

IN BRIEF

2 men arrested for duping 800 people

New Delhi: With the arrest of two men, the Delhi police has busted a gang involved in duping nearly 800 people on the pretext of parcelling them lucky draw gifts for which they were asked to pay a minimal amount, officials said on Thursday. The accused, Sunny Goel (28), a resident of Uttam Nagar, and his associate Sajjan Kumar (34), a resident of Rohini, confessed to have cheated approximately 700-800 people till now, it said. The matter came to notice after the police said it received a complaint from Ramesh Pandey who alleged that on August 6, he received a phone call from an unknown mobile number and the caller informed him that his mobile no. was selected in a lucky draw and he had won a Samsung A51 mobile phone. The market cost of the mobile is approximately ₹25,000 but he was told to pay only ₹3,995 for it and share his address and PIN code so that they could send him the phone through speed post and which he could receive from his nearest post office. He further alleged that after 10 days, he received a parcel from the post office for which he paid ₹3,995. When he opened the same, he received a pouch of Patanjali Giloy Kwath instead of a phone.

Watchman found hanging from tree

Noida: The body of a 25-year-old watchman was found hanging from a tree in Noida on Thursday, in a suspected suicide case, police said. The watchman's body was found in G Block of Sector 63 in the city, they said, adding that the cause behind him taking the extreme step is yet to be ascertained. "The deceased and his father both worked in the same private company in Sector 63. He worked as a watchman and was unmarried. He hailed from Hardoi district in UP," an official from Phase 3 police station said. Necessary legal proceedings were being carried out, the official said. On Wednesday, the body of a 50-year-old Delhi-based man was found hanging from a tree in a park in Noida's Sector 7 in a suspected suicide case. — PTI

Man stabs neighbour in Sangam Vihar, held

New Delhi: A 19-year-old man allegedly stabbed the elder brother of his neighbour after he intervened during a quarrel between them in South Delhi's Sangam Vihar, police said Thursday. Gaurav Kumar, 25, is being treated at Batra Hospital following the incident Wednesday evening and he is stated to be out of danger, they said. A quarrel had broken out between Kumar's younger brother and the accused Akash but Kumar intervened and pacified them. Angry at his intervention, Akash later returned with his friends and stabbed Kumar in the back, police said. DCP (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said a case under IPC Section 307 (attempt to murder) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) has been registered and Akash has been arrested. A juvenile has also been apprehended, Thakur said. — PTI

Monsoon to stay longer in Delhi: IMD

New Delhi: Monsoon is likely to stay longer in the national capital and start withdrawing only in the "initial days of October", an India Meteorological Department official said on Thursday. The wind system had reached Delhi on June 25, two days earlier than normal. "According to the extended range forecast, monsoon rains will continue until September end. The withdrawal is likely to happen in the initial days of October," said Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre. Earlier this year, the MeT department revised the date for the withdrawal of monsoon from Delhi from September 21 to September 25. "The IMD revised the withdrawal date considering the trend in the last 20-25 years," Srivastava said. He said light to moderate rains are possible in northwest India from September 15. Till then, mostly dry weather will prevail in Delhi. — PTI

Highest single-day spike with 4,308 Covid cases

Death toll reaches 4,666 ■ ICU beds in hospitals to be increased: Jain

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

The national capital, on Thursday, witnessed record 4,308 new cases of corona, highest in a day since the outbreak of the virus infection. The previous highest single-day spike of 4,039 cases was reported on September 9.

The overall coronavirus figure of the city now stands at 2,05,482. Twenty-eight fatalities have been recorded in the last 24 hours, pushing the total death count to 4,666.

According to the Delhi health bulletin, a record 58,340 tests were done in the last 24 hours. Of the total 2,05,482 cases in the city, 25,416 are active and 1,75,400 patients have recovered. Health minister Satyendar Jain said that amid a surge in Covid-19 cases in Delhi, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has directed authorities to increase the number of ICU beds in hospitals and take steps to contain the spread of the infection.

Interacting with media persons, Mr Jain also said plasma therapy will continue to be used in Delhi as it is proving to be effective in people who are in stage one or two of Covid-19 treatment, but not in stage three or those on ventilators. He told this to media persons when asked to respond about an Indian Council of Medical Research-funded study which has found that use of convalescent plasma therapy in coronavirus infected patients does not help in reducing mortality or progression to severe Covid-19 stage. The chief minister had, on Wednesday, held a review meeting with Mr Jain, chief secretary Vijay Dev, senior officials, and medical superintendents of Delhi government-run hospitals and asked them to take all possible steps to prevent the spread of the virus. "The meeting was held to assess the current situation of Covid-19 and



Health workers collect swab samples for Covid-19 Rapid antigen testing at Civil Lines in Gurugram on Thursday. — PTI

medical superintendents of all hospitals were present in it. The main outcome of the meeting was that the CM has directed authorities to increase the number of ICU beds (in hospitals)," said Mr Jain. He pointed out that the city recorded the highest spike in cases so far because the Delhi government has gone aggressive on testing with over 54,000 tests, the highest ever in Delhi. Mr Jain emphasised that Delhi government's target is to ensure "zero mortality" and treatment protocols have been standardised.

On the ICMR-funded study, which has not yet been peer-reviewed and has appeared on medRxiv, a pre-print server, the health minister asked whether what the ICMR has said is wrong. "Plasma therapy has been in use for many decades for various diseases. As of now, there is no standard treatment for Covid-19. It is proving effective in patients in ICU, who are in the first two stages. I myself am a Covid survivor and was administered plasma therapy," he said.

Noida reports biggest spike of 251 cases, total at 9,605

Noida, Sept. 10: Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar on Thursday recorded 251 new coronavirus patients in its biggest single-day spike in cases that pushed the district's infection tally to 9,605, official data showed.

The number of active cases jumped to 1,820 from 1,696 on Wednesday, 1,599 on Tuesday, 1,520 on Monday and 1,429 on Sunday, according to the data released by the UP Health Department for a 24-hour period.

On the brighter side, 125 more patients got discharged during the 24-hour period, as the total number of recoveries in the district reached 7,737, the data showed. The district has so far recorded 48 deaths linked to the pandemic, with one of the lowest mortality rates — 0.49 per cent — in the state, it showed.

Meanwhile, the recovery rate dropped slightly to 80.55 per cent from 81.35

per on Wednesday, as per the statistics.

There were 66,317 active cases across UP on Thursday. So far, 2,21,506 patients have recovered across the state, while the death toll linked to coronavirus climbed to 4,206, showed the data.

Meanwhile, the Noida Metro opened its parking and e-rickshaw services for last mile connectivity at some stations as more commuters opted for the Noida-Greater Noida Metro, officials said.

The Aqua Line, which is the rail service between the twin cities, resumed operations on Monday after a gap of over five months due to the Covid outbreak, the NMRC said.

On Wednesday, 514 passengers commuted during the 7 am-11 am shift, while the figures stood at approximately 370 on Tuesday and 200 on Monday, a spokesperson for NMRC said. — PTI

Hussain's plea against custody pointless, ED tells high court

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

The Enforcement Directorate told the Delhi High Court on Thursday that the plea by suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain challenging his 3-day remand in a money laundering case related to the communal violence in northeast Delhi in February, has become infructuous as he has been sent to judicial custody now.

Hussain has sought setting aside the remand order of September 7, passed by a trial court and a direction to the ED to immediately send him to Tihar jail.

The ED submitted before Justice Yogesh Khanna that an infructuous matter need not be taken up as Hussain's has been handed over to the Tihar Jail authorities on expiry of his three days ED custody.

Additional Solicitor General S V Raju and advocate Amit Mahajan, representing the ED, said the trial court's September 7 order clearly says that the accused be handed over to Tihar jail authorities on September 10, and the agency has complied with the direction.

"The trial court order is implemented and it is over. So nothing survives even if the trial court order is set aside..." the counsel submitted.

However, senior advocate K.K. Manan, appearing for Hussain, opposed the submission of ED and said he is on the point of law and his prayer is to set aside the trial court's order.

He said if the trial court order is set aside, Hussain's custody will be illegal.

The court listed the matter for November 24 to hear arguments on the point of law.

No. of containment zones rises to 1,272, maximum in S.W. Delhi

New Delhi, Sept 10: Amid a rise in coronavirus cases, the number of containment zones in the national capital has gone up to over 1,200, with the maximum 234 in southwest Delhi and the lowest 29 in northeast Delhi, according to government data.

There are 1,272 containment zones in Delhi as on Thursday, according to information available on the revenue department's website.

Of the 11 districts in the city, six have more than 100 containment zones — southwest Delhi (234), west Delhi (169), north Delhi (148), south Delhi (145), central Delhi (120), and east Delhi (104). A Northeast Delhi has just 29 containment zones, the lowest in the city, followed by southeast Delhi (73), Shahdara (74), northwest Delhi (82) and New Delhi (94).

The number of containment zones rose by 50 per cent in the last nine days — from 846 on September 1 to 1,272 on Wednesday.

According to district officials, the number of containment zones might rise with the increase in

the number of coronavirus tests being conducted and the consequent climb in the number of infections

Health authorities on Wednesday conducted a record 54,571 tests, and consequently reported 4,039 new cases, the highest single-day spike here so far

On Tuesday, authorities conducted 45,797 tests, of which 3,609 were positive, according to the government's health bulletin.

Health Minister Satyendra Jain told PTI that the number of fresh cases has increased because of aggressive testing and it will stabilize in the next 10-15 days.

Last month, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had announced that coronavirus testing will be doubled to 40,000 per day within a week as there has been a marginal increase in the number of coronavirus cases in the city.

The number of coronavirus containment zones in Delhi rose from 539 on August 1 to 716 on August 27 and subsequently to 976 on September 5.

It breached the 1,000 mark on September 6, when it reached 1,076 and subsequently increased to 1,114 the next day.

There were 437 containment zones in the city on July 1 and by July 31, it had risen to 692, according to official data.

On August 3, the containment zone count came down to 496.

However, since the last week of August, the number of containment zones has been steadily increasing.

On August 25, there were 654 containment zones or localised areas from where infections were reported. — PTI

Govt revokes fee hike permission granted to school

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

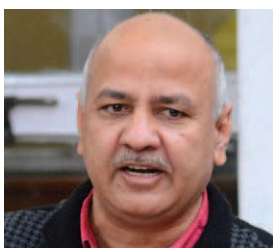
The Delhi government has revoked the fee-hike permission granted to a top private school in Chanakyapuri, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Thursday.

"The fee hike permitted to the school is being revoked. It was found that certain facts were ignored while granting the permission. The school increased its fees by almost 75 per cent, which is unacceptable. Therefore, we are revoking the order," Mr Sisodia told a press conference. Earlier in the day, a group of parents of the students of the school met Sisodia, who is also the education minister of Delhi.

There was no immediate response from the school authorities.

"Under the system called GAAP, it is necessary to follow a special process of accounting and audit, but the school did not do it. Also, there was no need to increase the fees as the school already had a surplus amount, which they gained during 2017-18, due to which its proposal to increase the fees was rejected by the Delhi government."

"During the same year, we directed the school to pay the teachers in accordance with the 7th



Manish Sisodia

Pay Commission recommendations from the surplus amount and not to put the burden on the students. But the school did not comply with the order. A school gets permission for establishment only if it has a three-month salary fixed deposit for the staff. Therefore, now the demand to increase the fees is unreasonable because that amount has already been deposited as a fixed deposit since the inception of the school," Sisodia said.

He said the Anil Dev Singh Committee constituted by the Delhi government had recommended that the fees arbitrarily increased by private schools from 2010 to 2012 should be refunded.

"Now the school wants to recover this amount from the students by showing it under the school expenses. Whereas, the previously overcharged amount cannot be allowed to be shown as an expense," Mr Sisodia said.

Noida Aqua Line to be fully operational from Saturday

Noida, Sept. 10: The Aqua Line connecting Noida and Greater Noida will begin its full-fledged operations from Saturday with trains after every seventh minute during peak hours.

The Metro service between the twin cities had resumed its operations on Monday with curtailed timings after a gap of over five months due to the coronavirus outbreak.

"The Aqua Line is all set to resume full-fledged operations from September 12. This means that the NMRC will run as per the timetable and schedule that was being followed for the Aqua Line before the lockdown," Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) said on Thursday.

The trains will operate from 6 am till 10 pm from Monday to Saturday. The services on Sunday will begin from 8 am till 10 pm, it said.

The trains will run at an



A worker cleans Metro Station after in Noida on Thursday. — PTI

interval of 7.5 minutes during peak hours (8 am to 11 am and 5 pm to 8 pm) and 10 minutes during non-peak hours from Monday to Friday, it stated. Metro trains will be available at an interval of 15 minutes on Saturday and Sunday throughout the day, it added.

Only one entry or exit gate will be opened at Metro stations of Sector

81.83, 101, 137, 142, 143, 144, 145, 156, 147, 148, Alpha-1, Delta-1 and GNIDA office, the corporation said.

Where both entry and exit gates will be kept open are Sector 50, 51, 76, Knowledge Park-II, Pari Chowk and Depot stations. Metro stations falling in containment zones will remain closed and trains will not stop there, the NMRC said. — PTI



Raghav Chadda

■ AAP NATIONAL spokesperson and MLA Raghav Chadda assured the slum dwellers that till the time the Arvind Kejriwal government is there, not a single slum dweller would lose their home

The BJP-ruled Central government and one such notice which was put at various houses of the slum dwellers of the Tughlakabad area noted that they have to evacuate their house by September 11. After this, their houses will be demolished.

"The BJP is issuing such notices across the national capital which is threatening the slum dwellers that their houses will be demolished within this month. These notices are against humanity and also illegal. These notices are against the basic principle of the constitution which allows every citizen to have a life with dignity," said the AAP MLA.

Reacting to Aam Aadmi Party's allegation,

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said that Mr Chadha should stop the drama of tearing notice and the Delhi government should allot vacant houses to slum dwellers with immediate effect.

"If the Delhi government demolishes the slums, BJP workers will shift the slum dwellers to the vacant houses of the Delhi government," warned Mr Bidhuri. Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor has said nothing can be more false and condemnable than Aam Aadmi Party leader Mr Chadha's diatribe on demolition of jhuggis around railway land as ordered by the Supreme Court.



Hindu women perform rituals of Jivitputrika Vrat on the bank of river Yamuna on the occasion of Jivitputrika festival in Noida on Thursday. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Child trafficking gang busted in MP

Bhopal: Police in Indore on Thursday busted a newborn trafficking gang by arresting two people including a woman and rescuing a 10-day-old infant from them. Acting on a tip off by a local non-government organisation (NGO), a team of women police sealed a particular area in Indore city and foiled the bid by the two accused, identified as Bablu alias Tejkaran Thakkar and Shilpa Telang, to sell the infant to an unidentified person who managed to escape from the spot, police said. "We have rescued the baby. Investigation is on to find out the biological parents of the kid", Indore district additional superintendent of police Manisha Pathak said. The two accused were trying to sell the baby at ₹1.20 lakh to their 'client'. "Both the accused are health workers. We suspect that they steal newborns from different hospitals," she said.

Govt selling nation's assets: Akhilesh

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday accused the BJP government of selling the country's assets as well job opportunities for youths with privatisation. He also hit out at the ruling dispensation over lathicharge on party protesters during 9baje9min' campaign on Wednesday night. "It is not understood whether BJP is running the government or selling the country's sources and resources. In the country and the state, they have sold toll, mandi (markets), government malls, ITI, polytechnic, airports, railways and insurance companies, and with privatisation, they have also sold job opportunities for youths, Yadav said in a tweet in Hindi. "The days of BJP government which resorted to lathicharge on peaceful Samajwadi 'sipahi' are over," he said. — PTI

1,350 kg cannabis seized, 4 arrested

Bengaluru: In the ongoing drive against drugs, 1,350 kg of cannabis was seized from a farmhouse in Kalaburagi, over 600 km from here, police said on Thursday. Four people have been arrested in this connection, the police said. On August 30, a 37-year-old auto-driver Jnana Shekhar allegedly selling cannabis here, was caught, they said. During interrogation, the auto-driver revealed that he got the consignment from a 22-year-old farmer Siddhunath Lavte of Sindagi Taluk in Vijayapura and the latter was also arrested. Lavte told police that he had supplied cannabis in Bengaluru and Mumbai. — PTI

Maratha quota stay: Man tries to kill self

Aurangabad: A day after the Supreme Court stayed implementation of the 2018 Maharashtra law granting reservation to Marathas, a man tried to end his life in Latur district of the state on Thursday, police said. The incident took place at the tehsil office in Chakur around 11.15 am, they said. The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the implementation of the law granting reservation to Marathas in education and jobs. "The man, around 28 years of age, tried to commit suicide at Chakur tehsil office by consuming poison. He was immediately shifted to a hospital in Latur," police said. Before taking the step, the man shot a selfie video in which he said that he will end his life at the tehsil office due to the stay on the Maratha quota. — PTI

15-year-old raped in UP's Banda city

Banda, UP: A 15-year-old girl was allegedly raped at a colony in a city area here, police said on Thursday. The incident took place 10 days ago when the girl went to a hand pump to fetch water. Additional Superintendent of Police Mahendra Singh Chauhan said. The accused, Birju Pandit, allegedly took her to a room and raped her, he said, adding the FIR was registered on Wednesday. He said police is probing the matter and searching for the accused. The girl has been sent to the district hospital for a medical examination. — PTI

■ Building where I stay belongs to Sharad Pawar, says Bollywood actress; NCP chief refutes

Ranaut calls Shiv Sena 'Sonia Sena'

Mumbai, Sept. 10: A day after Mumbai's civic authorities demolished portions of her office, actor Kangana Ranaut on Thursday again took on the Maharashtra government by castigating Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for misusing power and declaring that her voice won't be suppressed.

Ranaut, who found support from a section of the film fraternity and also some opprobrium, posted a series of tweets comparing the Shiv Sena-led Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to goons, terming the state

government a milavat sarkar and recalling Marathi culture and pride. On Wednesday, the day the actor returned to Mumbai from her home state Himachal Pradesh, the BMC demolished illegal alterations of her bungalow. The Bombay High Court stayed the demolition process and sought to know why the BMC entered the property when the owner was not present.

The "Queen" star, whose comment likening Mumbai to Pakistan occupied Kashmir triggered a spat with the Shiv Sena, took a jibe at the NCP-Shiv Sena-Congress state gov-

ernment and said the ideology of the Shiv Sena had been compromised.

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

Ranaut described Thackeray as a prime example of nepotism who is misusing power to suppress her voice.

"Your father's good deeds can give you wealth, but you have to earn respect,

you will shut my mouth, but my voice will echo in a hundred millions after me, how many mouths will you shut?"

"How many voices will you suppress? Till when you will run away from the truth, you are nothing but an example of dynasty," the 33-year-old actor wrote on Twitter.

The actor said the Shiv Sena made a milavat sarkar (mixed government) after the election and turned it into a Sonia Sena, alluding to the party's alliance with the Congress.

Ranaut said she was touched to receive over-

whelming support from her well-wishers from Maharashtra, who "condemned the hooliganism done by the government".

Kangana has said the building she lives in here belongs to Sharad Pawar with some reports suggesting she was referring to the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief.

Pawar, however, on Thursday refuted the claim, saying there is no substance in what the actress said.

Ranaut is at the centre of a controversy for likening Mumbai to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and criticising the city police. — PTI

Kangana issue over for Sena, says Raut

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, SEPT. 10

A day after the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) demolished illegal constructions at Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut's office, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday said that the issue was over for his party. However, the actress has continued her vitriolic against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray calling him an example of nepotism and accused him of turning Shiv Sena into 'Sonia Sena.'

"The Kangana Ranaut episode is over. We have even forgotten it. We are now busy with our government and social work," Mr Raut said after

meeting the Chief Minister at his residence Matoshree.

Mr Raut also denied his party has a role in the demolition carried out by the BMC in Kangana's office at Pali Hill in Bandra. "The action at Kangana Ranaut's office is done by the BMC. It has no connection with Shiv Sena. You can talk to the Mayor or the BMC Commissioner on it," he said.

The Shiv Sena-ruled BMC had razed illegal alterations at Kangana's office on Wednesday. However, the Bombay High Court later ordered a stay on it. Meanwhile, Kangana has continued with her outburst against the CM calling him prime example of nepotism.

'Govt has no control over electronic media'

KALPESH MHAMUNKAR
MUMBAI, SEPT. 10

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

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

The bench impleaded the Union Ministry of

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

The bench also made the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the central agencies that are currently probing cases related to the actor's death, as parties after one of the petitioners alleged that the agencies were "leaking" probe related information to the press and the public.



Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut arrives at her office where the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation conducted a demolition drive on Thursday. — PTI

Jha to be joint Opp candidate for RS post

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP Manoj Jha would be the joint Opposition candidate for the post of deputy chairperson of Rajya Sabha, election for which would be held on September 15. Mr Jha is likely to file his nomination papers on Friday.

NDA candidate and incumbent Deputy Chairperson Hariyansh has already filed his nomination on Wednesday. Though discussions had

been on for a joint Opposition candidate for some time, the decision was sealed when the Congress decided to back it at a Parliamentary Party meeting held earlier this week. The decision to field Mr Jha becomes politically significant in light of the coming Assembly polls in Bihar as Mr Hariyansh is also from Bihar and belongs to arch rival Janata Dal (United) headed by Nitish Kumar.

The position of the Deputy Chairperson fell vacant when Mr



Manoj Jha

Hariyansh's term ended. He has since been re-elected to the Upper House from Bihar.

Meanwhile, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar called up Odisha's Naveen Patnaik, seeking his party's support for the

NDA nominee.

Sources said Mr Kumar requested Mr Patnaik to extend the BJD's support to Mr Hariyansh for the post. The BJD had supported Mr Hariyansh in the last election as well, he said.

The nomination filing process began on September 7 and will conclude on September 11.

The election for the post was necessitated as the incumbent Hariyansh completed his term as a member of the Rajya Sabha earlier this year. He was sent to the Upper House of

Parliament again from Bihar. In 2018, he had defeated Congress's BK Hariprasad and was elected the deputy chairman.

The strength of the BJP-led NDA has also gradually increased to more than 114 in the house with an effective strength of 244 members as there is one vacancy. BJP floor managers are confident of securing the support of about 140 MPs, including the fence-sitters YSR Congress, TRS and BJD thus ensuring a smooth re-election for Mr Hariyansh.

'Historic fall' in GDP due to govt policies, says Rahul

New Delhi, Sept. 10: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday alleged that the policies of the Centre have caused loss of crores of jobs and appealed to people to make the Modi government "listen to their voice".

He urged people to be a part of the Congress's 'Speak Up for Jobs' campaign being run on Thursday from 10 AM for 10 hours.

"The policies of Modi Govt have caused the loss of crores of jobs and a historic fall in GDP," Gandhi alleged in a tweet.

"It has crushed the future of India's youth. Let's make the Govt listen to their voice," the former Congress chief said.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the promise was of providing two crore jobs every year and claimed that instead of providing 12 crore jobs in six years, 14 crore jobs were "snatched away".

The youth has now woken up and demands an answer, he said.

The Congress, on its official Twitter handle, said, "One devastating policy after another; BJP has snatched away the livelihoods of crores of Indians & pushed our youth into a bleak future."

— PTI

BJP chief Nadda on 2-day visit to poll-bound Bihar

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

BJP president J.P. Nadda will be on a two-day visit to Bihar from Friday where he is likely to meet chief minister and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar who has been under attack not just from the opposition but ruling NDA ally LJP's Chirag Paswan over various issues.

While the ruling NDA, with a new ally Jitan Ram Manjhi's HAM, is yet to officially start discussing the contentious seat sharing formula, LJP, which had contested 42 seats in 2015 and won just two, wants a even larger share of seats this time which the JD(U) and the BJP are unlikely to agree. Mr



J.P. Nadda

BJP has already declared that the ruling NDA will contest the coming assembly polls under Mr Kumar's leadership and his popularity remains still high despite the state in news over lack of COVID-19 care facilities, law and order situation, floods and other issues.

Mr Nadda, who will be accompanied by the BJP's in-charge of the state and national general secretary Bupendra Yadav, will preside over a number of

party meetings.

In Kolkata, Mr Nadda launched a scathing attack on the Trinamul Congress government in West Bengal, accusing it of having an "anti-Hindu" mindset and pursuing "minority appeasement" policies.

Slamming the ruling party in West Bengal for running a "corrupt dispensation", Nadda said even Rabindranath Tagore's legacy was "sullied" by the TMC-backed "land mafia" at Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan.

He exuded confidence that the saffron party will come to power in West Bengal with 50 per cent vote share in the assembly elections due next year.

Cong ready to tie up with LF in WB: Adhir

Kolkata, Sept. 10: Newly appointed West Bengal Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said on Thursday that his party is ready to forge a poll alliance with the CPI (M)-led Left Front in the state to put up a "spirited" battle against the TMC and the BJP in the 2021 Assembly elections.

Chowdhury, who is also the Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, further said that the fight was primarily between secularism and communalism.

"Secular ideals of the Congress will ultimately defeat the communal rhetoric of the BJP and the TMC. The Congress, in alliance with the Left parties, wants to put up a spirited battle against the misrule of the TMC," he said



Chowdhury

at a press meet, his first after taking over as the West Bengal Congress Committee (WBPC) president.

Chowdhury had earlier served as the WBPC chief from 2014 to 2018. Under his leadership, the party had joined hands with the Left Front and fought the 2016 state elections.

During the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, however, the proposed Congress-CPI(M) alliance fell apart after both the parties were unable to reach an agreement on seat sharing.

"Yet again, I have been given the responsibility of the state unit prior to the Assembly elections."

■ Assembly polls may decide fate of Chouhan-led govt

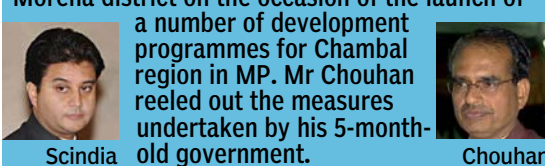
BJP blows bugle for bypolls in MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, SEPT. 10

BJP on Thursday blew bugle for the upcoming by-elections in 27 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh with chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and senior party leader Jyotiraditya Scindia launching a joint poll campaign in the Chambal region.

The outcome of the bypolls in the 27 Assembly seats, expected to be held by end of October this year, may decide fate of Shivraj government as well as the political future of scion of erstwhile Gwalior royal family Mr Scindia.

▶ THE TWO leaders jointly addressed a series of public meetings at Damini and Ambha under Morena district on the occasion of the launch of



Scindia

Chouhan

The two leaders jointly addressed a series of public meetings at Damini and Ambha under Morena district on the occasion of the launch of a number of development programmes for Chambal region in MP.

While Mr Chouhan reeled out the measures undertaken by his 5-month-old government to uplift the poor particular-

ly the farmers in the state, Mr Scindia launched a diatribe against previous Kamal Nath government for 'going back' on its promise to waive farm loans to the peasants.

"Congress had declared to waive crop loans up to ₹2 lakh of each farmer within ten days of coming to power in the state. But, former chief minister Kamal Nath had conve-

niently forgotten the pledge made to the peasants during his 15-month-rule in the state", Mr Scindia thundered.

As many as 16 of the 27 Assembly seats that are going to by-elections in coming days fall in Gwalior-Chambal region, considered the pocket borough of the Scindia dynasty.

Mr Scindia had instigated a revolt against Mr Nath in March this year by asking his 22 loyalists to resign from the assembly as well as Congress to pull down the Kamal Nath government.

Mr Scindia had snapped 2-decade-long ties with Congress to join BJP along with his loyalists in March.

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION	
Office of The Executive Engineer (Pr)-II Shahdara South Zone, School Block, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092 NIT No. : EDMC/EE-(Pr)-II/Shah.(S)/TC/2020-2021/05 Dated : 07.09.2020	
NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
For online tendering at percentage rate tender is invited for the execution of the following work by the EDMC from approved and eligible contractor and will be received as per time table.	
Last Date of Download of tender Document	: 15.09.2020 at 3:00 PM
Last Date of Bid Preparation and Hash Submission	: 15.09.2020 at 3:30 PM
Last Date of Close for Bid	: 15.09.2020 at 3:30 PM to 6:00 PM
Last Date of Re-encryption of Online Bid	: 15.09.2020 at 6:00 PM to 16.09.2020 at 3:00 PM
Opening of Financial Bid	: 16.09.2020 at 3:10 PM
S. No. 1. Name of work : Construction of 3 Rooms to accommodate & act as office for E&M staff at SLF site in ward No. 05/E in Shahdara (South) Zone. Head of account : DPCC-SWM-EDMC-ESCRQ, Tender Amount : Rs. 42,39,797/-, Earnest Money : Rs. 84,800/-, Time of Completion : 06 Months, Rates Hold good for : 06 Months, Cost of Tender : Rs. 500/-, Tender No.: 319190	
The demand draft for tenders cost & earnest money will be deposited in the office of E.E., (Pr)-II Shahdara (south), School Block, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092. Detailed NIT can be seen from the following website http://engineering.mcdetenders.com (WAP & SMS enabled tenders portal) or from the office of the undersigned. Both tenders cost and Earnest money can be deposits-d in the form of bank draft of a scheduled Bank in favour of Commissioner EDMC.	
RO NO - 49/DP/EA/ST/2020-21	Executive Engineer (Pr)-II EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. 155303

SHORT TAKES

NSCN-K member killed in encounter

Kohima: The Assam Rifles personnel shot dead a cadre of NSCN-K (NK) and arrested another during an encounter with the underground faction in Nagaland, official source said Thursday. In a major breakthrough against insurgent groups in the state on Wednesday night, security forces displayed highest degree of professionalism in apprehending two active cadres of NSCN-K (NK) from a village under Zunehoboto district, said Lt. Col. Sumit Kumar Sharma, PRO (Defence). During a search operation based on specific inputs about movement of armed militants in the village, a security forces column was fired upon by unknown insurgents, he said. In retaliatory fire, two cadres were apprehended, including one in injured condition, who was immediately evacuated to hospital, where the cadre succumbed, he said. — PTI

9 held for thrashing minor couple in UP

Gorakhpur: Nine people were arrested on Thursday after a minor couple was allegedly tied to a pole and the boy thrashed for having an affair with the girl in UP's Maharajanjan district, the police said. The boy was also apprehended on the basis of a complaint lodged by the girl's family, they said. Reportedly, the incident took place 10 days ago. However, the arrests were made only after a video of the incident went viral on social media on Wednesday. According to reports, the boy had gone to his girlfriend's village to meet her when they were caught by the villagers. The viral video clip shows the villagers tying the couple to a pole and beating the boy. "Taking cognisance of the video, three cases have been registered," the police said. — PTI

Another U'khand MLA Covid-19 +ve

Dehradun: Another Uttarakhand BJP MLA tested positive for Covid-19 on Thursday, days before the commencement of the Monsoon Session of the state assembly from September 23. Khanpur MLA Pranav Singh Champion has gone into self-isolation at his Mohini Road residence here after testing positive for Covid-19, official sources said. With several MLAs across parties having tested positive in the state over the past few days, the pandemic is likely to cast a shadow over the monsoon session of the state assembly. BJP MLA from Kaladhungi and state party chief Bansidhar Bhagat was hospitalised after he tested positive on August 30. Though he was discharged, he has been advised to remain quarantined at his home for 10 days. — PTI

Debt-ridden farmer ends life in UP dist

Banda, UP: A debt-ridden farmer allegedly ended his life by consuming poisonous substance in Pandaran village, the police said on Thursday. Ram Narain (38) consumed poisonous substance on Tuesday and died during treatment at the district hospital on Wednesday, they said. The farmer's brother Vidyasagar told police that "Ram Narain had taken a loan of ₹2.5 lakh from a bank four years ago and it had increased to ₹4 lakh. He also took a loan of ₹2 lakh from relatives this year for installing a tubewell in his field and was upset that he was not able to repay due to which he committed suicide".

4 killed, many hurt in lightning strike

Barwani, MP: Four persons, including a minor boy, were killed, and four others injured when lightning struck their makeshift house on a field in Madhya Pradesh's Barwani district on Thursday, an official said. The incident took place in the area under Varla police station limits, where the victims took shelter in the makeshift house during the rains, sub-divisional magistrate of Sindhwa Tapasya Parihar said. Four persons were killed and as many were injured when lightning struck the house, she said. The kin of the deceased will be given compensation as per the rules, the SDM said. — PTI

Rafale to give India edge over entire region: French DefMin

Ambala, Sept. 10: French defence minister Florence Parly on Thursday said India will have an edge over the entire region in defending its people with the induction of Rafale fighter jets, an event she described as a symbol of the relationship between the two countries.

Speaking at the ceremony at Ambala airbase where five France-made aircraft were inducted into the Indian Air Force, she said India and France are now writing a new chapter in their defence ties.

She said the programme to deliver the 36 aircraft to India meant a lot.

In military terms, it means that India will acquire a world-class capability, truly among the best in the world that would give your air force an incredible sovereign tool, she said.

In strategic terms, it means India will have an edge over the entire region to defend itself and protect its people, Ms Parly added.

The French defence minister said "Rafale" literally means a gust of wind or a burst of fire.

Both meanings express an incredible strength, she said, adding, It is also a symbol of the strong ties between two countries. — PTI

Pak shells forward areas along LoC in Poonch dist

Jammu, Sept. 10: The Pakistan Army opened heavy fire and shelled forward areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in five sectors in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Thursday, officials said.

The Indian Army retaliated befittingly, they said.

"The Pakistan Army continued unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars along LoC in many locations," Jammu-based defence spokesperson Lt. Col. Devender Anand said.

Rafale inducted in Squadron No. 17 at Ambala Air Force Station

'Stern message to those who challenge India's sovereignty'

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

The Indian Air Force on Thursday formally inducted Rafale fighter aircraft in its Squadron No. 17 or Golden Arrows at its first home base Ambala Air Force Station, one of the oldest airbases in the country.

The induction of French-made Rafale jets comes at a crucial juncture when India is involved in a four months tense military stand-off with China that has escalated in the last few days.

Speaking at the ceremony, defence minister Rajnath Singh said that the induction of Rafale aircraft sends a strong message to those who challenge India's sovereignty.

"It's induction today is a big and bold message to the whole world, especially to those who are eyeing our sovereignty. This induction is especially important because of the existing situation at our borders, which if I put in simple words has been created in the last few days. We fully understand that with the changing times we will also have to keep preparing ourselves," said Mr Singh.

French minister of armed forces Florence



Defence minister Rajnath Singh, minister of armed forces of France Florence Parly and Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria during the induction ceremony of Rafale jets at the Ambala airbase on Thursday.

Parly, CDS Gen. Bipin Rawat and IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria were also present during the ceremony.

The IAF Chief said that since the first five aircraft touched down at Ambala in July from France, the squadron has "been really busy and in an overdrive to operationalise".

Air Chief Marshal Bhaduria said that

Rafale aircrafts have conducted bombing practice of its advanced weapons and flown into "our operational environment".

"Within this time they have already flown and familiarised in our operational environment and have undergone intense integrated training with other combat fleets, including firing of advanced weapons," he said. He said

that the formal ceremony on Thursday also marks their full operational induction of their aircraft into the IAF. "They are good to go and deliver," said the IAF Chief.

Defence minister congratulated the Air Force for their "prompt action" near the Line of Actual Control during the unfortunate events alongside the border with China.

'ISI likely dropping arms along LoC in J&K'

Militants holed up in Valley facing shortage of weapons: Army ■ Forces step up vigil

SUMIR KAUL
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 9

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

Talking to PTI, General Officer-in-Command of strategically located XV Corps in Kashmir Lt. Gen. B.S. Raju said after an incident "across Peer Panjal", a reference to

Jammu region in Army parlance, "we have alerted all formations to keep a check on any flying object seen along the LoC".

He said the terrorists holed up in the Kashmir Valley have been facing acute shortage of arms and ammunition and they are desperately looking for some help from across the border for the same.

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

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

of Jammu region.

The Chinese-made drone weighed about 17.5 kgs and had a payload of 5.5 kg

including a sophisticated US-made M4 semi-automatic carbine and seven Chinese grenades. Four batteries, a radio signal receiver and two Global

Positioning Systems (GPS) were also recovered.

This, according to Gen. Raju, is a "new dimension" in decades of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. "Instructions have been passed on to the forward formations to keep an eye on any flying object coming from across the border (LoC) and hit it hard to bring it down," he said.

As small drones are tough to detect, an extra vigil using all high-tech gadgets along with human scrutiny is being maintained.

A strict watch is also being maintained for movement of civilians along the Line of Control as terrorists may disguise themselves as nomads or shepherds to pick up an arms consignment.

"We have discovered some dumps of arms and ammunition in recent past along the LoC. This is a clear indication that people across the border are making shallow infiltration, dumping the weapons and returning to their launch pads across the border." — PTI

Strong, stable N-E key to self-reliant India: Shringla

New Delhi, Sept. 10: Asserting that a strong and stable Northeast is key to building a self-reliant India, foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Thursday said the government is working to improve the infrastructure and connectivity in the Northeast states, while also facilitating greater regional integration.

The government has a vision for this region that is captured in the 3Cs — connectivity, commerce, and cultural commonalities, Mr Shringla said at a webinar on "Self-Reliant India: Reimagining the North East India in terms of Employment and



Skill". "In partnership with our neighbours and friends to the east, we are working to improve the infrastructure and connectivity in our Northeast states while also facilitating greater regional integration," he said.

Mr Shringla cited various examples of cooperation with countries like Japan and Bangladesh to enhance connectivity and ensure economic modernisation of the north-eastern states.

A new railway link between Akhaura in Bangladesh and Agartala

and Tripura is under construction, he said in his keynote address at the webinar organised by the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India (ICFAI) University.

Nationals of the two countries can not only travel on board the Maitree and Bandhan Express to each others' countries but on buses plying between Shillong and Dhaka and between Agartala and Kolkata via Dhaka, he said.

"We are upgrading the infrastructure of land customs stations for enabling smooth cross-border movement of goods and people," he said. — PTI

Assist in 2009 Bhushan contempt plea, SC tells A-G

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the attorney-general K.K. Venugopal to assist the court in a 2009 contempt case against activist lawyer Prashant

Bhushan for alleging misconduct against former Chief Justice S.H. Kapadia for being a part of forest bench that had decided the case of Niyamgiri mining lease in favour of Sterlite.

Alleging misconduct against Justice Kapadia, Mr Bhushan had said that he (Justice Kapadia) had shares of Sterlite.

Besides Mr Bhushan, former editor of *Tehelka*, Tarun Tejpal, is also facing contempt proceedings in the case.

Justice Kapadia went on to become Chief Justice of India on May 12, 2010 and had passed away on January 4, 2016.

The court agreed to ask Mr Venugopal to assist the court following a submission by senior counsel Rajeev Dhavan, who appeared for Mr Bhushan, said that some larger issues were involved in the matter and the attorney-general be requested to assist the court.

The court directed the listing of the matter in the week commencing from October 12, 2020, for further hearing.

Earlier a bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, who has since retired, had embarked on examining the larger issues involving the allegation of corruption against sitting and retired judges and the procedure of dealing with such complaints making allegations.

HC seeks Raja reply on CBI, ED petitions

New Delhi, Sept. 10: The Delhi high court on Thursday asked former communications minister A. Raja and others to respond to the CBI and ED pleas seeking early hearing of their appeals challenging the acquittal of individuals and firms in the 2G spectrum allocation scam cases.

Justice Brijesh Sethi issued notices to all the respondents — individuals and firms — asking them to file replies and listed the matter for hearing on September 21.

The two investigative agencies have sought early hearing of the appeals which were listed for hearing on October 12.

The CBI has also sought advancing the hearing of the appeal challenging the acquittal of Essar Group promoters Ravi Kant Ruia and Anshuman Ruia and six others in a

2G SCAM

separate case arising out of the 2G scam probe.

During the hearing, additional solicitor-general Sanjay Jain, representing the ED and the CBI, said it will be in public interest that the country's largest trial which was conducted at the public exchequer's cost be brought to its logical conclusion and the agencies' leave to appeal be heard at the earliest.

He submitted that he had completed his arguments on behalf of CBI on January 15, but thereafter, the matter could not be heard due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jain along with advocates Amit Mahajan and N.K. Matta added that as Justice Sethi will demit the office on November 30, the appeal be heard and decided expeditiously. — PTI

Record 95,735 new Covid cases in India in 24 hrs, total nears 45 lakh

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

India on Thursday reported another record high number of fresh cases with 95,735 new detections, taking the country's overall numbers to nearly 44.66 lakh out of which 34.72 lakh have already recovered and the national recovery rate is 77.74 per cent. In the last 24 hours, 1,172 deaths were registered due to the virus taking total fatalities to 75,062.

In order to curb the spread of infection, the union health ministry has asked states and union territories to mandatorily retest all symptomatic negative cases of Rapid Antigen Tests through RT-PCR to ensure no positive cases are missed out.

"The Union health ministry has noted that in some large states, sympto-

Major spike in cases feared in Assam by November-end

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, SEPT. 10

Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said that the Covid-19 pandemic would continue to be a huge challenge for the state till November this year and feared that in the months of September, October and

November, the number of cases is likely to cross over 75,000 mark.

Mr Sarma, while attending the Plasma Donation Programme organised by the Junior Doctors' Association at the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital said that people should not expect a vaccine to fight the disease till December.

health ministry said in a statement.

"This is necessary to ensure that such symptomatic negative cases do not remain untested and do not spread the disease among their contacts. This will also ensure early detection and isolation/hospitalisation of such false negatives. It has also been reiterated that while the RAT is being used to increase access and availability of testing in the field, RT-PCR remains the gold standard of tests," ministry officials said.

The ministry has also urged the states and UTs to urgently establish a monitoring mechanism in every district with a designated officer or a team and at the state level to follow up such cases. "The aim of states/UTs should be to ensure that no potentially positive case is missed out," officials added.

THE ASIAN AGE

11 SEPTEMBER 2020

Heed advice, announce rapid relief and stimulus

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

A survey conducted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) serves as a reality check on all-is-well claims being made by officials and ministers. The survey claimed demand continues to be weak. In fact, 41 per cent of the companies, which participated in the survey, reported that their sales in August 2020 were less than 50 per cent of their sales in August 2019. Another 21 per cent said sales in August 2020 were between 50 and 75 per cent of the sales recorded in August 2019. Fifty-six per cent companies have reported that unlocking of the economy did not improve their order books, while 49 per cent companies reported cash-flow issues.

Automobile sales figures show that people don’t have confidence in the economy. While car sales were relatively less impacted with people preferring safe personal transport in the pandemic, two-wheeler sales — that show the aspirational middle class is performing — have plunged by 28.7 per cent and commercial vehicle sales have more than halved reflecting the poor outlook of the economy.

India is a consumption-driven and domestic-focused economy. So a weaker demand could have a highly adverse impact on people’s jobs, companies and also exchequer. The Narendra Modi government, however, ignored the advice of several well-known economists to announce financial stimulus to kickstart the Indian economy.

Dithering of the government to announce steps to ring-fence the economy from Covid-19 lockdown impact led to a 24 per cent contraction in the GDP in the quarter ended on June 30. Though government-paid economists believe in a V-shaped recovery, most banks and rating agencies have forecast an economic contraction of 10 to 15 per cent. State Bank of India believes that annual production of the country would be 10 per cent less this fiscal year, which means at least 10 per cent of jobs will vanish.

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

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

Do animals have rights?

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

George Orwell famously wrote in *Animal Farm* “all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others”. This literally holds true in nature, where might is right for the sustenance of food chains and ecosystems, and in economies to which agriculture, fisheries, food processing, leather and dairy are intrinsic. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017, notified by the NDA 2.0 government, for instance, became unsustainable in law for this very reason, and the ban on the sale of cattle for slaughter that breached the people’s fundamental right to livelihood was since revoked.

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

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

THE ASIAN AGE

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Subhani

Vulnerable India faces crucial House session



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

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

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

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

The question that the country is asking is why

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS

JUSTICE SERVED

Is it justice in its most poetic form? In a daring caper perpetrated with perfect timing as India worried about skyrocketing Covid, connen, armed with two fake cheques, fleeced the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust in Ayodhya of a sum of ₹6 lakh. The fraud was detected during the verification process of a third fake cheque, after which trust secretary Champat Rai filed an FIR with the Ayodhya police. Signatures of Rai and trustee Dr Anil Mishra had been forged.

Priyanka Mathur
New Delhi

RONALDO’S 100TH

ACE FOOTBALLER, Cristiano Ronaldo, deserves encomiums for scoring his 100th international goal for Portugal during the UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) Nations League football match against Sweden. The soccer superstar got to the milestone by curling a free kick into the top corner from 25 metres for the first of his two strikes in his country’s 2-0 away win. The five-time world player of the year already holds the record for most goals (131) in the Champions League. Ronaldo becomes only the second player after Iranian striker Ali Daei (109) to join the elite “100 Club”. Kudos!

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

SHAME ON RANAU

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, “A bizarre potboiler” (Sep. 8). Since the BJP does not have any real agenda in Bihar, and is actually unable to solve the livelihood crisis there, it is using the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide as a ploy to polarise voters. Kangana Ranaut is its star campaigner. Shame on Kangana for stooping to play son-of-the-soil politics on behalf of a wretched party in order to settle her own scores in Bollywood. However, this also shows that the party has gained currency among the rich and famous, a fact that the Opposition better acknowledge.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

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Abhijit Bhattacharyya



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

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

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

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

matter that the CPC constitution’s original 1954 preamble clearly named the US as “enemy number one”.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IN BRIEF

Quake strikes New Jersey

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

Greece rescues 151 migrants

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

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

Probe on if netted shark killed surfer

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

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

2K HOMES WRECKED IN N. KOREA

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

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

Maysak "destroyed or inundated" more than 2,000 houses and tens of public buildings in the affected regions, the official KCNA news agency said, while 60 kilometres of roads and 59 bridges collapsed, with over 3,500 metres of railway roadbeds "swept away".

Natural disasters tend to have a greater impact in the North due to its creaking infrastructure, and the country is vulnerable to flooding as many mountains and hills have long been deforested.

The damage obliged the authorities to "change the direction of our struggle after comprehensively considering the year-end tasks that were underway", Kim told a top committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, according to KCNA.

It did not give specific details.

Trump downplayed Covid to avoid panic: Woodward

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

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

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

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

Justice Dept. push into Don case could prompt dismissal

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

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

accused him of raping her at a New York luxury department store in the 1990s — has anything to do with the scope of his White House duties.

The department's move is likely to have an ancillary benefit for Trump in delaying the case, but administration lawyers have a tough task at hand trying to argue that the president was acting in his official capacity when he denied Carroll's allegations last year, experts say.

air. "That's always tougher than the touch. You don't have to touch things. Right? But the air, you just breathe the air and that's how it's passed," he said. "It's also more deadly than even your strenuous flus." As per the book, Trump insists to Woodward he would triumph over the Covid-19 pandemic and

the economic calamity. "Don't worry about it, Bob. OK?" Trump told Woodward in July. "Don't worry about it. We'll get to do another book. You'll find I was right." Facing criticism that he lied to the country, President Trump on Wednesday defended his decision to downplay the dangers posed by the

pathogen, refuting allegations that he lied to the people of the country. "The fact is, I'm a cheerleader for this country. I love our country and I don't want people to be frightened," he said. "I don't want to create panic, as you say. And certainly, I'm not going to drive this country or the world into a frenzy." — PTI

WH: PREZ NOBEL NOMINATION HARD-EARNED

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

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

Pompeo: Moscow 'poisoned' Navalny

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

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

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

CAMPAIGNER FOR NAVALNY BEATEN UP

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

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

Covid risk pauses Assange hearing

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

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

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

Court hears Nawaz surrender review

SHAFQAT ALI ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 10:

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

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

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

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

3 PIA OFFICIALS SACKED OVER FAKE LICENCES

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

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



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

Iran war games amid US tension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

novel). TIFF, considered the most middle brow of the Big 4 international film festivals (amongst the high-brow Cannes, Venice and Berlin), is the most inclusive, democratic film festivals. Of all the films it's showing this year, 43 per cent are directed, co-directed or created by women, and 49 per cent are directed, co-directed, or created by Black, Indigenous or POC (people of colour).

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

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



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

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FILM FEST

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

Tiff opens, beams on thousands of laptops globally



SUPARNA SHARMA NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

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

the world.

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

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

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

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

The 11-day festival opened on Thursday with Spike Lee's *American Utopia*, and the closing film, or well series, will be a taste of Mira Nair's *A Suitable Boy* (an adaptation of Vikram Seth's 1993



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,840.32	1.69
Nifty 50	11,449.25	1.52
S&P 500*	3,406.29	0.22
Dollar (₹)	73.45	0.12
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.56	-0.29
Euro (₹)	86.91	-0.34
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,391,287	0.54
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.59	-0.20
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.053	0.064
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.710	0.007

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Peak power demand crosses last year's level

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

Citi to have first woman CEO of a Wall Street bank



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

Ravi Raju to head Nomura's wealth management biz



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

Australia allows import of Indian pomegranates

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

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

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10

It is official now. The government has revealed that 26 public sector undertakings (PSUs) have been chosen for privatisation as of now. Out of the shortlisted PSUs, 23 have received the Cabinet approval recently. The move is part of the government's efforts to meet its ambitious Rs 2.1-lakh crore divestment target for the current fiscal. Responding a right to information (RTI) query sought by Chandigarh-based activist Aman Sethi, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam), under the Ministry of Finance, on August 24 said, "There are 26 public sector undertakings in the list as on the date so far in which the Government of India is pursuing strategic divestment."

The activist raised two more specific queries; about the percentage of shares the government plans to divest; and if Uco Bank is also included in the sell-off list. The Dipam responded that the percentage of shares would be decided according to the market conditions and that no information was available with the department about the Uco Bank issue. Sensing heightened risk to revenue from the economic slowdown and the evolving pandemic conditions, the government has set a disinvestment target



LINED UP FOR SELLOFF	
▶ Project & Development India	▶ Bharat Petroleum Corporation
▶ Engineering Projects India	▶ Shipping Corporation of India
▶ Pawan Hans	▶ Container Corporation of India
▶ B&R Company	▶ Nilachal Ispat Nigam
▶ Air India	▶ Hindustan Prefab
▶ Central Electronics	▶ Bharat Pumps and Compressors
▶ Cement Corp India (Nayagaon unit)	▶ Scooters India
▶ Indian Medicine & Pharmaceuticals Corporation	▶ Hindustan Newsprint
▶ Salem Steel Plant, Bhadravati Steel Plant, Durgapur Steel Plant	▶ Karnataka Antibiotics & Pharmaceuticals
▶ Ferro Scrap Nigam	▶ Bengal Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals
▶ NDMC, Nagarnar Steel Plant	▶ Hindustan Antibiotics
▶ Bharat Earth Movers	▶ Indian Tourism Development Corporation
▶ HLL Lifecare	▶ Hindustan Fluorocarbon

Source: Dipam

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

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

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

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

Flawless 102-carat stone could fetch \$30 mn



JILL SERJEANT SEPT. 10

One of the world's rarest diamonds, about the size of an egg or a large lollipop, is going up for auction next month and is expected to fetch \$12 million to \$30 million. Sotheby's said on Thursday that the 102.39-carat diamond, a flawless white sparkler, was the second-largest oval diamond of its kind to be offered at auction. The largest, a 118.28-carat diamond, set a record \$30.8 million price when it was sold in 2013. Only seven such diamonds, known in the trade as D colour flawless or internally flawless white diamonds, over 100 carats have previously been sold at auction.

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

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

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

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

—Reuters

Serum pauses trials, but AstraZeneca still hopeful

Mumbai, Sept. 10: Serum Institute of India has put on hold trials of AstraZeneca's potential Covid-19 vaccine in the country until the British drugmaker restarts them, the company said on Thursday.

"We are reviewing the situation and pausing India trials," Serum, the world's biggest vaccine manufacturer by volume, said in a brief statement.

AstraZeneca said on Tuesday it had paused trials of its experimental coronavirus vaccine following an unexplained illness in a study participant, but its partner Serum said on Wednesday that trials in India were still ongoing.

AstraZeneca Pfc chief executive officer Pascal Soriot said on Thursday that the vaccine the company is developing with the University of Oxford could still be ready before the end of the year.

Speaking at an online conference, Soriot sought to reassure investors after the company temporarily stopped giving patients the experimental shot and started conducting a review of safety data. It's

still not clear whether the patient has a condition called transverse myelitis, a suspected diagnosis, Soriot said.

The CEO said he can't evaluate the length of the trial pause.

Serum Institute's move to pause the trials in India comes after the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) V.G. Somani asked Serum for details on the suspension of trials overseas, in a show-cause notice that was reviewed by Reuters.

Somani asked the company to explain why the trials should not be suspended in India until patient safety is established and he warned Serum could face action if it did not offer an explanation.

Serum said on Thursday that it was following the DCGI's directions and would not comment further on the matter.

The drugs regulator had in August given Serum approval to run Phase II/III clinical trials on the leading Covid-19 vaccine candidate to determine its safety and immunogenicity.

—Agencies

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

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

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

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

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

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

Over 85% MSMEs still face liquidity crunch

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 10

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

PM launches ₹20,000 cr fisheries scheme

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

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

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

After the launch, the Prime Minister interacted with farmers focusing on the livestock and fisheries sector. The PMMSY is a flagship scheme for focused and sustainable development of fisheries sector in the country with an estimated investment of Rs 20,050 crore for its implementation during 2020-21 to 2024-25 as part of



Narendra Modi

Aatmanirbhar Bharat package.

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

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

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

—PTI

AVANTI FEEDS SEES CENTRE'S BLUE REVOLUTION BOOSTING BIZ

ASHUTOSH JOSHI SEPT. 10

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

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

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

lysts late Wednesday.

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

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

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

—Bloomberg

China's mobile shipments down 15.6% in August

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

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

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

—Bloomberg



SHORT TAKES

Natl badminton camp called off

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

Vaccine will not guarantee Games

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

Jonty to coach Sweden post IPL

Stockholm: Former South Africa international Jonty Rhodes will be moving to Sweden with his family after the IPL to take charge as head coach of the country's national team, the Swedish Cricket Federation (SCF) has announced. The 51-year-old Rhodes is currently in Dubai for the IPL as the fielding coach of Kings XI Punjab. "Swedish Cricket Federation to invest in junior cricket, high performance & growth through the appointment of South African cricket great, Jonty Rhodes as head coach," SCF said in a statement. — PTI

Panghal bats for formative coach

New Delhi: Asian Games champion boxer Amit Panghal has requested the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to allow the inclusion of his formative coach Anil Dhankar in the ongoing national camp in Patiala. The world number one in the 52kg category said he has sent across his proposal formally to both SAI and the Sports Ministry but hasn't got any response so far. "I can only request and I have done that. I am waiting for some response, haven't got any as yet. The last mail that was sent by me to the ministry was on Monday," Panghal said. Panghal has regularly credited Dhankar for shaping his career in the early years and had even pleaded for a Dronacharya award for the coach, who is not a part of the national coaches panel. — PTI

Live on TV
CRICKET
England vs Australia 1st ODI from 5.30 pm on Sony Six, HD
FORMULA ONE
Italian Grand Prix Practice-1 from 2.25 pm; Practice-2 from 6.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD
US OPEN TENNIS
Women's Doubles Final from 9.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 2, HD
WWE SMACKDOWN
Bouts from 5.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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VICTOR AZARENKA

Serena, the other Mum, too into US semis

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



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

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

THE RESULTS

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

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

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

Lowry scores high as Raptors bully Celtics

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

Medvedev will play second seed Thiem who demolished Australia's Alex de Minaur, seeded 21st, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4. "I had a great feeling from the first moment on," said the Austrian. Fifth seed Alexander Zverev of Germany faces Spain's 20th seed Pablo Carreno Busta in the competition's other semi-final. The disqualification of Novak Djokovic for accidentally hitting a line official with a ball during the last 16 means the US Open will crown a first-time Grand Slam winner on Sunday. — AFP

Lowry scores high as Raptors bully Celtics

Meahwhile, Kawhi Leonard finished an assist shy of his first playoff triple-double and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Denver Nuggets 96-85 in Game 4 to move a step closer to their first Western Conference finals. Leonard garnered 30 points, 11 rebounds, four steals and two blocked shots. Reserve Montrezl Harrell added 15 points to help the Clippers take a 3-1 lead. They can close out the Nuggets on Friday night. — Agencies

SINNER DOWNS PHILLIPP IN GENERALI OPEN

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

triot and childhood friend Andrey Rublev 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 7-6 (7/5). Twenty-two-year-old Rublev raced to a 5-1 lead in the first-set tie-break before Medvedev, last year's US Open runner-up, hauled back to win it 8-6 with an ace. Medvedev, 24, smashed 16 aces and won 89 per cent of first-serve points. He made 75 per cent of returns to Rublev's 54 per cent. "One point decided two sets so it was a really tough match and Andrey was playing unbelievable actually," Medvedev said.

Lowry scores high as Raptors bully Celtics

good start is imperative, especially when it comes to high pressure tournaments like the IPL where there is a lot at stake. To get a disturbed combination into the groove and keep them mentally fit will be the super skippers biggest task on hand. While on captaincy, Dhoni will be aware that he needs to be supremely fit to last the entire tournament as his able (former) deputy, Raina, is out of the mix. With Harbhajan, former MI skipper, also out, the CSK management will probably look at Dwayne Bravo or Shane Watson (both having captaincy experience) as likely deputies. With Bravo (about to hit 37 years of age) and Watson, at 39 years (the same age as Dhoni), team

Smith sings Virat praises, says best

Manchester, Sept. 10: Australian run-machine Steve Smith has rated his great Indian rival Virat Kohli as the best ODI batsman in world cricket currently. The two batsmen, who will face off in the upcoming IPL and also during India's tour of Australia later this year, have been fierce rivals on the field but share cordial relations off it. Smith, who is currently in England for the three-match ODI series against the hosts starting from Friday, said this during an Instagram session with fans. When a fan asked the 31-year-old Australian to name the best ODI batsman, Smith had no hesitation in taking Kohli's name. The Indian captain is currently the leading scorer in ODIs among active cricketers with 11867 runs at an average of 59.34. He has 43 hundreds to his name and is only seven away from surpassing Sachin Tendulkar's world record for most hundreds in ODIs. During the session, Smith described Kohli's RCB teammate and South African great AB de Villiers as a "freak". Smith, who is set to represent Rajasthan Royalist in IPL 2020, said India's KL Rahul and Sanju Samson are the two players to watch out for. — PTI

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

Morgan and team set to take on Oz

London, Sept. 10: Eoin Morgan is hoping for spinning pitches during England's one-day series against Australia as the world champions plan for the 2023 World Cup in India. The England captain is anticipating a gentle turner in Manchester, where the fierce rivals will play three one-day internationals over the next week, with weather conditions conducive to slow bowlers. England's rise to top spot in the 50-over rankings was built around posting big totals on good batting tracks and their tournament triumph last summer

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

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

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

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

BEST BOWLING PERFORMANCES:
■ Australia: 7-20 Andy Bichel at Port Elizabeth 02-03-2003
■ England: 6-45 Chris Woakes at Brisbane 30-01-2011
— S. PERVEZ KAISER

Dhoni braces for another IPL hit in adversity



Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

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

International Cricket Council (ICC) championships and an equal number of wins leading Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the IPL, his reputation to lead teams to success is unparalleled. He is known to be tough when it matters, humane when his compatriots need a shoulder, and cool despite any degree of heat created in a pressure cooker situation. His resume would make him the ideal candidate for leader of the decade; the many pros notched therein outweighing the cons. Thala (the Head) as he is called can do no wrong

according to CSK fans. To them, he is like the animated, mythical character, Obelix who was born with a magic potion as part of his blood stream and could run through mammoth armies on his own. Blessed with a keen intuition and well honed instincts, Dhoni's super powers as a hero will be tested when he steps out for the toss in one of the fabulous stadiums dotting the stark desert of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Even as CSK step out onto the practice facilities, Dhoni's mind will be in overwork mode to figure out the best combination needed at the start of the tournament. If the loss of Suresh Raina has weighed heavily on the probable combination of the team, the withdrawal of Harbhajan

Singh (due to personal reasons) must have put the yellow fellows a few more steps back. CSK fans have yet to assimilate what it would mean for their favourite team to take the field without Chinna Thala (little head) as Raina is fondly referred to. Both Raina and Harbhajan get a lot to the undisturbed table of CSK, in different ways. With 5368 runs scored in twelve editions of the IPL, the left hander stands second on the list of top scorers, 44 runs behind Virat Kohli and above Rohit Sharma who follows at number three. More than the runs, Raina's effervescence on the field (with brilliant catching and more) plays a big role in constantly inspiring the team. Harbhajan, who came

into the CSK fold after a long stint with Mumbai Indians (MI), is the man Dhoni would trust most when squeezing the flow of runs matter. With an economy rate of less than 7.5, the crafty off-spinner is the best option in the death overs. More importantly, Bhajji, as he is known, is the only full-time exponent of off-spin in CSK's ranks which will make planning difficult for Dhoni when it comes to bowling to a team packed with left handed batsmen. With medium pacer Deepak Chahar and middle order batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad lodged in the sick bay, having tested positive for Covid, Dhoni's problems will be compounded when he sits to pick the best combination for the opening games. Getting a

good start is imperative, especially when it comes to high pressure tournaments like the IPL where there is a lot at stake. To get a disturbed combination into the groove and keep them mentally fit will be the super skippers biggest task on hand. While on captaincy, Dhoni will be aware that he needs to be supremely fit to last the entire tournament as his able (former) deputy, Raina, is out of the mix. With Harbhajan, former MI skipper, also out, the CSK management will probably look at Dwayne Bravo or Shane Watson (both having captaincy experience) as likely deputies. With Bravo (about to hit 37 years of age) and Watson, at 39 years (the same age as Dhoni), team

CSK will continue to be top heavy with seniors playing a youthful game. In 2018, Dhoni led CSK to their third IPL victory, the team coming back after a two-year hiatus. The team, whose average age was a shade above 30 years, surprised everyone by winning the final thanks to a magnificent effort by Watson, the oldest member of the team. Those who called the team 'Dad's Army' were made to eat their words thanks to a motivational effort by the skipper. Today, Dhoni is faced with a similar challenge of making his team rise from adversity. For someone who has been there and done that, there could be no better motivation for the Thala who thrives on such situations.