

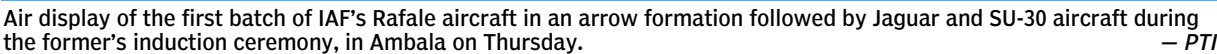
THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 11 SEPTEMBER 2020



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Vol. 83 No. 253 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

India and China are engaged in a stand-off since April-May over transgressions by the Chinese Army in many areas. — ANI



cheon meeting together with Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov as part of Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral cooperation in which views were exchanged. The trilateral luncheon meeting highlighted how the Russians are trying their best to nudge the two Asian giants towards a compromise in order to avoid a devastating war in the Ladakh sector. All three ministers were photographed standing next to each other and smiling, with the Russian foreign minister holding centre stage as the host, a symbolism that was not lost.

Some observers feel a resolution may begin if at all only after a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping that could take place in Moscow on the sidelines of a SCO Summit next month.

**SRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC**
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

Amilitary raging Sino-Indian tensions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe held a "very warm" 30 minute "summit telephone talk" on Thursday after which it was officially announced that the two countries had signed a key mutual defence logistics support pact called the "Agreement Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services between the Armed Forces of India and The Self-Defence Forces of Japan" a day earlier on Wednesday.

According to the announcement, the pact will provide the armed forces of the two countries access to each other's bases and ensure that either country's defence platforms, including ships and aircraft, will be able to use the other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies, including fuel and spare parts.

Japanese Ambassador in India Satoshi Suzuki and Indian Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar signed the pact on behalf of their countries. Both the leaders welcomed the inking of the pact, which Japan referred as the so-called "Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement" (ACSA), and

agreed that it would "further enhance the depth of defence cooperation between the two countries and contribute to peace in the Indo-Pacific region".

Observers are seeing the agreement between India and Japan as a “huge strategic signal” by both the countries, which share territorial disputes with China. It may be noted that India already has similar defence logistics support pacts with the US, France, Singapore, South Korea and Australia and is expected to ink one soon with Russia as well.

They also agreed to "work closely in security, economy, and economic cooperation".

New Delhi, Sept. 10: The Indian Army has occupied heights overlooking Chinese Army positions at Finger 4 along Pangong lake.

"Indian Army has occupied heights overlooking the Chinese Army positions at Finger 4 along the Pangong Tso. These operations were carried out along with the pre-emptive actions to occupy heights near the southern bank of Pangong Tso," a source told the news agency ANI.

The Chinese Army had occupied the heights from around April-May and had refused to disengage from there and other friction points in eastern Ladakh. The Indian Army has occupied them now along with the Green Top.

Meanwhile, both the armies held interactions at the Brigade-Commander level and Commander officer-level in Eastern Ladakh.

"Interactions are aimed at keeping the communication lines simple," an Indian Army source said.

In the past few days, India outflanked China by taking control of strategic height near Pangong lake's southern bank. It also thwarted an attempt by the Chinese Army to transgress into Indian areas near Chushul in Ladakh which is near the southern bank of Pangong Tso.

India and China are engaged in a stand-off since April-May over transgressions by the Chinese Army in many areas. — ANI



SHORT TAKES

INTER BOARD
ANNOUNCES EXAMS
IN MARCH 2021

Hyderabad, Sept. 10: Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TS BIE) has scheduled Intermediate Public Examinations (Theory)-2021 from March 24 to April 12, 2021, and practical examinations will take place from March 1 to 20. Advanced supplementary tests are scheduled for the last week of May 2021.

On Thursday, the BIE released an interim annual academic calendar for the academic year 2020-21 for all junior and composite colleges in the state offering Intermediate general and technical courses. There will be a total of 182 working days, as per the academic calendar.

Colleges will have holidays for Dasara from October 23 to 25 and Sankranti on January 13 and 14. A senior official said that, in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, colleges would be opened only if the requisite permissions are given by the government; until such time online classes will be held.

According to the academic calendar, colleges will be re-opened for the academic year 2021-22 on June 1, 2021 after summer vacation. Private unaided junior colleges have been advised to make admissions only in compliance with the admission schedule of the BIE.

— INN

MANUU ANNOUNCES
REVISED DATES FOR
ENTRANCE EXAMSATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

Maulana Azad National Urdu University (Manuu) has announced revised dates of entrance tests for admission into regular courses during the academic year 2020-21. According to Prof. Siddiqui Mohammed Mahmood, registrar-in-charge, the University will conduct the tests on September 28, 29 and 30. The entrance test will be conducted offline in two sessions on all three days. Candidates were advised to visit university's website manuu.edu.in for more details.

Meanwhile, the extended last date for online application for admissions into various merit based postgraduate, undergraduate and bridge courses under regular mode will end on September 30. The details of the courses along with an online application form are available on the university website.

BANDI SANJAY
VISITS HISTORICAL
NIZAMABAD FORTDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, SEPT. 10

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay criticised that formation of Telangana state is benefited Chief Minister K.Chandrasekhar Rao family members. He said that people are unhappy with the TRS rule in the state. Mr Sanjay visited historical Nizamabad Quila (Fort) on Wednesday night and observed the jail barrack, where famous poet Dasharathi Krishnamacharya was imprisoned during Nizam rule.

BJP leaders, activists welcomed the party state president. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Bandi Sanjay said that BJP will come to power in Telangana state in 2023 Assembly elections. MP D. Arvind, BJP district president Baswapuram Laxminarsaiah, and others were present.

FIVE ORGANS OF AN
YOUTH DONATED TO
JEEVANDAN SCHEMEDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

Five organs of 21-year-old K. Naveen, who was declared brain dead, were donated by his family to the Jeevandan scheme of the government. Naveen fell down from a two-wheeler on August 31 near his village Raghavapur in Peddapalli district, where he worked as a daily-wage worker. He was treated at a private hospital in the district and later shifted to Yashoda Hospital in Secunderabad. After intensive treatment for seven days, there was no response and he was declared brain dead due to severe head injury. Naveen's father K. Saidaiah and mother K. Saramma agreed for organ donation and two kidneys, a liver and the corneas were donated to the Jeevandan scheme.

OGH docs say no space for operations

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

Postgraduate doctors of general medicine and orthopaedic departments at Osmania General Hospital used an effigy to explain how lack of space in operation theatres was affecting patient care and stressed that frontline workers must not be blamed for it.

On the second day of their protest, doctors explained the manner in which the number of operations had reduced. The orthopaedic department used to perform six surgeries a day, it has come down to one now. The doctors said challenges were faced in infection control and lack of space was affecting post-operative care and in providing emergency care.

General medicine doctors said that they were not performing surgeries since the two months as the department shifted from the heritage building to the new building of the Osmania General Hospital. The department since then



Junior doctors at Osmania General Hospital stage a mock operation using an effigy under a tree to highlight that there is not enough space in the operation theatres in the new building.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

does not have the space to operate and post-graduates are suffering the most.

The arrangement of

sharing operation theatres between cardio-thoracic and orthopaedic departments has not worked as

it is not proving to be feasible for doctors. Junior doctors of general medicine had a meeting with health officials

and were told that the heritage building cannot be re-opened as it is dangerous and there is threat to life.

Govt to run isolation
centres in rural areas

Officials were told to ensure adequate stocks of medicines

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

Covid-19 cases are increasing in rural areas with each passing day and there is need for setting up government-run isolation centres in these areas to house Coronavirus-infected patients, health minister Etela Rajendar has said.

Reviewing the Covid-19 situation with senior department officials, he pointed out that families living in villages do not have facilities to isolate in their own homes those suffering from the Coronavirus. Hence, there is need to set up isolation centres with all required facilities in rural areas.

The minister instructed health officials to ensure that such centres also have adequate stocks of medicines and disposables, including protection kits, for medical and associated personnel.

He wanted the health department to prepare itself for facing sudden spikes in Covid-19 cases. He pointed out that if there are one lakh new cases, then 15,000 of them will require hospital care. Arrangements must be put in place to treat 10,000 of these patients in government hospitals and the remaining 5,000 in private hospitals, he said.

On availability of oxygen supplies at government-run hospitals, the minister went over plans for installing liquid oxygen tanks (LOTs) in 22 hospitals of the state.

At present, Osmania General Hospital, Gandhi Hospital, and NIMS in Hyderabad, Kakatiya Medical College Hospital in Warangal, RIMS in Adilabad and Nizamabad Government Hospital have LOTs. Installation of LOTs has also been completed at the King Koti Hospital and TIMS in Hyderabad as well as at Mahbubnagar Government Hospital. Setting up of these tanks will be completed at 13 other hospitals selected across the state in the next three days, officials informed the minister.

Rajendar said he has received several complaints at the legislature premises from MLAs and MLCs about medical equipment needing repairs in hospitals across the state.

He wanted officials to prepare an inventory of all medical equipment in all government hospitals, their state of repair, and appoint personnel to carry out such repairs.

“At the same time, do

GHMC records
327 new cases

From page 1

The department said 327 new cases were recorded in GHMC limits. Ranga Reddy district had 195 new cases, Nalgonda had 149, Medchal-Malkajgiri 132, Kamareddy 123, Warangal Urban 124, Khammam 109, Karimnagar 107, Siddipet 103, Sangareddy 96, Nizamabad 90, Suryapet 83, and Bhadradri-Kothagudem district recorded 81 new cases.

There were 2,684 patients being treated in government hospitals of whom 1,227 were on supplementary oxygen and another 636 were in the intensive care units. In private hospitals, there were 4,356 patients with 1,985 on supplementary oxygen and 917 in ICU wards, the health department said.

Centre issues
fresh guidelines
for Covid-19 testsDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

The Centre has instructed that states must follow-up on results of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for detecting Covid-19 and retest those whose results come in the negative if they develop any symptoms after they are tested using RATs.

On Thursday, the Union ministry of health said it has noticed that in some states, symptomatic negative cases tested by RATs were not being followed up by RT-PCR testing. The Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction tests are considered the gold standard with respect to detecting Covid-19 cases.

The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) had previously declared that RATs are not fully reliable and there was plenty of scope for them giving false negative results. It had also said, way back in June, that those testing negative in a RAT, should be tested by RT-PCR to rule out infection.

In Telangana state, bulk of the Covid-19 determination tests conducted daily are believed to be of the RAT variety. Of the 60,000-odd daily tests, it is believed that just around 10,000 could be of the RT-PCR variety. However, the actual numbers of test types remain a mystery as the state government has never revealed the break-up of the numbers of RAT and Rt-PCR tests it conducts every day, or of those conducted by private testing laboratories.

not lose sight of other seasonal diseases and health conditions of

Data on retesting has also not been released since the disease broke out in Telangana state in March this year.

The Union health ministry and the ICMR have now written a joint letter to the states saying that their guidelines clearly state that all symptomatic (fever or cough or breathlessness) negative cases of RATs, and asymptomatic negative cases of RAT that develop symptoms within two or three days of being tested negative, are “mandatorily retested using the RT-PCR tests.”

The ministry also urged the states to “urgently establish a monitoring mechanism in every district with a designated officer or a team, and at the state level too, for following up on such cases. These teams, the health ministry said, “shall analyse details of RAT conducted on a daily basis in the districts and in the state and ensure that there are no delays in retesting of all symptomatic negative cases.”

The states have further been advised to regularly analyse the incidence of positives during the follow-up RT-PCR tests. This follow-up testing procedure “is necessary to ensure that such symptomatic negative cases do not remain untested and do not spread the disease among their contacts. This will also ensure early detection and isolation/hospitalisation of such false negatives,” the ministry said.

people while focusing on Covid-19,” the minister cautioned.

TRIALS WILL HAVE
UPS AND DOWNS,
SAY SCIENTISTSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

Pausing trials for Covid-19 vaccine of AstraZeneca due to safety concerns is nothing new, scientists said while pointing out that ‘trials’ are experiments which may or may not work. The trials have been paused in India too by Serum Institute of India following instructions from the Drug Controller General of India.

The hype over an effective Covid-19 vaccine has created hope but ultimately every vaccine requires a time period and it has to cross various phases before it can be certified as safe. Reports from phase 1 and phase 2 trials were encouraging but in the phase 3 trials adverse effects were noted on two human subjects who volunteered for trials.

Director of the Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) Rakesh Mishra said, “They will now have to go back and understand what has gone wrong. The phase 3 trials are meant for a large number of people. As the vaccine is tried on different human bodies, the results are bound to be different.”

He said importance of safety and efficacy, adverse side-effects and different responses are known only when the proposed vaccine is tried on a large number of people. “Science has noted 85 per cent rejection in vaccines. This does not mean that we will stop trying,” Mishra said.

The adverse effect of neurological symptoms has raised alarm across the world. It has dashed hopes of many who were looking forward to the vaccine as a safety net from the pandemic.

But scientists say that further evaluation is required to understand the adverse response of the human body. Meanwhile, two vaccine formulations developed by Russia are catching everyone's attention but scientists remain skeptical.

A senior scientist with a private pharmaceutical company in Hyderabad said, “The number of human subjects for the vaccine from Russia is significantly less for drawing conclusions. The results of safety and efficacy will be known only after they are tested on more people. In the case of AstraZeneca, two people have reported adverse effects. Clarity will emerge when more trials are carried out.”

HC seeks information from
TS on UG, PG sem examsVUJJINI
VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

The Telangana High Court on Thursday directed the state government to inform it by Monday as to whether or not there was a possibility to hold semester and final year examinations of post-graduate and undergraduate courses in the online mode in view of the spread of Covid-19.

The court suggested that the government conduct advanced supplementary exams for students who could not take the main exams, if they are held.

“In the mark-sheet, it should not appear as supplementary exams and they should not be called so,” the High Court said.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijayen Reddy directed Advocate General B.S. Prasada to get instructions from the government on its queries and suggestions and to inform the Court by Monday, as some of the exams were scheduled from Wednesday.

The bench was hearing two public interest litigations. One petitioner, B. Venkata Narsing Rao, president, NSUI, was seeking postponement of the semester and final year examination of PG and UG courses in view of the rise in Covid-19 cases.

Referring a picture published in *Deccan Chronicle* on Thursday (along with the report ‘Eamcet centres continue to violate distancing rules’), which portrayed the difficulties of parents who had accompanied students appearing for Eamcet exams on Wednesday and not maintaining physical distance outside the exam centres, the bench observed that the government should consider alternative methods to conduct exams or to conduct the advance supplementary exams for student who missed out on the main exams.

Pointing out that the government and private hostels were not open, Chief Justice Chauhan observed “Consider the practical difficulties of a student, who happens to stay in Adilabad

NEW SOP REFRAINS STAFF,
CANDIDATES FROM CZsHARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

Amidst massive outrage over grave violations of guidelines for the various exams being conducted, the Union health ministry has issued revised standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be followed to contain the spread of Covid-19 while conducting examinations.

One of the major points listed in SOPs is that no staff or examinees from containment zones shall be permitted in the exam centres. Such examinees shall be given an opportunity to write the examination through other means or the universities, educational institutions or testing agency may consider appropriate measures in this regard, the guidelines stated. The ministry further suggested that exam functionaries and examinees be asked to submit a self-declaration about their health status at the time of entrance to the examination centre. Such forms may be circulated at the time of issuing of admit tickets, it said.

district and comes to Hyderabad. In the absence of hostels, where will he stay for all those days as he has to appear for at least six exams papers? Even if he takes the risk of staying in hotels, the students might jeopardise their lives as the Covid-19 menace is rampant.”

Justice Vijayen Reddy observed that it may be possible to hold online exams to technical courses like BTEch or MTech, but it was too difficult for other courses as they contain description parts and the student should engage more time before the computers.

“Most of the students reside in rural areas and they might not have access to computers or high bandwidth connectivity to attend online exams,” Justice Vijayen Reddy opined.

Damodar Reddy, counsel for Venkata Narasinga Rao,

CENTRE RENEGED ON
PROMISES, SAYS TS

From page 1

The Centre did not implement even the promises made in accordance with the Constitution during the bifurcation of AP. They said the TRS government had decided to confront the Centre to realise its legitimate demands. The party will not mind if someone terms it a “war with the Centre,” they maintained. Dr Keshava Rao said that owing to attitude of the Centre, the state government had been losing ₹10,000 crore of its share in the GST. He said the party will also oppose the New Electricity Act proposed by the Centre.

Dr Keshava Rao and Nageswara Rao pointed out that the Centre had not even given a single paisa to the Mega Textile Park at Warangal. It also did not allocate urea to the state though there has been a 24 per cent increase in area under cultivation. They listed out issues related to sanctioning of Navodaya schools, airstrips and expansion of NHs, apart from repairs to NHs damaged due to rains and floods.

Dr Keshava Rao said, “We earlier extended issue-based support to the Centre. This time, we will not compromise on our rights. We will create hungama in and outside Parliament. We will also conduct dharnas with support of other parties.” Nageswara Rao said, “We shall wait and see whether or not Telangana BJP MPs, who have been creating hungama against the state government, will join us in our fight for legitimate rights of the state.”

The MPs stated that the TRS will not play any politics in election of the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

● **FUNCTIONARIES, EXAMINEES** need to submit a self-declaration about their health status at the entrance.

Besides this, all staff and students will be allowed entry only if they are found using face cover and masks. The face cover and mask have to be worn at all times inside the examination centre by everyone present inside.

To avoid overcrowding, enough entry and exits gates for students and staff will have to be ensured, the guidelines said.

Universities, educational institutions and examination conducting authorities have further been directed to plan out the examination schedule in a staggered manner to avoid overcrowding.

In case of need for frisking the examinees, the guidelines say that it shall be undertaken after the thermal screening. Personnel involved in frisking shall wear a triple-layer medical mask in addition to gloves, it added.

sought directions to the government to request more time from the UGC, tentatively after Dasara, to complete UG and PG exams, where the UGC has instructed all universities to complete exams by September 30.

“Even the Supreme Court had suggested that the state governments can approach the UGC and obtain its approval for postponement of exams”, counsel said.

The Advocate General informed the bench that the government will make all arrangements to hold the exams through the physical method as the syllabus and pattern of exams in the final year will be descriptive in nature and holding exams online may not be feasible.

He assured the court that he will discuss this issue with officials and get back by September 14.

Fake certificate racket busted

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

The police have busted a fake educational qualifications certificate racket and arrested an ex-serviceman who was running a coaching academy here in the city.

According to the police, the accused, Burla Shankar Rao, had joined the Army in 1987 and retired in 2013. After that, he started ‘A1 Geethanjali Defence Academy’ in Balajinagar of Jawaharnagar to coach aspirants for army entrance tests.

His wife, Uma Maheshwari, and son, Utttejare, also coached the students.

The police said that over time, Shankar Rao noticed that many unqualified students were approaching him for coaching and instead of losing business, he decided to provide them with fake education qualification certificates and then admit them into his academy.

He was charging ₹45,000 for a Class 10, ₹55,000 for Intermediate, ₹75,000 for degree, ₹1 lakh for a MSc. and ₹1.5 lakh for an MPhil

certificate.

He would also provide fake LLB certificates for ₹2 lakh each, the police said. He was assisted in this racket by Ashish, Dileep Rathod, and Sharma.

The police said they acted on a tip-off, and the special operations team of Malkajgiri zone, IT core inspector and sleuths of Jawaharnagar police station conducted a raid on the academy premises on Wednesday and seized fake blank certificates with the names of the above-mentioned universities and took Rao into custody.

IN BRIEF

Differently abled duo end life

Hyderabad: A speech and hearing impaired man and woman allegedly died by suicide in Nalgonda district early on Thursday, police said.

The two, known to each other and working in the packing division of an e-commerce giant here, resorted to the extreme step after stating in a note and through sign language in a video that they decided to set themselves afire due to personal reasons, the police said.

"The two were known to each other for the past six months and the woman went missing a few days ago. Later, they shared a video through an instant messaging app among their friends stating through sign language that they were committing suicide," a police official said.

In the wee hours, the two shared their location among their friends. By the time, they reached the spot the couple was found dead with burns, the official said adding one note with their details and another saying: "We are dying" was found at the scene.

A case has been registered and further probe has begun.

CPM: Pusugubba encounter fake

Khammam: Venkatapuram-Vazed Area Committee of CPI-Maoist party said that Pusugubba encounter where two Maoists were killed by police four days ago is a fake one. In a statement, the committee secretary Sudhakar said that the police took the two Maoists into custody and killed them in a fake encounter. "The police took the help of a trader, who is also a police informer, killed them in Pusugubba forests. It is a fake encounter," he said. Comrade Sreenu alias Kovasi Jogal, native of Jaggaram under Bhadrachalam mandal and comrade Madakam Ithu, native of Rampuram, Punoor Block in Bijapur district were killed in the fake encounter. He said that TRS government is using its police to kill the Maoist leaders in the state. Sankar, who was killed 10 days ago in Gundala mandal in Bhadradi district is also a fake encounter. Sankar was nabbed and killed in the forest.

4 bills introduced in Assembly

Hyderabad: The state government on Thursday introduced four Bills on the fourth day of the sixth Assembly session. Education minister P Sabitha Indra Reddy introduced the Telangana State Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation) (Amendment) Bill 2020, paving the way for creating private universities. Municipal administration and urban development minister K.T. Rama Rao on behalf of finance minister T. Harish Rao tabled the Telangana Disaster and Public Health Emergency (Special provisions) Bill 2020. Harish Rao is suffering from Covid-19. Rama Rao also introduced the Telangana Public Employment (Regulation of Age of Superannuation (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and Telangana Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (Amendment) Bill, 2020. Panchayat raj and rural development minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao has introduced draft notification

Stringent laws soon against drunk driving

Drunk drivers causing accidents to be booked as murderers**ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, SEPT 10**

Drunk drivers who are involved in accidents causing death may be booked as murderers in the future. The Warangal police commissionerate is taking steps in that direction following the series of road accidents caused in the recent past.

Three people were killed on Wednesday night when a drunk driver hit an auto, a two-wheeler and a cyclist at Pembarthy in Jangaon district. The driver over-speeding in an inebriated state is said to be the reason for the accident.

During the last week, five youths were killed after ramming into an oncoming lorry at Damera on NH 163. In-charge commissioner of police P. Promod Kumar has taken the issue seriously and is making the moves to bring stringent laws against drunk driving. He has already issued direc-



In-charge Commissioner of Police P. Promod Kumar

tions to the police officers to book any drunk driver causing death under IPC section 302 (II).

"A person who is under the influence of alcohol is well aware that he is a threat to other road users. Despite this, if he or she takes the wheel and causes an accident, it must amount to murder," he said.

Mr Promod said that they have already intensified the

drunken drive checking during late nights. At the same time, the police officers were asked not to allow parking of vehicles on the roadsides. The officers are to inspect the areas where accidents are frequent and identify the causes and take steps to avoid them. Late-night patrolling and setting up of stoppers along the highway was also suggested to the officers.

● During the last week, five youths were killed after ramming into an oncoming lorry at Damera on NH 163.

● Data showing road accidents between January and August-2020 under Warangal Police Commissionerate Jurisdiction

577 Total accidents**205 Fatal accidents****225 Number of persons killed****24 Grievously injured****540 Escaped with minor injuries****CASES AGAINST DISSENT VOICES BY COPS: CPM****DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, SEPT. 10**

CP district committee, All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) and Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) are trying to own up the leader of Telangana Armed Struggle Chakali Ilamma by organising various programmes on the occasion of her 35th death anniversary on Thursday.

CPM state secretariat member P. Sudarshan said, "Fighting against the liberalisation policies of the state and central government is the real tributes to Ilamma. She paved a way to distribute 10 lakh acres to the poor in Telangana. She fought against the landlords of Vinnor to protect the lands of kauldars".

He said that successive governments weakened the land reform Acts for the last 70 years, and the people should be ready to protect the poor in the state. He said that the state of affairs in TRS government is the worst and that there is no democratic spirit in the state. "Filing cases against the people who raised objections against the government policies have become common in the state. The cases against CPI-M workers in Khammam are the best example for it," he said.

A programme was organised in Manchikanti Hall in Khammam by the leaders of DYFI. The youth took an oath to bring forward the aspirations of great leader Ilamma. The DYFI district secretary Shaik Basheeruddin said, "It is need of the hour that the youth should know the ideals of Ilamma. Because of her and other heroes, we are moving freely in society. The youth should fight against the wrong policies of the state government by taking the spirit of Ilamma."



Marlapadu village in Vemsoor mandal in Khammam district.

Marlapadu sarpanch on war against belt shops

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KHAMMAM, SEPT. 10

The sarpanch of Marlapadu gram panchayat in Vemsoor mandal has started a campaign against belt shops in the village.

Nearly 20 cases of, and one death due to, Covid-19 were reported in Marlapadu, which has a population of 4,200.

There are fears among the people that the virus was spreading fast in rural areas.

The increasing Covid-19 cases due to belt shops is worrying people in Marlapadu.

There are 30 belt shops in the village and the people from Andhra Pradesh, where liquor is not available, are coming to the Marlapadu for alcohol. Interestingly, there is one licensed shop in the village and liquor reaches the belt shops from the main shop.

Marlapadu is a centre to reach villages in Andhra Pradesh and other villages of the mandal are drawn here due to the belt shops.

In this context, sarpanch, Mandapati Venugopal Reddy, decided to campaign against the belt shops in the village. For it, he has chosen a multi-pronged strategy. Firstly, he asked each and every belt shop organiser to lift the belt shop for the sake of the people of Marlapadu.

Secondly, Mr Reddy explained to the organisers the problems of belt shops. People gather at the belt shops and Covid-19 may spread. Thirdly, he started issuing notices to the belt shops and asking them to close their shutters.

Marlapadu panchayat secretary, Suresh Reddy, is also extending all cooperation to the sarpanch on the issue. "Covid-19 cases

are increasing daily and it has crossed 15 so far. There is every chance of it increasing further. We found that the existence of belt shops is one of the reasons for the spread of the cases. We will find a solution soon on it," he said.

The licensed liquor shop owner in Marlapadu was asked not to sell liquor to the belt shops. The request has been hitherto ignored.

The BJP is also serious over the menace of belt shops in the village.

BJP Vemsoor mandal president, Parsa Rambabu, said, "The party took the issue of increasing belt shops seriously and one can understand the worry of the people on the spreading of the virus due to the shops. We will stage dharnas against them and the agitation will be continued till the belt shops are lifted from Marlapadu."

Complete smart works, officials told

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, SEPT. 10

Karimnagar district collector K. Shashanka on Thursday ordered the officials concerned to complete the Smart City works which are in progress under city municipal limits within six months by maintaining quality in works.

The collector chaired a review meeting with the city mayor Y. Sunil Rao, police commissioner V.B. Kamalasan Reddy and municipal commissioner V. Kranthi along with the officials of the engineering and revenue departments and consultants here at the collectorate conference hall in the Karimnagar district.

Addressing the meeting, Mr Shashanka ordered the officials to give importance on the development of Smrithi Vanams along with Ujjwala park by laying separate roads and to complete the works within three to four months.

"Instead of taking repair works in Ujjwala park, try to develop it with new and innovative methods along with use of laser shows in the park to give it a modern look." Providing a boat-ride facility from Smrithi Vanam to Alagandula Fort will be highly beneficial, officials should focus on arrangement of boat facility, he opined.

Complete the works of Manair River front within six months by develop-

● Mr Shashanka ordered the officials to give importance on the development of Smrithi Vanams along with Ujjwala park by laying separate roads and to complete the works within three to four months.

● Officials told to focus on Swachh Survekshan.

ing the Sircilla bypass road, he told officials.

Focus on adventurous activities in the Linear Public Park such as cycling, boating, water paracycling, water rides and greenery for children to play and a walking track for senior citizens, he ordered.

Mr Shashanka also said that in the part of Swachh Survekshan for dumping yard works, GPS systems will be enabled to the vehicles which are collecting the wastes from various colonies under the city municipal limits. Prepare a complete report about road laying works under the Smart city project along with furnishing the details about how many days required to complete them, he told officials.

Additional DCP Chandr Mohan, trainee collector Ananth, ACPs, Town planning officials, smart city consultants, contractors and engineering officials were among those who were present along with others.

KCR PLAYING DRAMA TO MAKE SON CM: TD**PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, SEPT. 10**

To make his son, IT and Municipal minister K.T. Rama Rao, Chief Minister and to divert the attention of the people from various issues, the Telangana Rashtra Samiti chief and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao is playing one more drama of establishment of a national party Naya Bharath, alleged Telugu Desam Karimnagar parliament segment president Ambati Joji Reddy on Thursday.

In a released here, Mr Joji Reddy said that it is not a Telangana movement to become a ring master at national level through establishment of a national party. When the health of CM KCR is not supporting him to visit the districts to know the problems being faced by the people due to outbreak of Coronavirus pandemic, how he is going to garner the strength to establish a national party, he questioned.

In the past, KCR tried to enter into national politics through the Federal Front. He even made people believe that other regional parties were joining him, but he failed when the other regional parties denied him. Who stopped CM KCR in making his son a CM, he asked.

Death due to virus higher among docs, healthcare workers

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 10

In comparison to others infected with Covid-19, the risk of death due to infection is 17 times higher in doctors and 15 times more in healthcare workers, according to Indian Medical Association.

It has been noted that in every one lakh people in India there are 4,969 cases of infected healthcare workers, 1,428 cases of infected doctors and 285 of others.

In every one lakh Covid-19 patients, doctor deaths are 87, healthcare personnel 16 and common people five.

The positivity rate in

healthcare workers from January to May as analysed by the IMA is 4.6 per cent. It was also noted that healthcare workers in contact with confirmed cases of Covid-19 without adequate protection was 2.8 per cent.

These initial numbers are now giving an insight into why it has spread so rapidly among healthcare workers. Not taking the infection seriously and still continuing with their work in the health sector has cost them.

A senior doctor of IMA on condition of anonymity explained, "Many doctors are above 50 years of age and they have been seeing

patients without realising that their age, co-morbid conditions and immune state is compromised. The fact that every patient whether Covid or non-Covid-19 must be seen only with proper protection has not been followed. Due to lack of following these protocols the numbers are very high." Doctors are bound to have high viral loads as they see patients everyday and the time gap between two patients is not very long.

Given infrastructure problems, many of the doctors have been exposed. With the infection risk high, there is a need to test doctors in the hospitals.

HEAVY INFLOW**Sriramsagar Project officials released 12,857 cusecs of water**

SRSP starts releasing water into FFC

NARENDER PULLLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, SEPT. 10

With continuous inflows from upstream River Godavari in Maharashtra, the Sriramsagar Project (SRSP) has started releasing water into the Flood Flow Canal (FFC) from Thursday. Project officials released 12,857 cusecs of water. SRSP currently has 1090.3 feet of water against its full reservoir level of 1091.00 ft.

The gross storage capacity of the project is 90,313 tmc ft. With present level reaching 86.46 tmc ft and

inflows continuing, officials released water through FFC into mid-Manair reservoir in Karimnagar district. It has been decided to maintain SRSP storage at 85.00 tmc ft while releasing water through various canals.

Officials have also released 6,000 cusecs of water each into Kakatiya and Sarasvathi canals, 300 cusecs into Laxmi canal, 540 cusecs for Alisagar lift irrigation scheme, 405 cusecs Gutpa LI scheme, and 152 cusecs to Mission Bhagiratha scheme. Evaporation losses



account for 627 cusecs. Inflows into the project are currently 26,732 cusecs while outflows are 19,154 cusecs.

SRSP superintendent engineer Sushil Deshpande has alerted district administration of Nizamabad, Jagtial and

Karimnagar districts about the release of water into flood flow canal. Fishermen, farmers and others have been advised to be cautious, as outflows into the flood flow canal will be increased gradually.

The Gaikwad Major Irrigation Project across River Godavari in Maharashtra has reached full reservoir level and is releasing water downstream. Similarly, projects in Parbhani and Nanded districts too are releasing water into the river, which have enabled outflows from SRSP.

SHORT TAKES

2 SOG JAWANS
KILLED IN
ENCOUNTER

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 10

Two jawans of Special Operation Group (SOG) of Odisha police died in an exchange of fire between security forces and Maoists in a forest near Sirki village on Kalahandi-Kandhamal border, police said on Thursday.

The martyrs were identified as Sudhir Kumar Tudu (28) of Mayurbhanj district and Debasis Sethy (27) of Angul district. At least five Maoists had died in the gun-battle that took place on Wednesday. Initially, four bodies of Maoists were recovered from the spot. During the combing operation following the encounter, the security personnel recovered another body of a Maoist.

On a tip-off from Intelligence input, an operation was launched on Kalahandi-Kandhamal border on September 8. Two composite teams of SOG and District Voluntary Force (DVF) had participated in this operation. Following heavy firing from the Maoists, a team of SOG and DVF had retaliated, said an official statement issued by Odisha Police.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik paid tribute to the martyred jawans. "Salute to the martyrdom of Debasis Sethy of Angul and Sudhir Kumar Tudu of Mayurbhanj who laid down their lives fighting against left-wing extremists. My heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred jawans," the Chief Minister tweeted.

LUKEWARM
OPENING DAY FOR
RLYS SPL TRAINS

New Delhi, Sept. 10: There was a lukewarm response from passengers towards railways' 80 special trains, bookings for which opened on Thursday, with the average occupancy rate being less than 50 per cent, except for two trains which showed more than 100 per cent occupancy.

While Indore Jn Bg Railway station to Howrah in West Bengal showed an occupancy of 108 per cent, the Shramik Express from Valsad station to Muzaffarpur in Bihar showed occupancy of 179 per cent, according to data provided by the national transporter. Though the Indore to Howrah train was over booked, the train in the reverse direction had only 15 per cent occupancy.

Another train running over western railway between Manmad and Mumbai in Maharashtra showed 52 per cent occupancy. Occupancy in trains originating from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal for journeys towards Karnataka and Telangana maintained an average occupancy of around 30 per cent. The most occupancy of 47 per cent was seen in the Muzaffarpur-Bangalore weekly special train, followed by the Gorakhpur-Yeshwantpur Jn Railway station at 32.4 per cent and the Darbhanga-Secunderabad special which has an occupancy of 31 per cent.

INFANT
TRAFFICKING GANG
BUSTED IN MP

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, SEPT. 10

Indore police on Thursday busted a newborn babies trafficking gang, took two people including a woman into custody, and rescued a 10-day-old infant from them.

Acting on a tip off by a non-government organisation (NGO), a team of women police sealed a particular area in Indore and foiled the bid by the two accused, identified as Bablu alias Tejkaran Thakkar and Shilpa Telang, to sell the infant to an unidentified person who managed to escape from the spot, police said.

"We have rescued the baby. Investigation is on to find out the biological parents of the child", Indore district additional superintendent of police Manisha Pathak said.

According to the police, the two accused were trying to sell the baby for ₹1.20 lakh to their 'client'. "Both the accused are health workers. We suspect that they steal newborns from hospitals", a senior police officer from Indore told this newspaper on the condition of anonymity. Interrogation of the two accused would unearth the entire network of child trafficking in the state, he added.

Tibet under electronic surveillance

China is miffed over India's recruitment of Tibetans in the Special Frontier Force

Army on alert along LoC after ISI uses drones

Srinagar, Sept. 10: A quadcopter used by Pakistani spy agency ISI in Jammu and Kashmir has necessitated alert along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Valley as the Army believes it could be used for dropping weapons for terrorists.

General-Officer-in-Command of strategically located XV Corps in Kashmir Lt Gen B.S. Raju said after an incident "across Peer Panjal", a reference to Jammu region in army parlance, "we have alerted all formations to keep a check on any flying object seen along the LoC". He said the terrorists holed up in the Kashmir valley have been facing acute shortage of arms and ammunition and they are desperately looking for some help from across the border for the same.

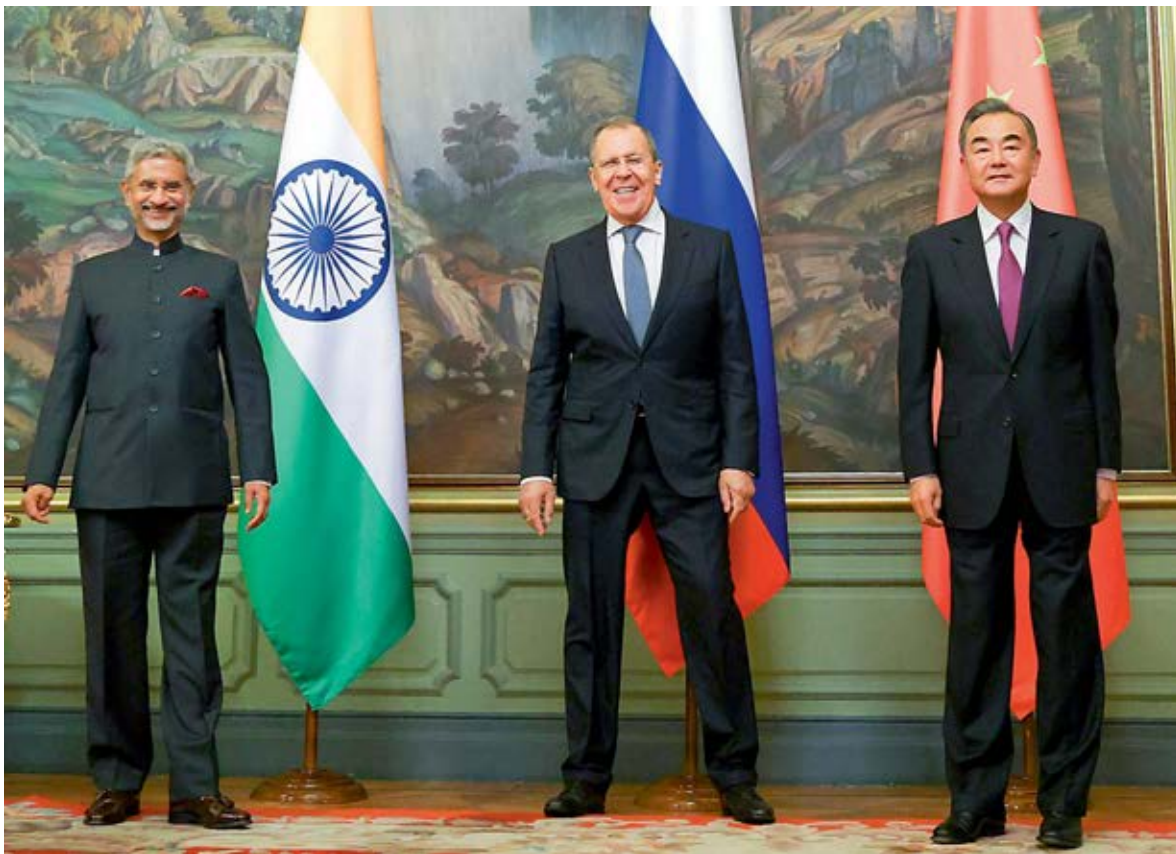
In June, BSF had shot down a Pakistani drone, loaded with a sophisticated rifle and seven grenades, along the International Border in Kathua district

of Jammu region.

The Chinese-made drone weighed about 17.5 kgs and had a payload of 5.5 kg including a sophisticated US-made M4 semi-automatic carbine and seven Chinese grenades. Four batteries, a radio signal receiver and two Global Positioning Systems were also recovered.

This, according to Gen Raju, is a "new dimension" in decades of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

"Instructions have been passed on to the forward formations to keep an eye on any flying object coming from across the border (LoC) and hit it hard to bring it down," he said. As small drones are tough to detect, an extra vigil using all high-tech gadgets along with human scrutiny is being maintained. A strict watch is also being maintained for movement of civilians along the LoC as terrorists may disguise themselves as nomads or shepherds to pick up arms consignment. — PTI



Foreign minister S. Jaishankar, left, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, and China's foreign minister Wang Yi, pose for a photo on the sidelines of a meeting of Foreign Ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Commonwealth of Independent States and Collective Security Treaty Organisation Member States in Moscow on Thursday.

THE FALLOUT

- Tibetans living close to the Indian borders and otherwise are under massive electronic surveillance following tensions between India and China
- Ever since the Galwan valley clashes, surveillance has been increased on Tibetans and many of them who remained in close touch with Indians are now incommunicado
- Indians residing close to the borders in Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh and other areas share a good rapport with Tibetans
- In Tibet, human rights abuses include disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions, forced abortions and infanticide
- According to one report, 87,000 deaths have been recorded in Lhasa alone between March 1959 and September 1960

between the two countries following the clashes in Galwan valley in June. This includes mobile-phone monitoring and keeping an eye on other forms of communication, be it emails or chats — the contents of which are being monitored round the clock. It is learnt that in some areas close to the Indian borders, mobile-phone networks have been jammed to ensure there is

no communication.

Threats from the PLA have ensured that people keep to themselves lest they invite the wrath of PLA, whose brutality against Tibetans is well known. For the PLA, places like Purang are significant as they are not only close to the borders with India and Nepal, the Mansarovar lake and Mount Kailash are located towards the north of this

town, the area where the PLA has deployed surface-to-air missiles and is expanding its military base by taking up construction work.

Indian SIM cards do not work here due to poor connectivity and many locals in Dharchula use Nepal Telecom SIM cards to talk business with Tibetans.

It is not only Purang that PLA is worried about. Sources say that the

Chinese Army is heavily surveilling villages in Demchok in Ladakh, Tago and Yamrang areas in Khimkulla Pass along the LAC in Himachal Pradesh, Linzhi, a city in the southeast of the Tibet Autonomous Region which borders Arunachal Pradesh where the Bokar tribes live on both sides and also the areas near Nathu La.

"Tibetans living close to

the borders with India share a great rapport from even before the 1962 war as most of these routes were used for trade between the two nations. Generations of tribes or traders have close cultural ties besides having business interests which makes the PLA uncomfortable. With tensions at its peak between the countries ever since the 1962 war, the PLA wants to have a tighter grip over Tibet and its people, especially due to the friendship with the Indians," sources said.

Besides strict electronic surveillance, Indian agencies have learnt that due to the heavy mobilisation of

forces on the Chinese side, many Tibetans have been asked to evacuate and relocate to areas far away from the borders. In Tibet, not following the dictate of the PLA has led to disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests and even killings. Denial of freedom of speech and the Internet is a constant.

Recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping in his address to the seventh Central symposium on Tibet had called for building a "new modern socialist" Tibet and constructing an "impregnable wall" against separatism and "sinicisation" of the Tibetan Buddhism.

Kangana Ranaut episode over for Sena, says Raut

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 10

A day after the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) demolished illegal constructions at Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut's office, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday said that the issue was over for his party.

However, the actress has continued her vitriolic against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray calling him an example of nepotism and accused him of turning Shiv Sena into "Sonia Sena."

"The Kangana Ranaut episode is over. We have even forgotten it. We are now busy with our government and social work," Raut said after meeting the Chief Minister at his residence Matoshree.

Raut also denied his party has a role in the demolition carried out by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation in Kangana's office at Pali Hill in Bandra.

"The action at Kangana Ranaut's office is done by the BMC. It has no con-

● THE ACTRESS has continued her vitriolic against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray calling him an example of nepotism and accused him of turning Shiv Sena into 'Sonia Sena.'

nection with Shiv Sena. You can talk to the Mayor or the BMC Commissioner on it," he said.

The Shiv Sena-ruled BMC had razed illegal alterations at Kangana's office on Wednesday. However, the Bombay High Court later ordered a stay on it.

Meanwhile, Kangana has continued with her outburst against the Chief Minister calling him prime example of nepotism and accusing him of misusing the power. Just like Wednesday, she posted a series of tweets too on Thursday targeting Thackeray.

Terming the MVA government in Maharashtra as a 'milavast Sarkar,' she accused Uddhav of compromising on its identity. "The ideology on which Shri Balasaheb

Thackeray built Shiv Sena, today they have sold the ideology for power, becoming Sonia Sena from Shiv Sena. The goons who broke my house behind my back, do not call them a civic body. Don't insult the constitution."

"Your father's good deeds can give you wealth, but you have to earn respect, you will shut my mouth, but my voice will echo in a hundred millions after me, how many mouths will you shut? How many voices will you suppress? Till when you will run away from the truth, you are nothing but an example of dynasty," she said in another tweet.

Referring to Shiv Sena's alliance with the Congress, Kangana said Uddhav has turned it into a "Sonia Sena".

The actress had found herself in controversy after criticising the Mumbai police and comparing Mumbai with Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK). It had evoked a sharp response from Raut who asked her not to visit Mumbai.

KALPESH
MHAMUNKAR | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 10

The Bombay High Court on Thursday expressed surprise that the government had no control over the electronic media and asked why television news should not be regulated by the state.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a bunch of petitions that sought various reliefs related to the case of the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, including a direction to restrain the press in its coverage of the case.

The bench impleaded the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as a party in the matters. It also directed the ministry to file a reply in court indicating the extent of state control that is exercised in respect of telecasting news, particularly such news that may have serious ramifications.

The bench also made the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Enforcement Directorate

● THE BENCH made the NCB and ED, the central agencies that are currently probing cases related to actor's Sushant Singh Rajput's death, as parties after one of the petitioners alleged that the agencies were 'leaking' probe related information to the press and the public.



(ED), the central agencies that are currently probing cases related to the actor's death, as parties after one of the petitioners alleged that the agencies were "leaking" probe related information to the press and the public.

The bench, however, refused to implead actor Rhea Chakraborty as respondent in the case. "We do not see any reason to implead Chakraborty, an accused who is presently in judicial custody," it said.

The petitions, filed by activists, and eight retired senior police officers, allege, among other things that several TV channels were running a parallel probe into the

case and that they were running a malicious campaign against the Mumbai police through their current reportage in the case.

On September 3, another bench had heard the same pleas and had passed an order urging the press to show restraint while covering the developments of Sushant Singh Rajput's death case.

On Thursday, senior advocate Milind Sathe, who appeared for the former police officials, told the bench that despite the order, TV channels were continuing with their slander against the Mumbai police. Sathe submitted transcripts

from news broadcasts whereby, channels had insinuated that the Mumbai police had been assisting or shielding the accused, and the "drug mafia".

CJ Datta told advocate Sathe that he shouldn't be bothered by what a news anchor was saying. He, however, added that the court hoped and trusted that the spirit of the order dated September 3 would be kept in mind by TV news channels.

The Union government, meanwhile, pointed out that the petitioners should have approached the Press Council of India, a statutory body which regulates the print media, and the News Broadcasting standards Authority (NBSA) with its grievances against the TV news channels. At this, the bench noted that the NBSA wasn't a statutory body.

"We are surprised that the state has no control over the electronic media. Why should it (TV news) not be regulated in case they may have serious ramifications," the bench said.

Kerala is witnessing a huge spike in Covid-19 cases and also experiencing heavy rainfall

Pinarayi convenes all-party meeting on byelections

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPT.10

Close on the heels of Kerala government writing to Election Commission of India to cancel the forthcoming byelections to Chavara and Kuttanad Assembly constituencies, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has convened an all-party meeting on Friday to arrive at a consensus on the issue.

The EC has announced

that the polls to the two seats would be held along with Bihar elections in November. In a letter written to EC, Kerala chief secretary Vishwas Mehta has listed out the reasons for reconsidering the decision to hold by the polls in the two constituencies.

The chief secretary has pointed out that going by the voting percentage in Kuttanad assembly segment in the last Lok Sabha polls, at least 1.17 lakh voters are likely to turn up for casting their votes in 172

● THE OPPOSITION Congress-led UDF is not averse to cancelling the Assembly bypolls. The Opposition says that even if the two MLAs are elected, they would get just four months term as the next Assembly elections are due in April 2021.

polling stations. Similarly, 1.32 lakh voters are expected to exercise their franchise in 163 polling stations in Chavara.

With the state witnessing a huge spike in Covid-19 cases over the last couple of weeks, social distancing will be at risk in these polling stations. The state has also been experiencing heavy to very heavy rainfall during the south west monsoon.

This is a cause of concern especially in Kuttanad constituency where many areas are below sea level and prone to floods and water logging. Hence arranging logistics for polling would

be a major problem.

The state government has also apprised the EC of the huge pressure under which the officials of police, revenue, local bodies and various government departments are working as Covid-19 warriors. It is because of their relentless work that the state could contain the virus in the first two phases.

On the political front, the opposition Congress-led UDF is not averse to cancelling the Assembly

bypolls. The Opposition says that even if the two MLAs are elected, they would get just four months term as the next Assembly elections are due in April 2021.

Apart from Covid-19 threat, the elections will also put a huge financial burden on the government especially at a time when the state's economy is in dire straits.

The UDF, however, wants the local bodies poll also postponed by a few weeks or at least a month. The

elections to the 1,000-plus local bodies including corporations, municipalities, panchayats are scheduled to be held in October.

The BJP on the other hand is for cancelling Assembly bypolls. However, the party wants the local bodies poll as scheduled. All these issues will be discussed in detail at the all party meeting on Friday.

The government will try to arrive at a consensus before going to the EC again.

IN BRIEF

Quake strikes New Jersey

New York: A magnitude 3.1 earthquake struck in East Freehold, New Jersey, early Wednesday morning, the US Geological Survey reported. Residents took to social media to express their shock at the rare occurrence. Hundreds of people as far away as Philadelphia and Long Island, New York, contributed to the USGS' "Did You Feel It?" map, reporting only weak or light shaking and no damage. "It would be very surprising for us to see anything more than you know, damaged shelves or picture frames falling off of windows," said Robert Sanders, a geophysicist with the survey. The USGS said the earthquake happened about 2 a.m. and was centered 1.25 miles south, southeast of the centre of East Freehold.

Greece rescues 151 migrants

Athens: Greece's coast guard says a rescue operation was launched overnight after a yacht carrying more than 150 migrants was found in distress in bad weather northeast of the Aegean island of Amorgos. The coast guard said Wednesday a nearby cargo ship picked up 151 people from the yacht during the search and rescue operation Tuesday, in which coast guard and Greek navy vessels also participated.

A witness on board the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged cargo ship said they saw one person swimming away from the yacht, but gale force winds in the area were hampering any further search and rescue operations Wednesday morning, the coast guard said. It said the cargo ship was transporting the migrants to Turkey. Thousands of people fleeing war or poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia arrive on Greek islands each year in an attempt to make their way into Europe.

Probe on if netted shark killed surfer

Canberra: Authorities will investigate whether a dead tiger shark caught in a net off an Australian beach killed a surfer, an official said Wednesday.

Nick Slater, 46, was fatally mauled on Tuesday off popular Greenmount Beach on the Gold Coast tourist strip in a rare attack off a beach protected by shark netting. His death is only the second fatal shark attack at one of Queensland's 85 beaches that have been protected by nets and drum lines since as early as 1962, the state government said. The first was a 21-year-old swimmer who was mauled by more than one bull shark off a netted beach on North Stradbroke Island, north of the Gold Coast, in 2006. Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said a large tiger shark had been found since Slater's death tangled in a net off Greenmount Beach. "Further investigations will be conducted to discover if there is any link between it and the fatal attack," Palaszczuk said. Before nets were put in place, the last fatal shark attack was in 1958.

2K HOMES WRECKED IN N. KOREA

Seoul, Sept. 9: A typhoon that struck North Korea wrecked nearly 60 bridges and destroyed or inundated more than 2,000 houses, state media reported Wednesday, with leader Kim Jong Un saying the damage had disrupted central planning for the rest of the year.

Typhoon Maysak brought days of heavy downpours to the country's east coast last week even as the North was still reeling from earlier flooding and typhoon damage, and this week it was followed by Typhoon Haishen.

Maysak "destroyed or inundated" more than 2,000 houses and tens of public buildings in the affected regions, the official KCNA news agency said, while 60 kilometres of roads and 59 bridges collapsed, with over 3,500 metres of railway roadbeds "swept away". Natural disasters tend to have a greater impact in the North due to its creaking infrastructure, and the country is vulnerable to flooding as many mountains and hills have long been deforested.

The damage obliged the authorities to "change the direction of our struggle after comprehensively considering the year-end tasks that were underway", Kim told a top committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, according to KCNA. It did not give specific details.

Trump downplayed Covid to avoid panic: Woodward

Washington, Sept. 10: US President Donald Trump has acknowledged downplaying the dangers posed by the deadly Coronavirus, saying he did not want to create panic in the country, according to a new book by a renowned American investigative journalist.

The book, 'Rage', by Bob Woodward is being described by the publisher as an "unprecedented" and "intimate tour de force" of new reporting on the Trump presidency that is facing a pandemic, economic disaster and racial unrest. The book is scheduled to hit the stores on September 15, less than two months before the November 3 presidential election. Excerpts of the book and clippings of the interviews with Trump were released by Woodward to some media outlets on Wednesday.

"I wanted to, I wanted to always play it down," Trump told Woodward in March, a recording of which was released by the 77-year-old veteran journalist to *The Washington Post*. "I still like playing it down, because I don't want to create a panic."

In another interview on February 7, the audio clip of which was posted by *The Washington Post*, Trump told the journalist, who broke the Watergate scandal in 1972, that the Coronavirus was deadlier than the flu and could be transmitted through the

Justice Dept. push into Don case could prompt dismissal

Washington, Sept. 10: Attorney General William Barr on Wednesday defended the Justice Department's move to intervene in a defamation lawsuit against President Donald Trump, even as experts were skeptical of the federal government's effort to protect the president in a seemingly private dispute. The Justice Department's action is "a normal application of the law. The law is clear. It is done frequently," Barr said at an unrelated news conference in Chicago.

He added, "The little tempest that is going on is largely because of the bizarre political environment in which we live." But experts said it's far from clear that the conduct at issue — whether Trump defamed E. Jean Carroll, a writer who

accused him of raping her at a New York luxury department store in the 1990s — has anything to do with the scope of his White House duties. The department's move is likely to have an ancillary benefit for Trump in delaying the case, but administration lawyers have a tough task at hand trying to argue that the president was acting in

his official capacity when he denied Carroll's allegations last year, experts say. "I wouldn't make such an argument, and if a president approached me to do it, I would say, 'Don't,'" said Stuart Gerson, who led the Justice Department's Civil Division in President George H.W. Bush's administration when Barr was attorney general for the first time.

"The president gets sued all the time and is defended by the government," Gerson added, "but those are for lawsuits that have to do with actions in his official capacity as the president. This isn't anything like that."

The Justice Department's action is consistent with the expansive view of executive authority it has taken under Barr. — AP

WH: PREZ NOBEL NOMINATION HARD-EARNED

Washington, Sept. 10: The nomination of Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize for brokering the landmark Israel-UAE deal is a "hard-earned and well-deserved honour," the White House has said, underlining that the US President has made peace a cornerstone of his foreign policy efforts. Far-right Norwegian lawmaker Christian Tybring-Gjedde on Wednesday nominated Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in mediating the deal between Israel and the UAE which is seen as a historic step towards peace in the Middle East.

Israel and the UAE announced on August 13 that they were establishing full diplomatic relations. The first commercial direct flight between Israel and the UAE landed in Abu Dhabi on August 31 after both countries announced normalisation of relations. The deal would be signed on September 15 at the White House. The UAE is only the third Arab country to establish diplomatic ties with the Jewish state. Israel's neighbours, Egypt and Jordan, being the other two Arab states to recognise Israel. — PTI

Pompeo: Moscow 'poisoned' Navalny

Washington, Sept. 10: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday there was a strong chance Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's poisoning was ordered by senior officials in Moscow. "I think people all around the world see this kind of activity for what it is," Pompeo said in a radio interview.

"And when they see the effort to poison a dissident, and they recognise that there is a substantial chance that this actually came from senior Russian officials, I think this is not good for the Russian people," he told conservative host Ben Shapiro.

Navalny, the most visible critic of President Vladimir Putin within Russia, fell violently ill last month as he took a flight in Siberia. He was flown for treatment to Germany, where doctors said he was poisoned. Pompeo reiterated that the United States and its European allies all wanted Russia to "hold those responsible for this accountable" and said Washington would also try to identify the perpetrators. "It's something that we'll take a look at, we'll evaluate, and we'll make sure we do our part to do whatever we can to reduce the risk that things like

CAMPAIGNER FOR NAVALNY BEATEN UP

Moscow, Sept. 10: Unidentified attackers beat up an activist campaigning for hospitalised Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny in the Urals city of Chelyabinsk, his colleagues said Thursday. Alexei Baraboshkin, the local coordinator for Navalny, was "assaulted by unknown attackers" late Wednesday after receiving threats for several weeks, his campaign office wrote on Telegram. It posted a picture of him with a bruised and bleeding eye. Navalny is being treated in Germany for poisoning with Novichok in an incident that has sparked international condemnation and the threat of sanctions against Russia. — AFP

this happen again."

Pompeo's remarks come despite President Donald Trump's comment last week that he had seen no proof that Navalny was poisoned. Trump has sought warmer relations with Putin. — AP

Covid risk pauses Assange hearing

London, Sept. 10: The London hearing on WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's extradition from Britain to the United States was suspended Thursday because one of the lawyers may have been exposed to the Coronavirus. District Judge Vanessa Baraitser ordered the proceedings adjourned until Monday while a lawyer representing the US government is tested for the virus.

Assange is fighting American prosecutors' attempt to get the British government to send him to the US to stand trial on spying charges. US prosecutors have indicted the 49-year-old Australian on 18 espionage and computer misuse charges over WikiLeaks' publication of secret US military documents a decade ago. The charges carry a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison.

Assange's lawyers say the prosecution is a politically motivated abuse of power that will stifle press freedom and put journalists around the world at risk. The hearing started Monday at London's Old Bailey criminal court and is scheduled to last about a month. — AP

Court hears Nawaz surrender review

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 10:

Pakistan's Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday conducted hearing on former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's review petition against order to surrender in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption reference.

During the hearing, National Accountability Bureau (NAB) prosecutor said that the ex-premier has been declared proclaimed offender by the court.

Justice Mohsin Kiyani remarked that Nawaz Sharif's bail had been rejected after which he has become absconder in the case. The former premier is residing in London but his doctors are present in United States, he added.

Subsequently, the court directed to present arguments over admissibility of the plea and adjourned the hearing till September 15. Meanwhile, NAB has challenged Nawaz Sharif's bail in

3 PIA OFFICIALS SACKED OVER FAKE LICENCES

Islamabad, Sept. 10: Three officials of Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority have been sacked for their alleged involvement in the fake flying licence scandal in the country's national carrier, Pakistan International Airlines, according to a media report on Thursday. A fourth CAA employee obtained a stay order from a court against the possible decision to sack him, the Dawn newspaper reported. —PTI

Avenfield reference in IHC, saying that the ex-PM is a convict and absconder. Interior secretary and foreign ministry should take action as per law for Nawaz Sharif's return.



This photo released by the semi-official Fars News Agency shows Iranian troops participating in a military drill near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, on Thursday. Units from the navy, air force and ground forces are participating in a nearly 2 million-square-kilometre area of the Gulf of Oman. — AP

Iran war games amid US tension

Tehran, Sept. 10: Iran's military Thursday began an expansive annual three-day exercise near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, state TV reported, with the manoeuvres taking place amid heightened tensions between the Islamic Republic and the United States.

Units from the navy and air force and ground forces are participating in a nearly two million-square-kilometre (772,200-square-mile) area of the Gulf of Oman.

State TV said Iranian submarines and drones were being deployed. Adm. Habibollah Sayyari,

commander of the annual exercise dubbed Zolfaghar-99, said Wednesday the operation is aimed at "improving readiness in confronting foreign threats and any possible invasion."

Sayyari's comments hinted at the threat of military conflict amid tensions between Iran and the US, which has sought to extend a years-long United Nations weapons embargo on Tehran that is due to expire in October. — AP

ity conflict amid tensions between Iran and the US, which has sought to extend a years-long United Nations weapons embargo on Tehran that is due to expire in October. Last month, US Central Command published a black-and-white video showing what appeared to be Iranian special forces fast-roping from a helicopter onto the oil tanker MT Wila, whose last position appeared to be off the eastern coast of the United Arab Emirates near the city of Khorfakkan.

Iranian state television later acknowledged the

brief seizure, referring to the operation as a routine inspection without elaborating. In July, Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard fired a missile from a helicopter targeting a replica of a US aircraft carrier in the Strait of Hormuz in an exercise aimed at threatening the US. In January, a US drone strike killed a top Iranian general at the Baghdad airport and Tehran responded by firing ballistic missiles at American forces in Iraq.

Iran's navy operates in the Gulf of Oman on the eastern side of the strait. — AP

FILM | FEST

Journalists are watching digital screenings, virtual red carpets in their pyjamas due to Covid

Tiff opens, beams on thousands of laptops globally



SUPARNA SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

The annual Toronto International Film Festival (Tiff), which serves as the diving board for big Hollywood and European films eying the Oscars, opened on Wednesday on a thousand laptop-screens across

the world.

The 45th edition of Tiff is the first of its kind — a hybrid in the times of Coronavirus.

Every September, Tiff, which rolls out the red carpet on Toronto's buzzy King Street to welcome 400-odd films and their creators, actors, has this year split between screenings in cinema halls, and "outdoor screenings" in Toronto's two drive-in venues.

Film journalists from across the world, who are usually in attendance, are taking part in the festival virtually, watching digital

screenings, virtual red carpet events in their pyjamas.

"We began this year planning for a 45th festival much like our previous editions," said the festival's artistic director Cameron Bailey, "but along the way we had to rethink just about everything. This year's lineup reflects that tumult". It's true.

The 11-day festival opened on Thursday with Spike Lee's *American Utopia*, and the closing film, or well series, will be a taste of Mira Nair's *A Suitable Boy* (an adapta-



Alma Poysti as Tove Jansson in Finnish film *Tove*.

tion of Vikram Seth's 1993 novel). Tiff, considered the most

middle brow of the Big 4 international film festivals (amongst the high-brow

Cannes, Venice and Berlin), is the most inclusive, democratic film festivals. Of all the films it's showing this year, 43 per cent are directed, co-directed or created by women, and 49 per cent are directed, co-directed, or created by Black, Indigenous or POC (people of colour).

There is *One Night in Miami*, Regina King's film about a young Muhammad Ali, actress Halle Berry's directorial debut, *Bruised*, Ricky Staub's *Concrete Cowboy* starring the Covid-recovered Idris Elba, and Francis Lee's *Ammonite*

starring Kate Winslet.

And there is, of course, Chaitanya Tamhane's Marathi film, *The Disciple*.

If there is a god of film festivals, it is *Serendipity*. Because that's all that can explain why my very first film at Tiff on Thursday was the delightful, peppy, *Tove*. A Finnish film written and directed by two women — Eeva Putro and Zaida Bergroth, respectively — Tove tells the story of the Helsinki-based author and illustrator, Tove Jansson (played with both verve and affecting vulnerability by Alma Poysti).

DECCAN Chronicle

11 SEPTEMBER 2020

Heed advice, announce rapid relief and stimulus

Democracy feeds on argument, on discussion as to the right way forward. This is the reason why respecting the opinion of others belongs to democracy," said Richard von Weizsäcker, the German president, under whose term his country got reunited. This philosophy is not new to India as it was ingrained in its culture with the Rig Veda declaring thousands of years ago: "Let noble thoughts come to me from all directions". However, the import of this philosophy seems to have been lost on the current government, which appears to believe that no consultation is required on the issues of national importance — especially on reviving the economy which is badly mauled by coronavirus.

A survey conducted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) serves as a reality check on all-is-well claims being made by officials and ministers. The survey claimed demand continues to be weak. In fact, 41 per cent of the companies, which participated in the survey, reported that their sales in August 2020 were less than 50 per cent of their sales in August 2019. Another 21 per cent said sales in August 2020 were between 50 and 75 per cent of the sales recorded in August 2019. Fifty-six per cent companies have reported that unlocking of the economy did not improve their order books, while 49 per cent companies reported cash-flow issues. Automobile sales figures show that people don't have confidence in the economy. While car sales were relatively less impacted with people preferring safe personal transport in the pandemic, two-wheeler sales — that show the aspirational middle class is performing — have plunged by 28.7 per cent and commercial vehicle sales have more than halved reflecting the poor outlook of the economy. India is a consumption-driven and domestic-focused economy. So a weaker demand could have a highly adverse impact on people's jobs, companies and also exchequer. The Narendra Modi government, however, ignored the advice of several well-known economists to announce financial stimulus to kickstart the Indian economy. Dithering of the government to announce steps to ring-fence the economy from Covid-19 lockdown impact led to a 24 per cent contraction in the GDP in the quarter ended on June 30. Though government-paid economists believe in a V-shaped recovery, most banks and rating agencies have forecast an economic contraction of 10 to 15 per cent. State Bank of India believes that annual production of the country would be 10 per cent less this fiscal year, which means at least 10 per cent of jobs will vanish.

Commenting on the government's complacency, former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan said, "If you think of the economy as a patient, relief is the sustenance the patient needs while on the sickbed and fighting the disease. Without relief, households skip meals, pull their children out of school and send them to work or beg, pledge their gold to borrow, let EMIs and rent arrears pile up. So by the time the disease is contained, the patient has become a shell of herself."

In spite of hard facts arguing for a strong stimulus, if the Modi government does not act, history will not be kind to it.

Do animals have rights?

Is your dog equal to you? Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde on Wednesday posed this existential question before a petitioner. Allahabad-based People's Charitoteer Organisation has sought juridical personhood for all members of the animal kingdom. Its plea cites legal entity status accorded to animals in two recent verdicts rendered by the Punjab and Haryana and Uttarakhand High Courts. Besides the Centre and some of its ministries, it has arrayed all states, UTs, the National Crime Records Bureau and the Animal Welfare Board of India as party.

George Orwell famously wrote in *Animal Farm* "all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others". This literally holds true in nature, where might is right for the sustenance of food chains and ecosystems, and in economies to which agriculture, fisheries, food processing, leather and dairy are intrinsic.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017, notified by the NDA 2.0 government, for instance, became unsustainable in law for this very reason, and the ban on the sale of cattle for slaughter that breached the people's fundamental right to livelihood was since revoked.

While the Supreme Court considers this prayer of animal righters, if sceptically, as Justice Bobde himself clarified, it is important, therefore, to bear in mind that progressive, and innocuous, though this reform appears, it may end up wasting the judiciary's time. For sure there are international precedents — leftist Ecuador was the first to amend its constitution in 2008 to apply this definition to nature, while New Zealand accorded it to the Te Urewera national park in 2014 and the river Whanganui, "ancestor of the Maoris", in 2017. But to officially hold animals as not "property" but equals yet have them governed by manmade laws is openly fallacious.

The petition urges all citizens of India be declared persons *in loco parentis* for animals. However, treating wildlife as a person requires the establishment of guardians to represent its legal interests. This "doctrine of trust" is already in place; so, perhaps, the rights approach to this case is redundant, after all.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. HSD-348/2006-08



Subhani

Vulnerable India faces crucial House session



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

Parliament will convene on the 14th of September, five days before the constitutional stipulation of 180 days expires. Article 85 of the Constitution stipulates that there should not be a gap of more than six months i.e. 180 days between two sessions of Parliament.

That the House convenes at an extraordinary moment in the contemporary history of India is a sequitur. The Covid-19 pandemic, the first in over a century of such global magnitude, is testing both the resilience of the Indian people and the Union and state governments to the extreme. With over 44 lakh cases and 75,000 deaths India now ranks second in the world, ahead of Brazil and behind the United States. However, the curve is not flattening. It is spiking like a fighter aircraft on a 90-degree upward ascent. With only five crore of 135.26 crore people tested so far India is looking at a very long haul with no vaccine in sight. The fact that the death rate is low is definitely a matter of relief. However, even this may unfortunately prove to be evanescent.

The most draconian lockdown in the world and that too at a four-hour notice completely failed. Nothing exemplifies it more than the fact that on March 22 the day the Janata Curfew was enforced India had 381 cases and seven deaths. Six months later the figures are traumatic. Prime Minister Modi's unfortunate boast that "today, the entire country is fighting a war against coronavirus... Mahabharata was won in 18 days but the war against coronavirus will take 21 days" sounds like a nasty joke.

The question that the country is asking is why

the government has not been able to control the pandemic especially when China where this evil ogre originated has been successful in stamping it out. Worldwide infections today stand at more than 27 million and over 8,90,000 people dead from the disease.

However, in China, the virus has been all but banished through a combination of lockdowns and travel restrictions earlier in the year. President Xi Jinping recently swaggered during an awards ceremony for medical professionals that China had passed "an extraordinary and historic test". "We quickly achieved initial success in the people's war against the coronavirus," Xi said. "We are leading the world in economic recovery and in the fight against Covid-19," he added. Where the NDA-/BJP government seriously erred is in underestimating the portentousness of the peril and doing precious little for 52 days between when the first case was reported in Kerala on January 30 and the announcement of the Janata Curfew on March 22.

The most severe casualty of the ill-conceived and poorly executed lockdown has been the Indian economy. In the early days of the lockdown itself it became fairly evident that epidemiologists had become economists and economists had morphed into epidemiologists. While the former flattened the economy the latter miserably failed to flatten the disease curve. The economic data for the fourth quarter of the 2019-20 fiscal estimated a GDP growth rate of 3.1 per cent capping a seven-quarter economic freefall. The fact that the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal accounted for only eight days of the lockdown was a harbinger of

things to come. The first quarter economic data of the current fiscal revealed as was expected, that the lockdown had knocked the bottom out of the Indian economy. "GDP has shrunk from ₹35.35 lakh crore in Q1 of 2019-20 to ₹26.90 lakh crore in the first quarter of Q1 of 2020-21, showing a contraction of 23.9 per cent as compared to 5.2 per cent growth in Q1 2019-20," the official statement by the National Statistical Office proclaimed. Attempts by the government to talk up the economy are, at best, pathetic and, at worst, laughable. What Parliament must examine very closely is whether the assumptions that underpin the 30.42 lakh crores Union Budget passed on the last day of the budget session i.e. the 23rd of March, 2020, are still valid.

Another issue that has assumed menacing proportions is the question of GST compensation to the states. When the GST framework was being negotiated from 2015 to 2017 the NDA/BJP government had promised the states that in return for giving up their sub-sovereign taxing powers states would be compensated to the extent of 14 per cent compounded growth in revenue using 2015-16 as the base year for revenue estimation. This was to be done calculating the difference between that figure and the actual GST collections in a particular year till 2022. This arrangement was put in place to smoothen the implementation of the GST regime and compensate states for shortfalls in revenue collection as a consequence of such execution. The central government is now reneging on this sov-

ereign commitment to the states. This constitutes a sledgehammer assault on the federal structure of the nation. Parliament would naturally be very agitated for Article 1 of the Constitution states that India that is Bharat shall be a Union of states.

However, the most crucial issue that will dominate Parliament is the continuing Chinese aggression and occupation of Indian territory. While initially denying and obfuscating both the fact and extent of Chinese transgression into Indian territory even at the level of the Prime Minister in terms of the statement he made at the all Party meeting, the NDA/BJP government has now been compelled albeit reluctantly to accept that the situation is as if not more serious than 1962. While Parliament will unanimously express solidarity with our brave soldiers who were martyred in the Galwan Valley and other places there would be very hard and searching questions as to whether India is prepared for combating a four-front national security nightmare. The China-Pakistan axis, Covid-19 and a collapsed economy and a possible upsurge of left wing extremism in the red corridor from Tirupati to Pashupati, given the current antagonistic relationship with Nepal. Most of all even four months down the line government has not answered a fundamental question — why have the Chinese intruded into our land? Is it anger over some unfulfilled commitments given in Wuhan and Mamallapuram?

India is vulnerable like never before. No amount of cynical headline management using the unfortunate death of a cine actor will deflect from an almost existential crisis that stares us in the face.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

What Parliament must examine very closely is whether the assumptions that underpin the 30.42 lakh crores Union Budget passed on the last day of the budget session are still valid

LETTERS

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health often gets sidelined when compared to other physical problems (*Accept mental health problem: Experts, DC, Sept. 10*). Mental well-being is as important as physical well-being. When we don't shy from visiting a general physician, why does visiting a psychiatrist become a problem?

Nida Nazli
Hyderabad

RHEA'S BAIL PLEA

As per the Rhea Chakraborty's lawyer says Section 27A (financing illicit traffic and harboring offenders) is not applicable to the actor as no drugs or psychotropic substance was seized from her. One has to see if putting 27A in the chargesheet against her will be drawback for her bail.

P.J. David
Hyderabad

COVID TASK FORCE

A task force by the Telangana state government (*Task force to probe hefty hospital bills, DC, Sept. 10*) is a very good beginning. It should first probe if the patients being treated were really tested positive or if the hospitals were treating those with some other sickness as Covid patients and discharging them after they recovered after a few days with Covid negative certificate. Then there must be a probe on medicines being used by these hospitals which inflated the bills so much.

J. Vijay Kumar
Secunderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Hijackers extend deadline

BERNE, SWITZERLAND, Sept. 10

The International Red Cross Committee announced early today that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine has delayed its ultimatum for the proposed exchange deal for the liberation of more than 400 passengers of three hijacked airlines. The Geneva-based committee told the Swiss National News Agency it had word from its special negotiator in Amman, that the ultimatum originally set for 0830 hrs IST today was delayed indefinitely. The message was relayed to the Swiss Foreign Ministry and to the three other countries involved — the US, Britain and West Germany.

Abhijit Bhattacharyya



Throw Chinese out of India's economy; war is not an option

As the tense standoff with China in Ladakh worsens, with shots fired at the Line of Actual Control for the first time in 45 years, the battle drums are beating in some quarters and there is loose talk of a "short war" in the next few months. That is ill-advised, and a reality check is in order.

The September 5 *New York Times* had a disturbing front page headline: "Pandemic quiets India's streets and punctures its high hopes". The story read: "Not long ago, India's future looked entirely different... A sense of malaise is creeping... (as) China is increasingly muscling into Indian territory". September 4's *Wall Street Journal* was dismal too: "Economies reel in developing world".

Those talking of war have no idea of the economic disaster it will inflict. India's ruling class has never fully understood, or effectively dealt with, the Communist Party of China, and wishful thinkers actually hoped the CPC would offer a magic wand for India's economic uplift. That was never to be: ever since 1971 at least, when Henry Kissinger and his boss Richard Nixon reached out to Beijing, China's focus was firmly set on America. No

matter that the CPC constitution's original 1954 preamble clearly named the US as "enemy number one".

Where did India figure? Nowhere! The Han Chinese saw it as an "inferior" neighbour that could be used (and discarded) as a crutch in some sectors, as a "market of consumers, crazy for foreign goods; industry devoid of technology upgrades; capital and investment-starved; and banks riddled with mega fraudsters and bad loans".

Amid all this, an invisible Han-produced chemical/biological warfare-type salvo was enough to extinguish all enterprise, set India on the road to ruin, and knocked the aspiring power off its growth trajectory. "The economy of India shrank by 23.9 per cent a quarter, its worst performance since the 1996 figures," *WSJ* reported. And things will worsen the longer the Chinese-virus pandemic lasts. As India's resources to protect its workers and companies is limited, the prospect gets gloomier. "While rich countries can print more currency or take on debt at low cost, such a move by less fortunate nations" like India (will) enhance financial instability.

See the larger picture again. Latin America lost 26.5 million jobs, but one

country, India, sources suggest, lost 40 million-plus jobs. Brazil began one of the largest aid programmes... giving \$100 monthly to individuals, \$200 to families; and the US gave \$600 to jobless workers, in addition to other benefits. Has India done anything comparable? No, because it doesn't have the resources. India's economics has collapsed like a house of cards, in less than six months of the Chinese virus.

The Chinese have put India squarely on the mat, internally and externally. Their so-called "investment" resorted to long, deep penetration of India's private HDFC and ICICI Banks. They are everywhere, from telecoms to automobiles, with the likes of Great Wall Auto waiting to enter, expand and finish off established Indian carmakers.

The PLA's territory-penetration targets India's defences, and compels New Delhi to spend billions more in dollars to buy military hardware for high-altitude terrain. War, understandably, implies huge expenditure. For India, however, the dilemma is rapidly depleting revenue and rising expenditure. Given this background, India must not even think about a "physical war". Instead, tackle the enemy through a "finance war". It must not fall into the

Chinese trap. No one can predict the fallout of a war. If it lasts 15 days, for example, it may cause the death of upto 15,000 soldiers and three times more casualties.

Further, where will India fight? On its own territory — some of which has been occupied by force by the PLA? According to some calculations, 1,000 sq km has gone to the Chinese in this century itself: Depsang 900 sq km; Pangong 65 sq km; Chushul 20 sq km; Galwan 20 sq km. India fought to regain its own territory at Haji Pir in 1965. In Kargil 1999 too, India fought for its own land. There were mind-boggling casualties in both clashes with Pakistan.

With China, things will be far, far worse, further damaging the economy. That is not prudent, and a change in strategy is called for.

First, hit the Chinese companies lock, stock and barrel, target investments and whatever else in India. Use economics and finance as a tool to tackle the Hans' malevolence-cum-perfidy. War will destroy whatever wealth India does possess now.

Politically, too, it will create huge turbulence. The month-long 1962 war destroyed Jawaharlal Nehru. One hopes 2020 will not see a repeat. The

1962 war triggered an emergency over the external threat, followed by a draconian Gold Control Act. The 22-day conflict paved the way for demonetisation on June 6, 1966, followed by all-round economic dislocation. The 17-day 1971 war led to another economic recession, and then the 1975 Emergency which almost derailed Indian democracy.

India must therefore take the economics route to curb, deport, expel and de-couple from China. Not through bloodshed. The latter will inflict a massive body blow to India's defences, economics and democracy. Draconian laws are bound to follow due to the all-round external threat and internal dissent, and a destruction of India's polity, society and economy.

India needs to act fast. In October 1962 Nehru wrongly asked an ill-prepared military to throw China out of its territory. Don't do it today. Instead, first throw all non-military Chinese out of India's trade, telecoms, transport and tourism... and every other sector immediately.

The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College. The views expressed are personal.

quick BITES

| INDICATORS | | % |
|------------------------|------------|-------|
| Sensex | 38,840.32 | 1.69 |
| Nifty 50 | 11,449.25 | 1.52 |
| S&P 500* | 3,406.29 | 0.22 |
| Dollar (₹) | 73.45 | 0.12 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 95.56 | -0.29 |
| Euro (₹) | 86.91 | -0.34 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 52,391.287 | 0.54 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 40.59 | -0.20 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 6.053 | 0.064 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 0.710 | 0.007 |

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Peak power demand crosses last year's level

Peak power demand is back to normal as it has touched 174.33 GW on Wednesday, surpassing the highest level of 173.15 GW in September last year, showing spurt in commercial and industrial activities. The peak power demand met had reached its previous highest level of 173.15 GW on Sept. 9 last year, as per the power ministry data. Peak power demand met is the highest energy supply during the day.

Citi to have first woman CEO of a Wall Street bank



Citigroup said Jane Fraser would succeed Michael Corbat as the bank's next chief executive, making Fraser the first woman to lead a Wall Street bank. Fraser is currently head of Citi's global consumer banking division, a major part of the bank that includes checking and savings accounts but also Citi's huge credit card business. She's been with Citi for 16 years. Fraser will be the first woman head of Wall Street's big six banks.

Ravi Raju to head Nomura's wealth management biz



Nomura, Asia's global investment bank, said it has appointed Indian-origin Ravi Raju as head of international wealth management. In this newly created role, Raju will be responsible for expanding Nomura's wealth management business in Asia ex-Japan. Raju will be based in Singapore.

Australia allows import of Indian pomegranates

India will now be able to export pomegranates to Australia for the first time if certain biosecurity conditions are met, a senior diplomat said. The development comes after the completion of an import protocol for fresh pomegranates from India, which followed an import risk assessment involving significant collaboration and discussion between Indian and Australian authorities.



Govt awaits opportune time to enter market 26 PSUs chosen for divestment

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

It is official now. The government has revealed that 26 public sector undertakings (PSUs) have been chosen for privatisation as of now. Out of the shortlisted PSUs, 23 have received the Cabinet approval recently. The move is part of the government's efforts to meet its ambitious Rs 2.1-lakh crore divestment target for the current fiscal.

Responding a right to information (RTI) query sought by Chandigarh-based activist Aman Sethi, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam), under the Ministry of Finance, on August 24 said, "There are 26 public sector undertakings in the list as on the date so far in which the Government of India is pursuing strategic divestment."

The activist raised two more specific queries; about the percentage of shares the government plans to divest; and if Uco Bank is also included in the sell-off list. The Dipam responded that the percentage of shares would be decided according to the market conditions and that no information was available with the department about the Uco Bank issue.

Sensing heightened risk to revenue from the economic slowdown and the evolving pandemic conditions, the government has set a disinvestment target



LINED UP FOR SELLOFF

- ▶ Project & Development India

▶ Engineering Projects India

▶ Pawan Hans

▶ B&R Company

▶ Air India

▶ Central Electronics

▶ Cement Corp India (Nayagaon unit)

▶ Indian Medicine & Pharmaceuticals Corporation

▶ Salem Steel Plant, Bhadravati Steel Plant, Durgapur Steel Plant

▶ Ferro Scrap Nigam

▶ NDMC, Nagarnar Steel Plant

▶ Bharat Earth Movers

▶ HLL Lifecare
- ▶ Bharat Petroleum Corporation

▶ Shipping Corporation of India

▶ Container Corporation of India

▶ Nilachal Ispat Nigam

▶ Hindustan Prefab

▶ Bharat Pumps and Compressors

▶ Scooters India

▶ Hindustan Newsprint

▶ Karnataka Antibiotics & Pharmaceuticals

▶ Bengal Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals

▶ Hindustan Antibiotics

▶ Indian Tourism Development Corporation

▶ Hindustan Fluorocarbon

Source: Dipam

of Rs 2.10 lakh crore for the 2020-21 fiscal. Of this, Rs 1.20 lakh crore is to come from disinvestment of public sector undertakings and another Rs 90,000 crore from stake sale in other financial institutions.

In July, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced privatisation of about 23 public sector companies, which had already received cabinet approval. Elaborating about disinvestment

plans, the minister had said the government wanted to sell stake in public sector companies when it would fetch the right price.

"There are already nearly 22-23 such PSUs which have been cleared by the Cabinet for disinvestment. The intent is clear that at least for those which had already been cleared by the Cabinet, we will have to disinvest," the finance minister had said.

Flawless 102-carat stone could fetch \$30 mn



JILL SERJEANT SEPT. 10

One of the world's rarest diamonds, about the size of an egg or a large lollipop, is going up for auction next month and is expected to fetch \$12 million to \$30 million.

Sotheby's said on Thursday that the 102.39-carat diamond, a flawless white sparkler, was the second-largest oval diamond of its kind to be offered at auction. The largest, a 118.28-carat diamond, set a record \$30.8 million price when it was sold in 2013.

Only seven such diamonds, known in the trade as D colour flawless or internally flawless white diamonds, over 100 carats have previously been sold at auction.

"More and more people have come to understand that something billions of years old and of the size of a lollipop can store as much value as a Rembrandt self-portrait or a Basquiat," Gary Schuler, worldwide chairman of jewellery at Sotheby's, said in a statement.

"Diamonds of this calibre and size have sold anywhere between \$11.9 million and \$33.7 million," said Quig Bruning, head of Sotheby's New York jewellery department.

Sotheby's said the gem was cut from a 271-carat rough discovered at the Victor Mine in the Canadian province of Ontario in 2018 and cut and polished for more than a year.

Two of the most famous large diamonds—the Koh-i-Noor and The Cullinan 1—belong to the British monarchy and form part of the British Crown Jewels.

—Reuters

India's fuel demand dips most since April

New Delhi, Sept 10: India's fuel demand in August posted its biggest decline since April as local lockdowns put brakes on economic activity and transportation, official data showed on Thursday. Petroleum product sales fell to 14.39 million tonnes in August, down 7.5 per cent over the previous month and about 16 per cent from a year earlier, data from the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) showed.

The decline in August was the sixth consecutive year-on-year slide. Fuel demand had slumped by a record 48.6 per cent in April to 9.4 million tonnes as the government imposed a nationwide lockdown in an attempt to curb the spread of coronavirus.

It recovered in the subsequent two months but has been falling again since July, on a monthly basis. Sale of diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country, fell 12 per cent to 4.84 million tonnes in August from 5.51 million tonnes in the previous month.

On an annual basis, the demand for diesel declined by 20.7 per cent. Petrol sales fell 7.4 per cent year-on-year to 2.38 million tonnes although it rose 5.3 per cent from 2.26 million tonnes in July as commuters preferred driving to using public transportation. LPG sales were down five per cent year-on-year to 2.2 million tonnes, while kerosene demand fell 43 per cent to 1.32,000 tonnes. Month-on-month, the sale was almost flat. Industry sources said reaching pre-COVID-19 sales may take at least 3-4 months. There is likely to be a pick-up in demand with the onset of the festive season in October-November but reaching pre-COVID-19 levels would not be before new year, they said.

Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan had previously stated that sales would return to normal by festival season but the local lockdowns being imposed in several states has prolonged the return to normalcy. Naphtha sales at 1.07 million tonnes was down 16 per cent over July demand. —PTI

India to take ₹30 L cr hit from Covid in medium-term

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

The pandemic would have caused a permanent loss of Rs 30 lakh crore to the economy in the medium-term. This is much higher than the loss suffered by several other countries in the Asia-Pacific, finds Crisil.

The rating agency expects the pandemic to have caused a permanent loss of 13 per cent of real GDP over the medium-term. In nominal terms, this amounts to Rs 30 lakh crore. The loss is far higher than a 3 per cent permanent hit to GDP in Asia-Pacific economies, other than China and India, estimated by S&P Global in June.

Catching-up with the pre-pandemic trend value of real GDP would require average real GDP growth to surge to 13 per cent annually for the next three fiscals—a feat never before accomplished by India.

Crisil has also revised India's real GDP growth forecast for fiscal 2021 to -9 per cent from -5 per cent projected in May. "With the pandemic's peak not yet in sight and the government not providing adequate direct fiscal support, the downside risks to our earlier forecast have materialised," it said, adding, that if Covid-19 were to peak out in Sept.-Oct., GDP growth could turn mildly positive towards the fiscal end.

Over 85% MSMEs still face liquidity crunch

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

Despite Rs 1.61 lakh crore getting sanctioned under Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), more than 85 per cent of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are still facing liquidity crunch.

As per the finance ministry data, till September 3, a total of Rs 1,61,017 crore or 53 per cent of the Rs 3 lakh crore ECLGS scheme has been sanctioned by different banks for the MSME sector reeling under the slowdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Of this, disbursements stood at Rs 1,13,713 lakh crore or 37 per cent.

However, these loans have been sanctioned for only those MSMEs which already had a loan outstanding with the banks.

"Of the total 6 crore MSMEs, 85 per cent do not have access to the formal banking system. The large majority has been facing issues even before the pandemic. The pandemic further enhanced their liquidity crunch. Among the MSMEs having access to formal credit, those who had a loan outstanding at the time of lockdown only were eligible for additional credit," said Meghna Suryakumar, founder and CEO of Credivatch.

The finance ministry data says that 41 lakh accounts have been sanctioned loans and 24 lakh have received it. The data does not specify the number of MSMEs which have been sanctioned or received credit. Even if



each account is counted as an MSME, only 6.8 per cent of the MSMEs have received the additional credit.

"In the first half of this fiscal, hardly any new loan has been disbursed to new MSMEs. New entrepreneurs with fresh loan requirements too are looking at fast sanction and disbursement of loans with 2 per cent interest subvention. I hope and pray the banks announce some special loan schemes for the second half of this fiscal. Liberal loan programmes for existing MSMEs outside the institutional credit domain as on February 29, 2020 should be immediately planned and announced," said Rajive Chawla, chairman, lamSMEofIndia.

Suryakumar finds a ray of hope coming from the fintech space. According to her, a few fintech players like Lendingkart and Capital Float have started financing the MSMEs outside the purview of formal banking. "Currently, their presence is quite small. But in the next five years, they would be financing a larger share of the unbanked MSMEs. The ongoing digitisation process will provide these MSMEs access to digital credit," she said.

In order to get there, MSMEs will have to first survive the pandemic.

PM launches ₹20,000 cr fisheries scheme

New Delhi, Sept. 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday launched Rs 20,050-crore Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) to boost production and exports in the fisheries sector as part of the government's aim to double farmers' income.

Through video conference, the Prime Minister also launched several other initiatives in the fisheries and animal husbandry sectors in Bihar, a state which is heading for the assembly polls in October-November.

Modi launched a mobile app e-Gopala that will provide solutions to farmers on livestock related issues and inaugurated Semen Station with state-of-the-art facilities in Pune with an investment of Rs 84.27 crore on 75 acres of land made available by the Bihar government.

After the launch, the Prime Minister interacted with farmers focusing on the livestock and fisheries sector. The PMMSY is a flagship scheme for focused and sustainable development of fisheries sector in the country with an estimated investment of Rs 20,050 crore for its implementation during



Narendra Modi

2020-21 to 2024-25 as part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat package.

The investment of Rs 20,050 crore under PMMSY is the highest ever in the fisheries sector, the PMO said on Wednesday.

Out of this, an investment of about Rs 12,340 crore is proposed for beneficiary-oriented activities in marine, inland fisheries and aquaculture and about Rs 7,710 crore investment for fisheries infrastructure.

The PMMSY aims at enhancing fish production by an additional 70 lakh tonne by 2024-25, increasing fisheries export earnings to Rs 1 lakh crore by

AVANTI FEEDS SEES CENTRE'S BLUE REVOLUTION BOOSTING BIZ

ASHUTOSH JOSHI SEPT. 10

Avanti Feeds Ltd, one of India's biggest exporters of seafood, says the government's ambitious plan to promote fisheries will boost its business.

The Hyderabad-based company, in which Thai Union Group Pcl holds a 24 per cent stake, recommends farmers should group together to benefit from the scale of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promised investment. The so-called blue revolution has an outlay of about Rs 20,000 crore (\$2.7 billion) on infrastructure, including cold storage and processing facilities, and Modi on Thursday rolled out an app for farmers to get market information.

"Ultimately, the backbone of this industry is the farmer, if you support him, everything will grow," Avanti Feeds's joint managing director C. Ramachandra Rao said on a call with ana-

lysts late Wednesday.

The programme is part of Modi's stimulus to revive the economy from a coronavirus-induced slump. It aims to more than double per capita consumption of fish in India to 12 kg by March 2025, and targets to generate about 5.5 million jobs.

Avanti Feeds, which exports more than two-thirds of its shrimps to the US, is looking for supply contracts with other countries, including China. For the three months through June, about 26 per cent of its exports were to Asian countries, with China being the major destination.

"We are working with Chinese importers to develop value-added products," Alluri Nikhilesh, executive director at the company's frozen foods units, said on the call. "China can become a dominant importer in the next few years."

—Bloomberg

Maserati unveils supercar after 15-yr gap

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, SEPT. 10

Italian super sports car-maker Maserati, owned by Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, on Thursday unveiled the new MC20, its first supercar in 15 years, in Modena.

Maserati's last supercar, the MC12, which cost almost \$800,000 was stopped being produced in 2005 after making only 50 units and bought by that few globally. In 2018, one MC12 sold at an RM Sotheby's auction for \$2.5 million.

Prices for the new MC20 car, which will be available globally next year, will start at about \$210,000. The supercar's production launch is scheduled for the end of this year, and Maserati is already accepting orders.



"The MC20 is more than a supercar. It's set the cornerstone to build Maserati for the future," Maserati CEO Davide Grasso said.

The new halo model will also offer electric, convertible and motorsport variants in beginning in 2022.

With a body made largely from lightweight carbon fiber and aluminum, the new Nettuno engine, a 630-horsepower V6 with torque of 730 Nm, delivers

0-100 km/h acceleration in under 2.9 seconds and a top speed over 325 km an hour. This engine signals Maserati's return to producing its own power units after a hiatus of more than 20 years.

The Maserati MC20 is part of a long-term plan by Fiat Chrysler to rebuild Maserati's once strong reputation for performance.

"It was critical of our strategy to start this new era with the launch of a

TRIUMPH ROCKET 3 GT BIKE LAUNCHED AT ₹18.4 LAKH

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, SEPT. 10

British superbike manufacturer Triumph Motorcycles, on Thursday launched its ultimate tourer, the all-new Rocket 3 GT in India priced at Rs 18.40 lakh at pan India showroom.

Well, that price is almost equivalent to a brand new Honda Civic. The company

ny already offers the roadster version R in India that was launched at Rs 18 lakh. Similar to the R, the GT too is being brought to the country through the CBU route. Deliveries of the new bike will start by the end of this month.

The new Rocket 3 GT is powered by the same 2,500cc, three-cylinder, liquid-cooled engine from the R that produces 167hp and a massive 221Nm of torque.



sports car," Grasso said, adding that "a sports car

that will bring us back to where we started."

China's mobile shipments down 15.6% in August

Shanghai, Sept. 10: Smartphone shipments in China fell 15.6 per cent in August compared with a year earlier, government data released on Thursday showed.

The numbers show consumer demand for handsets in China remains low, and that companies such as Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, Xiaomi Corp and Apple Inc will have a tougher time than before convincing customers to buy their latest products.

Phone makers shipped 24.4 million handsets in July, down from 33 million a year earlier, according to the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, a state-backed think tank.

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Natl badminton camp called off

New Delhi: The national badminton camp in Hyderabad for next month's Thomas and Uber Cup Final was on Thursday scrapped after it became clear that players would not get any relaxation on the mandatory seven-day quarantine period. The camp was originally scheduled to start on September 7 and conclude on September 27 for the event set for October 3 to 11 in Aarhus, Denmark. It was proposed by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) at the SAI Pullela Gopichand Academy. Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, SAI wanted all the 26 players to be in quarantine for at least a week before training, an idea which was rejected by the players and Badminton Association of India (BAI). SAI had said that players will have to stay and train at the Gopichand academy to ensure greater health safety amid the raging pandemic. However, top players, who are mostly from Hyderabad, were against the idea and voiced their reluctance to stay at the academy to SAI in a video conference. — *PTI*

Vaccine will not guarantee Games

Laussane: Amid uncertainty about planning the Tokyo Olympics, IOC president Thomas Bach said that progress with vaccines and rapid testing for Covid-19 would not be the complete answer for staging the rescheduled Games. "They will not be the silver bullet but they can greatly facilitate the organisation of the Games," Bach said after an International Olympic Committee board meeting. Bach declined to speculate on the Tokyo Olympics being held without fans. "We don't know how the world looks like tomorrow. So how can you expect from us to know how the world looks in 320 days from today?" Bach further added. — *AP*

Jonty to coach Sweden post IPL

Stockholm: Former South Africa international Jonty Rhodes will be moving to Sweden with his family after the IPL to take charge as head coach of the country's national team, the Swedish Cricket Federation (SCF) has announced. The 51-year-old Rhodes is currently in Dubai for the IPL as the fielding coach of Kings XI Punjab. "Swedish Cricket Federation to invest in junior cricket, high performance & growth through the appointment of South African cricket great, Jonty Rhodes as head coach," SCF said in a statement. Rhodes said he is excited about the fresh challenge he will face in a country not known for its cricket. "I am really excited to relocate to Sweden with my family and work together with the Swedish Cricket community," Rhodes said. — *PTI*

Panghal bats for formative coach

New Delhi: Asian Games champion boxer Amit Panghal has requested the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to allow the inclusion of his formative coach Anil Dhankar in the ongoing national camp in Patiala. Panghal said he has sent across his proposal formally to both SAI and the Sports Ministry but hasn't got any response so far. "I can only request and I have done that. I am waiting for some response, haven't got any as yet. The last mail that was sent by me to the ministry was on Monday," Panghal said. Panghal has regularly credited Dhankar for shaping his career in the early years, and had even pleaded for a Dronacharya award for the coach. — *PTI*

Live on TV

CRICKET

England vs Australia 1st ODI from 5.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

FORMULA ONE

Italian Grand Prix Practice-1 from 2.25 pm; Practice-2 from 6.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

US OPEN TENNIS

Women's Doubles Final from 9.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 2, HD

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Valabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-53. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Aditya Sinha

VICTOR AZARENKA

Serena, the other Mum, too into US semis

New York, Sept. 10: Serena Williams battled into a US Open semifinal showdown with Victoria Azarenka on Wednesday as top men's seeds Dominic Thiem and Daniil Medvedev booked their spots in the last four. Williams, seeded third, came from a set down to overcome unseeded Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova and keep alive her bid for a 24th singles Grand Slam title at Flushing Meadows. Later, Azarenka blew away Belgium's Elise Mertens as she continues her hunt for a first Grand Slam title in seven years. Serena's comeback included two astonishing shots against her left hand that contributed to winning points. "At that point I was fighting so hard. I was just trying to do everything I can whether righty or lefty," she said. A sluggish start saw the American lose the first 6-4, but she fought back to take the next two 6-3, 6-2, in 2hr 12min inside Arthur Ashe Stadium. "I never give up and you know I just gotta keep going," Serena futher added. Serena smashed 20 aces, the most she has had in eight years, taking her tally for the tournament to 64 so far. The record for the most number of aces in a US Open in the women's singles is 70, set by Serena in 1999 when she won for the first time. "Sometimes when I'm serving, I just tell myself, I don't care if my arm falls off, I'm going to keep serving," she said. Serena is looking to match Margaret Court's record for the most number of singles Grand Slam wins. It has been more than three years since she won her 23rd at the 2017 Australian Open — when she was already pregnant with daughter Olympia. Serena has come close since, reaching four major finals only to come away empty handed. In the last four she will renew her rivalry with Azarenka who demolished Mertens 6-1, 6-0 in just 1hr 13 min. Serena defeated Azarenka in the final of the US Open in 2012 and 2013. The last few years of Azarenka's career have



Victoria Azarenka celebrates after winning her women's singles quarterfinal match against Elise Mertens at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on Wednesday. Azarenka won 6-1, 6-0.

been interrupted by a custody battle over her son who was born in 2016. Azarenka said she found it "hard to accept losses" when she was young and at the top of her game, but was now benefiting from a more philosophical attitude. "I enjoy the moment no matter what it is. I take life as it comes," Azarenka told reporters. "It took me a long road to come here with a lot of struggles, a lot of understanding, forcing me to find this route, this path, if you can say that. But I'm here and I'm happy," she further added. In the men's draw, Russia's third seed Medvedev downed compa-

THE RESULTS

Men's singles quarterfinals: Daniil Medvedev (RUS x3) bt Andrey Rublev (RUS x10) 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 7-6 (7/5); Dominic Thiem (AUT x2) bt Alex De Minaur (AUS x21) 6-1, 6-2, 6-4.

Women's singles quarterfinals: Serena Williams (USA x3) bt Tsvetana Pironkova (BUL) 4-6, 6-3, 6-2; Victoria Azarenka (BLR) bt Elise Mertens (BEL x16) 6-1, 6-0.

triot and childhood friend Andrey Rublev 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 7-6 (7/5).

Twenty-two-year-old Rublev raced to a 5-1 lead in the first-set tie-break before Medvedev, last year's US Open runner-up, hauled back to win it 8-6 with an ace.

Medvedev, 24, smashed 16 aces and won 89 per cent of first-serve points. He made 75 per cent of returns to Rublev's 54 per cent. "One point decided two sets so it was a really tough match and Andrey was playing unbelievable actually," Medvedev said.

Medvedev will play second seed Thiem who demolished Australia's Alex de Minaur, seeded 21st, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4.

"I had a great feeling from the first moment on," said the Austrian.

Fifth seed Alexander Zverev of Germany faces Spain's 20th seed Pablo Carreno Busta in the competition's other semi-final. The disqualification of Novak Djokovic for accidentally hitting a line official with a ball during the last 16 means the US Open will crown a first-time Grand Slam winner on Sunday.

— *AFP*

SINNER DOWNS PHILLIPP IN GENERALI OPEN

Kitzbuehel (Austria), Sept. 10: Jannik Sinner defeated former two-time champion Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-3, 6-2 at the Generali Open Tuesday, a week after both players lost in the opening round of the U.S. Open. Sinner, the 2019 ATP Next Generation finals champion, won 85 per cent of the points on his first serve to keep his perfect record against Kohlschreiber, after also beating the German player in straight sets in Vienna last year. Kohlschreiber, who resides in Kitzbuehel and won the title here in 2015 and again two years later, appeared at the tournament for the 10th straight year. The 44th-ranked Sinner set up a second-round match against Laslo Djere. The Serb rallied from 4-0 down in the final set to defeat the eighth-seeded Albert Ramos Vinolas 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (2). Also, Feliciano Lopez downed Pierre-Hugues Herbert 6-4, 6-3; Federico Delbonis won an all-Argentine duel with Juan Ignacio Londero 6-4, 6-0; and Jordan Thompson outlasted fellow Australian John Millman 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (2) in just under three hours. Swiss qualifier Marc-Andrea Huesler got the better of Emil Ruusuvuori 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (2) and set up a match against Fabio Fognini. — *AP*

Medvedev will play second seed Thiem who demolished Australia's Alex de Minaur, seeded 21st, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4.

"I had a great feeling from the first moment on," said the Austrian.

Fifth seed Alexander Zverev of Germany faces Spain's 20th seed Pablo Carreno Busta in the competition's other semi-final.

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— *AFP*

Lowry scores high as Raptors bully Celtics

Miami, Sept. 10: With their season on the brink and title repeat hopes in jeopardy, the Toronto Raptors outgotted Boston for a dramatic series-tying 125-122 double-overtime triumph Wednesday in the NBA playoffs. Kyle Lowry led Toronto with 33 points and Norman Powell added 23 off the bench in an emotional thriller that resembled the intensity of a heavy-weight boxing matchup. The defending champion Raptors equalised the best-of-seven Eastern Conference semifinal with a winner-take-all

game seven set for Friday, a conference final against Miami awaiting the winner.

Meanwhile, Kawhi Leonard finished an assist shy of his first playoff triple-double and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Denver Nuggets 96-85 in Game 4 to move a step closer to their first Western Conference finals.

Leonard garnered 30 points, 11 rebounds, four steals and two blocked shots. Reserve Montrezl Harrell added 15 points to help the Clippers take a 3-1 lead. They can close out the Nuggets on Friday night.

— *Agencies*

Smith sings Virat praises, says best

Manchester, Sept. 10: Australian run-machine Steve Smith has rated his great Indian rival Virat Kohli as the best ODI batsman in world cricket currently.

The two batsmen, who will face off in the upcoming IPL and also during India's tour of Australia later this year, have been fierce rivals on the field but share cordial relations off it.

Smith, who is currently in England for the three-match ODI series against the hosts starting from Friday, said this during an Instagram session with fans.

When a fan asked the 31-year-old Australian to name the best ODI batsman, Smith had no hesitation in taking Kohli's name.

The Indian captain is currently the leading scorer in ODIs among active cricketers with 11867 runs at an average of 59.34. He has 43 hundreds to his name and is only seven away from surpassing Sachin Tendulkar's world record for most hundreds in ODIs.

During the session, Smith described Kohli's RCB teammate and South African great AB de Villiers as a "freak".

Smith, who is set to represent Rajasthan Royals in IPL 2020, said India's KL Rahul and Sanju Samson are the two players to watch out for.

— *PTI*

Morgan and team set to take on Oz

London, Sept. 10: Eoin Morgan is hoping for spinning pitches during England's one-day series against Australia as the world champions plan for the 2023 World Cup in India.

The England captain is anticipating a gentle turner in Manchester, where the fierce rivals will play three one-day internationals over the next week, with weather conditions conducive to slow bowlers.

England's rise to top spot in the 50-over rankings was built around posting big totals on good batting tracks and their tournament triumph last summer

ACU ARRIVES IN DUBAI TO KEEP IPL IN CHECK

New Delhi, Sept. 10: Preventing corrupt approaches through social media will be the focus of BCCI's anti-corruption unit (ACU) in the upcoming closed-door IPL, ahead of which the watchdog will educate players through video-counselling rather than physical sessions.

An eight-member BCCI team, led by Ajit Singh, landed in Dubai on Tuesday and is in the middle of their six-day quarantine. Singh has already said the IPL, beginning September 19, will be more secure than earlier as it is being conducted in a strict bio-bubble.

There will no crowds at the stadium and fans won't be allowed to throng the team hotel. There have been instances when corruptors masqueraded as fans to approach players.

The ACU will be speaking to all the eight teams separately and the sessions will be more useful for the younger players who are not exposed to international cricket and the glamour of IPL. The established players are already aware of the ACU protocols.

— *PTI*

was driven by their pace attack.

But with the next World Cup due to be held in India in three years' time, as well as a T20 World Cup there next year, Morgan is embracing the need for change.

"It's a huge benefit to us playing at Old Trafford, particularly if we play on the wicket I think we're going to play on which will hopefully be slow and take a lot of turn," he said.

The three-match ODI series starts on Friday, following a Twenty20 series in Southampton, which England won 2-1.

— *AFP*

| NUMBERS GAME | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| AUSTRALIA-ENGLAND IN ONE DAYERS SUMMARY OF RESULTS | | | | |
| Venue Played | Aus won | Eng won | Tied | N/R |
| Australia | 71 | 45 | 25 | 1 |
| England | 70 | 31 | 35 | 22 |
| India | 3 | 2 | 1 | - |
| South Africa | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| Emirates | 2 | 1 | 1 | - |
| West Indies | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| Total | 149 | 82 | 62 | 23 |
| Day/Night matches | 70 | 43 | 25 | 2 |
| Last five matches | 5 | 1 | 4 | - |

HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS:

- Australia: 342-9 in 50 overs at Melbourne 14-02-2015
- England: 481-6 in 50 overs at Nottingham 19-06-2018

LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS:

- Australia: 70 in 25.2 overs at Birmingham 04-06-1977
- England: 86 in 32.4 overs at Manchester 14-06-2001

HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES:

- Australia: 161* Shane Watson at Melbourne 16-01-2011
- England: 180 Jason Roy at Melbourne 14-01-2018

BEST BOWLING PERFORMANCES:

- Australia: 7-20 Andy Bichel at Port Elizabeth 02-03-2003
- England: 6-45 Chris Woakes at Brisbane 30-01-2011

— *S. PERVEZ QAISER*

Dhoni braces for another IPL hit in adversity



Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

If a question were to be put forth to Indian cricket fans as to who they would choose as the best captain of all eight teams participating in the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2020, the answer will be a no brainer. Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the recently retired former Indian skipper and, considered a sagacious and most experienced captain, will walk away with majority of the votes. Dhoni's record as a captain in the short formats of the game speak for themselves. With three

International Cricket Council (ICC) championships and an equal number of wins leading Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the IPL, his reputation to lead teams to success is unparalleled. He is known to be tough when it matters, humane when his compatriots need a shoulder, and cool despite any degree of heat created in a pressure cooker situation. His resume would make him the ideal candidate for leader of the decade; the many pros notched therein outweighing the cons.

Thala (the Head) as he is called can do no wrong

according to CSK fans. To them, he is like the animated, mythical character, Obelix who was born with a magic potion as part of his blood stream and could run through mammoth armies on his own. Blessed with a keen intuition and well honed instincts, Dhoni's super powers as a hero will be tested when he steps out for the toss in one of the fabulous stadiums dotting the stark desert of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Even as CSK step out onto the practice facilities, Dhoni's mind will be in overwork mode to figure out the best combination needed at the start of the tournament.

If the loss of Suresh Raina has weighed heavily on the probable combination of the team, the withdrawal of Harbhajan

Singh (due to personal reasons) must have put the yellow fellows a few more steps back. CSK fans have yet to assimilate what it would mean for their favourite team to take the field without Chinna Thala (little head) as Raina is fondly referred to.

Both Raina and Harbhajan get a lot to the undisturbed table of CSK, in different ways. With 5368 runs scored in twelve editions of the IPL, the left hander stands second on the list of top scorers, 44 runs behind Virat Kohli and above Rohit Sharma who follows at number three.

More than the runs, Raina's effervescence on the field (with brilliant catching and more) plays a big role in constantly inspiring the team.

Harbhajan, who came

into the CSK fold after a long stint with Mumbai Indians (MI), is the man Dhoni would trust most when squeezing the flow of runs matter. With an economy rate of less than 7.5, the crafty off-spinner is the best option in the death overs.

More importantly, Bhajji, as he is known, is the only full-time exponent of off-spin in CSK's ranks which will make planning difficult for Dhoni when it comes to bowling to a team packed with left handed batsmen.

With medium pacer Deepak Chahar and middle order batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad lodged in the sick bay, having tested positive for Covid, Dhoni's problems will be compounded when he sits to pick the best combination for the opening games. Getting a

good start is imperative, especially when it comes to high pressure tournaments like the IPL where there is a lot at stake. To get a disturbed combination into the groove and keep them mentally fit will be the super skippers biggest task on hand.

While on captaincy, Dhoni will be aware that he needs to be supremely fit to last the entire tournament as his able (former) deputy, Raina, is out of the mix.

With Harbhajan, former MI skipper, also out, the CSK management will probably look at Dwayne Bravo or Shane Watson (both having captaincy experience) as likely deputies.

With Bravo (about to hit 37 years of age) and Watson, at 39 years (the same age as Dhoni), team

CSK will continue to be top heavy with seniors playing a youthful game.

In 2018, Dhoni led CSK to their third IPL victory, the team coming back after a two-year hiatus.

The team, whose average age was a shade above 30 years, surprised everyone by winning the final thanks to a magnificent effort by Watson, the oldest member of the team. Those who called the team 'Dad's Army' were made to eat their words thanks to a motivational effort by the skipper.

Today, Dhoni is faced with a similar challenge of making his team rise from adversity.

For someone who has been there and done that, there could be no better motivation for the Thala who thrives on such situations.

