

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | FRIDAY 4 | SEPTEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



**Max:** 34°C  
**Min:** 24°C  
**Rainfall:** 6 mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Aavani 19  
**Tithi:** Thuvithiyai/ Thrithiyai  
**Star:** Uthirataathi  
**Rahukalam:**  
10.30 am to 12 noon  
**Yamagandam:**  
3 pm to 4.30 pm

### PRAYERS

**Fajar:** 4.46 am  
**Jumma:** 12.14 pm  
**Asar:** 3.21 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.21 pm  
**Isha:** 7.32 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 6.18 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 7.55 PM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 8.15 AM**

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+81,091)	(+1,074)
39,30,059	68,560

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+ 5,892 )  
**TN: 4,45,851** **7,608**

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

**2,63,51,340**

### DEATHS

**8,70,210**

**213**

worldometers.info

## HC places homemaker on higher pedestal, enhances accident compensation

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Highlighting the importance of homemakers in a family and placing them on a higher pedestal than that of any earning member in a family, the Madras high court has enhanced a compensation amount awarded to a 39-year-old woman who sustained 60 percent permanent disability in an road accident, from ₹4.86 lakh to ₹14.07 lakh. Justice S.M.Subramaniam enhanced the compensation amount while partly allowing an appeal from Bhuvaneshwari, challenging an order of the Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal, Salem, dated March 18, 2019, awarding a compensation of ₹4.86 lakh to her. ■ **Full report: P2**

## COUNTER

## POINT



**You can't even question the cancellation of Question Hour!**

# Gorging on white rice to take India to diabetic ICU

**T. SUDHEESH | DC**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Diabetes, which has become a burgeoning health problem in India, especially in the rice-eating belts, needs to be addressed on a war-footing in the post pandemic era, says a study report.

The report, authored by Dr. Bhavadharini Balaji and Dr. V. Mohan, and published recently in the American Journal Diabetes Care, predicts that higher consumption of white polished rice continues to pose alarming risk of diabetes among youngsters.

The decade-long study examined 1,32,373 participants in 21 countries. During the study, 6129 individuals without diabetes at baseline developed a state of type-2 diabetes.

Dr Mohan, the co-author, told *DC* that the minimum daily intake of white polished rice among Indians, especially from eastern, north-eastern and southern parts, was 630 gm, according to the study. It's the highest in the entire region including the Middle East, South America, North America, Europe and Africa. "Unless Indians do not reduce the daily intake of

● **A study carried out by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, a couple of years ago had found that Kerala had the largest number of diabetes patients with 19.4% while TN registered third position with 10%**

carbohydrates by half and increase the protein level, it will become a major health hazard that will put the country's economy in serious trouble," he said. "It's the time the government thought seriously about introducing new schemes that could promote the intake of protein-

rich food including vegetables and meat among people." The study comes at a time when India has been regarded as the diabetes capital of the world. A study carried out by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical

Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, a couple of years ago had found that Kerala had the largest number of diabetes patients with 19.4 per cent while Tamil Nadu registered third position with 10 per cent. According to the studies, India has over 50 million type-2 diabetes patients now. At least 80per cent of diabetic patients in India die from heart disease, a rate double that of the US and six times higher than Japan and China.

According to Dr. Mohan, white polished rice raises blood sugar levels quickly.

"The foods that create high GI (Glycemic Index) levels in the body are known to put you at risk to diabetes in the long run. "Avoiding excessive intake of carbohydrate and following a strict fitness regime are the only way to keep the blood glucose level in check," he adds.

Dr. Balaji said it was the largest study on white rice intake and incident diabetes ever done. "It is also one of the first to be done across different countries and confirms that white rice intake is one of the contributors to the diabetes epidemic in South Asia," he said.

## Mom unwell, Harbhajan not to join CSK camp in Dubai

**C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Even as the buzz and speculation around the surprise exit of Suresh Raina refuse to die down, the Indian Premier League has witnessed another high-profile pull-out. Veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh has decided to not join the Chennai Super Kings camp in Dubai, a team source confirmed on Thursday.



Harbhajan, who had earlier skipped the team's pre-departure camp in Chennai, is reportedly worried about his mother, who is not keeping well. Harbhajan was expected to reach the UAE this weekend. ■ **P8**



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**I will never insult national flag, says S Ve Shekher**



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# Don't eye LAC; talks only way out, India tells China

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3

Blaming China for the situation over the last four months in the Ladakh sector that was a "direct result" of China trying to unilaterally change the status quo at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), India on Thursday clearly said the "way ahead" was "negotiations" through both military and diplomatic channels.

New Delhi added it was "firmly committed" to a "peaceful dialogue" and urged China to "sincerely engage" India to restore peace and tranquillity at the LAC.

New Delhi also made it clear that Beijing "should not take any provocative action or escalate matters", which comes after the latest round of Chinese military actions at Pangong Tso lake in Ladakh both on the night of August 29 and on August 31.

In an escalation of the war of words, the Chinese embassy in New Delhi said in a statement that it was "seriously concerned" over and "firmly opposed" the Indian government's decision on Wednesday to block 118 mobile apps (on the grounds of being prejudicial to India's security), saying these "national security" grounds were an "excuse" and it "urges the Indian government to rectify the discriminatory practices violating World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules". Beijing said "suppression, self-seclusion and restric-

tions cannot benefit one country's development", and told New Delhi to "return to the right path of win-win cooperation". New Delhi, however, remained firm on its decision, and the external affairs ministry said Thursday that companies needed to follow Indian laws.

Observers see India's decision as another instance of New Delhi seeking to impose economic costs on Beijing for the Chinese military provocations in the Ladakh sector.

The MEA also confirmed that defence minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Moscow for a defence ministers' meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation member countries would include a bilateral meeting with the Russian defence minister, but that there was "no information" on any similar meeting with the Chinese defence minister, which is seen as another snub to Beijing. The MEA also confirmed that external affairs minister S. Jaishankar would also travel to Moscow for a SCO foreign ministers' meeting on September 10. All eyes are on that visit to see if Mr Jaishankar would meet his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi or not.

In yet another signal to Beijing, the MEA also said India looked forward to hosting a meeting of the four-nation "Quadrilateral" -- comprising India, the United States, Japan and Australia -- that focuses on the maintenance of a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.

# Army chief lands at Leh for review

**PAWAN BALI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3

As tensions with China flared up, Army Chief Gen. M.M. Naravane on Thursday landed in Leh to review the operational preparedness of the forces deployed in Ladakh.

Earlier, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria on Wednesday visited front-line airbases in the eastern sector to take stock. The IAF is on high alert in Ladakh.

Gen. Naravane, on a two-day visit to Ladakh, will visit forward areas to assess the emerging situation with China on the ground.

Gen. Naravane's Leh visit at this juncture is crucial as the Chinese have not taken well to India's moves to pre-empt them and occupy over two dozen strategic peaks on the southern banks of Pangong Tso. Some of these were taken by the Indian Army for the first time after the 1962 war and allows Indian forces to overlook Chinese garisons.

Another round of brigadier-level India-China talks on Thursday again failed to reach any breakthrough.



This was the fourth meeting in the last four days on de-escalation in southern Pangong Tso.

India is now well prepared to face the Chinese threat after it has built up forces that are well acclimatised, brought in tanks, artillery and stocked up supplies in the past few months after being initially surprised by the Chinese intrusions in May.

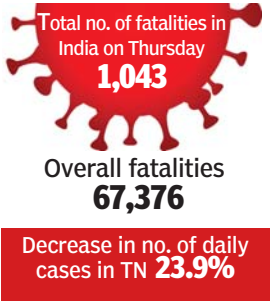
Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Bipin Rawat said Thursday India's forces were capable of handling aggressive Chinese actions in "best suitable ways". Gen. Rawat said India's policy of engagement, if not backed by credible military power and regional influence, would imply acknowledging China's pre-eminence in the region.

# India reports highest-ever 84,000 new Covid-19 cases

**VINEETA PANDEY | DC**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3

Close to 84,000 fresh cases of novel coronavirus were detected in India on Thursday, the highest so far in a single day as overall cases of Covid-19, as per the Union health ministry, went past 38.53 lakh. In the last 24 hours 1,043 deaths were recorded, taking overall fatalities to 67,376.

Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said India has one of the lowest cases per million when compared to other countries in the world. "Despite high infection rates in India, the cases per million (population) in Brazil and the US are seven times higher than their corresponding figures in India. India's caseload per million is 2,792, while that of the world is 3,359. The US has 18,986 cases per million while Brazil has 18,802. Similarly, deaths per million (population) in Brazil and the UK are 12 and 13 times higher, respectively, as compared to India," he said.



deaths have been in the age group of 60 years and above.

According to the health ministry five states -- Maharashtra (24.77 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (12.64 per cent), Karnataka (11.58 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (6.92 per cent), and Tamil Nadu (6.42 per cent) -- account for 62 per cent of the total cases in the country. These five states also account for 70 per cent of total deaths due to Covid-19. However, despite the rising number of cases in these states, officials said, there has been a 6.8 per cent decline in daily cases in Maharashtra this week compared to August 13-19, while in Andhra the decrease is 13.7 per cent, in Karnataka it is 16.1 per cent, Tamil Nadu it is 23.9 per cent and Uttar Pradesh has had 17.1 per cent decrease.

"We have a daily high number of fresh cases mainly because we are conducting a very high number of tests and our population is bigger than several nations. Our positivity rate today is 7.20 per cent," he said.

# Metro pares operation time, focuses on safety

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

The Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), which suspended its services on March 22 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will resume its operations from September 7.

The metro will be operational from 8 am to 8 pm to start with and will be extended later, according to the new guidelines CMRL issued in line with the Unlock 4 order of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Blue line metro which connects Chennai airport to Washermanpet will resume services on September 7 Monday while the Green line which connects Dr MG Ramachandran Central Metro to St Thomas Mount will recommence operations on September 9. The trains will run with a gap of five minutes during the peak hours (8.30 am to 10.30 am and 5 pm to 8 pm) and with a gap of 10 minutes during the



<b>TIMING:</b> From 8 am to 8 pm (to be extended later)	<b>BLUE LINE:</b> From Sept. 7	<b>GREEN LINE:</b> From Sept. 9
<b>SOCIAL DISTANCING:</b> 6 ft on (On platforms and in trains)	<b>FREQUENCY:</b> In every 5 minutes (between 8.30-10.30 am, 5-8 pm)	

- Smart cards will be issued/recharged
- Contact-less QR code mobile ticketing
- Single journey tokens on need basis

non-peak hours.

Passengers are advised to maintain a social distancing and are advised maintain a distance of six ft while waiting on platform and travelling in train. Markings like "X" have been made available on alternate seats both in trains and platforms so that passengers can sit on alternate seats.

Smart cards will be issued/recharged at ticket counters at Metro stations. Contact-less

QR code mobile ticketing is also available to passengers. Travel card reader machines shall be installed at all 32 metro stations to avoid crowding for recharge and extension of validity of smart cards. Cashless transactions are encouraged while single journey tokens will be discouraged. However passengers will be issued them on need basis and the tokens will be regularly sanitised.

# Oxford vaccine arrives in Chennai for trials

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Samples of Covidshield, the newly developed vaccine against Coronavirus by the Oxford University in England, arrived in Chennai on Thursday for clinical trials.

The vaccine will be tested in Chennai among 300 healthy individuals aged above 18 at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and the Sri Ramachandra Medical College Hospital.

The Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine would be chief supervisor of the project that would be undertaken by the National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis in Chetput. Several organisations were involved in the development of the vaccine and Oxford University had started testing it on health individuals to ascertain its potency.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Drugs Controller General of India chose Chennai for carrying out the tests as part of the exercise. The vaccine, which is being developed under an agreement with British-Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, is already phase-3 testing in several countries, including India, Brazil, England and South Africa.

Pune-based Serum Institute of India has an agreement with Oxford-Astra-Zeneca consortium

● **The vaccine will be tested in Chennai among 300 healthy individuals above the age of 18 at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and the Sri Ramachandra Medical College Hospital**

for manufacturing the vaccine in India.

Explaining how the vaccine worked, health minister C Vijayabaskar had said one week ago that it would create T-cells, which are white blood corpuscles (WBC), in 14 days and those WBCs would fight the virus that had infected the human body and develop immunity against it in 28 days.

The vaccine, which had given hope to the medical fraternity involved in combating the spread of Coronavirus, would undergo another two levels of testing before being approved by the agencies concerned.

Though the government had developed the infrastructure in hospitals to treat Covid-19 patients and had also procured life-saving drugs like Remdesivir, Tocilizumab and Enoxaparin and despatched them across the state, medical experts the world over felt that the vaccine alone could save mankind from the pandemic, Mr Vijayabaskar had said.

## Twitter account of PM's personal website hacked

New Delhi, Sept. 3: Twitter on Thursday said the account linked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal website was hacked, and it has now been restored.

"We're aware of this activity and have taken steps to secure the compromised account. We are actively investigating the situation. At this time, we are not aware of additional accounts being impacted. Advice on keeping your account secure can be found here," a Twitter spokesperson said in an emailed statement.

The compromised account has about 2.5 million followers. After hacking the @narendramodi.in Twitter account, which is the Prime Minister's personal website, the cyber-criminal reportedly sent out posts seeking donations for the PM National Relief Fund for Covid-19 using crypto currency.

"Yes, this account is hacked by John Wick (hckindia@tutanota.com). We have not hacked Paytm Mall," another message had said.

On August 30, cybersecurity firm Cyble had said hacker group 'John Wick' was behind a data breach at Paytm Mall, the e-commerce unit of Paytm. Paytm Mall had said it had not found any security lapses after investigating claims of a possible hack and data breach. — *PTI*



## SHORT TAKES

## SPB stable, conscious but on ventilator: Hospital

**Chennai:** Veteran playback singer S.P. Balasubrahmanyam, undergoing treatment for Covid-19, was stable and conscious but continued to be on ventilator support, the hospital treating him said on Thursday. The 74 year-old musician, "who had been admitted due to Covid-19 at MGM Healthcare continues to be on ventilator and ECMO (heart-lung assistance) support in the intensive care unit (ICU)," the hospital said in a bulletin. "His current clinical condition is stable. He is conscious, responsive and continues to show clinical progress. He is being closely monitored by our multidisciplinary clinical team," Dr Anuradha Basakaran, Assistant Director- Medical Services, MGM Healthcare, said in the bulletin. — *PTI*

## Hyundai gets bulk order for KONA from govt

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, AUG. 3

Hyundai Motor India Ltd. (HMIL) on Thursday received an order for 100 Hyundai KONA electric SUV from Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of PSUs under the Union Ministry of Power.

Mr S S Kim, MD & CEO, HMIL, said, "Guided by our vision 'Progress for humanity', we have been developing eco-friendly and human-centric technologies that provide the best experience for our customers. As a caring and responsible brand, it is our privilege to align with the government's goal for clean energy and collaborate with all stakeholders to create a sustainable ecosystem for electric mobility. Here, it is a moment of great pride to receive this order of 100 KONA electric SUVs from EESL, bolstering the government's faith in Hyundai's technological prowess and supreme quality standards."

These electric vehicles will be used by the senior officials of central and state governments and the first lot of vehicles will be delivered to the Kerala government. As a pilot project for clean mobility – EESL had ordered 10 KONA Electric SUVs in 2019 and this year EESL ordered 100 KONA Electric cars in-line with the government's mission of creating sustainable EV eco-system in India.

## HC enhances compensation for homemaker from ₹4.86L to ₹14.07L

**J. STALIN | DC**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Holding that homemakers are more important than an earning member in a family, the Madras high court has enhanced the compensation amount awarded to a 39-year-old woman who sustained 60 per cent permanent disability in a road accident, from ₹4.86 lakh to ₹14.07 lakh.

Justice S.M. Subramanian enhanced the compensation amount while partly allowing an appeal from Bhuvanewari, challenging an order of the Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal, Salem, dated March 18, 2019, awarding a compensation of ₹4.86 lakh to her.

Counsel for the appellant contended that the disability of 60 percent was assessed by the competent medical board of the government hospital and found permanent in nature. Therefore, fixing a sum of Rs 4,500 towards monthly income by the tribunal was very less and the compensation has to be enhanced.

Counsel for the insurance company contended that in the absence of any documents and evidences to prove the employment of the appellant, the tribunal has fixed the monthly income as ₹4,500 and therefore, there was no error and accordingly the award passed by the tribunal has to be confirmed.

The judge said the appellant was aged about 39 years at the time of accident and, undoubtedly, it was a crucial age, which would affect the matrimonial life of the appellant. She was unable to support the family and the husband and children have to take care of her. Undoubtedly, no document has been produced to establish the employment as well as the income of the appellant. However, the factual inference was to be drawn in such cases, as a woman at home was the homemaker and for this purpose, the fixation of income for grant of compensation, assessment

## Putting them on high pedestal

Highlighting the importance of homemakers in a family, Justice S. M. Subramanian said the value and importance of the homemakers in a family had never been undermined by anybody, including the courts. Performing the job of the homemaker is the toughest one and the homemakers are working without any time limits as they are working with love and affection, which can never be expected from an ordinary employee. Therefore, the job of a homemaker can never be compared with employee or employment and the importance and the values are also to be considered by the courts, while assessing the compensation. The homemakers are working from early morning till late night and one can experience the hard work being performed by the homemakers in the houses. The responsibility, perform-

ance of job with dedication and with love and affection, involvement regarding the future welfare of the family as well as the members of the family and all can never be undermined and it is to be given due weightage in such cases, where the claimants are homemakers. Visualising the situation wherein the homemakers in a family died, the family will become helpless and, undoubtedly, the situation would worsen. Thus, the importance, value as well as materialistic factors are to be considered, while fixing the compensation as far as the homemakers are concerned.

In motor accident cases, the tribunals are bound to consider the requirements of fairness. Fairness in granting compensation is of paramount importance. While assessing contributions of the homemakers to the

family, there should be no bias and the importance has to be realised. Fairness is an elusive concept. Ultimately it is grounded in social and moral values. These values or attitudes can be stated. But they cannot be justified or refuted by any objective process of logical reasoning. Moreover, they change from one generation to the next. Therefore, in the present context, there can be different views on the requirements of fairness in any particular case. Implicitly, the courts must exercise their powers, so as to achieve an outcome which is fair between the parties. But an important aspect of fairness is that like cases should be treated alike.

The judge said keeping in view the amount of fairness to be adopted in the cases of homemakers, we cannot forget that homemakers

are the nation builders. They are the sources for making the family happy and a happy family alone can constitute a better society and better society can lead the nation vibrantly. Thus, the homemakers are not only contributing to their family, but also to the development of our great nation. It is realistic, If anyone of the earning member died in the family, there will be an impact.

But, if the homemaker died, then the impact would be unmeasurable and the family will become scattered. It would be very difficult to cope with the family. Therefore, they are standing on a higher pedestal than that of the earning member in a family. Thus, mitigating factors, family status, income of the husband and other aspects are to be considered while fixing the compensation for homemakers, the judge added.

The judge said keeping in view the amount of fairness to be adopted in the cases of homemakers, we cannot forget that homemakers

insurance policy coverage was not disputed and negligence was decided, then the claimants were entitled for 'Just Compensation', the judge added.

The judge said the accident occurred in the year 2017 and considering the family status of the claimant as well as the other factors, it would be appropriate if the monthly income of the appellant was fixed as ₹9,000 and accordingly 15 multiplier was to be applied considering the age of the appellant. Thus the compensation of ₹4.86 lakh awarded by the tribunal towards loss of income was to be modified. This apart, the compensation granted under the head of 'pain and sufferings' was also very less, which was to be enhanced as the appellant has suffered continuously and therefore, the enhancement was to be granted to the appellant, the judge added and enhanced the compensation to ₹14.07 lakh.

He said ever since his birth till today, as he was 70 years old now, he has neither uttered any word nor acted in manner or even dreamt of causing even a minor slur much less an insult to our Indian National Flag. "I submit, undertake and assure to this hon'ble court that for the rest of my lifetime also, I would never utter any word or act in any manner which would cause an insult to our honourable Indian

## I will never insult national flag, says S Ve Shekher

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, AUG. 3

Actor-turned-politician S.Ve.Shekher has given an undertaking before the Madras high court that he will never utter any word or act in any manner which would cause an insult to Indian national flag.

S.Ve.Shekher filed an affidavit to this effect when his anticipatory bail petition came up for hearing before Justice A.D.Jagdish Chandra on Thursday.

Apprehending arrest in connection with a case registered for insulting and dishonoring the Indian national flag through his speech via YouTube on August 3, 2020, S.Ve.Shekher filed the present petition, seeking anticipatory bail

national flag, since I value patriotism for our motherland and honour to our national flag much more than anything material or even more than my parents or any of the near and dear ones to me. I raised those questions in my speech to the hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, only with the firm belief that Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation has in his own words documented the importance of the colours in the Indian national flag that people of all religious faiths shall always stand united and the same is represented as colours in the national flag which are inseparable and that there shall be no separation amongst the people of this great Nation on the basis of their religious faiths. I submit that I am definitely remorseful of having raised those questions to the hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, since I feel that any statement that he makes would be from his perspective and he is the best judge of his own statements. I therefore, most respectfully and humbly pray that this hon'ble court may be pleased to take all of my above submissions on record and enlarge me on anticipatory bail, in the event of my arrest by the respondent police, in the above crime no.260/2020," he added.



Apprehending arrest in connection with a case registered for insulting and dishonoring the Indian national flag through his speech via YouTube on August 3, 2020, S.Ve.Shekher filed the present petition, seeking anticipatory bail

## Reboot TN with masks and social distancing norms

**B. Vijayalakshmi**

## Viewpoint

With lockdown curbs eased in Chennai and other parts of the state, people have been gingerly stepping out of their homes since Tuesday. Places of worship, malls and parks have opened. Chennai bus services have resumed and inter-district bus operations will begin from September 7.

Similarly, trains and metro rail will run from Monday. E-passes will be required only for people arriving in Tamil Nadu by rail or air and travelling to hill stations like Ooty and Kodaikanal. Film shooting has been permitted with 75 crew members on the sets. Banks, government offices and industries have been allowed to function with 100 per cent of staff.

Koyambedu wholesale market, one of Asia's largest hubs for perishable goods, closed in the first week of May after it became a Covid-19 hotspot, is all set to be reopened in a staggered manner on September 18.

Also, Centre's Unlock-4 guidelines have specified that no local lockdown can be imposed in places outside containment zones. While standard operating procedures have been issued by the state government, it is in the hands of people to follow them for their own safety.

Coronavirus can be slowed by ensuring all people wear masks when they step out of their homes.

People not wearing mask or wearing it wrongly increase the risk of trans-



mission to everyone. Refusing to maintain safe distance is a sure sign of irresponsibility. While working from home has been recommended by the government, some people may not have the option. Likewise when going to grocery and vegetable stores or medical shop, people must stay 6 feet away from others and practise vigilant hand hygiene.

Operating adequate number of buses and trains will not only prevent overcrowding but also spread of virus.

A recent modelling study says widespread use of



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Operating adequate number of buses and trains will not only prevent overcrowding but also spread of virus.

A recent modelling study says widespread use of

mask and social distancing measures may help prevent over 2,00,000 Covid-related deaths in India by December 1.

The study by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington highlights the urgent need for people to wear face masks, follow social distancing and other prevention guidelines as advised by public health authorities.

Mandatory use of masks, social distancing norms and hygiene precautions can help save lives and mitigate the impact of coronavirus on our country's health and economy.

The state government must ensure strict compliance with safety norms and protect people from the most infectious pathogen.

<<<<

It is time people cultivated the habit of wearing masks in public places. Our DC photographer **E.K Sanjay** clicked these shots in Chromepet, Pallavaram and Tirusulam on Thursday.



## Dos and don'ts for metro passengers

CMRL conducts trial run on Thursday. —DC



■ Symptomatic passengers or those with high temperature will not be allowed to use metro train services.

■ Face shields, gloves and medical PPEs have been arranged for front-line passenger handling staff.

■ Two entrances of the metro stations will be opened initially. And based on demand, opening of other entrances shall be explored.

■ Contactless frisking of passengers will be undertaken.

■ Lifts shall be shared

only with 2 to 3 persons at a time and usage of lifts shall be encouraged for aged and persons with disabilities only.

■ Passengers are advised to stand on alternate steps in the escalators to maintain social distancing.

■ Hand sanitizer – Foot press/contactless dispenser with hand sanitiser has been arranged at the entry for all passengers.

■ Passengers are encouraged to use the Aarogya Setu App at the time of entry into the station.

■ Passengers may travel with minimum baggage and avoid metallic items.

■ All human contact areas—lift buttons, escalators, handrails and customer handling points—will be disinfected frequently at stations.

■ Special attention will be provided to frequent cleaning and disinfecting of public toilets at Metro stations.

■ Social distancing will also be monitored through CCTV at all stations and inside trains.



## SHORT TAKES

## Official dies of corona

DC CORRESPONDENT  
SALEM, SEPT. 3

A training assistant inspector, Sekar (58), who was under treatment for corona infection here died on Thursday. Sekar had been working as an assistant inspector at the Salem police training center. He was diagnosed with corona on August 27, and subsequently given treatment at a special medical camp in Karuppur. His condition deteriorated on Thursday morning, and he was rushed to the Salem government hospital for intensive care. But, he died in the evening. He is survived by wife and two sons.

## Portable oxygen cylinders in GH

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THANJAVUR, SEPT. 3

A total of 100 small, portable oxygen cylinders are kept ready at the Thanjavur medical college hospital, and the government hospitals at Pattukottai and Kumbakonam, so that people with breathing problems can approach these hospitals and utilize the facility, said Collector M Govinda Rao, here on Thursday. In a press release, Rao said, this has been done as a corona preventive measure.

The collector also said that those who home quarantine themselves, should have pulse oxymeters and thermal scanners at home, and check their oxygen levels both in the morning and evening. If their oxygen level is less than 95, they should quickly approach nearby hospitals. Fever camps are also held in various places for people to benefit. The collector advised people to avoid self-treatment and self-medication.

## Couple electrocuted

**Perambalur:** A farmer couple was electrocuted as they came in contact with a live electric fencing put up to prevent the entry of wild animals into an agricultural field at Krishnapuram under Arumbavur police station limits here, on Thursday. Police said the couple, Periyasamy and Malarkodi, forgot about the live fencing and attempted to cross it and were electrocuted. Arumbavur police are investigating.

## Man held for hoax bomb threat

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Upset over the police, a 37-year-old man from Mannivakkam in Chengalpet district made a hoax bomb threat to a movie theatre in Tambaram on Wednesday night, to fool them.

The man identified as, Jagdeesan, 37, was arrested by the police and remanded to judicial custody.

According to sources, the Greater Chennai police control room received a call around 10 pm on Wednesday and the person who spoke informed that he has planted bombs at a movie theatre in Tambaram, which would explode soon.

Top police officers were alerted about the call. A team of police officers with the bomb squad and sniffer dogs carefully searched the theatre and another team worked on tracing the caller. While the search lasted till Thursday morning, the bomb squad confirmed that no suspicious objects were found in and around the theatre and the police confirmed the bomb threat was fake.

Tracing the mobile number from which the call was made, officials held Jagadeesan from Mannivakkam under the Vandaloer Otteri police station limits. During interrogation, he confessed to having made the call to the police control room, to cheat the police officers. He told police that recently during a fight between him and his wife, the Tambaram all-women police stood by his wife. In order to fool the police officers, he made a fake bomb threat.



Tamil Nadu fire and rescue personnel conduct a mock drill at Paruthipattu lake eco-park in Avadi as part of monsoon preparedness in the presence of DGP C. Sylendra Babu, Director Fire and Rescue Service.

— DC

Hike local production of TiO<sub>2</sub>, says industryARULOLI M | DC  
TIRUNELVELI, SEPT. 3

The dependency on China for Titanium Dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>) for our requirements, and the monopolised mining of the raw material (illminite) for the production of TiO<sub>2</sub> pigments that has a wide range of industrial use has pushed the local TiO<sub>2</sub> manufacturing companies to struggle for their very sustenance. TiO<sub>2</sub> pigments are used in the manufacture of plastics, paint, paper, printing ink, textile products.

Despite India's rich mineral reserves of illminite, the country still depends on China for TiO<sub>2</sub> for its industrial use, said Poncekar, president, Indian Titanium Dioxide Manufacturers Association. "Of our total annual requirement of 3.5 lakh tonnes of TiO<sub>2</sub>, we

**This situation in India has turned highly favourable for China, since we import more than 75 per cent of our TiO<sub>2</sub> requirement, contrary to the Modi government's 'Make in India' vision**

import around two lakh tonnes from China," said Poncekar, and added that the six companies in India, of which two are in Thoothukudi district, Tamil Nadu, are able to produce only 50,000 tonnes of the country's total requirement. The pandemic had further slackened our production capacity."

Though illminite is available in plenty in states like Tamil Nadu,

Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Gujarat, the reason for India's illminite low production is attributed to the existing policy of illminite mining, which means only the IREL, a public limited company is permitted to mine illminite. Hence, we are much below our potential mining capacity, added Poncekar.

This situation in India has turned highly favourable for China, since we import more than 75 per cent of our TiO<sub>2</sub> requirement, contrary to the Modi government's 'Make in India' vision.

Hence, the Indian association of TiO<sub>2</sub> manufacturers association has urged the Centre to take immediate steps to enhance domestic production of TiO<sub>2</sub>, and impose heavy import duty for TiO<sub>2</sub> imported from China.

## DMDK's Sudhish lands in trouble with cartoon

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

By reproducing an old cartoon carried by a Tamil daily in 2016 in his Twitter page, DMDK's frontline leader and brother-in-law of party founder Vijayakanth L. K. Sudhish landed in a soup with people across political affiliations taking objection to it and forcing him to delete it.

The cartoon depicted Vijayakanth standing tall with a slew of political leaders prostrating around him in a circle. Though the faces of the leaders lying flat on the floor are not visible, at least some of them could be identified from the way



in which they had been portrayed.

So with DMK leaders saying that it was an insult to their late leader M. Karunanidhi and launching an attack on Sudhish. Even people

close to the DMDK reportedly criticized Sudhish for the cartoon.

After deleting it Sudhish tried to explain his act by saying that it was a counter to a cartoon carried by the same Tamil newspaper a couple of days back in which they showed Vijayakanth sitting in a cringed position atop a drum (nagara), which is the party's election symbol, and his wife Premalatha ringing a bell and starting the auction for the 2021 elections.

Sudhish said he just wanted to remind the newspaper how they portrayed the situation before the 2016 elections – when all political parties want-

ed the DMDK's support – and how they were looking at the party now.

However, many tweeples took screenshots of Sudhish's post and circulated it on social media. As it went viral, the comments that it drew were also nasty. Some of them were even obscene, attacking Sudhish for his impetuosity and lack of political decency.

Premalatha's announcement that the party would go it alone in the next elections, which prompted the latest cartoon, was mocked at by twitter users who said that it was aimed at striking a hard bargain with the major political alliances.

## Infections in Chennai down

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Fresh Covid-19 infections continued to be high at the state level with 5,892 cases and 92 deaths reported on Thursday while in Chennai the numbers came down to 968 though there were 29 fatalities.

Two districts adjoining Chennai reported high numbers — Chengalpet 378 and Tiruvallur 258 — while the districts where the infection rate was alarming were Coimbatore 593, Cuddalore 590 and Salem 214.

Taking note of the frightening figures in the districts, the Chief Secretary K Shanmugam held discussions with the collectors of Coimbatore, Cuddalore and Salem through video conference on the steps to be taken when inter-district bus and train services resume on September 7.

To come up with a comprehensive plan to fight the potential spread of Coronavirus with the relaxations to the lockdown come into force all over the State, the Chief Secretary is also planning to hold another meeting with all the district collectors on September 4.

Meanwhile, Chennai Corporation Commissioner G. Prakash warned individuals and business establishments not following Covid-19 prevention norms like wearing of facemasks and maintaining social distancing of strict action and heavy penalty.

Already the corporation had collected as fine Rs 1,85,67,117 from individuals and business establishments for not following the norms and some business establishments had also been closed, he said.

## Durai Murugan's elevation in DMK cleared

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

The decks have been cleared for the DMK general council, scheduled to be held September 9, to announce the names of Durai Murugan and T. R. Baalu as the new general secretary and treasurer of the party.

Till Thursday evening, the last date for filing of nominations for the two key posts of the party, no one had filed their papers, thus giving no scope for the holding of elections. So the two leaders would be announced as elected unanimously, thus avoiding any sort of friction within the party.

Durai Murugan also called on Rajathi Ammal, wife of late M. Karunanidhi, at her residence in CIT Colony and sought her blessings on his elevation to the second top post in the party.

He told the media that he was preparing to take over as general secretary with awe since it was a post held by stalwarts of the Dravidian movement like C. N. Annadurai, V. R. Nedunchezian and K

## Go easy on fees, says Stalin

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

DMK President M K Stalin urged the Anna University vice chancellor M K Surappa to withdraw his order fixing September 3 as the deadline for students to pay the fees for the odd semesters.

The order was inhuman considering the problems the country was facing on account of the pandemic and the way it had affected the lives of the people, Stalin said in a statement on Thursday.

Anbazhagan. While he was happy to be elected for the post as one who started off in the party as an ordinary cadre, he felt that he had a great responsibility to perform well.

Greeting both Durai Murugan and Baalu



Stalin said the university had threatened to display the names of the students who failed to pay the fees by September 3 and then remove the names from the rolls after September 7.

immediately after the news came out of their emerging as unanimous candidate, actor Rajinikanth wished them all the best.

In his tweet, Rajinikanth described both their leaders as his respectful friends.



Passengers buy tickets at Vellore Katpadi railway counter on Thursday. — K. Senthil Nathan

## Road roko seeking arrest of miscreants

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ARIYALUR, SEPT. 3

Tension prevailed for a while here when some villagers staged a road roko in front of the T Pazur police station here on Thursday, demanding arrest of the culprits in connection with a local clash. Police said the villagers hailed from Azhisugadi, and one

**Rajasekaran preferred a complaint with the T Pazur police station, but so far none were arrested. Protesting against this, villagers staged a road roko**

Rajasekaran and his friends of the same village were chatting on August

26, when another group from the same village including Raghuvaran and Sundarapandyan picked up a wordy quarrel with them.

Subsequently, Raghuvaran's group attacked Rajasekaran's group, in which four of Rajasekaran's group were injured and admitted to the Government Medical College Hospital,

Thanjavur, and government hospital, Jayankondam.

Rajasekaran preferred a complaint with the T Pazur police station, but so far none were arrested. Protesting against this, villagers staged a road roko. But, police pacified them and assured them suitable action against the culprits and restored normalcy.

## Tiger attack: Officials study footage



Camera traps are being installed in Kallallah limits in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) buffer zone where a tiger killed a tribe woman on Monday. — DC

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC  
OOTY, SEPT. 3

Villages and tribal hamlets along the forest fringes in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) buffer zone here is enveloped in an uneasy calm following the death of a tribal woman who was mauled by a tiger in the MTR forests, on Monday.

Besides forming a special team, forest personnel have installed camera traps and also are operating drones in the jungles to monitor tiger move-

ment in the Kallallah limits, in the Singara forest range, adjoining the thickly-populated Masinagudi village and other villages like Singara, where the tragedy occurred.

The incident has triggered panic among the villagers and other local tribal groups settled in Ooty and Gudalur forest fringes.

Forest sources said they have installed camera traps in 10 places in Kallahalla limits inside the woods, where the tiger struck on Monday. A drone

is also being operated for aerial survey to track tiger movement in the forest.

A forest team has also been formed to perambulate the area and monitor the situation. Sources maintained that though no tiger images could be found in the 10 camera traps, an image of a tiger was captured in a regular camera trap installed a kilometre away from the Kallahalla site. Forest technical staff are analyzing this image to track its movement in the vicinity, sources added.

## Stir against fraud in job scheme

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ARIYALUR, SEPT. 3

A section of villagers of Parukkai in Ariyalur district boycotted the 100-days job scheme (Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee programme), and staged a road roko in their village on Thursday, demanding proper allocation of 100 days job to all the villagers. The protesters said that officials did not provide job opportunity to people living in the sixth ward of the village. Instead, they show

**The protesters said that officials did not provide job opportunity to people living in the sixth ward of the village**

fake accounts that opportunities are provided to everybody.

On information, officials of the rural development department and police rushed to the spot and assured the agitators that suitable action would be taken, and restored normalcy.



SHORT TAKES

LION CUB SEPARATED FROM ITS PRIDE DIES

Ahmedabad, Sept. 3: A lion cub separated from its pride died shortly after being rescued by forest personnel near Gir forest in Gujarat's Amreli district, a senior official said on Thursday.

The male cub, around two to three months old, was found by Shetrunjee forest division staff at Vandh village in Jafrabad taluka on Wednesday evening, Chief Conservator of Forest, Junagadh wildlife circle, D.T. Vasavada said.

"The cub was very weak when it was found by our staff. Primary investigation revealed the cub got separated from its pride. Thus, the animal was rescued and kept at a rescue centre under a doctor's observation," Vasavada said.

Despite best efforts to save the feline, it died early Thursday morning, the official said.

As per latest estimates, there are over 600 lions in the state's Gir forest and its surrounding areas. The Gir Forest National Park is the only abode of Asiatic lions.

NO SALARY; KERALA DOCS THREATEN TO QUIT

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT. 3

With more than half of the 900 plus junior doctors deployed in Covid First Line Treatment Centres (CFLTC) in Kerala yet to receive their monthly salary, they have threatened to resign from their duty from September 10.

The doctors have sent notice along with resignation letters to the government. The doctors were appointed in Covid centres for a period of three months, in the wake of a spike in cases of Covid-19 in the state.

When asked about the junior doctors' decision to submit resignation letters due to non-payment of salaries and salary cut, the chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said "they may be doing it for their personal interests." To another question whether the government will reconsider the salary cut, the chief minister replied in the negative.

The directorate of health services included the junior doctors in the government's salary challenge campaign under which six days' salary has to be contributed to the chief minister's distress relief fund every month.

A section of junior doctors claimed that only 400-odd doctors had received salary so far and that too after facing salary challenge cut and tax deduction.

"Some of us who received the salary faced a cut of ₹8,200 on account of salary challenge. And after tax deduction what we got in hand was just ₹27,000," said a doctor posted in a CFLTC in Ernakulam district.

The mistreatment of junior doctors comes at a time when Covid-19 situation in the state is getting worse by the day.

According to the government's own estimates, the state might witness a daily spike of 10,000 to 15,000 cases during September and early October.

MAN IN MP BEHEADS WIFE TO APPEASE DEITY

Singrauli, Sept. 3: In a suspected case of human sacrifice, a 50-year-old man allegedly beheaded his wife to please a deity and buried the body in his house in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place on Wednesday in Basauda village, located about 25 km from the district headquarters.

The accused was arrested on Thursday after his two sons alerted the police, district Additional Superintendent of Police Pradeep Shende said.

The man allegedly beheaded his 45-year-old wife in the early hours of Wednesday. He then buried the head and torso separately in the puja room of their house and later fled, the official said. According to his children, the accused killed his wife to please some deity. He also killed a goat some days ago and buried the carcass in the puja room to appease the deity, the official said.

After being alerted, the police formed teams and nabbed the accused on Thursday, he said. "I am myself interrogating the accused to get to the bottom of the case. According to the statements of his two sons, it appears the man killed his wife out of superstition," Shende added.

Pre-emptive move gives India surveillance edge over China

The strategic Advance Landing Ground is no longer visible to the enemy

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

From dominating the full ridgeline at Spanggur Tso — where the enemy troops have dig in — to the critical heights in Rechin La and Rezang La along with the hilltops at Kalatop. Helmet and Camelback — every movement of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China is under constant watch.

The strategic Advance Landing Ground at Nyoma in Eastern Ladakh, which used to be clearly visible to the enemy earlier, is no more in sight.

Frustrating as it is for the PLA, the Indian Army, assisted by the Special Frontiers Force (SFF), has literally caged the PLA from all sides. The heightened tensions between the two armies have led both armies to lay mines around their posts to safeguard them — similar to what Indian and Pakistan armies have been resorting to at the Line of Control for decades.

Giving a first-hand account of the situation prevailing in Pangong Tso area, highly-placed sources told Deccan Chronicle that the PLA troops are in no position to take a step forward as the Indian Army has now got hold of all the vantage points including some Chinese posts, presenting a clear view of all activity in the PLA camp.

"The entire garrison in Moldo gap which is in the Chinese occupation is visible to the Indian troops. This is where Indian and PLA tanks are standing one to one, though the enemy is in no position to move any further. If there is any misadventure from the other side, we can just roll down and cause massive damages in the enemy camp," they said. It is this "loss" for the PLA in Pangong Tso which, sources said, is making them desperate to open new fronts along the borders, particularly in Uttarakhand and Sikkim.

Several points on the northern and southern banks of Pangong Tso, like the ridgeline in Spanggur Tso, Kalatop, Helmet, Camelback among other areas — many of which were earlier manned by the PLA — are now in complete control of the Indian troops, who have moved



Indian Air Force (IAF) Chinook helicopter flies amid the prolonged India-China stand off in the Ladakh region in Leh on Thursday. — PTI

lock, stock and barrel to these points. New posts with two or three bunkers have also come up at the vantage points, giving the Indian Army a strategic advantage over the PLA.

"From Rechin La and Rezang La, the Army has a clear view of the Chinese territory up to several kilometres. Before we took over the strategic heights, the PLA had a view of about 30 km inside our territory which is no more the case now. The Advanced Landing Ground at Nyoma too is out of sight for the Chinese. Observation of our movement by the Chinese has come down drastically which is a major advantage for us," sources said, adding that the tables have been turned against China and the neighbouring country is no position to be on the offensive. It is, however, learnt that the Chinese troops are still holding on to a few ridges in Finger 4 area.

Not willing to go into much details about the specific roles played by the SFF soldiers, which consists of Tibetans, sources said that since Tibetans are good

Slain soldier got no credit, feel Tibetans

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Tibetans are upset with the Centre and Indian Army's handling of the death of Tibetan soldier, Tenzin Nyima, of the special frontier force SFF, who died while fighting the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China, during the ongoing stand-off in Ladakh.

Over the last 24 hours, Tibetans have been expressing anger. Nyima, 53, died in a mine blast while he and his team were capturing Chinese posts along the Line of Actual Control.

"When a soldier of Indian Army attains martyrdom in the line of duty, the body is sent home with full honours and the entire country talks about it. Why this discrimination against Tibetans who also fight for India?" asked Tibetan poet and activist, Tenzin

Tsundue, as the body was quietly sent home with no state recognition.

Another Tibetan, in his early 30s, says ever since many of them landed in India after fleeing Tibet, they joined the SFF and even the Indian Army. "Those in SFF get married in older age so that they can dedicate their youth to India. The treatment meted out to Nyima after his death while fighting for the nation is highly unfair. The country wants to use Tibetans as soldiers but do not want to give them due credit," he said.

In fact, many Tibetans this newspaper spoke to expressed their anger but did not wish to go on record. "We could not fight for our country (Tibet) but we continue to fight for the country that gave us shelter (India). We bravely fought against Pakistan and China since 1962," they said.

which has seen thousands of troops deployed on both sides there in full battle-preparedness.

Reiterating, meanwhile, that the "solution (to the current situation in the Ladakh sector) has to be found in the domain of diplomacy", Jaishankar also made it clear that "what happens at the border will impact the (Sino-Indian) relationship".

Asserting that it was "not the easiest of times" in the Sino-Indian relationship, Jaishankar said it was "vital" for both countries to accommodate each other.

The EAM made the comments in a discussion to mark the launch of his book— *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World*.

IAF CHIEF BHADAURIA VISITS EASTERN COMMAND

New Delhi, Sept. 3: Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria reviewed the IAF's operational preparedness along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim in view of the escalating border tensions with China, officials said on Thursday.

"Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria visited front-line air bases in Eastern Air Command (EAC) on Wednesday," an IAF spokesperson said without mentioning the names of the air bases.

The Eastern Air Command, headquartered in Shillong, looks after the aerial defence of sensitive areas along the LAC in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh as well as various other parts of the region.

The Army and the Indian Air Force have increased their alert levels in all key bases along the nearly 3,400 km-long LAC following China's fresh attempts to change the status quo in the Southern Bank of Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh.

The IAF spokesperson said the Chief of Air Staff was apprised about the "state of readiness" and operational preparedness of the combat units under the command.

"Bhadauria also met and interacted with air warriors serving in these units during the course of his visit. He lauded the focussed efforts by the station personnel towards maintaining proficiency in all roles envisaged and urged them to continue performing their duty with due diligence," the official said.

Army Chief Gen M M Naravane has reached Leh on Thursday. — PTI

Andhra Pradesh again crosses 10K mark in new cases

DC CORRESPONDENTS SEPT. 3

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh has recorded 10,199 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours taking its tally to 4,65,739. The health bulletin on Thursday reported that 75 people lost their lives due to Covid-related ailments taking the death toll to 4,200.

There are 1,03,701 active cases in the states.

The state health authorities discharged 9,499 Covid-19-infected patients after recovery in the last 24 hours.

TS reports 2,817 cases, 19 deaths

Hyderabad: There is no let-up in the spread of Covid-19 disease in Telangana with the state health department reporting 2,817 more infections and 19 more deaths in the state.

The latest additions for the 24-hour period between 8 pm Tuesday and 8 pm Wednesday, takes the number of deaths to 856 in the state while the total cases so far is at 1,33,406.

The Covid-19 bulletin on Thursday said that there are 32,537 active Covid-19 cases as on Wednesday evening. It said 2,611 persons have recovered taking the number of people who recovered to 1,00,013 so far.

Even as Covid-19 appeared to have a firm grip over Telangana, the greater Hyderabad municipal corporation (GHMC) area, the largest urban centre in the state, continued to see the highest number of daily cases.

1,553 new cases, 10 deaths in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Thursday recorded 1,553 cases of Covid-19 even as 1950 persons were cured of the disease. Of the new cases, 1,391 contracted the disease through contact, the source of 156 persons is yet to be ascertained, 40 health workers are also infected. The state recorded 10 deaths on Thursday.

DEATH TOLL IN KARNATAKA IS OVER 6000

Bengaluru, Sept. 3: The Covid-19 toll in Karnataka breached 6,000 mark on Thursday, as the state reported 8,865 fresh cases and 104 related fatalities, taking the total number of infections to 3.70 lakh, the health department said.

The day also saw 7,122 patients getting discharged after recovery. Out of 8,865 fresh cases reported on Thursday, 3,189 cases were from Bengaluru urban alone.

As of September 3 evening, cumulatively 3.70 lakh coronavirus cases have been confirmed in the state, which includes 6,054 deaths and 2.68 lakh discharges, the health department said in its bulletin. It said, out of 96,098 active cases, 95,363 patients are in isolation at designated hospitals and are stable, while 735 are in ICU. Out of the total 104 deaths reported on Thursday, 29 are from Bengaluru urban, followed by Dharwad 9, Koppal, Mysuru, Shivamogga 8, Bengaluru Rural 7, Hassan 5, Ballari, Haveri and Udupi 4, Dakshina Kannada, Gadag, Raichur and Tumakuru. — PTI

At a press conference here Chief Minister Mr Pinarayi Vijayan said that the increase of cases anticipated by the government has not happened so far. However, the next two weeks would be crucial, he said.

During Onam festival there was a huge rush of people in markets and public places. Many restrictions were lifted keeping in view the need to allow social life to move smoothly. However, its impact will be known only after 14 days. "We need to be prepared for a possible surge in cases," he said.

India must keep a close watch: Pawar

Mumbai, Sept. 3: NCP president Sharad Pawar on Thursday said the Chinese are "surreptitiously" encircling the Indian sub-continent, and India must keep a close watch on developments in Sri Lanka and Nepal.

He had invited former foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale and Air Marshal Bhushan Gokhale (Retd) for interaction with NCP MPs Supriya Sule, Praful Patel, Amol Kolhe and Vandana Chavan against the background of the stand-off in eastern Ladakh, Pawar tweeted.

The former defence minister said that during the meeting he expressed his concerns over a larger strategic and political thinking in China that aims to halt India's economic growth.

"I highlighted the fact that the Chinese are surreptitiously encircling the Indian Sub-Continent

from all directions and also expressed my concern over their presence in the South China Sea," Pawar said in another tweet.

"I hinted at the need to keep a close watch on affairs of Sri Lanka and Nepal and also the Chinese interventions in general," he added.

Vijay Gokhale spoke about the history of Indo-China relationship, especially the border disputes. The former foreign secretary shared his views on the current situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Pawar said.

Air Marshal Gokhale emphasized that India must take into consideration the new era of parallel warfare that includes cyber war, information war, perception creation and war on economic fronts, the NCP president added. — PTI

FIGURE | THIS Question Hour was dispensed with in 2004, 2009, also in 1991 as well as in 1962, 1975 and 1976

Only 40% of Question Hour time used in last 5 years

SENA SUPPORTS GOVT'S MOVE

Mumbai, Sept. 3: The Shiv Sena on Thursday came out in support of the Centre's move to drop Question Hour from the upcoming monsoon session of Parliament, and said the decision was taken due to an "emergency situation" caused by the pandemic, which everyone needs to understand.

Talking to reporters, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut said that other platforms to question the gov-

ernment are always available. "Even though the monsoon session of Parliament will not have a Question Hour, it is important to understand why it is so," Raut said. "This is an emergency situation. We need to understand and not criticize," he said, adding that even in Maharashtra the monsoon session of the state assembly will be held for two days only. — PTI

New Delhi, Sept. 3: The government on Thursday said it will answer every question asked in Parliament and 160 "unstarred" questions will be answered every day during the upcoming Monsoon session starting September 14, sources said.

Countering the Opposition charge of curtailing the Question Hour, the sources in the government said this is not the first time that the Question Hour will not be taken up during a session as it was dispensed with in 2004 and 2009, besides also in 1991

as well as in 1962, 1975 and 1976 for various reasons.

A research conducted by the Rajya Sabha also revealed that 60 per cent of Question Hour time was not availed during the last five years with only 40 per cent utilisation.

The Question Hour was first done away with during the Emergency in 1975 and 1976, when everything was functioning normally except opposition leaders, who were put behind bars, and the media, which was censored.

Unlike then, the government has argued that it is

a real health emergency in the country due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the session is being held under extraordinary circumstances even as there is a paucity of time.

The presiding officers of both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have received a letter from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, informing them that the government has consulted different political parties and that there is a broad consensus, barring one political party, on doing away with the Question Hour.

It is based on this consensus among the opposition parties that the government has requested the presiding officers to do away with the Question Hour and Private Members' Business for this session, the sources said.

Congress' Randeep Surjewala alleged that Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi had not consulted all the opposition leaders.

He said doing away with the Question Hour, not holding the government accountable to the questions of public interest



## IN BRIEF

## Eight gunned down in Mexico

**Cuernavaca, Mexico:** Gunmen killed eight people, including two minors, and wounded more than a dozen others in an attack on a wake in central Mexico, prosecutors said. The assailants opened fire at a house in the city of Cuernavaca using military-type rifles, the state prosecutor's office reported. Initial indications suggested the attack was the result of a fight between criminal gangs in Cuernavaca, a picturesque colonial city popular with tourists just south of the capital, the authorities said. Four bodies were found outside the wake, which was held for a young man killed in a motorcycle accident, while the remaining victims died after being taken to hospital. Another 14 people were wounded, according to prosecutors, who noted that high-calibre firearms had been used in recent gang-related crimes.

## Jihadists kill 9 Nigerian troops

**Kano, Nigeria:** At least nine Nigerian troops were killed in an offensive by jihadists in northeast Borno state, two security sources said. Fighters from the so-called Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in 10 trucks fitted with machine guns overran a military position in the town of Magumeri late on Tuesday, killing nine troops, they said. "The terrorists took over the (military) post around 4:00 pm (1500 GMT) and dispersed the troops, killing nine," the first source said. The militants burnt three vehicles at the base, including an armoured tank and an excavator used in digging fortifications to stave off jihadist incursions, said the second source who gave the same toll. A military reinforcement from the regional capital Maiduguri engaged the retreating attackers in a fight and killed 20 insurgents.

## Pacific War: China marks 75th anniv

**Beijing:** China on Thursday commemorated the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific, during which it endured a brutal invasion and occupation of much of its territory by Japan. Communist Party leader and head of state Xi Jinping led government officials in a minute of silence and presentation of floral wreaths at a memorial hall dedicated to soldiers and civilians who participated in the struggle. Japan launched a full-on invasion of China in 1937, marked by urban warfare and atrocities such as the notorious Rape of Nanking. While armies under Nationalist Party leader Chiang Kai-shek fought most of the major battles, Communist Party guerrillas under Mao Zedong forced Japan to divert soldiers and resources from battlefields elsewhere with low-level engagements.

## PAK: CONSULAR ACCESS TO JADHAV VALID

SHAFQAT ALI | DC  
ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 3

Pakistan Thursday said that the offer of third consular access to Indian prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav was still valid. "India should move forward and cooperate with the courts of Pakistan," Foreign Office spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri during his weekly media briefing.

Speaking on the issue of Indian prisoner, the Foreign Office spokesperson said that Pakistan was committed to implementing the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). India should move forward and cooperate with the courts of Pakistan.

During the second consular visit, Indian diplomats left the meeting. However, Pakistan's offer of a third consular access was still valid. He said that Pakistan was aware of its responsibilities, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) issue should be resolved on technical rather than political grounds.

Foreign Office spokesman regrets that some members of the Security Council Sections Committee blocked the ban on two Indian nationals. "Pakistan has always insisted on depoliticizing the issue of UN sections. Angara Appaji and Gobind Patnaik are wanted by Pakistan for terrorism," he added.

He said that Pakistan has provided documentary evidence to the UN sections committee and will continue to expose Indian-sponsored terrorism.

## Another PoC shot dead by cops in US

18-year-old was shot as officers were following up on a tip about guns allegedly stashed in a vehicle

## IN KENOSHA, BIDEN TO TEST HIS VOW TO UNIFY THE NATION

**Wilmington, Sept. 3:** Campaigning for more than a year as a calming, unifying figure, Joe Biden and his core pitch for the presidency face the most intense test yet when he travels to Kenosha, Wisconsin, a city wracked by police and protest violence that makes it a microcosm of the nation's election-year reckoning with systemic racism.

The 77-year-old former vice president, travelling two days after President Donald Trump visited the same city, plans to meet Thursday with family of Jacob Blake, who remains hospitalised after being shot seven times in the back by a white police officer as authorities attempted to arrest him. Biden also plans a community discussion.

— AP

## VIDEO IN NEW YORK MAN'S SUFFOCATION SHOWS GROUP OF POLICE OFFICERS PUT HOOD ON HIM

**Rochester, Sept. 3:** A man who had run naked through the streets of a western New York city died of asphyxiation after a group of police officers put a hood over his head, then pressed his face into the pavement for two minutes, according to video and records released Wednesday by the man's family.

Daniel Prude died March 30 after he was taken off life support, seven days after the encounter with police in Rochester. His death received no public attention until Wednesday, when his family held a news conference and released police body camera video.



Video grab of cops putting hood on the man who died of asphyxiation. — Agencies

## FOOTAGE SHOWS EXCESSIVE FORCE, HENCE DEPUTY FIRED

**Columbia, Sept. 3:** A deputy in South Carolina has been fired and charged with assault after body camera footage showed he yanked a woman to the ground by her hair, a sheriff said. Kyle Oliver (29), reported using force on January 7, but what he wrote in his report did not match the footage from another officer's body camera, Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said at a news conference. Lott said he reviewed the camera footage on Monday after receiving a tip. He said the woman never reported the excessive force. Lott decided to fire Oliver and after prosecutors reviewed the footage, they charged him with misdemeanor third-degree assault. "His actions are unacceptable, and I will not have it from any of my deputies," Sheriff Lott said.

— AP

protests against police brutality across the country, and just two days after officers in Los Angeles shot dead an African-

American man who was riding his bike when police tried to stop him. A local council member Trayon White told news

channel *WUSA9* that he had spoken with the mother of the man killed in Washington. "We've seen this narrative too many

times in America, and now it's hitting home," he said. "I talked to his mom about 15 minutes ago and we want to figure out what's

on the body camera footage, to figure out if he was running away why was he shot." "Some people say he was shot in the front, some

people say he was shot in the back," White, who identified the man as African American, told the news site *DCist*.

— AFP

## Prez wants voters to cast two ballots in Nov. election

## Don trumpets US strength, scoffs at Biden

**Wilmington, Sept. 3:** As thunderstorms threatened, President Donald Trump sped through a V-J Day speech on Wednesday, trumpeting American strength and managing to squeeze in a swipe at Democratic rival Joe Biden. Trump stood before an iconic World War II-era battleship to declare the port city of Wilmington, North Carolina, a World War II "Heritage City". He pointed to a bolt of lightning and said it was God saluting the event. He honoured war veterans, including 97-year-old Hershel "Woody" Williams, the sole surviving Marine from the war to receive the Medal of Honour. The West Virginia native fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima in the Pacific. "He's 100 percent sharp," Trump said of Williams, who travelled to the key battleground state with the president aboard Air Force One.

"I know a 78-year-old who's not so sharp," Trump added, a clear allusion to Biden. White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany had insisted earlier this week that there was no "political purpose" to Trump's visit to North Carolina. But when the president landed in Wilmington, Trump lost no time in criticising Biden.

"This is the most important election in the history of our country. I really believe that, because we're running against people that have got some big issues," he told supporters on the airport tarmac. "They have got some big, big problems. They're stone cold crazy."

Trump also encouraged those who cast votes by mail to cast two ballots in November's election, one by mail and another in person as a check to see if the mailed vote was counted.

"They'll go out and they'll vote and they're going to have to go and

## FB TO TARGET MISINFORMATION BEFORE POLL

**Washington, Sept. 3:** With just two months left until the US presidential election, Facebook says it is taking more steps to encourage voting, minimise misinformation and reduce the likelihood of post-election "civil unrest." The company said Thursday it will restrict new political ads in the week before the election and remove posts that convey misinformation about Covid-19 and voting. It also will attach links to official results to posts from candidates and campaigns declaring premature victories.

"This election is not going to be business as usual. We all have a responsibility to protect our democracy," Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a post on Thursday. "That means helping people register and vote, clearing up confusion about how this election will work, and taking steps to reduce the chances of violence and unrest." FB and other social media companies are being scrutinized over how they handle misinformation.

— AP

check their vote by going to the poll and voting that way because if it tabulates then they won't be able to do that. So, let them send it in and let them go vote," Trump said in an interview with *WECT-TV* at the Wilmington airport.

"And if their system's as good as they say it is, then obviously they won't be able to vote. If it isn't tabulated, they'll be able to vote. So that's the way it is, and that's what they should do."

— AP

## Protest in Bulgaria



Protesters clash with police during an anti-government demonstration in Sofia. Bulgarians gathered in downtown Sofia for another anti-government protest Thursday after a demonstration the night before led to violence, injuries and arrests. Several thousands faced off against riot police in front of the parliament building while demanding the resignations of Prime Minister Boyko Borisov and chief prosecutor Ivan Stoimenov Geshev late Wednesday. A small group began hurling explosives and firecrackers at officers. Police put a water cannon between parliament, and the offices of the government and the president and cordoned off the area. Violent clashes erupted.

— AFP

## Covid-19 vaccine shows promise

**Washington, Sept. 3:** An experimental vaccine that boosts the production of specific proteins could be effective against the Coronavirus that causes Covid-19, according to a study conducted in mice. Scientists at The Ohio State University in the US manipulated a natural cellular process to ramp up levels of two proteins used by the virus to infect other cells, packaged the protein-boosting instructions in nanoparticles and injected them into mice.

Within a month, the mice had developed antibodies against the SARS-

CoV-2 virus, according to the study published on Wednesday in the journal *Advanced Materials*. The technique involves altering specific sequences of messenger RNA, molecules that translate genetic information into functional proteins, the researchers said.

While these sequences are not translated to proteins, the researchers changed their structures to promote higher-than-usual levels of proteins. The sequences are known as untranslated regions, or UTRs.

— PTI

## UK working on a test that gives results in 20 minutes

**London, Sept. 3:** The British government says it is investing in a coronavirus test that gives results in as little as 20 minutes, as critics say tests for the virus are being rationed because the system can't cope with demand. Health Secretary Matt Hancock says the government is expanding trials of two new tests — a no-swab saliva test and another that gives results in minutes.

It's also running a trial on the benefits of repeat testing of people without symptoms. Britain has hugely expanded its testing capacity since the start of the pandemic. Anyone with symptoms is eligible for a test, but the *BBC* reported that people who enter their postcode into the government's website are sometimes being directed to drive-through centres hundreds of miles away.

— AP

## NBW issued against ex-Pak PM Nawaz

**Lahore, Sept. 3:** A Pakistani court on Thursday directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to execute a non-bailable arrest warrant against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a 34-year land allotment case, according to media reports. During the plot

allotment hearing, Model Town Police Inspector Bashir Ahmed told Lahore Accountability Court's Judge Asad Ali that Sharif was not at his residence.

Last month, the accountability court had issued a bailable arrest warrant and served summons at all

known addresses of the three-time prime minister, who is currency in London for medical treatment. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMN-N) leader Ata Tarar confirmed to the court on Thursday that the 70-year-old party chief Sharif had

been abroad for six months, the *Express Tribune* newspaper reported.

Responding to this, Special Prosecutor Harris Qureshi, appearing on behalf of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), asked the court to issue a non-bailable arrest

(NBA) warrant against Sharif. The court issued the NBA warrant and directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to execute the arrest through the Pakistan High Commission in London, the report added.

— PTI

## NEW DATA 87 per cent of the world's extreme poor live in Central and Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa

## Female poverty rate in S. Asia to rise due to Covid: UN

**United Nations, Sept. 3:** The female poverty rate in South Asia will increase in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and more women than men in the 25-34 age group will be poorer in the next decade, according to new data released by the UN. The UN Women and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) said that the Covid-19 pandemic will disproportionately affect women and push 47 million more women and girls into extreme poverty by 2021, reversing decades of progress to lift this demographic above the poverty line. The report, "From

Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the wake of Covid-19", said that the gender poverty gap will worsen further still in South Asia.

Central and Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, home to 87 per cent of the world's extreme poor, will see the largest increases in extreme poverty, with an additional 54 million and 24 million people, respectively, living below the international poverty line as a result of the pandemic. "The expected rise of poverty in South Asia as a result of the economic fallout of the pandemic

showcases the vulnerability of women and girls living in households that have only recently been able to escape poverty, the report released on Wednesday said.

The pre-pandemic female poverty rate in South Asia was projected to be 10 per cent in 2021 but is now expected to reach 13 per cent. "Moreover, before the pandemic, projections for the region suggested that by 2030 only 15.8 per cent of the world's poor women and girls would be living in South Asia. The revised projections now put that figure at 18.6 per cent," the

report said.

The report pointed out that the resurgence of poverty due to the pandemic threatens to deepen gender poverty gaps, especially for people aged 25 to 34, which is a key productive and family formation period for both women and men. In 2021, it is expected there will be 118 women in poverty for every 100 poor men globally, and this ratio could rise to 121 poor women for every 100 poor men by 2030.

While sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia will be the most impacted, "significantly more women than

men in South Asia will be affected. In the 25-34 age group, there will be 118 poor women for every 100 poor men in South Asia, and that ratio will increase to 129 women for every 100 men by 2030. Globally, the poverty rate for women was expected to decrease by 2.7 per cent between 2019 and 2021, but projections now point to an increase of 9.1 per cent due to the pandemic and its fallout. The "pandemic will push 96 million people into extreme poverty by 2021, 47 million of whom are women and girls. This will increase the total

number of women and girls living in extreme poverty to 435 million, with projections showing that this number will not revert to pre-pandemic levels until 2030," the UN agencies said.

"The increases in women's extreme poverty are a stark indictment of deep flaws in the ways we have constructed our societies and economies," UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Nguika said. "We know that women take most of the responsibility for caring for the family; they earn less, save less and hold much

less secure jobs — in fact, overall, women's employment is 19 per cent more at risk than men's."

Mlambo-Nguika said that the evidence of multiple inequalities is critical to drive swift, restorative policy action that puts women at the heart of pandemic recovery. While the pandemic has posed a serious threat to the prospects of eradicating extreme poverty by the end of this decade, the reality is even grimmer as these projections of increased poverty rates for women and girls only account for the downward revision of GDP.

— PTI



# DECCAN Chronicle

4 SEPTEMBER 2020

## Axing Question Hour lets govt avoid accountability

The Narendra Modi government's move to use the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic as an excuse to scrap Question Hour in Parliament's coming Monsoon Session, starting September 14, should cause little surprise: in the past six years it has always tried to avoid being held accountable for its actions before the House, despite overwhelming numbers in the Lok Sabha. It seems Shashi Tharoor's prediction four months ago that "strongmen leaders will use the pandemic excuse to stifle democracy and dissent" was not far off the mark. In our parliamentary system, where the executive is responsible to the legislature, the device MPs can most effectively employ is to put questions to ministers, and if not satisfied with the minister's reply, by asking follow-up questions on the floor of the House. If a minister fails to answer these properly, the government's prevarication will be visible to all in the House, and since the telecast of parliamentary proceedings from the 1990s, to the country. This is what the government was so desperate to avert, as there are many questions out there — on its tackling of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns, its economic mismanagement, the Chinese aggression in Ladakh and its occupation of Indian territory — which it is reluctant to answer.

What, really, is Parliament's main function? For the government, the answer is to pass the legislation the Cabinet recommends, rubber stamp ordinances promulgated in between sessions, and not stop the executive doing whatever it wants. But for most people, or constitutional experts, it is to hold the government accountable to those who put it in power. Cancelling Question Hour deprives MPs of the lone device they have to exercise some control over the executive.

The government says as Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha sessions will be in shifts, to allow "distancing" in MPs' seating, there is no time for Question Hour. The fact is while a "normal" session sits 30 hours a week, six hours daily, the coming session will have 28 hours: four hours a day, but sitting all days of the week, including Saturdays and Sundays. Of this, half an hour will be saved daily as Zero Hour is cut to 30 minutes, and there will be no private members' business on Fridays. Trinamul Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien calculated that due to the cuts, the coming session has an extra 30 minutes, more than enough time for Question Hour. Then the Centre argued officials would have to visit Parliament to assist ministers, increasing visitors in pandemic times, but the solution is simple: to allow ministers and officials to communicate via phone or video conferencing.

While the government claims some Opposition leaders were consulted, MPs asked why an all-party meeting wasn't called, as this will be the first time in India's history that a regular parliamentary session will be held without Question Hour. Several MPs said this would make Parliament a "notice board", saying questioning the government was the "oxygen of parliamentary democracy". Others likened it to the general climate of intolerance, with TMC MP Mahua Moitra tweeting: "Asking questions in court is contempt. Asking questions outside Parliament is sedition. And now asking questions inside Parliament is forbidden."

The government says Zero Hour, where MPs raise vital issues, will continue, though curtailed. But there's a critical difference. Ministers, even if present in the House, need not respond there, unlike in Question Hour, when they must.

## Banning apps will achieve little

India has fired the second round of its soft ammunition on China by banning 118 mobile apps, including the very popular gaming app PUBG even as India-China border skirmishes take a hard turn and India preemptively occupies strategic peaks and ridges on the southern side of Pangong Tso. India had banned a batch of 59 mobile apps, including TikTok, as the border tension showed signs of escalation in June this year.

The government has stated that these apps were "prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order", mostly the grounds for putting reasonable restrictions on the right to freedom and expression under Article 19 (2) of the Constitution.

The governmental move could offer people the satisfaction that India is getting even with China it but the hard fact is that it is not. China casts its net wider and deeper. Latest reports say Chinese exports have ballooned during the pandemic and matched those in the pre-Christmas season which saw the highest numbers; the US's tough talks and tax barriers could little dent its business. China is the only major economy in the world that has recorded a GDP growth in the last quarter when every other economy, including the United States and India, contracted to historic levels. The latest on the defence front is a report of the US department of defence that says the Chinese Navy with 350 vessels is the largest in the world, dwarfing even the US Navy that has 293 of them. The way India's eastern neighbour occupies key infrastructure projects in our neighbourhood and how it invests in strategic assets, including in lithium mines around the world, are an indicator of its future plans. Mobile apps are hardly the tools to contain it, should we aim at that?

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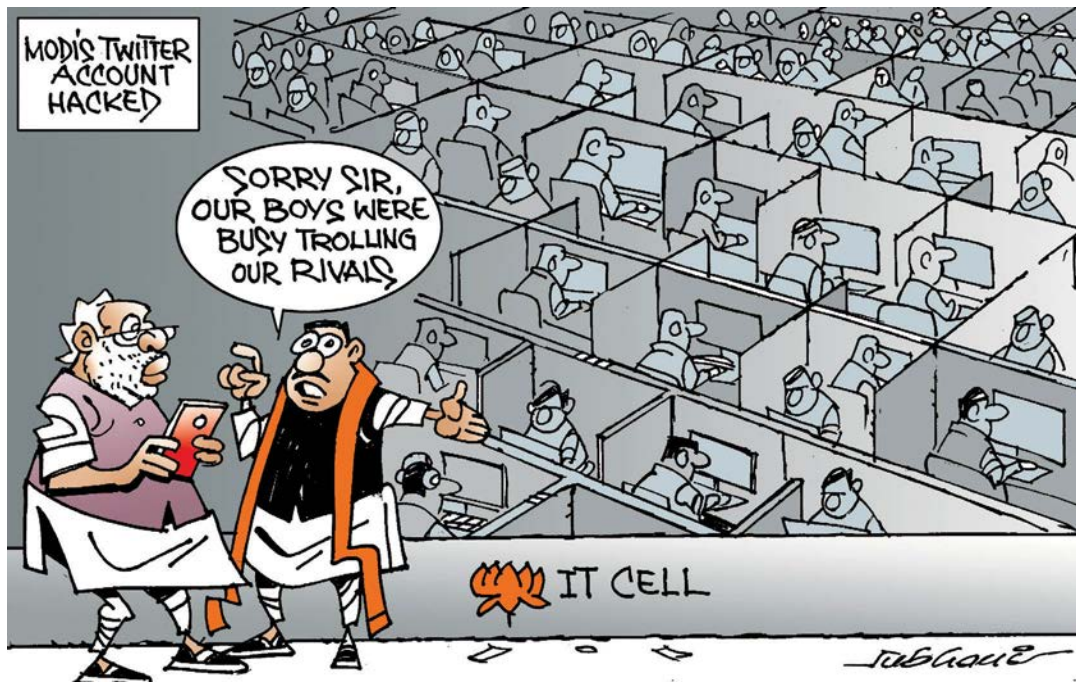
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Subhani



## In any crisis, take care of the most vulnerable



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

Is geography destiny? Those who inhabit placeless utopias like global citizens with much sought-after skills tend to argue that digital technologies and virtual communications have now erased the inconvenient boundaries of the physical world.

But the Covid-19 pandemic has sledgehammered the brutal lesson that geography's death has been hugely exaggerated. Surroundings matter. Where we are affects what happens to us. Mostly.

One area where this has been most visible is education.

Covid-19 has not only revealed vulnerabilities and inequalities in the education systems across the world, it has also made the situation worse.

Students living in areas reeling from floodwaters or where the roads got washed away or where there is no public transport and private transport is beyond what their family could afford trying to reach examination centres far away were not in the same place, literally and figuratively, as those in the big cities. The South Delhi or South Mumbai student who reached the test centre in a private vehicle was not in the same situation as someone else who had to use multiple modes of transport, negotiating difficult terrain, and great uncertainty, even if both were equally well-prepared or at par academically.

Competitive exams like the JEE (Joint Entrance Exam) for top-tier engineering courses and NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) for undergraduate medical and dental courses in India are framed as markers of merit.

But every aspirant does not have the same backstory. In several districts of West Bengal, for instance, many JEE aspirants left home as early as

3.30 am to reach the examination hall, battling lack of transport, persistent rain and floods. This is despite the efforts by state governments and civil society outfits to arrange transport for students in difficult situations. Students are also not equally placed when it comes to accessing healthcare. That is why there were students who campaigned to postpone the exam. Students from low-income families in flood-hit areas are handicapped. We don't yet know what awaits them, whether they will get a second chance on a different date without losing a year.

In a country where standardised testing is the attempt to gauge a young person's worth, overlooking a lifetime's experience of inequities of various kinds, and the heart-breaking inadequacy of the state-run schooling system in many instances, millions still see competitive exams as the only way out of the ghetto, and a passport to a stable and secure job and a brighter future.

What happens to those who don't "make it" to the exam hall, for no fault of theirs?

And it is not just about the JEE and NEET. There are many other competitive tests like National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) — which millions of young Indians aspire to crack because they see it as the only way out of their social and geographical limitations.

"The education crisis during Covid-19 was fuelled by deep pre-existing inequalities," says a recent report by Unesco.

"Education systems responded with distance learning solutions, all of which offered less or more imperfect substitutes for classroom instruction," said the report, noting that while many poorer countries opted for radio and televi-

sion lessons, 55 per cent of low-income, 73 per cent of lower-middle-income and 93 per cent of upper-middle-income countries adopted for online learning platforms for primary and secondary education.

The Covid-19 lockdown has exposed the all-too obvious fact that Digital India does not quite mean the same thing for every Indian.

The number of wireless Internet users in the country have been rising but there is still a glaring divide between urban and rural India. Just a little over four per cent of rural households have a computer, against 23.4 per cent of households in urban areas; 14.9 per cent of rural households have access to the Internet against 42 per cent households in urban areas, according to the 75th round of the National Sample Survey conducted between July 2017 and June 2018.

Within cities too, where you live matters.

Sonal Kapoor, founder and chief executive officer of Protsahan India Foundation, a non-profit organisation working with adolescent girls in slum communities of Uttam Nagar in West Delhi, likes to talk about the "slum digital lab" project that her NGO is running. It was shut during the lockdown months of April and May. It reopened early June. "None of the girls we work with have computers at home. Most families have one mobile phone of a most basic type; it is typically with the father or the brother. So, girls come here, follow up on their school homework, do their projects, prepare for competitive exams, learn coding, apply for government schemes online to avail other benefits for their families."

Many state governments are making efforts to circumvent the prob-

**The Covid-19 lockdown has exposed the all-too obvious fact that Digital India does not quite mean the same thing for every Indian**

lems on the ground. Even though school education has gone online, states are using parallel methods to try and ensure that geographically or financially disadvantaged students don't completely miss out on learning. They have been using a variety of different approaches simultaneously, alongside online classes. In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, for example, the department of education has also taken steps to telecast the pre-recorded digital classes through the local cable TV networks for the students of Class 8 to Class 12. These telecasts started on local cable TV channels from April. An alternative learning method was also started for primary and upper primary classes through audio classes on All India Radio, Port Blair.

In Bihar, during the lockdown, classes for students of Class 1 to Class 12 are being run on Doordarshan. Classes on television are run in the same way as in the normal classroom.

These may seem minor details in the broader narrative of the pandemic, but they impact millions of lives. They also show there are local resourceful adaptations to deal with the education crisis, worsened by Covid-19. This is especially true of school education.

These are not perfect solutions, but they grapple with exclusion, which remains a stark reality even in developed and socially progressive states. A Class 9 student set herself ablaze in Kerala's Malappuram district because she missed online classes. The family had no television or smartphone at home.

The key lesson — policy-makers have to factor in the needs of the most vulnerable. Those on top of the food chain will, and do manage better, even during a crisis. It is those at the bottom who need to be at the top of our policy priorities.

*The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com.*

## LETTERS

### MISHRA'S RETIREMENT

It is with reference to the news Arun Mishra retires from Supreme Court. Justice Mishra's tenure in Supreme Court will stand out in history for many reasons but the one we would like to focus on is his conduct on the Bench. It was to his Bench that most of India's most politically sensitive cases were inevitably marked in the recent years. His interpretation of law and command over law was immaculate. The Indore Development Authority case in which his interpretation of the Land Acquisition Act shows how well versed he is in law.

**P. Victor Selvaraj**  
Palayamkottai

### FREE ACCESES TO EDUCATION

APPROPOS YOUR report *Stalin sees dark side of online classes*. With the introduction of online classes for schools and colleges, students' learning has become a distant dream. Many families are unable to afford smart phones for all their children as classes are conducted simultaneously for all classes at the same time. Some of them don't have proper accessibility to the internet. To crown it all, the students who have not paid their fees are totally denied online classes. While these are major issues, the other disturbing fact is that many teachers are not able to explain or conduct classes with clarity. I guess the education department needs to corroborate with the concept of making education as mandatory for all by meeting all the necessary requirements. The poor urban students as well as students from the rural areas need to be facilitated with free smart phones along with internet connection so that they are not deprived of the basic fundamental right which is education.

**Jacqueline Netto,**  
Chennai

### FOLLOW STRICT NORMS

AT THE relaxation announced by the Centre and state governments the public felt relieved and the oldies like me who were under house arrest for 5 months have regained freedom! But we should remember how the Spanish flu which lasted for two years, killed 50 million initially in its first strike and the public when the quarantine and social distancing were lifted rejoiced. But it had reappeared and in its second wave tens of millions were killed in 1918. Now the relaxation is given by the government alone but not by the Covid-19! Unless we continue to shut up our mouths and noses wearing face-masks and maintaining social distancing for at least one year, the coronavirus may still reign in with second and third waves killing millions.

**A. Seshagiri Rao,**  
Chennai

Nilofar Suhrawardy



## Bank on Gandhis, test non-Gandhis, start early for '24

The storm created over a letter demanding change in the Congress Party's leadership has certainly dominated newspaper headlines for a while now. Given that no basic change is expected in the party's leadership, what can be inferred from this political drama? One can call it nothing but, considering the nature of the letter, the political stature of its writers and subsequent developments ending in Sonia Gandhi continuing as interim president. Ms Gandhi has held this post since Rahul Gandhi's resignation as president following the dismal performance of the Congress in the 2019 parliamentary polls.

Now let us consider this issue from another angle. The letter writers certainly don't seem to have any inclination either to quit the party or be considered for heading it. Also, neither of their names are as strongly associated with the Congress nationwide as are those of the members of the Gandhi family. Their political reach is limited to their regional domain, while others are known more for their professional and intellectual

accomplishments than anything else. Without taking any names, in all probability, the average Indian from outside their states is hardly aware of their political importance. And perhaps even their association with the Congress Party.

This is not surprising. How many people outside West Bengal know the names of anybody other than Mamata Banerjee with the Trinamul Congress? The same can be said about Mayawati and her Uttar Pradesh-based BSP, Mulayam Singh Yadav/Akhilesh Yadav and the SP as well as Lalu Prasad's RJD in Bihar.

Of course, the Congress is not a regional party and it is expected to give greater importance to a democratic process for electing its leaders. The Left parties, too, attach importance to following party rules and protocol. Strict adherence to these rules has prevented their senior leaders from rising in political stature. This was why Jyoti Basu of the CPI(M) could not become the country's Prime Minister in 1996. In 2008, Somnath Chatterjee chose to stick to his guns; as Speaker of Lok Sabha, he did not

vote along the party line. He was expelled from the party for this decision. These two examples show that at times strict adherence to party rules can prove extremely costly. Deviation by the CPI(M) in these two cases may have spelled its rise instead of decline. India's political map may not have been the same as what it is today.

Now surely, the democratic culture of any political party cannot solely be decided by its top-ranked members, mostly hailing from the elite and privileged classes? How can that be? Also, it might just be difficult for the average Indian to understand whatever may be communicated to them by elites.

Undeniably, Sonia, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Vadra belong to the privileged classes. Nevertheless, party propaganda coupled with media coverage has definitely led to their moves being taken greater notice of by people compared to those by other Congress leaders. Additionally, the effect of their huge presence in nationwide electoral campaigns cannot be ignored. Besides,

their party is not the only one that performed miserably in the 2019 general election.

Hence, at present, the selection of a non-Gandhi to head the party demands building their image from the grassroots on an extensive scale. Can the party afford to do this? Every Congress leader does not hold the same appeal to the people as the three Gandhis do. Crowds drawn by these leaders certainly help them gain media coverage and also spell a headache for rival parties. Can the same be said about other Congress members? It will probably take a decade for the party's political culture to reach a stage where that is the fact. The party needs to start according importance to image-building exercises for other members, too, from now on. It has nothing to lose by testing and judging the electoral potential of non-Gandhi members in the national domain. The big question is, whether other members are willing to take the risk. Electoral campaigning is not a cakewalk. Gaining media coverage is also not easy for all. It may perhaps be more appropriate for

Congress members to deliberate at present on teamwork and possible alliances advantageous to them in the coming Assembly elections. Besides, they need to start planning for the 2024 parliamentary polls from right now and not leave crucial decisions till the last minute. This refers to the formal induction of Priyanka in the party as general secretary of Uttar Pradesh's east wing when just a few months were left for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

The political drama that followed the letter has certainly helped the letter writers garner attention. Their simple message apparently is that their roles in party politics must not be sidelined. They have made a point, democratically speaking. The party needs to give greater importance to functioning as a team. A united Congress has a chance to strengthen its ranking; divided, the futures of all party members are at stake!

*The writer is a journalist with specialisation in communication studies and nuclear diplomacy. She is also the author of several books.*



quick  
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,990.94	-0.24
Nifty 50	11,527.45	-0.07
S&P 500*	3,475.64	-2.94
Dollar (₹)	73.48	0.60
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.68	0.21
Euro (₹)	86.86	0.25
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,755*774	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.93	-0.50
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.896	-0.024
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.636	-0.015

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

Ramakrishnan to  
be MD & CEO of  
South Indian Bank

South Indian Bank said the Reserve Bank of India has approved appointment of Murali Ramakrishnan as its MD and CEO with effect from October 1. Ramakrishnan had retired from ICICI Bank as senior general manager at strategic project group on May 30, 2020, and joined the South Indian Bank as an advisor on July 1. Ramakrishnan was heading a business transformation project of SME business at ICICI Bank.

Lenders asked to roll out scheme by 15th  
FM sets deadline for  
debt recast schemeFC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3

In order to help borrowers hurt by the pandemic, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday asked banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) to roll out loan restructuring schemes for Covid-19-related stress by September 15. She also asked lenders to identify eligible borrowers, reach out to them and quickly implement resolution plans for the revival of every viable business.

While urging lenders to support distressed borrowers, Sitharaman also reminded them that loan restructuring should not impact the lenders' assessment of their creditworthiness.

The government move comes three days after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lifted a moratorium on loan repayments on August 31. The central bank offered the moratorium as the coronavirus lockdown, effective March 25, shuttered businesses and left millions jobless, pushing India's economy toward a full-year contraction in more than four decades.

In a video conference with heads of scheduled commercial banks and NBFCs, the finance minister urged lenders to immediately put in place a board-approved policy for resolution. "There should be a quick implementation of a sustained resolution plan by lenders for the



## KEEPING BANKERS ON THEIR TOES

► Sitharaman also asked lenders to identify eligible borrowers, reach out to them and quickly implement resolution plans for the revival of every viable business

revival of every viable business," she said.

Banks are in the process of getting a restructuring framework in line with the RBI's framework and eligibility defined by the central bank in its notification on August 6. In the meeting, bankers assured the finance minister that they are ready with their resolution policies and have started the process of identifying and reaching out to borrowers and that they will comply with the timelines stipulated by the RBI.

An official statement said Sitharaman advised lenders to ensure that regularly updated FAQs on the resolution framework are uploaded on their websites in Hindi, English and regional languages, and also circulated to their

offices and branches. Besides, the minister also reviewed the schemes announced under Aatmanirbhar Bharat—the Rs 20-lakh crore post-pandemic financial rescue package.

The RBI last month permitted one-time restructuring of both corporate and retail loans without them getting classified as a non-performing asset (NPA). Restructuring benefit is available for accounts that are standard on March 1, with default of less than 30 days.

Besides, K.V. Kamath committee is working on recommendations on financial parameters like debt service coverage ratio, debt-equity ratio post-resolution and interest coverage ratio for recasting corporate loans.

Dubai seeks  
to attract  
wealthy  
retireesABBAS AL LAWATI  
SEPT. 3

Dubai started a programme to attract wealthy retirees as the Middle East business hub faces a flight of expatriates amidst an economic downturn.

Foreigners over the age of 55 will be eligible for a five-year renewable visa if they meet certain criteria, according to the Dubai Media Office. In its initial phase, the programme will focus on UAE residents working in Dubai.

Candidates should meet one of the following requirements: Monthly income of 20,000 dirhams (\$5,445); savings of 1 mn dirhams; or own property in Dubai worth 2 mn dirhams.

The United Arab Emirates passed a law in 2018 allowing expatriates to stay beyond retirement age. Foreigners form about 90 per cent of Dubai's population, but their residency is tied to employment, discouraging many from setting roots in the city.

The programme "will contribute toward our tourism economy by facilitating frequent visits from families and friends of the retirees and increasing visitation from markets with a high retiree population," said Mohammed Ahmed Al Marri, D-G of the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs.—Bloomberg

Services pick up, but  
still in contraction zoneSANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

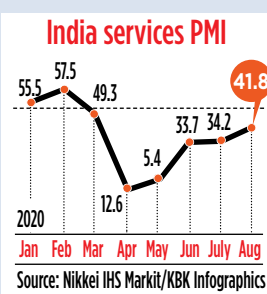
Despite showing a rise over July, services Purchasing Managers' Index continued in the contraction zone in August. Pandemic restrictions and job losses have been weighing heavily on services PMI.

The Services Business Activity Index of IHS Markit rose sharply from 34.2 in July to 41.8 in August, the highest since March. Nevertheless, the latest reading, by coming in below the 50 neutral value, indicated continued decline in business activity.

The ongoing pandemic restrictions continued to adversely impact client demand and business operations. New business and output continued to contract at marked rates, albeit slower than the records seen in April and May. Restrictions also contributed to a record increase in outstanding business.

Reduced business activity saw the Indian service sector operating below capacity. Ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and temporary business closures meant that firms were unable to process previously placed orders, which led to incomplete work increasing for a third month running.

Meanwhile, sustained revenue losses through the second quarter and increasing cost burdens led companies to raise charges for the first time since March. The rate of input price inflation was slightly faster than seen



in July, but marginal overall. Higher fuel costs were cited as the key reason behind higher input prices. In line with rising cost burdens, output charges grew at a margin-

al pace. Firms mentioned the passing on of higher costs to customers.

"August highlights another month of challenging operating conditions in the Indian services sector...Output and new work continue to fall at solid rates, while restrictions meant that firms were often unable to complete projects. Backlogs of work accumulated to the greatest extent in almost 15 years of data collection. That said, the survey showed signs of a potential recovery," said Shreya Patel, economist at IHS Markit.

## RURAL JOBS DROP, URBAN RISE IN AUG.

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Rising unemployment in rural India brought down overall employment in the country by 0.2 million in August from July levels. What hurt rural unemployment was lower farm and MGNREGA jobs.

The unemployment rate, which has been falling after April, increased from 7.4 per cent in July to 8.4 per cent in August. As a result, the employment rate fell from 37.6 per cent to 37.5 per cent in the same period, finds think-tank CMIE.

This deterioration in labour market conditions in August was essentially located in rural India. While in urban India 3.4 million got jobs, employment

declined by 3.6 million in rural India, thus, accounting for the 0.2 million overall decline.

Rural India, that led the recovery story till July has pulled back hard. Rural India faced a double whammy in August. It saw a fall in MGNREGA employment, which is non-farming related employment, and kharif sowing-related employment.

As per the initial data available, compared to July, person-days generated in August were down by 55 per cent. August person-days were also 72 per cent lower than that in June. The fall in MGNREGA employment coincided with a fall in farming activities in August. By July-end, 83 per cent of the kharif sowing was complete.

## COFFEE-BREAK

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



**Aries:** You'll be happy but egoistical. For some, fruitful journey develops new contacts and brings monetary gains. At work, your awe shows its effects.



**Taurus:** You have a romantic and sentimental relationship with your loved one. You'll enjoy repeat clients and considerable financial profit.



**Gemini:** Avoid lending money and expensive possession to casual acquaintances. Students do well in academic and extra-curricular activities.



**Cancer:** Expect continuous and increased cash flow; you'll pay off debts. Service personnel's hard work is appreciated. Elders are helpful in times of need.



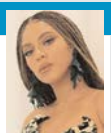
**Leo:** Huge ventures and pending proposals get rolling. Save for the future. Business starts anew. Service personnel find superiors and subordinates' cooperation.



**Virgo:** Expect heavy expenses over auspicious reasons. Doctors, lawyers, agents, army personnel and mariners have an average day. Employees may miss their deadlines.

## You share your b'day with

Beyoncé is an American singer, songwriter, record producer, dancer, actress and filmmaker. Her debut a Dangerously in Love and her singles include If I were a Boy, Single Ladies to name a few



**Libra:** Artists' work won't be satisfactory. Students' hard work is rewarded. New collaborations may be profitable. Self-employed professionals may open new offices.



**Scorpio:** Social work will keep you busy. Financial losses are indicated. Get started on a hobby or sport you have been planning to take up.



**Sagittarius:** Students must involve themselves in extra-curricular activities. Businessmen may sign new deals. Employees are appreciated for their good work and sincerity.



**Capricorn:** Expect proximity with your spouse but problems with children. Businessmen sign lucrative deals. Self-employed people may feel frustrated with their vocations.

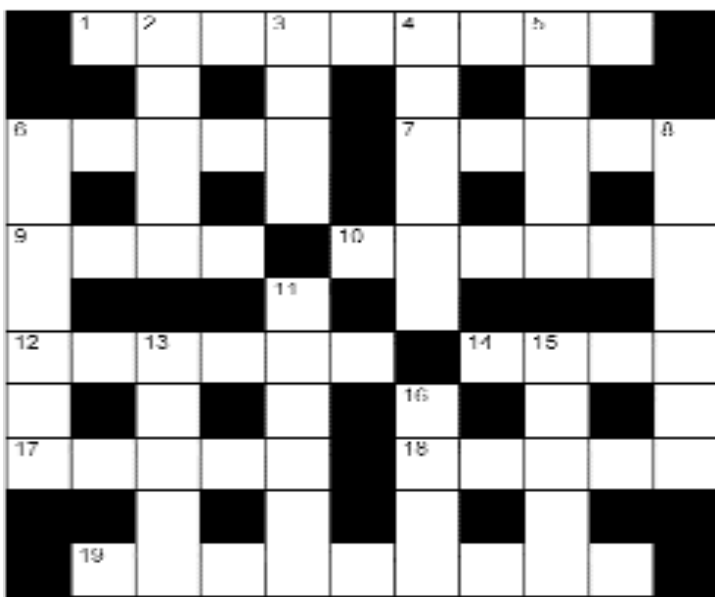


**Aquarius:** Those employed may feel tremendous peer pressure. A professional opportunity is arriving. A positive and creative attitude brings success at work.



**Pisces:** Your business foundation is set; family roots deepen today. A property issue you're apprehensive about may settle amicably. Some professionals may expand their business to other cities.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



- Across**
- At present (9)
  - Teams (5)
  - Bus station (5)
  - Rower's accessories (9)
  - Go back on a deal (6)
  - Favour (6)
  - Defeat (4)
  - Uncertainty (5)
  - Intense (5)
  - Kept in subjugation (9)

- Down**
- Below (5)
  - Flowering bush (4)
  - Indicated assent (6)
  - Become void (5)
  - Pried (7)
  - Playhouse (7)
  - Medieval clown (6)
  - Kit out (5)
  - Ooze out (5)
  - Deep voice (4)

## YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

**Across:** 1. Chainsaw, 7. Began, 8. Motto, 9. Normal, 10. Prop, 12. Ally, 14. Jargon, 17. Carry, 18. Learn, 19. Released.

**Down:** 1. Cigar, 2. Annual, 3. Numb, 4. Actor, 5. Abundance, 6. Component, 11. Faults, 13. Large, 15. Guard, 16. Tyre.

## Word Mine

Y  
C N R  
G A E N P

TODAY'S RATINGS: 14 AVERAGE: 16

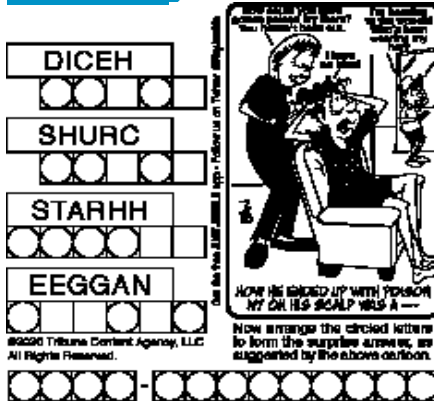
GOOD: 18 OUTSTANDING

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

Don't miss: South: Y, C, N, R, G, A, E, N, P. West: Y, C, N, R, G, A, E, N, P. East: Y, C, N, R, G, A, E, N, P. South: Y, C, N, R, G, A, E, N, P. West: Y, C, N, R, G, A, E, N, P. East: Y, C, N, R, G, A, E, N, P.

Opening lead: Y, C, N, R, G, A, E, N, P.

## Jumble



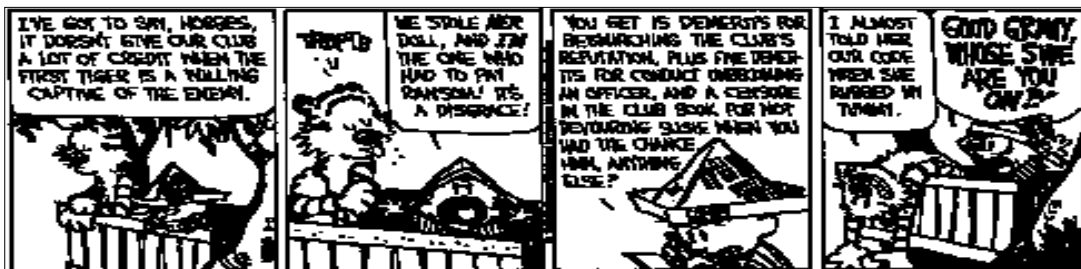
Yesterday's Jumble: PRESS TRACK SMOOTH UNWIDE  
Answer: The fibres hadn't even each other in years until they — CROUCHED PICKED

diamond support. Now you should bid three spades, showing where you have primary values. Then partner might roll out your preferred form of Blackwood, or he might just jump to six diamonds. Real bridge players don't use Blackwood!

Six diamonds makes easily here because the diamonds are 3-2 (67.8%) and the clubs are 4-3 (62.2%). But if there was a bad split somewhere, declarer would need the

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



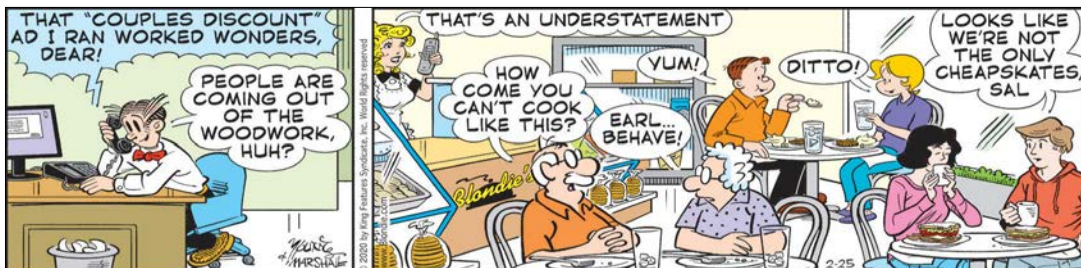
THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli &amp; craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs





## SHORT TAKES

## Punia, two more wrestlers +ve

**New Delhi:** Three senior male wrestlers, including world championship silver-medallist Deepak Punia, have tested positive for Covid-19, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Thursday.

Besides the Olympic-bound Punia (86kg), the other two wrestlers who have tested positive for the virus are Navin (65kg) and Krishan (125kg). All three are part of a national camp at the SAI Centre in Sonapat ahead of which the wrestlers are in quarantine. "Three senior men's wrestlers, who had reported to the National Wrestling Camp at SAI Centre in Sonapat, have tested positive for Covid-19 virus," the nodal sports body said in a statement.

With his silver at the worlds, Punia had secured a place for himself at the Tokyo Olympics. They have been moved to a SAI empanelled hospital as a precautionary measure for further monitoring.

All wrestlers were tested, upon arrival, as per the SAI SOP for resumption of sports activities. — PTI

## Cyclist Lutsenko claims Stage 6

**Mont Aigoual, France:** Kazakh rider Alexey Lutsenko won his first stage in his fifth Tour de France with a solo effort up Mont Aigoual on Thursday.

The Tour's top contenders were still racing far behind the 27-year-old Lutsenko on the mountain when he crossed the line at the top with towering views of southern France. Lutsenko was among a group of eight breakaway riders that surged ahead of the main pack on the 191-kilometre (119-mile) Stage 6. The stage sped south-west from the start town of Le Teil in southern France.

Lutsenko, riding for the Astana team, shook off his breakaway companions on the day's punishing final climb, up to the Lusette pass, scaled for the first time by the 117-year-old Tour. — AP

## Waqar for one ball brand for Tests

**Karachi:** Pakistan pace great Waqar Younis on Thursday said the ICC should consider using only one brand of ball in Test cricket as fast bowlers find it difficult to adjust while playing in different conditions across the world.

The Pakistan cricket team played with the Dukes ball during their recent tour of England, where the visitors lost 0-2 a three-Test series.

"I have been a big advocate of the Dukes ball for many years but I feel that only one brand of ball should be used around the world for Test cricket," Younis wrote in a column for the Pakistan Cricket Board. "It doesn't matter which brand but the ICC should make that decision. It's hard for bowlers to adjust," he added. — PTI

## English take on Aussies in T20s

**London:** One of England's most extraordinary seasons will end with them facing arch-rivals Australia as both sides try to strike a balance between playing their strongest limited-overs teams and keeping an eye on the future.

The Coronavirus pandemic threatened to wipe out England's entire home season yet they are now set to complete all 18 scheduled men's internationals, albeit the fixtures have been played behind closed doors.

They face Australia in three Twenty20s in Southampton starting on Friday before taking on their oldest foes in a further three one-day internationals in Manchester later this month. — AFP

## Live on TV

## FORMULA ONE

Italian Grand Prix First Practice One from 2.25 pm; Second Practice from 6.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

## CRICKET

England vs Australia 1st T20 From 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

## US OPEN

Matches from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 2 HD

## UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

Lithuania vs Kazakhstan from 9.30 pm; Italy vs Bosnia-Herzegovina from 12.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2, HD; The Netherlands vs Poland from 12.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD



Caroline Garcia of France celebrates her 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) win over Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic in their women's singles second round match at the US Open tennis championships in New York on Wednesday. — AP

## OH! KAROLINA Garcia shocks top seed Pliskova at US Open

**New York, Sept. 3:** France's Caroline Garcia produced the biggest upset of the US Open on Wednesday, sending top seed Karolina Pliskova tumbling out of the tournament.

Garcia, the world number 50, scored one of the biggest wins of her career with a 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) second-round victory at Louis Armstrong Stadium.

The 26-year-old's 1hr 33min victory sends her into a third round meeting on Friday with American 28th seed Jennifer Brady.

If she can reproduce Wednesday's polished performance, Garcia will fancy her chances of extending her run at Flushing Meadows.

Garcia — whose talent propelled her to fourth in the world rankings in September 2018 before a protracted slump sent her sliding down the standings in 2019 — attacked Pliskova from the outset.

Garcia raced into a 5-0 lead after scoring two early service breaks before taking the first set.

SELECTED RESULTS	
<b>Men's singles second round (number in brackets denotes seeding):</b> Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Kyle Edmund (GBR) 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-4, 6-2; Jan-Lennard Struff (GER x28) bt Michael Mmoh (USA) 6-2, 6-2, 7-5; Pablo Carreno-Busta (ESP x20) bt Mitchell Krueger (USA) 6-1, 6-2, 6-2; Ricardas Berankis (LTU) bt Steve Johnson (USA) 7-5, 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 (7/1); Denis Shapovalov (CAN x12) bt Kwon Soon-woo (KOR) 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-2; Taylor Fritz (USA x19) bt Gilles Simon (FRA) 7-5, 6-3, 6-2; Filip Krajinovic (SRB x26) bt Marcos Giron (USA) 6-4, 6-1, 6-3; David Goffin (BEL x7) bt Lloyd Harris (RSA) 7-6 (8/6), 4-6, 6-1, 6-4; Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x4) bt Maxime Cressy (USA) 7-6 (7/2), 6-3, 6-4; Borna Coric (CRO x27) bt Juan Ignacio Londero (ARG) 7-5, 4-6, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-3; Alexander Zverev (GER x5) bt Brandon Nakashima (USA) 7-5, 6-7 (8/10), 6-3, 6-1.	<b>Women's singles second round (number in brackets denotes seeding):</b> Caroline Garcia (FRA) bt Karolina Pliskova (CZE x1) 6-1, 7-6 (7/2); Jennifer Brady (USA x28) bt Catherine Bellis (USA) 6-1, 6-2; Angelique Kerber (GER x17) bt Anna-Lena Friedsam (GER) 6-3, 7-6 (8/6); Ann Li (USA) bt Alison Riske (USA x13) 6-0, 6-3; Aliaksandra Sasnovich (BLR) bt Marketa Vondrousova (CZE x12) 6-1, 6-2; Yulia Putintseva (KAZ x23) bt Vera Lapko (BLR) 6-3, 6-3; Varvara Gracheva (RUS) bt Kristina Mladenovic (FRA x30) 1-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-0; Petra Martic (CRO x8) bt Katerina Bondarenko (UKR) 6-3, 6-4; Naomi Osaka (JPN x4) bt Camila Giorgi (ITA) 6-1, 6-2; Marta Kostyuk (UKR) bt Anastasiya Sevastova (LAT x31) 6-3, 7-6 (7/5); Anett Kontaveit (EST x14) bt Kaja Juvan (SLO) 6-4, 6-1; Shelby Rogers (USA) bt Elena Rybakina (KAZ x11) 7-5, 6-1; Petra Kvitova (CZE x6) bt Kateryna Kozlova (UKR) 7-6 (7/3), 6-2.

Although Pliskova improved in the second, she was unable to find the crucial service break when it mattered, and was unable to convert a set point in the second to level the match.

In the tie break, Garcia raced into a 6-2 lead and then completed victory when Pliskova hit a return into the net.

It was a disappointing exit for Pliskova, who had been elevated to No.1 seed after a slew of high-ranking player withdrawals due to the coronavirus.

While Pliskova fell by the wayside, there were no such problems for fourth seed Naomi Osaka of Japan, the 2018 champion. The 22-year-old dominated hard-hitting Italian opponent Camila Giorgi in a 6-1, 6-2 victory.

Elsewhere on Wednesday, Petra Kvitova advanced to the third round with a straight sets defeat of Katerina Kozlova of Ukraine, winning 7-6 (7/3), 6-2.

Kvitova, chasing a third Grand Slam crown after wins at Wimbledon in 2011

and 2014, needed 1hr 40min to claim her place in the last 32.

Gracheva, ranked 102nd in the world, upset France's 30th-seeded Kristina Mladenovic 1-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-0.

Mladenovic suffered a meltdown for the ages as she slid to defeat, collapsing from a 6-1, 5-1 lead and blowing four match points along the way.

Another seed to tumble was the Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova. The out-of-sorts 12th seed was beaten 6-1, 6-2 in little

more than an hour by Belarus' Aliaksandra Sasnovich.

Germany's Angelique Kerber, the 2016 US Open champion, booked her place in the third round with a straight sets win over compatriot Anna-Lena Friedsam.

The 17th seed progressed with a 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) victory in 1hr 40min, and will now face Ann Li, who knocked out 13th seed Alison Riske 6-0, 6-3.

## SHARAN-CACIC BOW OUT IN OPENING ROUND

India's Divij Sharan and his Serbian partner Nikola Cacic fought hard before going down in three sets to eighth seeds Nikola Mektic and Wesley Koolhof in the first round of the US Open men's doubles event here.

Sharan and Cacic lost 4-6 6-3 3-6 against Croatia's Mektic and Koolhof of the Netherlands in a tough contest that lasted one hour and 46 minutes on Wednesday. The winners will next play Simone Bolelli and Maximo Gonzalez. — Agencies

## CAPITAL BOYS BOWL OVER COACH RYAN

**Dubai, Sept. 3:** Delhi Capitals bowling coach Ryan Harris is impressed with the pace at which the players are getting back into shape after months of inactivity.

After completing the mandatory six-day quarantine, Harris was finally out of his room on Wednesday evening, and oversaw his first nets session at Delhi Capitals.

Harris said it didn't look like the boys were out of practice in the past few months.

"I know that the boys haven't been able to train in the past few months due to the pandemic, but watching them bat and bowl, and seeing some shots flying over the fence, I've been impressed with them," said Harris in a team statement.

"Their work ethic is unbelievable and they seem in very good space for guys who haven't done a lot of training — they look in excellent condition," he added.

Having been allowed to set foot outside after after six days in isolation, Harris says it felt good. "Honestly, six days isn't a lot, but it felt like three weeks for me. But when I got the message this morning from the doctor, saying I've cleared my quarantine and my tests, that was probably the best message I've ever got (laughs)," he said. — PTI



Ryan Harris

## Messi vs Barca still a stalemate

**● Despite 90 minutes of meeting between Barcelona president Josep Bartomeu and Jorge Messi, Lionel's father-cum-agent, there was no clear picture on whether the Argentine would leave the Catalans this season or not.**

Barcelona, Sept. 3: Lionel Messi's future at Barcelona looked no closer to being resolved after the first meeting between the player's father and club officials ended without an agreement, a person with knowledge of the situation confirmed, on the condition of anonymity.

The person said club president Josep Bartomeu on Wednesday met for more than 90 minutes with Jorge Messi to discuss the the Argentina star's request to leave the club, but that neither part made any concessions.

Lionel last week told the club that he wanted to leave the club and invoked a contract clause that allowed him to leave for free at the end of the season.

But Barcelona claimed the clause expired in June and said he must see out his contract until June 2021, unless the buyout clause of 700 million euros (USD 837 million) is paid.

Also in the meeting were Barcelona official Javier Bordas and Messi's brother, Rodrigo.

A lawyer for the Messi family was also present. In what was described as a cordial meeting, all parts made their positions clear. Jorge Messi said the player

wants to leave and Barcelona said it will not accept his transfer request.

No other meeting was immediately scheduled, and the next steps were unclear. Barcelona has said it still hopes Lionel could change his mind.

In addition to meeting with Messi's father, Barcelona said it also wanted to meet personally with the player to try to change his mind about leaving. The club said it has been doing everything to try to convince Messi to finish his career at the club where he started nearly 20 years ago.

Lionel Messi hasn't met with club officials since announcing his decision to leave.

— AP



Indian chess player P. Iniyan in this file photo.

## Iniyan is World Open chess star

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Close to the heels of India's historic gold at the Olympiad, another chess player has achieved a unique feat. Tamil Nadu's P. Iniyan emerged champion in the 48th annual World Open chess tournament. The online event — a nine-round classical time control format — concluded on August 9, but the results were declared on Thursday after a thorough 'fairplay' analysis.

A total of 122 players from 16 countries took part in the event that had more than 30 Grandmasters in the fray. The 17-year-old Erode boy scored seven-and-a-half points out of a possible nine. He had six victories and three draws. Iniyan and Russian GM Sanan Sjugirov were tied for the top spot, but the Indian had a better tie-

break score.

Iniyan said the World Open was the most memorable event since becoming India's 61st GM last year.

"The game against Georgia's Jobava Baadur was a special one. Jobava, with an unconventional style, is a unique player and the win against him was a great achievement," Iniyan said.

En route to the title, Iniyan also defeated GMs Sam Sevian and Sergey Erenburg of the USA and Nyzhky Illia of Ukraine. Since the event was happening in US time, Iniyan had to burn midnight oil. "I was playing from 9.30 pm to 6 am every day. I had to prepare specifically by practising all night for a few days before the tournament," said Iniyan. who had pulled off a stunning win over World No.2 Fabiano Caruana in an online blitz event.

## City find James hard to get past

**Miami, Sept. 3:** James Harden's shooting touch deserted him, but the Houston star came up big on the defensive end in the Rockets' 104-102 series-clinching win over Oklahoma City in the NBA playoffs on Wednesday.

Harden leapt to block a potential game-winning three-point attempt by Thunder rookie Luguentz Dort with 4.8 seconds remaining as the Rockets held on through a frantic finish to win the best-of-seven Western Conference series four games to three and book a second-round showdown with LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers.

In a closely contested game, Houston took the lead for good, 103-102, on PJ Tucker's driving basket with 1:25 remaining.

The ball changed hands several times before the Thunder got it into the hands of Dort, whose dream night was ended by Harden's big block.

Houston's Robert Covington drained a free throw with 1.4 seconds left to make it 104-102.

Then Harden was called for a foul on Danilo Gallinari before the ball was inbounded, giving the Thunder a free throw and the ball.

Gallinari missed from the foul line and the Thunder turned the ball over on the final inbound pass.

— AFP

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