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SHORT TAKES

Woman killed in road accident

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

A 25-year-old woman was killed after a private bus ran over her near Chromepet on Monday night.

The deceased, identified as, Vaishnavi, 25, a resident of Arumugapettai in Walajahbad in Kanchipuram district, was a maintenance worker in the Greater Chennai Parks in the city.

After duty on Monday night, Vaishnavi was riding pillion with a motorist who gave her a ride to Kanchipuram. While they were near the Chromepet bus stand, the driver lost control of the bike and hit the median. In the impact Vaishnavi fell on the road and a private minibus, coming behind the bike, ran over her. She died on the spot. Based on information, the Chrompet traffic investigation police rushed to the spot and recovered the body. An investigation has been launched. Vaishnavi lived with his husband and two children.

5-member gang held for kidnapping farmer

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

The Chengalpet town police on Tuesday arrested a five-member gang for kidnapping a farmer in the district.

According to the police, the victim was identified as Parthasarathy, 50, a farmer who lives in Vaiyavur in Kanchipuram district. He is also into real estate brokshere.

Parthasarathy borrowed ₹6.5 lakhs from one Lakshman, a financier in Tindivanam, a few months ago. Due to the coronavirus lockdown, he struggled financially and failed to repay the amount. Parthasarathy requested for more time to repay. But the financier demanded money instantly.

On Tuesday, Lakshman sent his men to abduct Parthasarathy. Police said the five men intercepted Parthasarathy near Palayaseevaram in Chengalpet. Following a heated argument, five of them forcibly pushed him into the car and fled.

In the afternoon, when the gang stopped the car to have lunch on the Chennai-Tiruchy national highway, Parthasarathy managed to alert the police control room. Chengalpet DIG Samundeeswari immediately instructed the Chengalpet town police to trace him.

The police team traced the car near Pazhaveli in Chengalpet district. The police team rounded up the gang along with the kidnapped. The five men identified as Viji, Micheal Raj, Santhosh, Raju, Rathinam were arrested by the police for criminal intimidation and abduction.

The accused were remanded in judicial custody. Police are now on the lookout for the financier.

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Encroachments take life out of Ramapuram lake

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

Though the state government brought in various measures to restore lakes and water-bodies in the city, especially after the 2015 flood, under the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust, the reclamation of the encroached Ramapuram lake and its water-bodies remains a pipedream. The lake and its water-bodies, according to revenue records, was spread over 27 acres in 1987. But now it has shrunk to two acres.

Till 1990 the waterbody was the lifeline for entire Ramapuram village which had groundwater level at two feet depth. Today the groundwater table plummeted to 30 feet in wells and went beyond 150 feet in bore wells due to unchecked encroachment of the lake by at least 700 people.

An official report prepared by Chandrasekharan, tahsildar, Maduravoyal taluk in August 2019 says that out of 10.87 hectares (27acres) Ramapuram lake and water-bodies spread over 2.08 hectares (5.13 acres) has been classified as 'Gramanatham' (village residential area) in the revenue records. The remaining extent of 8.79 hectares (21acres) stood registered as Ramapuram lake. Of this, 1.66 hectares



The encroached Ramapuram lake.

(4 acres) was earmarked for Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board. The rest of the land must have remained as Ramapuram Lake and water-bodies. But the lake has been reduced to 85ares (2.1acres) today. Though the lake is maintained by the GCC authorities and the district collector in 2018. But they have failed in preventing encroachments.

The entire area is being encroached by residential, commercial and educational institutions. The authorities should act against encroachers under the provisions of the Tamil Nadu Land Encroachment (Am-

endment) Act, 1965. We had also filed a Public Interest Litigation in the high court last year to get the encroachments removed, but it reached nowhere," he said.

Meanwhile, an official with the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust (CRRT), that comes under GCC, said that eviction drives and resettlements would be a huge and costly task for the government.

So the government protects the existing portion of land by regularising the encroachments, the official says.

Jumbo dies after being injured in fight with other elephants

Coimbatore, Sept. 8: A male elephant was found dead, with injuries on its trunk near the reserve forest area of Andiparai Shola in Valparai range in the district, forest department sources said on Tuesday.

Based on information by some tea estate workers that they noticed an elephant with its trunk injured and bleeding moving to the forest area last night, forest department officials rushed to the spot and recovered the carcass, sources said.

The veterinarians carried out autopsy on the 25-year old elephant this morning and concluded that the death could be due to injuries sustained in a fight with other elephants in the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR). The carcass was later buried there, they said.

This is the third elephant to die in the ATR this year and 20th in the last seven months in Coimbatore Forest division.

— PTI

Based on information by some tea estate workers that they noticed an elephant with its trunk injured and bleeding moving to the forest area last night, forest department officials rushed to the spot and recovered the carcass, sources said



Devotees throng Vadapalani Murugan temple for Aavani krithigai festival on Tuesday.

— DC

Denied job as cabin crew member by AI

SC to hear transwoman plea after 3 weeks

New Delhi, Sept. 8: The Supreme Court Tuesday said it would hear after three weeks a transgender woman's plea challenging Air India's decision to deny her a job as a cabin crew member.

A bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna said that the matter has been already notified for hearing and would be taken up after three weeks. Senior advocate Anand Grover, appearing for the petitioner, said that she had filed an application for early hearing of her main petition as the matter is pending since 2017. On July 23, the top court had allowed the transgender woman, who had undergone sex change in 2014, to amend her plea challenging Air India's decision to deny her the



job of a cabin crew member by assailing the grounds of conducting personality test for third gender candidates by the national carrier. The top court had issued notice in 2017 and sought responses from Air India and the Civil Aviation Ministry on the plea. They justified the decision of not selecting her saying she had failed to secure minimum marks to qualify for the personal-

ity test and group discussion (PT and GD) and there no discrimination done against her. The petitioner had claimed that to pursue her dreams, she had worked for 13 months in Sutherland Global Services in the airline sector and even at Air India's customer support, both domestic and international, at Chennai. Born in Tamil Nadu in 1989, she said she graduated in engineering in 2010. She underwent the gender surgery to turn into a woman in April 2014 and this information was published in the state government gazette. The petitioner said she learnt about an advertisement on July 10, 2017, by Air India for the post of a female cabin crew for its Northern Region office in Delhi on a fixed term engagement

basis for an initial period of five years. She applied in the female category as she had undergone a successful sexual reassignment surgery in Bangkok. She said she got the call letter, appeared for PT and GD tests and undertook four attempts, "but unfortunately she has not been short-listed for the post in question even though she fared well in the tests conducted". In her petition, she alleged that she was not shortlisted for being a transgender and the vacancies in the cabin crew were earmarked only for women. She said that representations were made to the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Civil Aviation, but there was no redressal. She had sought direction to Air India and the ministry for consideration

of her candidature. "The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016 prohibits discrimination. It is clear that no person shall discriminate against a transgender person in relation to employment or occupation...", her plea said. Citing the top court verdict of 2014, she said the apex court has given certain directions for protection of the rights of the transgenders by including a third category in documents like election card, passport, driving license and ration card, and for admission in educational institutions, hospitals, among others. "By recognising diverse gender identities, the court has busted the dual gender structure of 'man' and 'woman' which is recognised by the society," she said in her plea. — PTI

EMUs only after Central nod

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

The much expected Tambaram-Chengalpet third line will be commissioned by March 2021, in phases, and electrification of 270 km long rail lines will be completed in the current financial year, said General Manager, Southern Railway, John Thomas.

The fourth line connecting Chennai Beach to Egmore railway stations will be completed in 2023 and the Detailed Project Report will be submitted in November this year, he said while addressing a virtual press meet on Tuesday.

The operations of EMUs have been halted in all the cities across the country due to Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. It will be resumed only after approval from Railway Board and Central government.

A total of 901 Covid-19 infected patients have been treated and were cured at railway hospital, Perambur till August 31, 2020. The SR operated 507 Shramik Specials and facilitated the movement of 7.35 lakh stranded persons. Southern Railway had arranged Refund of fare on Cancellation of Tickets during Lockdown to the tune of Rs.70.58 crores during the period

from 1.6.2020 to 31.8.2020

The doubling of Mecheri Road to Mettur dam (12Km), Omalur-Mecheri Road (17 km), Attipattur-Attipattu Pudunagar (1.70km) will be completed March next year and gauge conversion of Andipatti-Theni (17km), Theni -Bodinayakanur (15km) will be completed by September next year. Employees at Carriage Works, Perambur manufactured 7,200 PPEs, Loco Works, Perambur 2,000 PPEs and Golden Rock Workshop, Trichy 10,250 PPEs. The Southern Railway has made 2,54,190 masks and 37,040 liters of sanitizers during the lockdown period.

Five killed in lorry-car collision

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

Five persons, including four of a family, were killed and four others sustained injuries when a lorry and car collided near Vriddachalam in Cuddalore district on Tuesday.

According to police, Velusamay of Nainarpalayam in Kallakurichi district was proceeding to Sri Kolanchiappar temple in Vriddachalam along with his family members in a car to perform ear boring ceremony of his children. When the vehicle was nearing Periya Nesalur village on Ullundurpet-Salem Highway, a youth attempted to cross the road and, noticing the danger, the driver applied

the brake. Meanwhile, a lorry transporting fish from Parangipettai to Kerala collided with the car. The vehicles were damaged and turned upside down.

Revathy, wife of Velusamay, their relatives Bhavani, Parimala and Loganathan, a worker in the lorry, died at the spot. The injured - Velusamay, Devanath, Arivarasam, Prathvijay, Renukadevi and Manimegalai, were rushed to the government hospital, Perambalur. Devanath died in the hospital. The bodies were sent to government general hospital, Vriddachalam for post-mortem. Traffic was disrupted for more than an hour. Cuddalore SP M. Sree Abhinav inspected the site.

12 more succumb to coronavirus in Pondy; toll climbs to 337

Puducherry, Sept. 8: Puducherry continued to see an upward trend in Covid-19 deaths as 12 more people died of the deadly virus on Tuesday, raising the toll in the union territory to 337.

A release from Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said 440 new cases of the viral infection were reported, pushing the overall tally to 17,749. Of the fresh cases as many as 4,831 were active followed by 12,581 cases of recovery and discharge. The Director said 440 new cases were identified after examination of 2,081 samples in the last 24 hours, while 446 patients were discharged from hospitals.

The fatality and recovery rates were 1.9 percent and 70.88 percent respectively. Kumar said the department examined 85,906 samples so far and it was found that 66,500 of them tested negative. Results of examination of remaining samples was awaited.

— PTI

Green Line metro services to resume today

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

Green Line metro rail services, from St. Thomas Mount to Puratchi Thalaivar Dr M G Ramachandran Central Metro station, will resume on Wednesday.

A Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) release said the operation will be resumed in the Green Line as part of bolstering of its operations in a graded manner. The CMRL, which had suspended all operations on March 22 due to the pandemic and lockdown, resumed the Blue Line operations on Monday between Washermenpet and Airport metro station.

The Green Line operations between St Thomas Mount and Puratchi Thalaivar Dr M G Ramachandran Central Metro via Koyambedu will restart from 7 am to 8 pm with peak hour headway of 5 minutes and non-peak hour headway of 10 minutes.

The train stoppage time at stations has been increased from 20 seconds to 50 seconds in order to maintain social distancing and fresh air circulation.

Contact-less QR code ticketing methods and travel card reader machines have been introduced in all 32 metro stations for safety of passengers. These facilities can be utilised by downloading the CMRL mobile app.

Lifer for two in murder case

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARUR, SEPT. 8

The district fast track Mahila court awarded life sentence to two persons on Monday for murdering a retired staff nurse and stealing her jewelry, including mangalsutra, here in 2013.

According to the prosecution, the accused Vetri alias Sivasubramanian (33) and his friend Prabhakaran (23) hailing from Thanthondrimalai and Sukkaliyur respectively, strangled the victim Jayanthi (62), and stole her jewelry of eight sovereigns, and set on fire the victim's body in a nearby forest area. Pa-supathipalayam police arrested the duo and filed a murder case against them before the Mahila court. Mahila Court Judge Sasikala awarded life sentence to both.

FB gang holds youth for ransom, three held

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, SEPT. 8

Police have arrested three persons including a woman, and are on the lookout for five others regarding the cheating of a youth group through facebook, by posting romantic messages and obscene photos.

Police identified the arrested as Rahamathnisha (20), a third-year college student, Mohamad Yazar and Asiknivas, youth wing organiser (Indian National League), Tiruchy district. In their joint operation, the gang had access to the facebook account with one Vinodkumar (30) a printing

Police on lookout for another five

press owner of Chettipalayam in Cuddalore district, a year ago, through which Rahamathnisha expressed her love for him through facebook, and made frequent calls to him through whatsapp.

On September, Rahamathnisha called Vinodkumar and told him that she would like to meet him urgently, and Vinodkumar came to

Tiruchy on his two-wheeler. On reaching Tiruchy, he informed Rahamathnisha about it.

A little later, a person introducing himself as a person sent by Rahamathnisha to take him home, asked him to come to the military ground. But, a four-member gang in an auto-rickshaw met Vinodkumar and said they were asked by Rahamathnisha to take him home.

Vinodkumar and two others traveled in the autorickshaw, and two others followed them on Vinodkumar's two-wheeler. The gang took

Vinodkumar to a house in Cantonment area, and snatching his bike, demanded ₹one lakh for them to release him and his two-wheeler. When Vinodkumar refused, they assaulted him, snatched his ATM card and taking him forcibly to an ATM kiosk, attempted to draw cash, but there was no money. Finally, the gang released him saying they would release his bike only if he paid them Rs one lakh.

Based on his complaint, K K Nagar police formed a special team, and they called the gang members. Stating that the amount demanded was ready, they asked them to collect the same at a par-

ticular spot.

There, three members of the gang including Rahamathnisha came to the spot where the police team was waiting.

Soon, the police team rounded them up, and they were remanded to judicial custody. Based on their input, police are in search of another five persons including Ansari, lover of Rahamathnisha, who is said to be ab-sconding.

Preliminary enquiries revealed that the gang was involved in similar crime in different parts of the state and had cheated several persons, police added.



Heavy traffic jam near Koyambedu junction on Tuesday due to flyover work.

— DC

IN BRIEF

Did AICTE object to waiving arrears or not?

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

Did the AICTE really raise objections to Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's decision to exempt college and university students with arrears from taking those examinations? Or does the government order stands?

It remained a million dollar question, keeping the students in a quandary, even after a copy of an e-mail purportedly sent by the AICTE chairman Anil D. Shahansrabudhe to Anna University vice-chancellor M K Surappa made its rounds in the media.

While the publication of the letter copy on Tuesday led to many suspecting the claim of the government that no such letter was forwarded by Surappa, who had first said that he had received a communication from the AICTE and that he had referred it to the government, it did not clear the doubts over the students' future at the end of the day.

Reacting to the letter, whose authenticity came under a doubt later in the day with fisheries minister D. Jayakumar reiterating that the government had received no such communication and even the university not approving the genuineness of the letter, DMK president M. K. Stalin launched an attack on the government on the issue.

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Vegetable, fruits exports from Chennai hit

P.A. JEBARAJ | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

The export of vegetables and fruits from Chennai to other countries has fallen drastically since March due to the Coronavirus lockdown, apart from reduced air cargo services and high freight charges.

Chennai regularly exports vegetables such as carrot, cabbage, beans, beetroot, garlic and all seasonal fruits, said an exporter.

Vegetable and fruit exporters usually prefer cargo via passenger flights to ensure the quality and freshness of products. But with the airlines

increasing freight charges exports have come to a standstill.

There is lot of uncertainty from sourcing fruits and vegetables to get cargo slots. In the initial days of the lockdown, labour and transportation were the big challenges, but gradually the high freight charge became the major reason for the drop in exports.

The bulk of vegetables and fruits are exported from Chennai airport to Dubai, Qatar, Singapore, Malaysia and other countries. Due to the high freight charges the export volume has come down. The export cost of one kilogram of vegetable is

Rs 60 via passenger flight, while the charge via cargo flight is Rs 200. The products are not delivered on time via cargo flights, compromising the freshness of the goods.

An exporter said the overseas buyers are not ready to pay for the higher cost. They are waiting for the international flights to resume operations for an improvement in the situation.

Officials at the Chennai airport said they are taking necessary steps to export the goods on time. However, they said the freight cost cannot be reduced as it is a fixed price across the country.

₹14.26 cr credited into bank accts of ineligible persons in Cuddalore dt

Cuddalore: Cuddalore district collector Chandra Sekhar Sakhamuri said a sum of Rs14.26 crore was credited into the bank accounts of 77, 254 ineligible persons under the Central government sponsored Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme in the coastal district.

Speaking to reporters in Cuddalore on Tuesday, he said after the news about irregularities came to light he ordered a probe and to exclude the ineligible beneficiaries. A total of 80,737 persons were registered under the scheme. Of this 35,231 persons from other districts and states were

found to be ineligible. The administration alerted the authorities in the districts and states to freeze these bank accounts. Similarly, a total of 43,075 persons from Cuddalore district were found to be ineligible while 3,483 were found to be genuine beneficiaries under the scheme.

Govt will open 2,000 mini clinics in state, says CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

Spread of coronavirus continued with 5,773 new infections reported in the State apart from 89 fatalities despite the Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami claiming that the pandemic had been brought under control in the last five months.

In Chennai, there were 946 new cases and 16 deaths, while the districts that had high numbers were Chengalpattu 330, Coimbatore 524, Cuddalore 398, Thiruvallur 248 and Thiruvannamalai 262.

However, addressing an advisory meeting on Covid-19 prevention measures, strengthening of medical infrastructure and continuing awareness on the disease, Palaniswami said increased testing, which went up to 85,000 a day, as advised by the medical experts and higher officials, helped bring down the rate of infection.

Relaxation in lockdown had led to the opening up of most sectors and people had been allowed to move freely. But since the removal of e-pass system and other monitoring of movements had added to the task of the officials, who had to be vigilant and ensure that the disease did not spread, the Chief Minister said.

He said the government had planned to open 2,000 mini clinics all over the state to treat people suffering from minor ailments like fever and headache. With basic medical equipment the mini clinics would function with one doctor, one nurse and one assistant.

Vacancies in the health department would be filled, Palaniswami said, adding that the government would not allow the loss of even one life. Every life is precious and should be saved, whatever be the financial burden, he said.

Whatever efforts the government made, at the end of the day it was the cooperation of the people that made the difference, he said, urging people not to crowd in fish and meat markets. Also he wanted the police to ensure that there was no crowding at Marina beach, where people could be putting themselves at risk by buying things from the vendor.

Normalcy will be



Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami meets Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Tuesday and appraises him about the government's efforts to curb the spread of Covid-19. Health minister Dr C Vijayabaskar, Chief secretary K Shanmugam, DGP J K Tripathy and other officials were also present during the meet.

₹74.69 cr second data centre inaugurated

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

A high-tech State Data Centre, the second such facility in Tamil Nadu was inaugurated by Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Tuesday.

The facility, set up at an estimated cost of ₹74.69 crore on Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu (Elcot) premises in Perungudi here, was inaugurated through a video conference by the CM from the secretariat.

The SDC-2, under the IT department with 195 server racks would cater to safe storage of government data and also render online services between state departments, people and the industry besides fulfilling other information technology based needs of the government, an official release here said.

CM Palaniswami had on June 1, 2018, announced a Cyber Security Architecture for Tamil Nadu (CSA-TN) at a cost of Rs 21.39 crore.

"To protect the government's e-governance infrastructure and assure safe and secure internet services, Cyber security archi-

restored soon, he said, adding that people should

Expert committee on school education

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

The state government has appointed a 13-member committee led by the principal secretary of school education to offer recommendations for implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

The committee consisted of five IAS officers, who are Sigy Thomas Vaidhyar, Pooja Kulkarni, G Latha, Kavitha Ramu and C Munianathan, according to a government notification.

The other members are Akila Radhakrishnan of Unicef, N Panchana-

tham, VC of Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, A Jothimurugan, former VC of Thiruvalluvar University, R. Balasubramanian, Pro vice chancellor of SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Mariazeena Johnson, chancellor of Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, R Elangovan, Retired Director of School Education, Sundarapariipooranam Pakshirajan, former member of Tamil Nadu Child Rights Protection Commission and V. K. Jeyashiri, a school teacher who won the Sahitya Academy Award for translation in 2019.

ture for Tamil Nadu plan will be implemented through the state-run Elcot," he had said.

As part of this initiative, Palaniswami also launched a portal www.cert.tn.gov.in which shall be the computer emergency response team for the

following the norms like wearing facemasks and

state government and play a key role in audit, supervision and protection of the government's computer and data infrastructure. The first Tamil Nadu State Data Centre was set up under the National e-Governance Action Plan in 2011.

Call to bring education under state list: Experts

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

Tamil Nadu should reject the provisions of the National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 that were not in consonance with the federal structure, social justice and equity, said a statement by 100 educationists and civil society representatives, addressed to the Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

"NEP 2020 demolishes the federal character of India by promoting centralization, by controlling all decision-making from ECCE and primary education to higher education, including professional education. This cannot be countenanced," the statement said.

Since the State had progressed well in education, the Assembly should adopt a resolution demanding transfer of Education as subject to List II in Seventh Schedule under Article 246 of the Constitution of India (as was the case in the original Constitutional scheme), the statement said.

"As is known, originally education was a state subject in the Constitution. In 1976 (dur-

■ "NEP 2020 demolishes the federal character of India by promoting centralization, by controlling all decision-making from ECCE and primary education to higher education, including professional education. This cannot be countenanced"

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ing Emergency) by 42nd Constitution Amendment, it was shifted to the Concurrent List (List III under Article 246), the signatories of the statement explained.

Implementation of NEP 2020 would usurp the constitutional right and duty of the State and Union Territory governments to frame their own policies and programmes or enact laws concerning education, as per the needs and aspirations of the people of the State, the statement said.

Even before the state government had decided on the policy issue relating to the NEP, teachers, who are employees of the government, had been asked to give

suggestions on it, the statement pointed out and said the Union Secretary writing to the School Education Secretary even before the policy was placed before Parliament was a serious violation of the federal structure of India.

The signatories, including People First chairman M G Devasahayam, coordinator Thomas Franco, former vice-chancellor Vasanthi Devi, former high court judge Hariharanthaman and educationist Prince Gajendra Babu, urged the State government protect the rights of the state, uphold parliamentary democracy and carry forward the social justice measures.

'Withdraw Neet' demo by DMK

DC CORRESPONDENT
NAGAPATTINAM, SEPT. 8

Members of the district unit of the DMK youth and students wing here, led by party district in-charge, Gowthaman, carried black flags and placards and staged a demonstration here on Tuesday urging the Centre and state governments to withdraw NEET, and to streamline the on-line education and classes.

Similar demonstrations were held at Tiruvarur, Pudukkottai, Ariyalur, Perambalur, Karur and Tiruchy districts.

Covid test mandatory for MLAs to attend Assembly

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 8

The state Assembly meeting at the Kalaiwanar Arangan on Monday (September 14), would actually transact business for just two days as the first day would be spend on obituary references to the former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, MP from Kanyakumari H V a s a n t h a k u m a r, Chepaik-Thiruvellikeni MLA J Anbalagan and victims of Coronavirus pandemic.

The Business Advisory Committee, which met on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Speaker P Dhanapal, decided to make it a three-day session between September 14 to 16 and finalized the proceedings. The second day would see the transaction of government businesses and the third day for taking up supplementary demands for grants and Appropriation Bills.

There would be question hour on both the days, the Speaker said after the meeting, which was attended by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Durai Murugan, DMK whip Chakrapani, Leader of the Congress Legislative Party K R Ramasamy and Deputy Speaker Pollachi Jayaraman.

All those attending the session, including media persons, would have to undergo a coronavirus test 72 hours ahead of the beginning of the session, it was announced. Emerging out of the meeting, Durai Murugan said that they had asked for a seven-day session.

B RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, SEPT. 8

The Bharathiar University in Coimbatore has been urged to allot funds for sterilization and sanitation of examination halls at the Government Arts College (GAC) here in Ooty, for holding of final semester examinations at the college, as otherwise, it may not be possible to conduct the exams in a safe environment, given



the Covid-19 threat.

Senate member, Bharathiar University, Dr R Sanil, Associate professor, Zoology, at the GAC here and also president, Ooty chapter of Tamil

Nadu Government College Teachers Association, in a letter to Vice-Chancellor, Bharathiar University, stated that colleges are acting only as centers to conduct university exams. Hence, it is the responsibility of the university to adhere to the directions of the government to hold exams.

"To conduct exams, the university had already collected fees from students. But the exams for the first

and second year degree courses have been annulled. Exam fee collected from students of the first and second year degree courses, is more than enough to provide proper facilities to maintain hygiene in exam centres. Hence, the university may sanction an amount of Rs. 20 per student per exam, and provide proper sanitation facilities for the students and clean rooms and surroundings, after

each batch of exams. More than 200 students may visit the colleges during examination days. So, there is a dire need to take all precautionary measures in the backdrop of Covid-19 threat," he said, and added that the university asking colleges to look into the local bodies for sanitation facilities is unjustifiable, when the university has enough funds to be allotted for the purpose.



On behalf of the Vellore Red Cross unit, Collector Shanmugasundaram on Tuesday inaugurates the project of planting 15 lakh fruit-bearing trees and palm tree saplings across the district. Kudimaramathu works around the Anpoondi lake here have been completed, and the new tree planting project is expected to strengthen the lake bund also. The project would also help improve the forest cover across Vellore, said the collector. Indian Red Cross secretary Dr C Indernath participated in the event.

— K. Senthil Nathan

SHORT TAKES

3 ARRESTED FOR
HOISTING 'PAK
FLAG' IN J&K TOWNDC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 8

The Jammu and Kashmir police on Tuesday claimed that they arrested three over ground workers of Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) on charge of hoisting Pakistan's national flag in a township of northern Bandipore district of the Union Territory. It also claimed recovering a hand-grenade and other incriminating material from the trio.

A statement issued by the police here said that they registered an FIR and took up investigations after receiving information that some "anti-national elements" at the behest of local active LeT militants have hoisted Pakistani flag at the main marketplace in Hajin township of Bandipore "in order to create fear psychosis and incite anti-national feelings among the common people of the area".

"During the course of investigation, officers learnt about the involvement of three individuals involved in the commission of crime. They have been arrested and identified as Mujeeb Shamas, Tanveer Ahmad Mir and Imtiyaz Ahmad Sheikh — all residents of Mir Mohalla Hajin," the statement said.

BJP CHALLENGES
NEELAM GORHE'S
ELECTIONSONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 8

Shiv Sena legislator Neelam Gorhe was on Tuesday re-elected as the deputy chairperson of the Maharashtra legislative Council. However, the BJP has challenged the election in the Bombay High Court on the ground that BJP MLCS infected by Coronavirus were deprived of their voting rights.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Legislative Council Ramraje Naik Nimbalkar announced that Gorhe was elected "unanimously". However, the BJP staged a walkout from the House stating that the election should not be held as the matter is sub-judice. Meanwhile, the Shiv Sena also appointed Gorhe as a spokesperson of the party.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) had fielded Neelam Gorhe, while the BJP had nominated Vijay alias Bhai Girakar. However, the BJP has also approached the High Court seeking its intervention in the scheduling of the election.

MP BJP LEADER
JOINS CONG AHEAD
OF BY-POLLSRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, SEPT. 8

Senior BJP leader Satish Singh Sikarwar on Tuesday joined Congress here dealing a jolt to the saffron party ahead of crucial by-elections to 27 Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, expected to be held by the end of October.

Sikarwar is most likely to be nominated as Congress candidate for the Gwalior constituency which is going to by-elections along with other 26 Assembly seats.

"Sikarwar was inducted in Congress along with 150 BJP cadres including two local sarpanches by former chief minister and Madhya Pradesh PCC president Kamal Nath", a press release issued by the party said.

"I was fighting against the feudal force of the erstwhile Gwalior royal family of Scindia when I was in the BJP. But, the BJP's battle against the feudal culture in Gwalior has lost relevance after Scindia switched over to BJP from Congress. Hence, I quit BJP to join Congress to continue my fight against the feudal force in Gwalior", Sikarwar told reporters.

Sikarwar had contested as a BJP candidate in Gwalior Assembly constituency in 2018 polls and lost to Munnalal Goyal who had then fought the polls as a Congress nominee. Mr Goyal quit Congress and joined BJP in March this year.

Nath said "Congress is now free of the influence of the (Gwalior) palace (following Scindia's exit from Congress).

Nath described Scindia and the latter's followers who quit Congress to pull down his government in March as 'merchants of power' and said "BJP has bargained with 'merchants of power' to assume power in MP".

Nepal steps up surveillance on border

Indian security agencies keenly watch sudden, unusual spurt in helicopter sorties by Nepalese army

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC
HYDERABAD SEPT. 8

Amid heightened tensions between India and China along the Line of Actual Control, hectic activity by Nepal Army — particularly a sudden spurt in helicopter sorties around the Lipulekh pass on the border between Uttarakhand and Tibet Autonomous Region of China near the trijunction with Nepal — is being keenly watched by Indian agencies.

The increase in activity by the Nepal Army, around the time China is said to have deployed surface-to-air missiles and expanding its military base near Mount Kailash, not far away from the Lipulekh pass, suggests that Nepal could well be assisting China in the inhospitable mountain passes under the garb of constructing its own outposts along the India-Nepal border, close to the hill state of Uttarakhand, where massive deployment of forces is underway.

Over the past couple of months, Nepal Army choppers have been seen undertaking multiple sorties — something which sources describe as quite unusual — as the Himalayan nation has, more or less, left the people living on its border with India and China at the mercy of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China. The PLA is said to be not only supplying food and other essentials to the villagers but is also believed to be slowly taking control of certain areas inside Nepalese territory.

Informed sources told Deccan Chronicle that while the annual trade at Purang town in Tibet — where traders from the three countries gather each year — had been suspended this year due to Covid-19, so also the Kailash Mansarovar yatra, the passes remained inaccessible for civilians. This made the task of enhancing its military bases near Mount Kailash easier for the PLA. Satellite images show the deployment of surface-to-air missiles and the ongoing construction activity to expand the base. The pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar traverses the Lipulekh pass.

As tensions along the LAC in eastern Ladakh reached its peak post the



Apache helicopter of the Indian Air Force lands amid border tensions with China, in Kishtwar district of Jammu on Tuesday.

— PTI

violent clashes in Galwan Valley, sources said that, besides their own resources, the PLA is believed to be taking assistance from the Nepalese Army which, going by its recent aggressive posturing with India over Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura, would be more than willing to extend all possible help.

"It is no secret that China has been occupying and taking control of areas inside Nepalese territory. It has also been extending support to the people living in the bordering villages in an attempt to win their confidence, which would lead to lesser dependency on India. Nepal assisting China directly or indirectly is not surprising," senior officials in the know of the developments, said adding that Nepal Army copters have been spotted repeatedly over Tinkar and Chhangru villages in Nepal beside the Lipulekh pass. Sources said that the helicopters have been transporting men and material. The Tinkar valley is the de facto tri-junction between China, India and Nepal.

China talks of approaching harsh winter, hopes for disengagement

Beijing, Sept 8: As fresh border confrontation erupted between Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh, China on Tuesday hoped disengagement can be achieved as soon as possible through mutual consultations, flagging approaching harsh winter.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian expressed this hope hours after India and China accused each other of firing in the air near the Pangong lake at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh on Monday.

The Indian Army said Chinese troops fired shots in the air and attempted to close in on an Indian position in eastern Ladakh on Monday as it rejected charges by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) that it transgressed across the LAC.

The remarks by the Army came after the PLA late on Monday night

alleged that the Indian troops crossed the LAC and "outrageously fired" warning shots near the Pangong lake.

The use of firearms along the LAC marks a serious escalation in border tensions as the previous instance of shots being fired at the de-facto border was in 1975.

Zhao spoke about disengagement when asked at a media briefing about restoration of the status quo by disengaging the troops. "You have a good wish. We all hope our troops get back to their camping area and there won't be any more confrontation in the border areas."

"You know that place has a very bad natural condition and it is above a height of 4,000 metres," he added. "In winter this is not good for humans to live. So we hope, through diplomatic and military channels and through consultations on the ground

we can achieve disengagement as soon as possible and reach consensus."

India has already called on China to work jointly for complete disengagement and de-escalation on the LAC, saying the future of the bilateral relationship is dependent on the situation along the border.

This is the first time in the four-month-long border standoff that China has officially acknowledged the harsh conditions of the mountainous Ladakh region in winter where the temperatures plummet to minus 30 degrees Celsius posing major health hazards to the thousands of troops mobilised by the two armies.

Reports from the area said both sides were making arrangements for a long drawn out faceoff especially at the Pangong lake area where the troops were positioned eyeball to eyeball with heavy weapons and armoury.

Echoing the PLA's comments, Zhao sought to blame Indian troops for firing warning shots first on Monday.

On the Indian stand that it was Chinese troops which took provocative steps first, he read out the statement of the PLA's Western Theater command spokesman alleging that Indian troops illegally crossed the LAC and outrageously fired warning shots on Chinese border patrol soldiers forcing them to take countermeasures.

"I also want to stress in this incident, the Indian side fired shots to the Chinese border troops first. This is the first time since 1975 that the tranquility is interrupted by the shots. And the Chinese side always stresses that both sides should peacefully settle our differences through dialogue and consultations. Confrontation won't benefit either, he said.

- PTI

RAFALE JETS TO
BE FORMALLY
INDUCTED INTO
IAF TOMORROW

New Delhi, Sept. 8: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, his French counterpart Florence Parly and India's top military brass will attend a ceremony in Ambala airbase on Thursday to formally induct five Rafale fighter jets into the Indian Air Force, officials said.

Parly and Singh will hold talks in Ambala on ways to further deepen bilateral defence and security cooperation after the ceremony, they said.

The French defence minister is scheduled to arrive on Thursday morning and will depart late afternoon, the officials said.

The first batch of five Rafale jets arrived in India on July 29, nearly four years after India signed an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36 of the aircraft at a cost of ₹59,000 crore.

The jets, produced by French aerospace major Dassault Aviation, are yet to be formally inducted into the IAF.

Ten Rafale jets have been delivered to India so far and five of them stayed back in France for imparting training to IAF pilots.

The delivery of all 36 aircraft is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021.

A second batch of four to five Rafale jets are likely to arrive in India by November.

India to start Phase 3 trial of various vaccines as Covid tally crosses 42.8 l

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, SPET. 8

The government is now working towards initiating Phase 3 human trials of the Russian novel coronavirus vaccine — Sputnik V — on the Indian population. NITI Aayog member (health) VK Paul said that this decision was taken following the discussions with the Russian government which had approached India for manufacturing of Sputnik V in India and its possible use for Indians. The trials or the bridging studies for the Russian vaccine will begin shortly after the regulatory process is over.

In addition to this, India is all set to start Phase 3 trials of the Oxford vaccine candidate next week at 17 locations. Besides, two indigenous vaccine candidates — one by Biotech and another by Zydus Cadilla — too are progressing well with Phase 3 trials set to go. However, given its huge population, the government is happy to collaborate with partner nations to get the benefit of vaccines for its population as soon as possible.

"Russia had offered us production of the vaccines by Indian companies and Phase 3 trials in India. The government of India attaches great importance to this offer of partnership from a very special friend of this nation. It is a win-win situation for us. On both fronts there has been significant progress. Some companies are in touch for manufacturing,

On the regulatory aspect, the Indian scientists have looked at it and have paved the way for Phase 3 and bridging studies which will be facilitated in the spirit of partnership, science and humanity," Paul said.

The development comes at a time when India is recording very high numbers of cases on a daily basis. In the last 24 hours, close to 76,000 fresh cases of COVID-19 were detected from various parts of the country taking India's total tally to 42.80 lakh, as per union health ministry data of early Tuesday morning. India also registered record 1, 133 deaths in a single day taking its overall fatalities due to the deadly virus to 72, 775.

While Mr Paul said cases are very high on daily cases and not stabilizing at present, he attributed these rising numbers to higher testing India is conducting among its population. He added that the virus is spreading faster because people are avoiding testing despite having symptoms and they are spreading infection since they are neither isolated nor treated. He also blamed people for being lax and not taking enough precautions while going in public.

"Economic activities and unlocking processes have helped the virus grow more...But let us not forget that the recovery rate in India is very good and the case fatality rate is very low (1.70%)...When we see closely we find signs of stabilising," he said.

Kerala nos go past
3,000-mark againDC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPT. 8

Kerala on Tuesday recorded 3026 new cases of Covid -19 even as 1862 persons recovered from the infection. The total number of active cases in the state has gone up to 23,217. Of the new cases 2723 contracted the infection through contact, 49 came from abroad, 165 from other states, the source of infection among 237 is yet to be known and 89 health workers also got infected. The state reported 13 Covid - 19 deaths taking the toll to 372.

Thiruvananthapuram district reported the highest number of cases at 562, Malappuram 358, Ernakulam 318, Kozhikode 246, Palakkad 226, Alappuzha 217, Kollam 209.

Telangana reports 2,392 cases, 11 deaths

Hyderabad: Deaths from Covid-19 in Telangana state crossed the 900 mark and stood at 906, with the state health department on Tuesday reporting 11 more fatalities from the disease. It also said there have been 2,392 new Covid-19 cases taking to 1,45,163 the total cases so far.

The Greater Hyderabad

Municipal Corporation area had 304 fresh cases followed by Ranga Reddy district with 191, and Karimnagar district with 157 new cases. The other districts to register more than 100 cases between Sunday and Monday evening were Mechal-Malkajgiri with 132, Khammam 116 and Nalgonda with 105 cases.

10,601 new cases, 73 deaths in AP

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday registered 10,601 new Covid-19 cases taking the tally to 5,17,094 and 73 deaths taking the death toll to 4,560 in the last 24 hours.

Prakasam district has recorded the highest number of new infections with 1,457.

146 deaths reported in Karnataka

Bengaluru: Karnataka on Tuesday reported 7,866 Covid-19 cases and 146 fatalities, taking the total number of infections to 4,12,190 and the death toll to 6,680. The day also saw 7,803 patients getting discharged after recovery. Out of the 7,866 fresh cases reported, 3,102 were from Bengaluru urban alone. The state has a cumulative 4,12,190 Covid-19 cases.

Farooq Abdullah
hits back at
Ram MadhavYUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 8

A day after Bharatiya Janata Party's national general secretary, Ram Madhav, accused Farooq Abdullah and Jammu and Kashmir's other regional mainstream leaders of "trying to inject a dangerous Islamist discourse into the state politics", the latter on Tuesday hit back saying that it were the saffron party and its ideological parent

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which are paying communal politics and that the same will result into their extermination.

"If anybody is playing communal politics, it is the BJP and RSS. We never did it and they are playing it and this will drown them," Abdullah said while speaking to reporters here after offering fateha prayers at the grave of his father and legendary Kashmiri leader Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah commemorating his 38th death anniversary.

He asserted that his National Conference (NC) party never played politics over religion.

"NC never played politics over religion. That is our history. What was the motto of Sher-e-Kashmir (Sheikh Abdullah)? It was '*Sher-e-Kashmir ka kya irshad; Hindu, Muslim, Sikh Itihad*' (what is the

COMMITTED TO
SERVE COUNTRY,
SAY VILLAGERS
NEAR BORDER

Pithoragarh (U'k-hand), Sept. 8: Amid tensions on the Line of Actual Control between India and China, villagers in border areas of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh recalled the 1962 War and said they were committed to serve the country.

"We are ready to face the enemy whenever the Army needs our help. 80-year-old Gopal Singh Napalchayal, a resident of Napalchu village in Vyas Valley, said.

"We have a strong sense of commitment towards the nation and its armed forces," he added.

Recalling the 1962 war, Napalchayal said when Chinese troops reached near the Darma, Vyas and Johar valleys in the district, villagers helped the Army carry ammunition and food to border posts on sheep and mules.

Our women donated their gold and silver ornaments to help the nation, he said.

It was time for our winter migration after harvesting our crop in October when the war with China began in 1962 but our villagers decided to remain here, he recalled, adding that they did not vacate their villages till the conflict ended.

We used to come down to Chiyalekh Malpa and Jipty camps to carry ammunition to our shoulders up to Garbiyans from where it used to be taken to the last posts on sheep back, Napalchayal said.

Johar Valley villagers said they draw their inspiration from the late Laxman Singh Jangpangi, who was awarded the Padma Shri in 1959 for his services to the nation as an Indian trade agent in Gartok town of Tibet.

He was the first Indian who had informed the then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru of the ill-intentions of the Chinese, said Sriram Singh Dharmashaktu, a resident of upper Johar Valley.

— PTI

IN BRIEF

B'desh blast toll rises to 27

Dhaka: The death toll from a near-simultaneous explosion of six air conditioners in a mosque on the outskirts of Bangladesh's capital Dhaka rose to 27, with one more victim succumbing to his injuries, according to a media report.

A 30-year-old man died on Monday while undergoing treatment at the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka, the bdnews24.com reported. Another 10 people were battling for their lives at the hospital, it said on Monday. A gas leak in an underground pipeline caused the six air conditioners to explode almost simultaneously during Friday evening prayers on September 4 at the Baitul Salat mosque in the central district of Narayanganj.

Bruce Williamson dies of Covid

Los Angeles: Bruce Williamson, the former lead singer of the legendary vocal group *The Temptations*, has died at the age of 49 after a battle with Coronavirus. The singer passed away on Sunday at Mountain View Hospital in Las Vegas, his business manager, Anta Ealy, confirmed to *USA Today*. Williamson was diagnosed with Covid-19 in late August, weeks after having his gallbladder removed, Ealy added. Williamson's son Bruce Alan Williamson Jr took to pen an emotional tribute on Facebook. "There's no words in the world that can express how I feel right now. I love you Daddy. Thank you for being awesome, thank you for being loving, thank you for being Who You Are. I pray to God and we will meet again," he wrote on Monday. Original Temptation Otis Williams also remembered Williamson as "one of our brothers". "Once you are a Temptation, you are always a Temptation," he said.

Murderer sworn in as Lankan MP

Colombo: A Sri Lankan politician sentenced to death for murder was escorted out of prison on Tuesday to become the first convict to be sworn in as a member of parliament, to heckles from opposition MPs. Premalal Jayasekara from the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Party (SLPP) was convicted in August of murdering an opposition activist after opening fire at an election rally in 2015. But the 45-year-old's conviction and sentence came after nominations for the August 5 poll, meaning he could still contest the election and take up his seat. Jayasekara was a no-show when the current parliament held its first session on August 20 as prison authorities refused to let him out. However, he petitioned the Court of Appeal which on Monday held that he should be escorted from prison to exercise his rights as an MP. Opposition lawmakers wearing black shawls in protest heckled Jayasekara as he took the oath.

PAK MINE BLAST DEATH TOLL AT 19

Peshawar, Sept. 8: At least 19 people have been killed and dozens were battling for their lives after six units of the famed marble mines in Pakistan's Ziarat Ghar mountain collapsed, causing large boulders to fall on them, according to media reports on Tuesday.

The mines collapsed on Monday night, instantly killing 12 miners, the *Geo News* reported. The death toll rose after seven more succumbed to injuries at the District Mohmand Hospital. Majority of the deceased include labourers and few others who had gathered at the foothill in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Safi town near the Afghanistan border, about 85 km from provincial capital Peshawar. Mohmand District Police Officer Mohmand Tariq Habib told *Geo News* that 15 to 20 people are still buried under the rubble.

He said the rescue operations were hit due to darkness on Monday night and that heavy machinery had been mobilised on Tuesday for rescue operations. Deputy Commissioner Iftikhar Alam said the death toll is expected to rise, according to the daily. Around 45 labourers were busy in excavation operations when the mine collapsed, the *Dawn* newspaper reported. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said nine people have been rescued, it reported.

Rescue Officer Bilal Faizi said most of the injured were in serious condition.



Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko (left) speaks during his interview with a group of Russian journalists in Minsk, Belarus, on Tuesday. — AP/PTI

Belarus Oppn activist resists push to leave country, nabbed on border

Kyiv (Ukraine), Sept. 8: A leading opposition activist in Belarus was held on the border Tuesday after she resisted authorities' attempt to force her to leave the country. Maria Kolesnikova, a member of the Coordination Council created by the opposition to facilitate talks with longtime leader President Alexander Lukashenko on a transition of power, was detained Monday in the capital, Minsk, along with two other council members.

Early Tuesday, they were driven to the Ukrainian border, where the authorities told them to cross into Ukraine. Kolesnikova refused, and remained on the Belarusian side of the border in the custody of the Belarusian authorities.

Two other council members, Ivan Kravtsov and Anton Rodnenkov, crossed into Ukraine.

The authorities have applied similar tactics to other opposition figures, seeking to end a month of demonstrations against the re-election of Lukashenko in a vote the protesters see as rigged, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the main opposition challenger to Lukashenko, left for Lithuania a day after the August 9 vote, under pressure from the authorities.

On Saturday, a top associate of Tsikhanouskaya, Olga Kovalkova, moved to Poland after the authorities threatened to keep her



Maria Kolesnikova

in jail for a long time if she refused to leave the country. Belarusian prosecutors have opened a criminal probe against members of the Coordination Council that opposition activists set up after the election to try to negotiate a transition of power.

Several council members were arrested and some others called for questioning. Last week, Kolesnikova announced the creation of a new party, Together. She said the move will help overcome the current crisis, but the party founders' call for constitutional changes has stunned some other opposition council members, who argued that it could divert attention from the main goal of getting Lukashenko to step down.

Cheng — who conducted interviews with international CEOs for *CGTN's* Global Business and BizTalk shows — has not been seen in public since being held, although Australian diplomats in Beijing were able to speak to her on August 27. "As long as foreign journalists obey the law... they have no reason to worry," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

Cheng is the second high-profile Australian citizen to be detained in Beijing after writer Yang Hengjun was arrested in January 2019 on suspicion of espionage. Earlier this year, Australia warned its citizens they faced the risk of arbitrary detention if they travelled to China. — AFP

Trump supporters rally where far-right group member was shot

Oregon (US), Sept. 8: Hundreds of people gathered in a small town south of Portland for a pro-President Donald Trump vehicle rally — just over a week after member of a far-right group was fatally shot after a Trump caravan went through Oregon's largest city.

Later, pro-Trump supporters and counter-protesters clashed at Oregon's Capitol. Vehicles waving flags for Trump, the QAnon conspiracy theory and in support of police gathered about noon on Monday at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City.

The rally's organisers said they would drive to toward the state capital, Salem, and most left the caravan before that. A smaller group of members of the right-wing group the Proud Boys went on to Salem, where a crowd of several dozen pro-Trump supporters had gathered.

At one point Monday afternoon, the right-wing crowd rushed a smaller

Harris will never be Prez: Trump

Washington, Sept. 8: US President Donald Trump has slammed the "rhetoric" against the Coronavirus vaccine by Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and running mate Senator Kamala Harris, who he said would "never" be the president.

Trump was apparently responding to a *CNN* interview by Harris on Sunday, in which the vice-presidential nominee said she would not trust the president unless there was a credible source of information that talks

about the vaccine's efficacy and reliability. "She (Harris) is talking about disparaging a vaccine so that people don't think the achievement was a great achievement," Trump said at a Labour Day press conference at the White House on Monday.

"I don't want the achievement for myself. I want something (that's) going to make people better, that people aren't going to get sick with," he said. "That includes therapeutics, where we're doing equally as well." — PTI

group of Black Lives Matters counter-demonstrators, firing paint-gun pellets at them. There were skirmishes, and the Black Lives Matter group dispersed shortly after local police arrived on the

scene. Organisers of the earlier vehicle rally said they did not plan to enter Multnomah County, where Portland is located. Oregon City is about 32 kilometres south of Portland. — AP

Stop interrupting witnesses, Assange told

London, Sept. 8: A British judge told WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on Tuesday that his extradition hearing will proceed without him if he continues to speak from the dock and interrupt witnesses.

Vanessa Baraitser briefly adjourned the hearing at London's Central Criminal Court after Assange

interrupted defence witness Clive Stafford Smith, who was giving evidence.

Assange's outburst couldn't be heard by journalists following proceedings by video link.

Assange is fighting an attempt by American prosecutors to extradite 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 media freedom and put journalists at risk around the world.

Addressing Assange, the judge said: "You will hear things, no doubt many things, you disagree with during these proceedings." "If you interrupt proceedings it is open to me to proceed in your absence," she added. — AP

MONEY | MATTERS

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos tops table while President Trump is ranked 339th**7 Indo-Americans in Forbes' rich list in US**

New York, Sept. 8: Seven Indian-Americans have figured in Forbes' list of richest Americans, topped by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos for the third year in a row. The 2020 Forbes list of 400 Richest People in America has been topped by Bezos, 56 who has a net worth of \$179 billion and has occupied the spot of the richest person in the US for the third year in a row. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Cofounder Bill Gates is ranked second on the list with a net worth of \$111 billion.

The richest people in the US saw their wealth swell despite the Coronavirus pandemic's devastated impact on the economy. "Pandemic be damned: America's 400 richest are worth a record \$3.2 trillion, up \$240 billion from a year ago, aided by a stock market that has defied the virus...Even in these trying times mega-fortunes are still being minted," Forbes said.

The list has seven Indian-Americans — cybersecurity firm ZScaler CEO Jay Chaudhry, Founder and

Chairman of Symphony Technology Group Ramesh Wadhvani, cofounder and CEO of online home goods retailer Wayfair Niraj Shah, Silicon Valley venture capital firm Khosla Ventures founder Vinod Khosla, Managing Partner of SHERPA Ventures Kavitar Ram Shriram, Airline veteran Rakesh Gangwal and Workday CEO and Cofounder Anel Bhushri. Rounding out the top five on the list are Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg on the third spot with a net worth of

\$85 billion, Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett, ranked 4th and with a net worth of \$73.5 billion and chairman, chief technology officer and co-founder of software giant Oracle Larry Ellison, ranked 5th with a net worth of \$72 billion.

President Donald Trump is ranked 339th on the list with a net worth of \$2.5 billion. Chaudhry, 61 is ranked 85th on the list with a net worth of \$6.9 billion. Wadhvani, 73 has been ranked 238th on the list and has a net worth of

China says Oz TV anchor detained

Beijing, Sept. 8: China said Tuesday that it had detained a high-profile Australian journalist working for its state media on "national security grounds". Cheng Lei's detention was a new blow to deteriorating relations between the two countries that have seen China warn its citizens of travelling to Australia and vice versa.

In the first comments on *CGTN* anchor Cheng Lei, held since August 14, foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said authorities took "compulsory measures" against her on suspicion "of criminal activity endangering China's national security".

"The case is still in the process of investigation in accordance with the law," Zhao said, adding that her "legal rights and interests are all receiving full legal protection". He did not give further details of the allegations against her.

Cheng — who conducted interviews with international CEOs for *CGTN's* Global Business and BizTalk shows — has not been seen in public since being held, although Australian diplomats in Beijing were able to speak to her on August 27.

"As long as foreign journalists obey the law... they have no reason to worry," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

Cheng is the second high-profile Australian citizen to be detained in Beijing after writer Yang Hengjun was arrested in January 2019 on suspicion of espionage. Earlier this year, Australia warned its citizens they faced the risk of arbitrary detention if they travelled to China. — AFP

Last 2 Oz journalists flown out of China amid diplomatic standoff

Melbourne, Sept. 8: Two journalists from Australia working in China have been evacuated after they were questioned by Chinese police and were forced to seek refuge in Australian diplomatic missions in the communist nation amidst a diplomatic standoff between Canberra and Beijing.

Bill Birtles, the *ABC's* correspondent based in

CHINA DETAINS 23 IN CRACKDOWN ON INNER MONGOLIA PROTESTS

Taipei, Sept. 8: Police in China's Inner Mongolia region have detained at least 23 people following protests last week against a new policy that replaces Mongolian-language textbooks with Chinese ones in classrooms. The push to use the new textbooks, which started in other ethnic minority regions such as Xinjiang and Tibet in 2017, has prompted demonstrations and school boycotts by ethnic Mongolians in at least five cities and counties in Inner Mongolia.

The 23 detentions were across eight banners, the regional word for counties, according to an *Associated Press* tally of nine local police reports over the past several days. The reasons range from "organising and collecting signatures for a petition" to "picking quarrels and stirring up trouble".

Others were for "flagrantly insulting a deceased former leader of the country" and "sharing videos in a WeChat group to obstruct the implementation of the national textbooks policy". WeChat is a popular messaging app in China. The local government is also exerting pressure in other ways. Authorities in Zhenglan banner announced that they had suspended two members of the ruling Communist Party without pay for failing to carry out the policy. Police in Chifeng city said Monday they handed over Communist Party members, including two elementary school teachers, to a local party disciplinary committee for investigation. — AP

MARISA PAYNE, Oz foreign minister

Beijing, and Mike Smith, the *Australian Financial Review's* (AFR) correspondent based in Shanghai, boarded a flight to Sydney on Monday night after they were questioned separately by China's Ministry of State security, the report said. They landed in Sydney on Tuesday.

With the two journalists moving out of China, Australia now has no accredited reporter left in the country for the first time since the mid-1970s. Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne in a

statement on Tuesday said consular officials had provided support to the journalists. "The Australian Government has provided consular support to two Australian journalists in China to assist their return to Australia. Those Australians have now arrived in Australia. Our Embassy in Beijing and Consulate-General in Shanghai engaged with Chinese Government authorities to ensure their wellbeing and return to Australia," she said.

Seven uniformed officers simultaneously visited the homes of Smith in Shanghai and Birtles in Beijing on Thursday morning. Both journalists were told they were persons of interest in an investigation into Cheng who was detained last month, the AFR reported.

According to *ABC*, the reporters were told they were banned from leaving the country and needed to organise a time to be questioned over a "national security case". Birtles spent four days sheltering in Australia's Embassy in Beijing, while Smith took refuge in Shanghai consulate. — PTI

Pak sessions next week on FATF bills

Islamabad, Sept. 8: Pakistan government has decided to hold a new session of the National Assembly and the Senate on September 14 and 15 respectively to pass important bills, including one related money laundering and terrorist financing, which was earlier rejected by the upper house of Parliament.

The decision to call the fresh sessions was taken during a meeting between Prime Minister Imran Khan and his adviser on parliamentary affairs Babar Awan on Monday, according to a media report.

Awan called on the prime minister following the postponement of the Senate and National Assembly (NA) sessions scheduled for Monday. According to a press release, various matters of importance came for discussion during the meeting. The fresh session of the National Assembly will be held on September 14 and that of the Senate on September 15, Awan said. — PTI

UN DECRIES ATTACKS ON JOURNOS IN PAK

Geneva, Sept. 8: The United Nation voiced alarm Tuesday at growing attacks on journalists and activists in Pakistan, often amid cries of blasphemy, urging Islamabad to protect those facing threats and probe any violence.

The UN rights office said it was growing increasingly concerned at numerous instances of incitement to violence, both online and off, particularly against women and minority journalists and activists, as well as physical attacks.

It pointed to the case of journalist Shaheena Shaheen, who was shot dead last Saturday by unidentified men in Balochistan's Kech district. — AFP

NAVALNY CASE: UN HR OFFICE SEEKS PROBE

Geneva, Sept. 8: The office of the UN human rights chief is calling on the Russian government to carry out or cooperate with an independent investigation of the reported poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Michelle Bachete, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, welcomed the emergence of Navalny from a coma in a Berlin hospital, said office spokesman Rupert Colville. "There was a very serious crime committed on Russian soil," he said. "There appears to be no doubt this exotic and highly deadly substance — Novichok — was used, and clearly there must be a proper investigation." — AP

INDIA, ISRAEL, U.S. WORKING ON 5G TECH

Washington, Sept. 8: India, Israel and the US have earnestly begun trilateral cooperation on digital leadership and innovation, a top American official has said, asserting that it is right that the three countries play a key role in delivering the next generation 5G technology in a way that is "open, interoperable, reliable and secure". The 5G collaboration is the first step and just the tip of the iceberg, the United States Agency for International Development (US-AID) Deputy Administrator, Bonnie Glick, told *PTI* after the US-India-Israel forum on strategic, tech and development/water cooperation discussion last week. — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

9 SEPTEMBER 2020

KCR's land revenue law may well be momentous

If bureaucrats and officials don't find ways to scuttle the intent and objectives of the sudden, disruptive land legislation Telangana chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao sprung on the state, it has built in within its scope ability to reform and impact and set a benchmark so momentous that it would be chronicled someday as one of India's most important legislations. The legislation is momentous, epic, but the asterisk (with a conditions apply warning) is rather crucial — if the bureaucracy, higher and lower, don't succeed in sabotaging Mr Rao's dream, as they are often wont to do.

As most Indians know, land revenue is one of the most brazenly corrupt functions of all governments and administrations: nowhere in our national democracy is Article 14 followed to its finality — land registrations don't discriminate against any Indian based on gender, region, religion, caste or economic strata — everyone pays a bribe while buying or selling a land. Almost no one's land is safe either. No criminal or political goon in any area can grab or illegally occupy anyone else's land to make a claim based on the proviso of "possession" without the connivance of officials of the land department.

Records of ownership and transfer are fraught with such complex conditionality and local variances, if one wishes to truly experience a slice of the medieval ages, one can try to buy, sell or seek a migration of purpose of land.

Chandrashekar Rao wishes to change all that, starting with abolishing and removing the village revenue officer (VROs). In an announcement on Monday that was styled to draw parallels with Narendra Modi's "surgical strike" swiftiness, Mr Rao decided to order all VROs to hand over all land documents to tahsildars, who would henceforth likely register all agriculture land while sub-registrars will handle non-agriculture land. Mutations will be hassle-free with a single website, named Dharani, will handle all land records and transfers.

In the past, in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, late chief minister N.T. Rama Rao tried to revolutionise land administration and abolished the Patwari system, which earned him huge political goodwill, but the deeply entrenched Patels/Patwaris of Telangana region managed to embed themselves back into the system with a new nomenclature — VROs.

India's current land system was largely conceptualised and designed by Sher Shah Suri, which Mughal emperor Akbar modified and named the mansabdar system, which, with a few changes, lasted the British era and thrived with very few amendments in Independent India.

Can Telangana set a new benchmark in high quality transformation of a vexatious branch of administration and enable our experiencing a basic economic right in a manner befitting the 21st century? Will Mr Rao's political determination and foresight be able to withstand the pressures of not just the displaced VROs, but an entire powerful corrupt ecosystem — land mafia, politicians, local goons, officials, touts and "dispute settlement" lords?

Will Mr Rao deliver a reform that will make history hail him as a great reformer or will he succumb before forces within his own party and government to hijack it remains to be seen. But for once, there is hope.

Come clean on economy

The galloping number of coronavirus infections, the disastrous performance of the economy and the worrying developments on the border call for a national consensus so that India can take them on effectively. And a lasting consensus can be built only on facts. The onus is on the government to feed the people with them.

Unfortunately, the government seems to have little plan to brief the people about the tough challenges the nation faces. The spite with which the ruling party replies to the legitimate questions posed to it is both unheard of and uncalled for. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, MP, has been asking the government on how it plans to mend the economy, which, he says, tanked because of the wrong policies of the government, including demonetisation and what he calls the faulty implementation of GST. The government can very well explain to him, and the nation, how those measures helped the economy. Instead, they have resorted to ad hominem attacks on Mr Gandhi. When told that the new tax regime systematically killed the small scale sector, the BJP's response was that Mr Gandhi had to apologise to the Supreme Court in the past for "one of his lies". This is unacceptable.

The nation is witnessing a strange economic phenomenon where the people find it difficult to make ends meet; it's day-to-day subsistence for them, while a handful of corporate honchos go on accumulating wealth. The loss of more than two crore jobs during the pandemic is sure to exacerbate the situation. It's not just Mr Gandhi who has expressed disappointment at the way the government responds to the crisis; eminent economists such as Dr Raghuram Rajan have demanded course correction. The BJP and the ruling dispensation cannot go on evading the tough questions; shooting the messenger does not kill the message.

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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Civil servants under watch for corruption

Transparency and weeding out corruption is a big theme with the Modi sarkar, and it has doggedly pursued this goal despite push-back from the babus. Last year, the government endorsed lists of dozens of officers of the IRS and IT services accused of corruption, sexual harassment and other charges.

The campaign continues. Now, as part of weeding out inefficient and corrupt babus, the Modi sarkar has again reiterated that Central ministries and departments must constantly update the list of officers who have completed 30 years of service. Besides, the register of officers with "doubtful integrity" will be regularly reviewed and updated to help identify babus who can be prematurely retired from service. Sources say that the department of personnel and training (DoPT) issued a letter to this effect on August 28.

Apparently, the names of such officers will be forwarded to the

respective review committees on a routine basis. Cases about the IAS, IPS, IFS and Railway cadre babus will be considered by the respective secretary of DoPT, ministry of home affairs, ministry of external affairs and Central Railway Board, respectively.

Will corrupt babus get the message?

CBDT CHIEF GETS EXTENSION
 The chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Pramod Chandra Mody, got his term extended by six months ending February 28, 2021. A retired 1982-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, Mr Mody was slated to retire on August 31. His predecessor Sushil Chandra (now Election Commissioner) too got an extension in May 2017, which was considered a rare exception at that time. Now with Mr Mody's continued tenure, it seems to have become a norm.

The virtually last-minute announcement has finally ended

the hectic speculation in babu circles about the government's plans. Since the beginning of August, the Board has been led by two retired IRS officers, Mr Mody and member Sushil Kumar Gupta. According to sources, there was a keen tussle between the two senior-most babus for the top slot. Finally, it appears that the government decided to go with a tried and tested hand than opt for a new face.

Mr Mody's extension also puts paid to the hopes of Seema Khorana Patra and Prabhash Shankar who were next in line in seniority to have a go at the top post.

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL?
 Shah Faesal's brush with politics in Jammu & Kashmir turned out to be short-lived. The erstwhile IAS topper had made headlines last year when he announced he was quitting the civil service to protest the situation in Kashmir. He founded a political party Jammu & Kashmir People's

Movement (JKPM). Now, more than a year later, he has left his own party and indicated that he might return to the service.

According to sources, the government has not accepted his resignation of January 2019, pending investigation into some of his posts on social media. Apparently, before quitting politics Mr Faesal contacted top officials in the home ministry, and if we believe the rumours, even national security advisor Ajit Doval, before announcing his decision.

Those in the know say that since the government has not accepted his resignation, the door is open for his re-entry into the IAS. However, he will have to withdraw his resignation first.

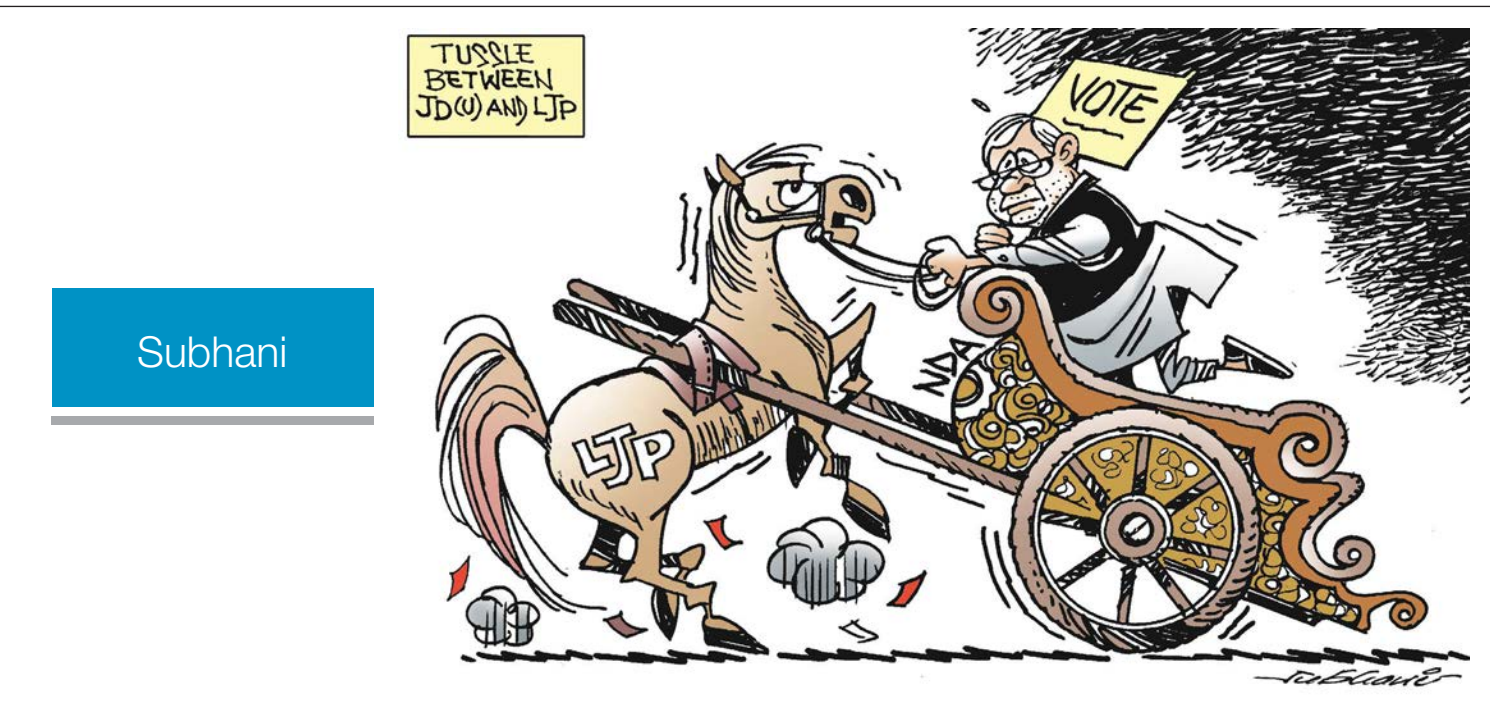
The website of the department of personnel and training (DoPT) still shows Mr Faesal as a serving officer, even though he plunged into politics for a year and a half. Since his resignation has not been processed, Mr Faesal can still withdraw his resignation. But

more likely the final say in this matter may be a political one than an administrative decision.

BABUS MUST BE 'KARMAYOGIS'
 The Modi sarkar has now added "Karmayogi" to the government's expanding lexicon of buzzwords. The Union Cabinet has given its approval to "Mission Karmayogi", a skill-building programme for civil servants. It has been touted as the "biggest human resource development reform in the government".

According to C. Chandramouli, secretary, Department of Personnel and Training, babus will have to be "imaginative and progressive, energetic and enabling, transparent and tech enabled, and constructive and creative" to face modern challenges. But, all that it sounds like is a fancier word for good old "training".

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian) on Twitter. Let's multiply the effect.



Subhani

Understand the politics behind China tensions



N.V. Subramanian

Politics governs relations between all countries. Military power and diplomacy subsume within politics and cannot be a substitute for politics. This understanding is completely missing in India's negotiation of the ongoing border crisis with China in Ladakh. In contrast, every Chinese action is mediated by politics.

Why have the Chinese suddenly shown a hard side towards India? Unless China's political objectives which led to the border action are clearly understood, it will be of little help to apply purely military and diplomatic solutions to it. Politics has to be met with politics, which this writer has been reiterating from the first days of the Galwan Valley clash.

Before Galwan, there was no history of comparable violence for decades. Both sides patrolled to their respective perceptions of the Line of Actual Control, the de facto border between India and China. Transgressions, tensions and rival claims were handled peacefully by the two armies and by the two nations' diplomats. China always restored the status quo.

Why are the Chinese so adamant about holding on to new territories now? There's a definite trust deficit with the current political leadership. The Army remains the same. The diplomatic institutions have not changed. Only political attitudes, ideologies and the consequent thrusts have changed. Indian politics has changed. The Chinese are responding to that change.

The Chinese have responded to a similar political change even earlier. In the late 1990s, they hardened their stance towards the Atal Behari Vajpayee government for having justified India's

1998 nuclear tests on the grounds of the threat posed by China. Pakistan and China have been extra close ever since, although Vajpayee had tried to undo the damage with China. Vajpayee's Lahore initiative was also aimed at weakening the China-Pakistan nexus. He did not fancy a two-front war.

The past six years have been a process of unlearning Vajpayee's lessons. Pakistan-bashing brings handsome electoral dividends. It was why Prime Minister Narendra Modi was re-elected with a bigger majority in 2019. Then on August 5 the same year, the Lok Sabha saw unfettered revanchism about wresting Aksai Chin from China. The same day, the Chinese protested against the change in Ladakh's status to Union territory, but were completely ignored. They kept on protesting.

The deadly Galwan incident and the preceding tense days took the establishment and "strategists" by surprise. They had forgotten the Chinese protests. Galwan was thought to be a local incident, neither cleared by the Central Military Commission nor the higher authorities in Beijing, which admits of complete ignorance about the inner workings of China.

China is a highly political nation. Every organ and institution of the State, including the powerful military, subsumes within politics, which is solely represented by the Chinese Communist Party and its (current) leader Xi Jinping. Every decision that China takes is political. The Galwan incident was political, although the instrument was military.

The most worrisome aspect of tensions is the zero political trust between India and China. This was not the case before May 2014. Tensions have geographies like bodily diseases. The ten-

sions currently are located in eastern Ladakh. Over-analysing the location and ignoring or underplaying the politics is perilous. Suppose the tension shifts to the eastern sector. Will the emphasis shift to the new location, neglecting politics once again? Will eastern Ladakh be forgotten in the panic about a new area of tension?

Sadly, China does not trust the current leadership in New Delhi. After India's self-admitted "pre-emptive action" in eastern Ladakh in August-end, the conflict risks have risen. China has withdrawn peace guarantees. To the Line of Control (with Pakistan) is joined the entire Line of Actual Control in military tensions. Vajpayee's strenuous efforts to prevent a two-front crisis by building independent relations with both Pakistan and China have now been completely undone.

Since India has an elected government whose character surfaces China's worst instincts, politics has no chance unless New Delhi is willing to try. India has to hold a frank political dialogue with China to understand the root cause of tensions. A resolution will not come from military-to-military talks and narrow diplomacy or armed posturing. Frank political discussions may concern India's perceived drift towards the United States against Beijing; the August 5, 2019 action and the statement on Aksai Chin in the Lok Sabha; India's counter action in Doklam, in the disputed Bhutan-China region, and so on.

The political idea is to turn the clock back to the pre-May 2014 period, when relations were even with China. A two-front

conflict is always a nightmare. A shattered economy, record unemployment, a drifting neighbourhood, peaking Covid-19, the world's disinterest in Sino-Indian troubles, the growing internal divisiveness, and much wrong elsewhere makes accommodative and assuaging politics imperative over military machismo and sterile diplomacy.

Understandably, India does not trust China any longer. But before May 2014, the same adversary was trusted to the extent that the LAC was considered peaceful, compared to the LOC. What changed? A nationalist government came to power in India entrenched in revanchist ideology.

It is also true that Xi Jinping in 2018 was confirmed China's President for life. He is only second to Mao Zedong to get an interminable tenure. Xi shuns Deng Xiaoping's policy of rise by stealth. He is determined to consolidate China's leading position in the world and gather up recalcitrant territories.

At the same time, Xi's hard line has been exacerbated by the boorishness of US President Donald Trump, who has accelerated America's decline. He is the Boris Yeltsin to Mikhail Gorbachev-Barack Obama. Should Joe Biden be elected in November and he sensibly normalises relations with China, India shouldn't be left stranded with no doors open with Beijing for rapprochement.

Dependence on a professional military and career diplomats can only take a nation state so far. States are not built around such people but constituted by politics mediated by citizens. Vajpayee knew that well.

Two courses are open now. There is Vajpayee's way of securing India by politics, which is remarkably Bismarckian. The other way is defiantly blundering along with an adversary most unsuitable for any kind of experimentation.

The writer is an analyst and journalist based in New Delhi

LETTERS

SHARE COVID-19 CUP

The cartoon by Subhani in DC dated September 8, 2020 wherein the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is shown as being shocked for being given a cup (the first prize being received by US President Trump) by corona virus itself for India taking the second place in number of corona cases evoked not just laughter but has also made one ponder about the precarious state we are living at present thanks to the inefficient handling of the pandemic by the government. The cup for the second prize should also be shared by the Chief Ministers of several states of India with Modi for making India take the second place in Covid19 cases in the world by their lethargic attitude in control of the virus poor enforcement of rules of mask wearing, social distancing etc.

M.C. Vijay Shankar
Chennai

JUSTICE FOR VIEWERS

SINCE TWO months, we are hearing the verdict of guilty on a daily basis of Rhea Chakraborty and her family in Sushant's tragic end (*'Justice for Sushant' holds mirror to media*, Sept. 8). The stake holders in this case are the Centre, governments of Bihar and Maharashtra and investigating agencies CBI, ED and NCB. It is a nightmare for TV viewers after 9 pm, with all channels reviewing the day's findings of the case with a magnifying glass a la Sherlock Holmes, Hercules Poirot and Perry Mason all in one and pronouncing the verdict of guilty. It is a drama in real life with angry men and women who abuse each other with no rhyme or reason making the coverage a study in midsize history of hypocrisy, as rightly concluded by you in the editorial.

Parthasarathy Mandadi,
Tirupati

LESSON FOR LIFE

ANGER, THEY say, is one letter short of danger. Life is all about conquering anger, which is the by-product of ego, and reflecting a mature outlook in our behaviour. That the world No. 1 tennis player Novak Djokovic displayed his anger when trailing Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta by hitting the ball full toss (accidentally though) at the throat of an official in the US Open on Sunday was really shocking. He was rightly disqualified from the prestigious tournament. Players like Djokovic, one feels, should see video cassettes of how tennis ace Bjorn Borg played the game. He was an embodiment of patience. Be that as it may, Djokovic's ugly incident is indeed a lesson for life.

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

SHORT TAKES

Coach Poonia is Covid positive

New Delhi: Dronacharya awardee athletics coach and former international hammer thrower Virender Poonia has tested positive for Covid-19 and has been admitted to a hospital in Jaipur. The 47-year-old Virender is the husband of Olympian discus thrower and sitting Rajasthan MLA Krishna Poonia. He is now admitted to the Railway Hospital in Jaipur. He, however, said he is doing "fine".

"Last week I had body pain and sore throat and so I went for Covid-19 testing and it turned out to be positive. The result came on Saturday," Virender said. "Today is the fourth day (after testing positive) and I am alright. There is still body pain and sore throat but I am hoping to get better."

Virender, a Railways employee, won a bronze in hammer throw in the Asian Junior Championships in 1992 and finished fourth in the 1998 Asian Senior Championships. He was Krishna's coach when she won the discus throw gold medal in the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games. He received the Dronacharya Award in 2012. — PTI

Ailing Ali asked to stop training

New Delhi: Promising India defender Anwar Ali has been asked to stop training as his latest medical reports are being sent to the Asian Football Confederation, months after being diagnosed with a congenital heart condition, which has put a question mark on his career.

One of the impressive performers of the 2017 U-17 World Cup at home, Anwar underwent blood tests, a CT scan and an MRI at a top private hospital in Kolkata last week, the reports of which had been sent to the All India Football Federation's medical committee.

"His reports have been sent to the AFC and till a final decision is taken, he has been asked to stop practice. A decision on his future in football should come by this weekend," I-League chief executive officer Sunando Dhar said. The centre-back's career has been left hanging in the balance ever since he was diagnosed with a congenital heart condition last year. — PTI

Italy edge Dutch, Norway win big

Paris: Nicolo Barella extended Italy's two-year unbeaten run as he scored the winner in Monday's 1-0 victory away to the Netherlands in the Nations League while Erling Haaland netted twice for Norway in a 5-1 thrashing of Northern Ireland.

Roberto Mancini's Italy saw their record 11-match winning streak end with last week's draw against Bosnia and Herzegovina but got the best of the Netherlands in Amsterdam courtesy of Inter Milan midfielder Barella's header in first-half stoppage time. "It was a great performance by the entire team, we played with personality. We earned a great result and we are all happy, especially with the performance," said winger Lorenzo Insigne. "We could have scored more goals and killed the game but we still earned the three points. That is what counts most." — AFP

Clippers out-gun Nuggets, in lead

Miami: Paul George scored 32 points and the Los Angeles Clippers turned up the heat defensively on Monday in a 113-107 win over the Denver Nuggets for a 2-1 lead in the NBA Western Conference semifinals. Kawhi Leonard added 23 points, 14 rebounds and six assists for the Clippers, coming up big on both ends of the floor as Los Angeles powered to the finish in the see-saw battle. Denver, blown out in game one but coming off a convincing game-two victory, led 78-68 midway through a third quarter. It was tied up at 101-101 with less than five minutes remaining and the Clippers closed it out with a 12-6 scoring run. — AFP

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Editor: **ADITYA SINHA**

Elise in wonderland

Mertens sends 2nd seed Kenin packing, Serena advances

New York, Sept. 8: Serena Williams battled into the quarter-finals of the US Open on Monday as top men's seeds Dominic Thiem and Daniil Medvedev sailed through to the last eight at Flushing Meadows.

After Williams kept her bid for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam singles title alive, second seed Sofia Kenin was sent crashing out in the last 16 by Belgium's Elise Mertens.

Kenin, the highest seeded player left in the tournament and winner of the 2020 Australian Open, was bundled out of the last 16 6-3, 6-3, in 1hr 14 mins by Mertens.

Mertens, the 16th seed, will now play Victoria Azarenka of Belarus in the quarter-finals.

Kenin, who had not lost a game in her first three

rounds, never got her service game together against Mertens.

The 21-year-old Moscow-born player won only 56 percent of first serve points compared to 75 percent for Mertens.

Unseeded Azarenka came from a set down to oust 20th seed Karolina Muchova 5-7, 6-1, 6-4 in 2hr 30min.

Earlier, Williams had to summon up every last ounce of strength to depose 15th seed Maria Sakkari in three hard-fought sets.

The 38-year-old American needed almost two and a half hours to dislodge her 25-year-old Greek opponent 6-3, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3 inside an empty Arthur Ashe Stadium in New York.

The American will play Tsvetana Pironkova for a place in the semi-finals

BOPANNA-SHAPOVALOV OUSTED FROM US OPEN

New York, Sept. 8: The Indian challenge came to an end at the US Open with the quarterfinal loss of Rohan Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov in the men's doubles event here.

Bopanna and Shapovalov lost 5-7, 5-7 to Dutch Jean-Julien Rojer and Romania's Horea Tecau in the last-eight match which lasted one hour and 26 minutes on Monday.

Bopanna and Shapovalov lost their serve once in each set and could not convert the only break chance that came their way in the second set.

It was Bopanna's best performance at a Slam since he made the quarterfinals at both the US Open and the French Open in 2018. — PTI

after the Bulgarian ousted France's Alize Cornet in another draining three-setter.

'ABSOLUTELY UNREAL'

Pironkova, playing her first tournament in three

years after a lengthy break in which she gave birth to her son, prevailed 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 at the Louis Armstrong Stadium.

"It's absolutely unreal, I really can't believe it,"

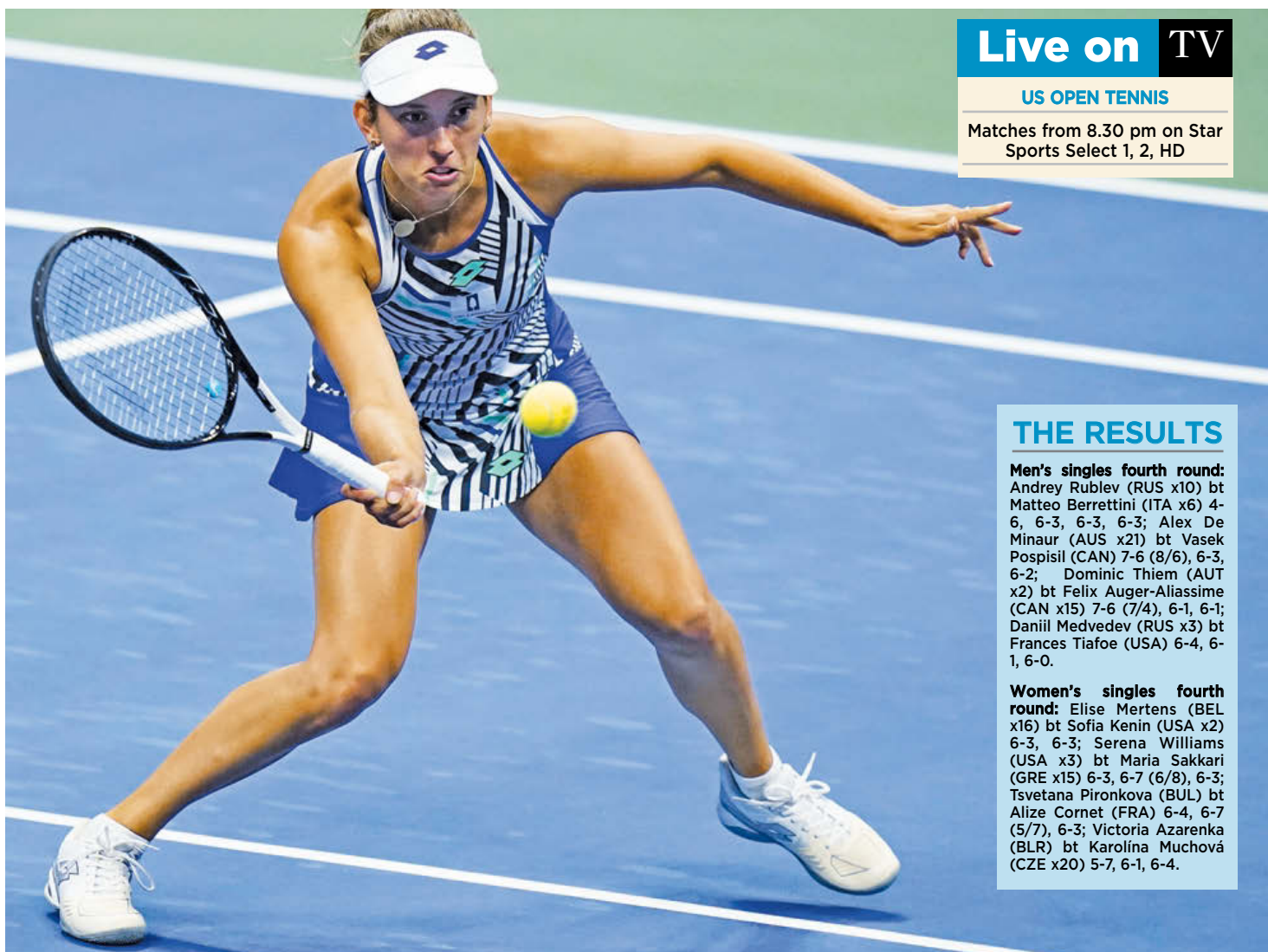
said Pironkova, whose last tournament appearance before this year's US Open was the 2017 Wimbledon championships when she exited in the second round.

In the men's draw, second-seeded Thiem raced into the round of eight with a three-set demolition of Canadian rising star Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Thiem dismantled the 20-year-old 15th seed 7-6 (7/4), 6-1, 6-1 in 2hr 7min.

He will play Australia's 21st seed Alex de Minaur for a spot in the semi-finals after the Australian breezed past unseeded Canadian Vasek Pospisil 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 6-2, in 2hr 17 min.

Third seed Medvedev blew away unseeded American France Tiafoe 6-4, 6-1, 6-0 in only 1hr 38 min. — AFP



Elise Mertens of Belgium plays a shot en route to her 6-3, 6-3 win over Sofia Kenin of the United States in their US Open women's singles fourth round match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on Monday. — AP

Roland Garros to allow spectators

Paris, Sept. 8: Spectators will be allowed at the French Open this month despite the growing number of coronavirus cases in the country, organizers said.

Organizers unveiled the health protocols for the clay-court grand slam, which will take place at Roland Garros in western Paris from September 27 after being postponed from its May start due to the pandemic.

"Since the international circuit restarted, Roland Garros will be the first tournament with the privilege of hosting an audience," French Tennis

Federation president Bernard Giudicelli said on Monday.

In accordance with the latest government guidelines capping attendance to 5,000 people in regions such as Paris, the federation has scaled down its plans.

The federation wanted to welcome 50% to 60% of capacity, the equivalent of about 20,000 fans per day. Instead, Roland Garros will be divided into three zones based on the three main courts, with 5,000 people each for the Philippe Chatrier and Suzanne Lenglen courts. — AP

No Barty at French Open

Sydney, Sept. 8: World number one Ashleigh Barty announced Tuesday she will not defend her French Open crown, citing the coronavirus fears that also prompted her and several other top players to withdraw from the US Open.

The Australian, who claimed her maiden Grand Slam at Roland Garros in 2019, said it was a "difficult" decision but the health of her family and team came first.

"Last year's French Open was the most special tournament of my career so this is not a decision I have made lightly," she said on social media.

"There are two reasons



Ashleigh Barty

for my decision — the first is the health risks that still exist with Covid.

"The second is my preparation, which has not been ideal without my coach being able to train with me due to the state border closures in Australia."

Barty is based in

Brisbane while her coach, Craig Tytzer, is in Melbourne and unable to travel as the city battles a significant second-wave virus outbreak.

She announced in late July that she would sit out the US Open, currently underway in New York, with defending men's champion Rafael Nadal and world number two Simona Halep among those who also opted out because of the pandemic.

At the time, Barty was still monitoring the situation with the French Open, which is due to start on September 27, but said Tuesday her withdrawal was the latest development in "a challenging year for everyone". — AFP

MANKADING | IN IPL

Ponting speaks in Ashwin's support

Dubai, Sept. 8: Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting says he is on the "same page" as off-spinner R. Ashwin regarding running out non-strikers for backing up too far before a ball is delivered.

Ashwin, who was in the spotlight last IPL after dismissing Jos Buttler during a Kings XI Punjab versus Rajasthan Royals encounter, did something that his current IPL coach didn't endorse.

However, Ashwin and Ponting have had an open discussion here over the mode of dismissal and by the former Australian captain's own admission, they have reached a common ground.

"He (Ashwin) made me get on a podcast with him when I first arrived here to have a good open chat about it," Ponting told 'Cricket.com.au'.

"I think we're both on the same page. He feels he did everything in the rules and laws of the game and he's absolutely right," Ponting said.

In fact, Ponting found logic in Ashwin's rationale.

"He's saying, 'What if it's the last ball of the IPL, what if I'm bowling and the batting teams needs two runs to win and the non-striker is charging halfway down the wicket? What do you expect me to do?'"

150-160 is handy, says RCB coach

Dubai, Sept. 8: A score of 150 to 160 will be a competitive one in Dubai or Abu Dhabi track, reckons RCB coach Mike Hesson, who is happy to have identified his team's designated death bowlers, an area that has let them down during earlier Indian Premier League seasons.

The length of side boundaries are bigger in grounds like Abu Dhabi and that will bring down the average team total.

"Here 150-160 will be good scores in some grounds and it will be different. Chinnaswamy (in Bengaluru) is a great batting wicket, smaller boundaries and scores (team totals) are (on) higher (side)," Hesson told RCB's YouTube channel.

He said that on certain

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"There's an argument there as well, but as I said to him, I would expect that he would hold on to the ball and not Mankad and tell the batsman to stay in his crease next time and see if he's good enough to try and close the game out for us."

The batting great, however, made it clear that there is no place for "cheating" which is the case when non-strikers tend to back up too far.

"It shouldn't get to that stage anyway, batsmen shouldn't be cheating. That's what batsmen are doing, batsmen are actually cheating by trying to steal a yard or two here or there. It's something that needs to be addressed."

Ponting reiterated the need for a run penalty for offenders.

"I think something has to happen with the laws of the game to make sure batsmen can't cheat and there certainly shouldn't be the rule the way it is," he said. — PTI

YUVRAJ EYES A STINT IN BIG BASH LEAGUE

Melbourne, Sept. 8: Flamboyant Indian batsman Yuvraj Singh, who retired last year, is eyeing a stint in the Big Bash League and Cricket Australia is trying to help him find a team, a media report has said.

No Indian player has ever featured in the BBL as the country's cricket board (BCCI) doesn't allow active players to take part in overseas league.

The 38-year-old Yuvraj had retired from international and domestic cricket last year, clearing the decks to ply his trade in foreign leagues across the globe.

According to a report in *Sydney Morning Herald*, Yuvraj's manager Jason Warne of W Sports & Media has confirmed that Cricket Australia was trying to find a franchise that would be interested in the former Indian all-rounder.

"We're working with CA to try to find him a home," Warne said on Monday.

Yuvraj, the 2011 World Cup player of the tournament, last played for India in 2017. — PTI

Every brand may have a 'Dhoni' living inside it



Dr Raj Mohan Tella
Guest Column

In trying times like these, does greatness matter? Does it really elevate us and set the course of our lives or for that matter of brands and businesses on an ascendant? The context is the great Dhoni and the call is to all those brands, which want to build greater affinity with their stakeholders. Unravelling Dhoni may actually lead us to find out what is it that brands can imbibe from his actions and exploits.

I turn to the philosopher Peter Koestenbaum to unbundle the Dhoni magic. Koestenbaum states that there are four ways or dimensions of a leader — vision, reality, ethics and courage in his Leadership Diamond Model.

To begin with visioning, which simply means to think big and new. You would recollect how Dhoni envisioned a young and energetic team way back in 2008, while setting into

motion the gradual phasing out of established seniors. I am not suggesting that a business phase out veterans, but am only drawing the focus to the necessity of a vision for the enterprise. When businesses have a vision or a well-articulated destination, then everyone and all the energies of a business are focused to achieving that.

Next comes reality, which means responding to facts without illusions. If you are a Dhoni follower, you would recognise the great's cricketing brain, where every decision of his was based on homework, facts and an intuitive capability of marrying all the pointers to conceptualising out of the box

● Risk and return are linked; we know that from economics. But when you blend it with self-belief then the chances of triumph seem far greater. We saw that in Dhoni.

moves. To succeed, brands too have to rely on facts; research and understanding of audience needs, map trends, develop customer affinity and blend all of these to trigger those unique marketing/branding victories.

Then comes ethics — sensitivity and empathy. Which player doesn't vouch for learning from Dhoni? You would have

seen him interacting with the juniors in the team, guiding the bowlers from behind the wicket and leading the way by example.

For brands listening can be core strength. The more they listen to their audiences, the sharper their insights. Customers, influencers, social media advocates, suppliers, vendors, employees and more — giving them an ear and empathising with them only makes a brand and the leadership more sensitive to the existing and emerging needs.

Koestenbaum's last dimension is courage. Greatness is about the ability to act, initiate and risk. You and I know that one innings, which won India,

the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2011 was a play of Dhoni's courage and planning. But in contrast, how many times have you seen a brand take that risk and come across as being courageous amidst marketing challenges. Risk and return are linked; we know that from economics. But when you blend it with self-belief then the chances of triumph seem far greater. We saw that in Dhoni. In today's times, you can see it in some brands and businesses. Especially, in the ones who are successfully raising investments both from India and abroad.

So the next time you think of Dhoni or want to build a great brand, put the four Koestenbaum

dimensions to play. There is a good chance you will embark upon a journey of useful change and repurposing. Begin by asking fundamental questions and what could emerge is the presence of one or two dimensions and not all four of them in your brand. Then the task is cut out. Engineer the missing dimensions into your business environment and thinking. For I believe that every business and brand may have a 'Dhoni' living inside them. You could give it that winning nudge towards greatness.

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