combing the area where a Ukrainian military aircraft crashed found two more bodies on Saturday, bringing the death toll to 26. One person survived.

The plane, a twin-turboprop Antonov-26 belonging to the Ukrainian air force, was carrying a crew of seven and 20 cadets of a military aviation school when it crashed and burst into flames Friday night while coming in for landing at the airport in Chuhuiv, about 400 kilometres (250 miles) east of the capital Kyiv. Two people initially survived the crash, but one later died in a hospital. No cause for the crash has been determined.

Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared Saturday to be a day of mourning for the crash victims and ordered that flights of An-26 planes be halted pending investigation of the crash cause. Zelenskyy, who visited the crash area on Saturday, called for a full assessment of the condition of the country's military equipment and said he wanted an official report on the crash by October 25.

The An-26 is a transport plane used by both military and civilian operators. Nearly 1,400 of the planes were manufactured from 1969 to 1986, according to the company's website. The age of the plane that crashed Friday was not immediately reported. — AP

U.S. TO RESTRICT CHINESE JOURNOS' STAY TO 90 DAYS

Washington, Sept. 26: The Trump Administration is seeking to restrict the stay of journalists from China in the US to just 90 days with the provision of another extension for a similar duration, according to a federal notification.

The move came amidst worsening of bilateral ties over a range of issues like the Coronavirus pandemic, trade, Beijing's increasing grip on Hong Kong and alleged human rights abuses against minorities in the Xinjiang province.

The proposal of the Department of Homeland Security is part of the fixed time limit on visas of students, researchers and foreign journalists in the US. While the time limit for foreign journalists in general has been restricted to 240 days and another extension of a similar period, those for a journalist from China would be issued a I visa by the United States just for 90 days. — PTI

VICTORIA HEALTH CHIEF QUILTS IN QUARANTINE PROBE

Melbourne, Sept. 26: The health minister in Australia's Victoria state has resigned in the fallout from an inquiry into why security guards were used instead of police or the military at quarantine hotels.

Lapses in security at the hotels were given as the major reason for a second wave of Covid-19 cases. Victoria reported just one more Coronavirus death as Melbourne's new case average continued to fall. The death took the state toll to 782 and the national figure to 870. There were 12 new cases, while Melbourne's 14-day average fell again on Saturday to 23.6. Melburnians, who have been in lockdown for more than a month, are waiting for the easing of restrictions on Monday. It's expected to include a staged return to school for some students and outdoor gatherings of five people from two households.

Health Minister Jenny Mikakos on Saturday issued a statement confirming her resignation, just a day after Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews gave evidence to the inquiry. — AP

HEBDO STABBING: SEVEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY

Paris, Sept. 26: Seven people were in custody Saturday after a stabbing outside the former Paris offices of satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, including the suspected assailant, authorities said.

Counterterrorism authorities are investigating what authorities called an Islamic extremist attack linked to *Charlie Hebdo*, which lost 12 employees in an al-Qaida attack in 2015. The weekly, which routinely mocks religious and prominent figures, recently republished caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad that outraged Muslims. The suspected assailant in Friday's stabbing had been nabbed a month ago. — AP

Malaysia's ruling coalition wins first electoral test

Kualalumpur, Sept. 26: Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's ruling coalition won a key state election on Saturday, in a vote that was widely seen as a referendum on his seven-month-old administration.

The victory in Sabah state in Borneo is likely to strengthen Muhyiddin's position as he faces a leadership challenge from opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, who said this week he had the parliamentary majority needed to oust the premier.

Muhyiddin's Perikatan Nasional (PN) coalition and its allies won 38 of the 73 seats up for grabs in Saturday's election, narrowly taking control of the previously opposition-held state.

Muhyiddin said earlier that victory in Sabah could pave the way for early national elections aimed at ending uncertainty over the stability of his ruling alliance, which has a two-seat majority in parliament.

Muhyiddin came to power in March after forming an alliance with opposition parties following the shock resignation of his predecessor, Mahathir Mohamad.

Muhyiddin's opponents have accused him of stealing power by shifting alliances instead of at the ballot box, and his allies have been pressuring him for months to call snap national polls to secure a strong mandate.

"He will use the victory to dismiss any challenge to federal leadership. Muhyiddin can now con-



● Muhyiddin came to power in March after forming an alliance with opposition parties following the shock resignation of his predecessor, Mahathir Mohamad.

fidently lead a federal coalition in a general election," said Adib Zalkapli, a director with political risk consultancy BowerGroupAsia.

On Wednesday, Anwar declared that he had secured a "formidable" majority to claim the premiership - something Muhyiddin dismissed as a "mere allegation".

The power struggle comes as the Malaysian economy reels from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Muhyiddin has announced a stimulus package of 305 billion ringgit (\$73.16 billion), including additional measures announced just three days ahead of the Sabah polls. — Reuters

Youth: Act to halt catastrophic climate change

Brussels, Sept. 26: United under Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, young people rallied worldwide on Friday to demand urgent action to halt catastrophic climate change, in their first global protest since the Coronavirus crisis began. With wild weather wreaking havoc across the world - from fires ravaging the US West, to abnormal heatwaves in the Siberian Arctic and record floods in China — organisers said their aim was to remind politicians that, while the world focused on Covid-19, the climate crisis

was more acute than ever. Demonstrations were planned in more than 3,100 locations, though with pandemic-related curbs limiting the size of gatherings, much of the action shifted online. In Stockholm, Thunberg and a handful of members of her group, "Fridays for Future", assembled outside parliament with signs bearing slogans including "Stop Denying the Climate Is Dying".

"We need to treat the climate crisis as a crisis. It's just as simple as that. The climate crisis has never once been

● PARTICIPANTS WERE asked to post pictures on social media and join a 24-hour global Zoom call —though mass gatherings were held in countries, including Germany.

treated as a crisis and unless we treat it as a crisis we won't be able to, so-called, 'solve' it," Thunberg told reporters.

Organisers said turnout was expected to be far smaller than the global climate strikes held one year ago, which drew more than six million people

onto the streets. Participants were asked to post pictures on social media and join a 24-hour global Zoom call — though mass gatherings were held in countries, including Germany.

In Berlin, police said nearly 10,000 people took part in demonstrations. Protesters cycled in groups to the Brandenburg Gate, where they sat in face masks, observing social distancing and chanting: "Strikes in school, university and companies. That is our answer to your politics." — Reuters



People march in Buenos Aires to join the "Fridays for future" climate emergency movement, launched by Swedish environmentalist Greta Thunberg. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

Djokovic braces for unhappy Nadal

Paris: Novak Djokovic will renew his love-hate relationship with Roland Garros in the knowledge that it is himself rather than seemingly unsettled 12-time champion Rafael Nadal who could pose the greatest threat to winning a second Paris title and 18th Grand Slam crown.

The only man to beat Djokovic in 2020 is Djokovic after the Serb's hair-trigger temper prompted a sensational disqualification from the US Open. Federer will miss the French Open as he rehabs his injured knee.

Former champion Simona Halep arrives as the player to beat in a women's draw missing title holder Ashleigh Barty and recent US Open winner Naomi Osaka, two of the world's top three.

Serena Williams can never be discounted as she launches another bid for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam singles crown here. — *AFP*

Bruno penalty hands Man U win

Brighton: Bruno Fernandes scored a penalty, awarded on a VAR review after the final whistle had blown, as Manchester United rode their luck to register their first Premier League points of the season with a thrilling 3-2 win at Brighton on Saturday.

The Seagulls hit the woodwork five times and thought they had earned a deserved point when Solly March headed home to equalise in the 95th minute.

However, Neal Maupay's handball was penalised by referee Chris Kavanagh after he had blown for full-time and Fernandes converted from the spot in the 100th minute.

Pre-season hopes that United could mount a title challenge to their biggest rivals Liverpool and Manchester City dissipated after a dire display in losing 3-1 to Crystal Palace last weekend. — *AFP*

Hamilton takes Russian GP pole

Sochi, Russia: Runaway Formula One series leader Lewis Hamilton emerged from a "horrible" red-flagged qualifying session at Sochi on Saturday with a stunning pole position for Sunday's Russian Grand Prix.

The Mercedes six-time champion clocked a best lap in one minute and 31.304 seconds to outpace Max Verstappen of Red Bull by half a second.

His Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas was third-quickest with Sergio Perez of Racing Point sharing the second row.

Hamilton is bidding to claim his fifth win at the Sochi track where Mercedes have dominated winning all six races since 2014. If he translate pole into victory, he will equal Michael Schumacher's career record of 91 Grand Prix wins. — *AFP*

Celtics rally to beat Miami Heat

Miami: The Boston Celtics roared back in the second half to beat the Miami Heat 121-108 on Friday to stay alive in the NBA playoffs.

Jayson Tatum scored 31 points and Jaylen Brown added 28 as six Celtics players scored in double figures and Boston cut the deficit in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference finals to three games to two.

English Premier League: Manchester City vs Leicester from 9 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

Spanish Premier League: Atletico Madrid vs Granada from 7.30 pm; Barcelona vs Villarreal from 12.30 am (Monday). All matches on LaLiga page on Facebook

Italian League: Napoli vs Genoa from 6.30 pm; Roma vs Juventus from 12.15 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 2

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SUPER SHUBMAN

Gill's unbeaten 70 helps KKR beat Sunrisers by 7 wkts

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 26: Kolkata Knight Riders defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by seven wickets in an Indian Premier League match here on Saturday.

Opting to bat first, Sunrisers Hyderabad scored 142 for four with Manish Pandey making a 38-ball 51 at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium.

In reply, KKR chased down the target of 143 with two overs to spare. Shubman Gill top-scored with an unbeaten 70 off 62 balls while Eoin Morgan added an unbeaten 42 off 29 balls.

Earlier, Kolkata Knight Riders put up a disciplined effort with Pat Cummins brilliantly spearheading the attack to restrict Sunrisers Hyderabad to a modest 142 for four.

Having drawn flak for bowling

SCORECARD

Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner c and b Chakravarthy 36, Jonny Bairstow b Cummins 5, Manish Pandey c and b Russell 51, Wriddhiman Saha run out 30, Mohammad Nabi (not out) 11, Abhishek Sharma (not out) 2. Extras: (b-2, lb-2, w-3) 7. Total: (for 4 wkts, in 20 overs) 142. FoW: 1-24, 2-59, 3-121, 4-138.

Bowling: S.P. Narine 4-0-31-0, P.J. Cummins 4-0-19-1, Shivam Mavi 2-0-15-0, Kuldeep Yadav 2-0-15-0, C.V. Varun 4-0-25-1, K.L. Nagarkoti 2-0-

17-0, A.D. Russell 2-0-16-1. **Kolkata Knight Riders:** Shubman Gill (not out) 70, S. Narine c Warner b Ahmed 0, N. Rana c 'Saha b Natarajan 26, K.D. Karthik (c) 'lbw b Rashid Khan 0, E. Morgan (not out) 42. Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-4) 7. Total: (for 3 wkts, in 18 overs) 145. FoW: 1-6, 2-43, 3-53.

Bowling: B. Kumar 3-0-29-0, K.K. Ahmed 3-0-28-1, T. Natarajan 3-0-27-1, Rashid Khan 4-0-25-1, Mohammad Nabi 4-0-23-0, Abhishek Sharma 1-0-11-0.

dangerous David Warner to derail SRH early on. Pandey returned to form at No. 3 with a 38-ball 51 and along with Wriddhiman Saha (30 off 31

balls), tried to repair the damage but the duo were dismissed at the death and SRH lacked the finishing touch to settle for a seemingly below-par total.

Unlike their last match against Mumbai Indians, KKR looked more intent and aggressive with their approach, having brought in Sunil Narine and Cummins up front with the new ball.

Cummins smartly altered his length and bowled Jonny Bairstow with an absolute ripper to give KKR the first breakthrough.

In his second-coming, architect-turned mystery spinner Chakravarthy dismissed a well-set Warner (36 off 30) in a soft manner for his maiden IPL wicket, giving KKR the big breakthrough. — *PTI*



Shubman Gill of Kolkata Knight Riders plays a shot against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their Indian Premier League match at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Saturday. — *BCCI*

Dhoni asks team to up the ante

Dubai, Sept. 26: Two consecutive defeats have left Chennai Super Kings reeling and skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni is contemplating rejigging the combination, saying they are lacking steam and need to come back with a clearer picture for the next IPL games.

CSK, one of the most dominant teams in the history of IPL, have lost two of the three games they have played with the latest being a 44-run thrashing at the hands of Delhi Capitals.

"I don't think it was a good game for us. There was no dew, but the wicket did slow down. We are

We need to come back with a clearer picture, looking at the combination. Maybe, the team balance will get better once (Ambati) Rayudu comes back in the next game.

— **M.S. DHONI**
Chennai super Kings captain after losing the match against Delhi

CSK COACH RUES MISSING KEY PLAYERS

Dubai, Sept. 26: Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming has admitted that his side were "a little bit muddled" at the moment and they need a clearer strategy going ahead after suffering two losses in three matches in the Indian Premier League.

Fleming also rued the missing of some key players that he said has affected the team combination. "Well, we're a bit muddled at the moment. We're missing some key players, and we're trying to find a balance that allows us to

be competitive. We're looking to develop a personality based on the wickets that we're facing," Fleming said after CSK lost to Delhi Capitals by 44 runs on Friday.

"Each wicket has been completely different, and our batting is without Rayudu, (Suresh) Raina etc. We're trying to find a way or a combination and how to use players. We've learned a massive amount over three days."

Three-time champions CSK could not get going during the run chase against DC, and when

lacking a bit of steam in the batting and that hurts. The run rate keeps on mounting after such slow starts and adds pressure, we need to figure that out," Dhoni said after the match against Capitals on Friday night.

"We need to come back with a clearer picture, looking at the combination. Maybe, the team bal-

ance will get better once (Ambati) Rayudu comes back in the next game."

Rayudu, who struck a brilliant 48-ball 71 in CSK's five-wicket win over MI in the tournament-opener, missed the next two games due to a hamstring injury.

The CSK captain expressed hope that Rayudu will be available

in their next game.

"That will give us the room to experiment with an extra bowler perhaps. There are quite a few things we can think about. We are one batter extra to start off, so the players need to step up," Dhoni also asked his bowlers to pull up their socks after two ordinary outings. — *PTI*

Shaw shared a 94-run opening stand with Shikhar Dhawan.

"CSK has some good pace bowlers. I was able to time the ball and get some gaps. As the spinners came on, even if we are 40/0, it doesn't matter, I knew me and Dhawan could pace our innings after the powerplay," he said. — *PTI*

SHAW 'STICKS TO PLAN' TO DELIVER WINNING KNOCK

Dubai, Sept. 26: Young opener Prithvi Shaw, who starred in Delhi Capitals' win over Chennai Super Kings, says his plan was to play along the ground and avoid "silly mistakes" after failing to make an impact in the first match.

Shaw was dismissed for five in DC's campaign opener against Kings XI Punjab but the 20-year-old made amends with a fluent 64 off 43 balls on Friday. "My plan was to play my natural game but play the shots along the ground, last game we saw there were some silly mistakes and it was not working for me or the team," Shaw said.

Shaw shared a 94-run opening stand with Shikhar Dhawan.

"CSK has some good pace bowlers. I was able to time the ball and get some gaps. As the spinners came on, even if we are 40/0, it doesn't matter, I knew me and Dhawan could pace our innings after the powerplay," he said. — *PTI*



Jos Buttler

Buttler boost for Rajasthan

Sharjah, Sept. 26: Sanju Samson will like to continue his dream form while the presence of Jos Buttler puts Rajasthan Royals on even keel with Kings XI Punjab in an IPL game which promises to be yet another six-hitting contest.

Coming into the match after morale-boosting victories, both KXIP and the Royals would look to build a winning momentum after starting the tournament as underdogs.

Buttler, who missed the first match due to quarantine rules as he reached the UAE separately with his family, is expected to open alongside Yashashvi Jaiswal while Steve Smith will take David Miller's position in the batting order. Tom Curran and Jofra Archer will again complete the four-player overseas quota.

"I am excited to play my first game, it was great to be back in training with the boys, there's a great vibe around the team so I'm really looking forward to taking the field," Buttler said on the eve of the match.

"The atmosphere and energy around the squad is fantastic, obviously lots of confidence after that first game. The training has been very energetic, guys are lively and enjoying

● **Coming into the match after morale-boosting victories, both KXIP and the Royals would look to build a winning momentum after starting the tournament as underdogs.**

each other's company. So expecting a really tough match against Kings XI," Buttler said.

K.L. Rahul plundered a record 132 not out off just 69 balls to lead KXIP to a 97-run win over Royal Challengers Bangalore. He did get reprieve twice when his opposite number Virat Kohli dropped a couple of sitters.

Rahul, one of the cleanest hitters of the ball, notched up the highest score by an Indian in IPL history and he would like to continue in the same vein on a ground which has short boundaries on all sides.

The young Samson, on the other hand, made a mincemeat of the Chennai Super Kings bowlers, hitting nine sixes in his 32-ball 74 before Jofra Archer joined the party with a four-six burst in the final over in the match played here on Tuesday. — *PTI*

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 18
- Rajasthan won: 10
- Punjab won: 8
- Tied: 1 (KXIP beat Rajasthan in Super over after match ended in a tie.)

MEETING IN 2019

- Kings XI Punjab beat Rajasthan Royals by 14 runs at Jaipur.
- Kings XI Punjab beat Rajasthan Royals by 12 runs at Mohali.

FOR THE RECORD

- Jos Buttler, who scored 859 runs at an average of 47.72 and a strike rate of 153.94 in 21 innings of as many matches, has the second best strike rate behind Yusuf Pathan (161.24) for Rajasthan Royals in IPL.

- Lokesh Rahul's unbeaten 132 in the previous match was the highest score for Kings XI Punjab and fourth highest ever in IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ QAISAR*

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	2	2	0	0	4	+1.100
Kings XI Punjab	2	1	1	0	2	+2.425
Mumbai Indians	2	1	1	0	2	+0.993
Rajasthan Royals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.800
Kolkata Knight Riders	2	1	1	0	2	-0.767
Chennai Super Kings	3	1	2	0	2	-0.840
Royal Challengers Bangalore	2	1	1	0	2	-2.175
Sunrisers Hyderabad	2	0	2	0	0	-0.730

Tabulated as Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points, Net Run Rate

Stuttering starts put Dhoni, Kohli under huge pressure



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

A pall of gloom descended on the IPL — in fact the entire cricket world — with Dean Jones's passing away in Mumbai. He was part of the Star Sports experts commentators team, and by all accounts looked to be hale and hearty till the sudden cardiac arrest.

I got to know Jones a bit during his playing days — having covered the Tied Match at Madras in 1986 in which he scored a magnificent 210 — and a great deal more as commentator,

especially when we worked together during the Indian Cricket League in 2007-8.

The last time we had an extended conversation was in 2015-16 when I travelled to Adelaide for the first-ever day-night, pink ball Test, between Australia and New Zealand. We were staying in the same hotel and would invariably meet at breakfast.

One morning, I asked him to describe his cricketing journey. "I could play a bit, I can talk a lot, hopefully that leaves something

for posterity to remember me by," Jones replied. Who knew the end was so near? That he died in the saddle, pursuing his life's abiding passion, is perhaps some solace.

Meanwhile, the first week of the IPL has been completed. Going by early trends, this edition too promises to be a bumpy roller-coaster ride for all teams, with dramatic ups and downs.

There is too much cricket remaining in the tournament and detailed analyses at this juncture would be presumptuous. Instead, I'll spotlight some outstanding performances and some failures from the pool of Indian players in the IPL.

K.L. Rahul, Sanju Samson, Rohit Sharma and Prithvi Shaw have

been the outstanding batsmen so far. Rahul's blazing century helped Punjab wallop RCB, and was redemption for his team missing out on a win in the first match against Delhi.

Prithvi Shaw, so often the despair of his captain and fans because he throws his wicket away with the bowling is at his mercy, came up with a splendid, match-winning half century against Chennai.

Rohit, after a stutter against Chennai, came into his own against KKR as only he can, taking a heavy toll of all bowlers, including Pat Cummins, the world's no.1 Test bowler and the most expensive overseas player in the tournament at ₹15.5 crore. The T20 format can be brutally cruel to even the best.

My best innings so far, however, is Sanju Samson's bazooka 74 off 32 balls which devastated CSK.

Samson's potential has never been doubt, but his temperament was suspect, which contributed inconsistent performances and saw him in and out of the Indian team.

With this innings, he not only helped Rajasthan — without Stokes and Butler — stun Chennai, but made a statement that he is going to seriously compete with Rishabh Pant for M.S. Dhoni's place in India's T20 and ODI teams.

Among bowlers, Mohamed Shami has bowled at hot pace, getting swing and seam movement to harry batsman. He is at the peak of his prowess, and a potent weapon for

Punjab. India hopeful Navdeep Saini has looked sharp and penetrative for RCB.

Leg spinners are to the fore among spinners. Most successful has been Yuzvendra Chahal, befuddling batsmen with his shrewd mix of leg-breaks and googlies.

Rahul Tewatia has done the star turn for Rajasthan, but the most impressive has been Punjab's 20-year-old Ravi Bishnoi who has the redoubtable Anil Kumble as coach and mentor, a huge advantage.

Which brings me Virat Kohli and M.S. Dhoni, invariably always in the news, the latter even more after he announced his retirement from international cricket. Both started with victories, but after

that have been non-descript, as captains and batsmen and are under severe pressure.

Kohli has flopped in both matches RCB's played, which is unusual, but also troubling for his team. With other topnotchers Finch and de Villiers not striking big either, RCB are not getting the scores to support the excellent Chahal and Saini.

For Dhoni, the problem's bigger, and does not have to do with his batting position as is being widely debated. CSK's overall batting and bowling is floundering, there is a shortage of power hitters, few bowling options since Watson and Jadhav are not bowling.

In an ageing team, particularly these issues become even more detrimental.