

OTHER STORIES

188 PUBLIC TOILETS IN KHAMMAM SOON

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, SEPT. 13

Urination in open places is still a menace under the limits of the Khammam Municipal Corporation.

About 20,000 people visit Khammam town for different purposes like hospitals, shopping, work in government offices, colleges, functions, cinema halls, cultural programs and attend work in other institutions. Urination is a big problem with many urinating in open places, even on busy streets. Though the officials of the Khammam Municipal Corporation took various measures like imposing fines and others, it has made little difference.

Congress Corporator Vaddeboina Narasimha Rao said, "The problem will be solved only when one can view it in depth. A person who comes to town for a purpose walks or travels at least two to three hours. The person should attend a nature call, and he does not find a place, forcing him to turn to an open place. It is quite natural."

To address the situation, the municipal officials proposed to construct 188 public toilets in the town.

About 40 busiest locations were identified and each public toilet will be built with the cost of ₹10 lakh. All of them have modern toilets, and about 102 are ready for opening.

NCBC OPPOSES GOLLAPADU DWELLERS SHIFT

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KHAMMAM, SEPT. 13

The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has summoned district authorities over the shifting of dwellers from Gollapadu channel area that were living there for a long time.

It issued a notice to the government asking the officials to appear at the NCBC office at 12 noon on September 15. District officials are appear in the NCBC courtroom located at Cama Place in New Delhi along with an affidavit on the issue.

NCBC member, T. Achary, who issued the notice to the government, said, "In case the commission does not receive a reply from the government within the stipulated time, it may exercise the powers conferred under Article 338B of the Indian Constitution."

In its notice, the commission explained the proceedings, including a visit by NCBC members to the Gollapadu channel, after receiving a petition from the locals. The residents told the NCBC members that they were forcibly shifted from the area and their wish to be allocated double bedroom houses.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had promised to give the 2BHK houses to them while visiting Khammam in 2018. NCBC members were told that state government was completely neglectful of the backward classes and their welfare. There are 1,000 BC families at Gollapadu and they are in dire conditions.

The NCBC said, "It is very strange that whenever the commission summons the officials — the district collector, police official and municipal commissioner — no one appears. 'As Covid-19 cases are escalating, it is necessary to monitor the pandemic and look after other important law and order duties. It is not feasible to attend the meeting,' is the excuse given. But the officials have adequate time to break the houses of poor dwellers in the Gollapadu channel on Pumping Well road."

The NCBC asked the state government not to evict the dwellers for a period of three months. The administration should provide all minimum infrastructure facilities like water, power and road to the dwellers till that time.

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● The administration should provide all minimum infrastructure facilities like water, power and road to the dwellers till that time.

Revenue graft a big challenge

Farmers hope New Revenue Act will resolve land disputes without any delay

PULI SHARATH
KUMAR | DC
KARIMNAGAR, SEPT. 13

People across Karimnagar district hope the new Revenue Act brought in by the TRS government will root out corruption involved in getting documents related to their lands.

Loksatta Udyama Samstha (LUS) had conducted a survey in the district involving 200 respondents of whom more than 40 per cent termed revenue department as the most corrupt. Police and municipal departments came next with 24 per cent and 18 per cent respondents calling them corrupt. These surveys were prompted by reports of corruption in government departments that forced people to take extreme steps.

For example, Mandala Raji Reddy, 60, a farmer of Reddipalli village in Veenavanka mandal of Karimnagar district received one acre and 20 guntas of land at



Retired MEO Mallikarjuna taken into custody by police for threatening to set ablaze revenue officials for not issuing him a passbook for over 15 years in Karimnagar district last year. (Right) Farmer Tandra Narsaiah thanking district collector A. Sharath on getting his pattadar passbook.



Kistampet village of Kalvasirampur mandal in Peddapalli district from his forefathers. He went around the revenue office for several months seeking transfer of land on his name but got no response from them. Vexed, he died by suicide in front of the tahsildar office in Peddapalli on June 20.

In another incident, which took place on November 19, another farmer Jeella Kanakaiah, 45, of Lamdadipalli village of Chigurumamidi mandal in Karimnagar district requested officials to issue a passbook for his four acres of land. When they did not respond even after four years, Kanakaiah went to the revenue office with a petrol bottle and

tried to set the revenue staff ablaze.

The government's own agencies have found instances of corruption among staff. A deputy tahsildar Sandeep Kumar demanded ₹2 lakh from one Jogi Reddy, resident of Thimmapur mandal for conversion of an agricultural land to establish an industry. Anti Corruption

Bureau (ACB) caught the official red-handed while accepting the bribe from Jogi Reddy in December last year.

In another instance, a farmer Tandra Narsaiah, resident of Nachupally village in Kodimayal mandal in Jagtial district complained that an official was not issuing him a pattadar passbook even after

collecting a bribe. Then collector of Jagtial district, Dr A. Sharath probed the matter suspended the revenue officials concerned and issued Narsaiah his pass book.

Under the circumstances, a farmer Sambaiah, resident of Keshavapatnam mandal welcomed the move of the TRS government to bring in the

new revenue act by scrapping the Village Revenue Office (VRO) system. He hoped the new act will not end up being an old wine in new bottle, with farmers continuing to face corruption under the new dispensation.

TD Karimnagar Parliament segment president Ambati Joji Reddy hoped the new revenue act will be implemented in an effective manner. It must ensure quick disposal of pending land disputes without the bigwigs in the ruling party exploiting it.

Registrations will become costlier

A. RAVINDRA
SESHU | DC
KHAMMAM, SEPT. 13

Though there are features in the new Revenue Act 2020 that could be useful to people, it may not address the issue of checking corruption in the revenue department.

Corruption has been prevailing in registrar offices, but there were some limits. Document writers used to collect money from one to two per cent on the registration value from buyers and the amount got distributed among the staff of the office.

Now, transferring powers of farm land registration to tahsildars will make the set up costlier than the earlier set up.

A. Venkateswara Rao, a farmer from Sattupalli said, "There is a big difference between corruption at the registrar office and tahsildar offices. People did not fear dealing with the registrar office as things ran smoothly despite kickbacks. But now powers have been given to higher officials, which will lead to more corruption. The arrest of additional col-

● Farmers say that there is every possibility that the tahsildar will demand more money

lector, tahsildar and revenue divisional officer three days back is an example of it," he remarked.

Tahsildar Nagaraju was arrested in a land mutation case in Keesara mandal in Medchal-Malkajgiri district by ACB sleuths. Similarly, additional collector of Medak district was arrested over issuing no objection certificate.

As per the new revenue act, mutation will be done automatically after the farm land registration is completed by tahsildar. There is every possibility that the tahsildar will demand more money, farmers say.

K. R. Venugopal, a farmer said, "The tahsildars will definitely demand more money than earlier for registering farm lands. There have been no instances of revenue officials being removed from service even after being caught by ACB. There is no use of provisions in the new act that erring officials will be removed if he or she is found guilty".



Nizamabad tahsildar office, which was built in 1919 during Nizam rule.

Act to reduce political pressure on settlements

NARENDER
PULLOOR | DC
NIZAMABAD, SEPT. 13

Contrary to belief, many revenue employees at higher levels are a relieved lot with the unveiling of the New Revenue Act. Otherwise, they were under tremendous pressure to settle land disputes, wherein elected representatives, political leaders and realtors were involved. However, a few revenue

officials indeed amassed wealth by siding with interest groups, including politicians, and doing their bidding.

The TRS government had been focusing on lapses within the revenue department for the last two years. Burning alive of a tahsildar and demands for bribes over ₹1 lakh by revenue officials in the state clearly exposed the gravity of corruption in the department.

A few honest officials

● THE PRESSURE from politicians in Nizamabad district to approve their wrongdoings was so high that a tahsildar committed suicide

were unable to compromise but faced tremendous pressure. The pressure from politicians in Nizamabad district to approve their wrongdoing was so high that a tahsildar committed suicide.

Another tahsildar wept publicly.

Speaking to this correspondent, a retired revenue officer, wanting to remain anonymous, said revenue officials become fall guys when it comes to graft charges. Without the involvement of elected representatives and higher-ups, no revenue officer can commit any irregularity, he remarked.

"However, a few revenue officials did play their

cards well and amassed huge properties," he pointed out.

Meanwhile, it is believed that abolishing of revenue courts will help people settle their land disputes speedily and easily at the proposed land tribunals. Around 430 cases are pending with revenue courts in Nizamabad district alone. They pertain to 51 tahsildar offices and 10 sub-registrar offices of the undivided Nizamabad district.

Transfer of land rights after sale to be much faster

ANUDEEP
CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, SEPT. 13

The new revenue act introduced by the state government is being seen as a relief for farmers.

According to the new act, land rights will be immediately transferred to the buyer soon after sale, purchase and mutation. Previously, a farmer who purchased land had to go from pillar to post in revenue offices to get the mutation processed.

Agriculture market committee chairman Chintham Sadanandam said the new act will turn out to be a boon for poor people. "It brings transparency, avoids delay in issue of passbooks and eradicates corruption. It is a decision

● Collectors have been empowered to cancel passbooks issued for government lands illegally.

● Farmers applying for agriculture loans need not submit their passbooks in banks. The loans will now be sanctioned based on digital records.

● From now on tahsildars will act as joint registrars and hold the power of registering farm lands.

of the state government that must be welcomed. This will also increase the



A farmer ploughing his land in Warangal.

responsibility of panchayats. Sarpanches and village secretaries will have to be more responsible in

discharging their duties."

Apart from this, the family fights arising from one family member bribing a

revenue official to transfer the property in his own name will also be avoided, as property transfer will

be done only after the mutual consent of all family members.

Collectors have been empowered to cancel passbooks issued for government lands illegally. Tahsildars, who issue such passbooks will be suspended and a criminal case would be booked against them. The land can be retrieved, putting an end to the encroachments of government lands.

From now on tahsildars will act as joint registrars and hold the power of registering agriculture lands. Registration offices will register non-agriculture lands. Farmers applying for agriculture loans need not submit their passbooks in banks. The loans will now be sanctioned based on digital records.

RIFT | RISK Govt may use Act to woo non-tribals, give them rights on lands in agency

Adivasis fear new Revenue Act will increase their woes

PILLALAMARRI
SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, SEPT. 13

There are many doubts over the intention of the state government in bringing the new Revenue Act 2020 and how it will operate the Act and for whose benefit. There are more disputes related to forest lands between the revenue and forest departments, as both rarely conduct joint surveys to resolve the problems.

In many cases,

Adivasis have been cultivating these lands for a long time. But the forest department is claiming rights on these lands and is trying to vacate the tribals from these lands.

But Adivasis say the lands they have been cultivating are revenue lands and assigned to them.

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has many times assured that disputes related to podu and forest lands will be resolved through joint surveys by the revenue and forest

department.

After this, pattas will be issued for lands being cultivated before the cut of date in the Forest Rights Act 2006.

Incidentally, Asifabad TRS MLA Atram Sakku raised the issue of podu lands in the ongoing Assembly session on Thursday.

He appealed to the Chief Minister to issue pattas for podu and forest lands using the New Revenue Act 2020.

There are doubts

that the state government may use the new Revenue Act to take back government lands distributed in the past for various purposes but lying vacant without cultivation or without establishment of companies or industries.

It is also stated the government may use the Act for land pooling and use them for public purposes. There are many doubts over this aspect among the poor who took land from the government earlier.



The government is developing urban forest parks in the government barren lands and planting trees in parks to create lung space for the people in Adilabad district.

TS RECORDS 2,216 NEW COVID CASES IN 24 HOURS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 13

Telangana state registered 2,216 new Covid-19 cases, and 11 deaths from the disease in 24 hours beginning 8 pm, on Friday, the state health department has said. In its Covid-19 bulletin issued on Sunday morning, the department said the new cases and deaths have taken the total Coronavirus infections to 1,57,096 and fatalities to 961.

The bulletin stated, 1,24,528 persons have recovered and, as on Friday evening, 31,607 Covid-19 patients were being treated in hospitals, or were in home or institutional isolation. Of the 52,617 tests conducted in the same 24-hour period, results for 2,345 tests were awaited.

The GHMC area, comprising mostly Hyderabad city, recorded 341 new cases, followed by Ranga Reddy district with 210, Medchal-Malkajgiri with 148, Nalgonda with 126, Karimnagar with 119, Khammam with 105, and Warangal Urban district with 102 new cases.

The bulletin said 2,725 Covid-19 patients were undergoing treatment at government hospitals while another 4,208 were in private hospitals. As many as 909 patients in private hospitals were in ICU wards either on ventilators or on mechanically assisted breathing while this number in government hospitals was 670, the it said.

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LEADERS CONDOLE RAGHUVANSH'S DEATH

From Page 1

In June he had stepped down from the post of RJD national vice-president over Tejashwi Yadav's decision to induct his rival Rama Singh into the party. Rama Singh's entry into the party was postponed after Lalu Yadav intervened.

Sources aware of the development said Singh "was upset and hurt after Tej Pratap humiliated him for opposing the party's decision to induct Rama Singh".

"After the demise of Karpoori Thakur, I stood behind you for 32 years. But not anymore", Singh had written, adding that he had received love and support from the party leaders and workers.

After Singh's death, Lalu Prasad in a tweet said, "I had asked you not to go anywhere. But now you have gone so far. We will miss you".

Tejashwi Yadav in his statement said that "his presence used to inspire the party. After my father was sent to jail we used to look towards him but now he has gone."

President Ram Nath Kovind termed the passing away of the former Union minister as tragic. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his death had left a deep void in Bihar and national politics.

Mr Modi also referred to the "churning" that the departed leader faced in his last days indicating his disenchantment with his party the RJD and its leader Lalu Prasad.

"An inner 'manthan' (churning) was going on in him during his last days. He remained true to the ideology he believed in.. In the recent past, he had been in the news. He was obviously in a state of inner turmoil since it had no longer remained possible for him to be by the side of his old associates. Finally, he gave expression to his feelings through the letters he wrote from the hospital bed," he said.

250 STUDENTS DUPED BY FAKE JOB FRAUDS

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 13

As many as 250 students who were hoping to land jobs in the aviation industry after receiving training at a private aviation academy in the city found their dreams grounded when it was found that the institution was not recognised to offer such education. According to Malakpet inspector K.V. Subba Rao, the students joined Fortune Flyers Aviation Academy at Moosarambagh, Malakpet, as it had promised 100 per cent job placement. Each student paid ₹90,000 as course fee, he said.

The fakery indulged in by the institute came to light when the students attended job interviews on Friday and were told that Fortune Flyers Aviation Academy was not registered and did not have any recognition from certifying agencies. This rendered the certificates they were issued upon completion of their courses useless, the police officer said.

When the trainees went to question the institution, they found it closed with a 'toilet' sign hanging on the building gate. "A case has been registered and we are investigating," Subba Rao said.

PROSTITUTION RACKET BUSTED NEAR KU

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, SEPT. 13

Hanamkonda police on Sunday busted an organised prostitution racket near Kakatiya University. Two men and an organiser were arrested in the raid on a house in Sagaravedi colony. Five women forced into prostitution were rescued.

Speaking to the media, Hanamkonda Sub-inspector Bojja Ravinder said, a woman named Md. Rasool Bhee rented the house in the colony and converted it into a brothel. She engage female sex workers from different places of Warangal.

"The accused used to contact the customers over the phone and charged between ₹2,000 and ₹5,000. Two of her customers, Chinta Naveen and Kolapalli Suman of Warangal were also caught during the raid," the SI said.

A case has been registered and investigation is ongoing.

Hospitals slap double charges for ICU, ward

Medical bills are abnormally increased within no time

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC ADILABAD, SEPT. 13

It seems corporate hospitals have become double-edged swords as far as providing treatment and charging exorbitant amounts for the same are concerned.

It has been observed that medical bills are doubled or increased abnormally within no time due to wrong calculation. An attendant of a Covid patient alleged that there was no government supervision on corporate hospitals and their charges. In fact, it is the rural people

● **HOSPITALS** are slapping double the charges for keeping a patient in ICU for 10 hours and again for shifting the individual to a general ward or separate room within 24-hours whereas it should be charged for a 24-hour stretch.

whom corporate hospitals victimise when they come for Covid treatment.

Attendants and family members of Covid positive patients of erstwhile Adilabad who are undergoing treatment at corporate hospitals in Hyderabad say that some of those hospitals are slapping double the charges for keeping a patient in ICU

for 10 hours and again for shifting the individual to a general ward or separate room within 24- hours whereas it should be charged for a 24-hour stretch.

It is learnt that the medical staff is shifting patients to the general ward from the ICU by saying that the patient was doing good in order to

accommodate other serious patients in ICU. This is even as the person shifted continues to have complications.

An attendant of a Covid patient of Adilabad, undergoing treatment at a corporate hospital, regretted that the management was collecting double charges for keeping the patient under observation in ICU and in a separate room on the same day.

The attendant said that some corporate hospitals are collecting ₹60,000 as charges for keeping the patient in ICU ward and another ₹40,000 for a separate room on the same day.

AID TO TEACHERS, LECTURERS SOUGHT

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, SEPT. 13

The state government should save the teachers and lecturers working in private schools and colleges that were losing jobs due to the COVID-19 situation by extending financial assistance to them.

The Progressive Youth League district secretary K. Srinivas said that incidents like Nagulaiah's suicide, who lit himself on fire in Hyderabad, would be repeated if the government does not come forward. He said that the private institutions removed thousands of teachers and lecturers, saying that the students were not paying the fee anymore.

"The salaries of these teachers are very less, and they are running their families with meagre salaries. The COVID-19 pandemic made their lives miserable, and some of them shifted to other professions like selling vegetables, going for farm works and attending their family works," he said.

As an estimate, about one lakh such people have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 and the government should announce a package to them immediately. There is a proposal to provide some work under MNREGS to them.

K. Rama Rao, a social worker, said, "The present situation had never been witnessed before."



Adivasi children taking tests in the open air in Soyamguda village in Sirpur (U) mandal in Kumarambheem Asifabad district on Saturday. Local educated Adivasi youth are teaching them voluntarily.

Adivasi kids take tests happily in open place

DC CORRESPONDENT KUMARAMBHEEM ASIFABAD, SEPT. 13

It is surprising to see the Adivasi children taking tests happily and without any mental pressure in their subjects regularly by sitting on the ground in the open-air by maintaining the COVID norms in the villages in Kumarambheem Asifabad district.

These open schools are being run under the banner of 'Kumarambheem Vidya Kendralu.' Many Adivasi children took the tests in their subjects in Soyamguda, Kohinoor (B) in Sirpur (U) mandal and Pavarguda in Jainoor mandal on September 12. Educated youth like Soyam Chandrabhan is teaching to the Adivasi children in Soyamguda while Saraswati in Pavarguda villages.

● **Adivasi children** are trying their best to cope-up with the situation as far as education is concerned during the COVID-19 epidemic.

● **These students** are unable to take online classes through T-SAT due to lack of signals, smartphone, TV and Dish connections.

Adivasi children are trying their best to cope-up with the situation as far as education is concerned during the COVID-19 epidemic.

These students are unable to take online classes through T-SAT due to lack of signals, smartphone, TV and Dish connections.

Many students are taking tests in their villages sitting in the open places following the COVID norms being taken by the educated youth of their villages.

Along with Adivasi leader Gedam Laxman, Jilla Grandhalaya Samsta Chairman of Kanaka Yadav Rao visited Pavarguda village in Jainoor mandal and distributed masks to the children being taught for a few days by the local educated youth voluntarily.

He said that he was happy to see that Adivasi children are being taught by the educated Adivasi youth in the villages itself to save the educational academic year.

Community elders took the initiative of teaching the children in their villages where the children are unable to take online classes.

Safety protocols were not violated

From Page 1

This happened even though her registration form clearly mentioned the name of that institute. The student has registered a police complaint demanding that she be allowed to take the test again or be allotted a medical seat. Elsewhere, learning from their mistakes and violation of safety protocols witnessed during JEE Mains, state authorities strictly implemented guidelines set for conduct of the NEET exams across all centres in the state.

Still, there were instances of social distancing norms being violated on Sunday, like at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Technology, Gandipet.

POLICE HELPS OUT STUDENT IN NEED OF TEST

From Page 1

The shocked student and her parents were left with no alternative but to go searching for an urban primary health centre (UPHC) where she could be tested.

The Mills Colony police who were present there helped Vaishnavi by taking her in their patrol vehicle to SRR Thota UPHC where she got her rapid antigen test (RAT) done.

Parents crowded outside the Gandipet centre after the exam concluded, a NEET aspirant present at

The test gives a result in half-an-hour. The UPHC doctors issued a report of negative result and Vaishnavi was rushed to the examination centre, just in time. "Even though I had mentioned that I have recovered from the virus and completed the quarantine period, the authorities did not listen to me," Vaishnavi said.

"What if I was indeed still positive for the virus? Would I not be allowed to

the scene disclosed.

However, by and large, students said safety precautions were in place and

appear for the exam? There should have been special arrangements for positive students and those still under quarantine period. With no such arrangements how can the authorities stop me from appearing for the exam," the student asked.

"I have studied hard for two years with an aim to crack this exam but because of such rules, it would have all gone to waste," Vaishnavi said.

all standard operating procedures (SOPs), including that of 12 students per exam hall, were followed.



Corporator A Damodar Yadav speaking during the press conference.

TRS corporators allege Surekha disturbing peace

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, SEPT. 13

Corporators from Warangal East constituency on Sunday lashed out at former minister and Congress leader Konda Surekha for her recent comments against the local MLA Nannapuneni Narendar.

In a joint press conference held at Warangal, the TRS corporators alleged that the Konda couple were trying to instigate war in the constituency for their political gains.

The corporators attributed their win in the Corporation elections to the TRS government's welfare schemes and development programmes, and their active

● **THE TRS corporators** alleged that the Konda couple were trying to instigate war in the Warangal East constituency for their political gains.

participation in the separate statehood agitation.

They said Konda Surekha's claims that many TRS leaders won because of the Konda couple's support are false.

The corporators ridiculed that Konda couple planned their return to Warangal East constituency after the people in Parkal constituency had rejected them during

the last Assembly elections and all these statements are as part of their plan.

The corporators said that they will not spare if Konda couple try to create ruckus in the Warangal East constituency. They demanded Surekha to withdraw her comments against TRS leaders.

Stating that they were firmly with the TRS, the corporators said that they would work under the guidance of MLA Nannapuneni Narendar.

In all, 17 corporators including Kavati Kavitha, M. Rajitha, Y. Leelavathy, M. Bhagyalaxmi, Sharada Joshi, M. Rajender, A. Damodar Yadav, Bayya Swamy etc and TRS division presidents were present.

Centre creating hurdles in NH works, says Vinod

PULI SHARATH KUMAR KARIMNAGAR, SEPT. 13:

Withdrawal of the construction works of National Highways which were sanctioned earlier is not acceptable on the part of the Central government, alleged former MP and state planning commission Vice-chairman, Boinalpalli Vinod Kumar on Sunday.

Mr Vinod Kumar inaugurated the smart toilet constructed using modern and advanced technology in the premises of the city municipal corporation accompanied by the backward class minister, Gangula Kamalakhar, city mayor, Yadagiri Sunil Rao, district collector K. Shashank and municipal commissioner V. Kranthi in Karimnagar city.

Mr Vinod Kumar said that intending to transform the Karimnagar into

● **FORMER MP and state planning commission Vice-chairman, Boinalpalli Vinod Kumar** said that state MPs must exert pressure on the Central government for sanction of National Highways

a National Highway junction, during his tenure as MP of Karimnagar, he tried for the sanctioning of five National Highways.

The government which has given the nod for the construction of a National Highway from Jagtial to Warangal district at that time has now withdrawn the permission which is not correct, he criticized.

The MPs must respond immediately on this issue and must take necessary

measures along with exerting pressure on the Central government for sanctioning of National Highways, he demanded.

BC welfare minister Kamalakhar said that the construction works of 15 smart toilets were taken up in the part of the smart city project under city municipal corporation limits. As a pilot project, the construction works of two smart toilets were completed and inaugurated. The construction works of the remaining 13 will be taken up very soon along with the advanced vegetable and fish markets in the city, he informed.

Mr Vinod Kumar also inaugurated two fogging autos which were purchased by KMC for preventing the spread of seasonal diseases and keeping a check on population of mosquitoes.



Vice-chairman of the state planning commission B.Vinod Kumar inaugurates fogging autos here at the premises of city municipal corporation in Karimnagar on Sunday.

CELESTIAL PHENOMENON

People also lit lamps and offered water to tulasi plant at their residences

Special prayers mark Sunday as six planets align in line

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, SEPT. 13

Various sections of people in erstwhile Karimnagar district offered special prayers on Sunday morning with six planets aligning on the day. A message that went viral on social media said that it is a highly auspicious occasion not to be seen again in 200-300 years.

Astrologers said on Sunday morning, Sun entered Leo, Moon Cancer, Jupiter Sagittarius, Saturn Capricorn, Mars

Aries and Mercury Virgo, with all planets being in different houses of Veena Yoga. The celestial phenomenon will end when the moon leaves the sign of Cancer passing through the Gandanta zone on Tuesday, astrologers stated.

Shastri, a pujari of Shivalayam in Karimnagar city, said as the six grahas (planets) are positioned like a string on Sunday, it is an auspicious day. It will do good to people if they offer prayers to the Sun and Mars (Agni Tattva) by lighting a lamp, present an incense stick to

purify Saturn (Vayu Tattva), place flowers to strengthen Jupiter, given water to Moon (Jala Tattva) and offer Chandan (sandalwood paste) to Mercury (Pruthvi Tattva). Following social media posts and phone calls, people also lit lamps and offered water to tulasi plant.

N. Saritha Rani, a housewife, told *Deccan Chronicle* that she came to know about the special day through her friends and relatives at about 10 am. "Even though I received the information a bit late, I arranged all the materials

and offered prayers in time by lighting a lamp in front of the tulasi plant at my house, which will bring health, wealth and prosperity to my family," she said. Astrologers say there are few time slots (*muhurtas*) that are highly auspicious. During such times, it is good for people to set positive intentions for fulfilment of their desires. September 13, 2020, is one such date since maximum planets are going to be very strong in their own signs.

Founder president of Indian Youth Secured



Organisation Ghansham Ojha said lighting lamps is also a symbol of peace and harmony. People should make a conscious effort to control their pride and egos through spirituality on such days, he advised.



Special prayers offered to Sun God in Karimnagar district to mark the auspicious day on Sunday. (Top) Women offering prayers by lighting lamps in front of Tulasi plant in Karimnagar district on Sunday.

SHORT TAKES

WB: BJP WORKER FOUND HANGING FROM TREE

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, SEPT. 13

A BJP worker was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Hooghly of West Bengal on Sunday morning. Ganesh Roy, the deceased, was a booth level worker of the party. The body, with legs bent and apparently touching the ground almost, was found hanging from a tree, one and half km away from his home. A noose was tied around the neck of Roy.

The police later recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. Roy's family members said that he went out of home at Khanati village in Goghat on Saturday afternoon but he did not return. According to them, he was murdered by the Trinamul Congress which they claimed was threatening him with dire consequences before the Lok Sabha Elections last year.

Echoing them state BJP president Dilip Ghosh also accused the ruling Trinamul Congress of killing Roy in cold blood and then hanging the body to pass it as a case of suicide.

ARTISAN OFFERS TO MAKE DURGA IDOL AT ₹101

PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC BERTHAMPORE, SEPT. 13

At a time when many Durga Puja organisers in West Bengal are facing difficulty to collect donations to organise the biggest festival of the state, due to financial crunch amid Covid-19 pandemic, a Berhampore-based artisan has dropped his remuneration to ₹101, perhaps the lowest amount, for idol making. Kanchan Karmakar, the reputed idolmaker, said he would take the amount as his fee from the Berhampore Indraprastha Women Durga Puja Committee.

Asked about his decision, he said, "I have been working as a sculpture for the last 45 years. My creations were sent to the US, Europe and the Middle East earlier. But this time I am making an idol of Goddess Durga of clay for our local organisers all of whom are women. Since they have no funds due to this pandemic, they can not afford to pay for a Durga idol. So they decided to not organise the Durga Puja this year. I then reduced my fee as a token price to help them continue with their puja and bring happiness in our locality."

Chhanda Dutta, one of the puja committee organisers, said, "We are indebted to Kanchanda for his good effort. Now we can organise our Durga Puja despite many odds. Due to the pandemic situation we failed to collect big amount but he generously supported us. The price of his idol can be anything around ₹50,000! But, he dropped the price for us."

YECHURY NAMED IN DELHI RIOTS CHARGESHEET

New Delhi, Sept. 13: The CPI(M) on Sunday criticised the government over the reference to its leader Sitaram Yechury and some civil society members in a supplementary chargesheet filed by the Delhi Police which cites statements from some accused to say that they mobilised anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protestors.

"The CPI(M) condemns this obnoxious action by the Delhi Police to further the narrative of its political masters and urges the government to desist from such acts of criminalising peaceful political protests," the Communist Party of India (Marxist) Politburo said in a statement.

The reaction came a day after it was reported that the names of CPI(M) general secretary Yechury, Swaraj Abhiyan leader Yogendra Yadav, economist Jayati Ghosh and Delhi University professor Apoorvanand figure in the supplementary chargesheet in the February riots cases, allegedly for "provoking and mobilising" anti-CAA protesters.

The Sunday statement by the Politburo said it was "shocked by the brazenness with which the Delhi Police, acting under Home Minister Amit Shah, has tried to implicate prominent political leadership, academics, cultural personalities and activists in connection with the horrific communal violence in North East Delhi in February".

Nepal trying to stake claim on 3 villages in U'khand

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD SEPT. 13

With India locked in a stand-off with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Nepal has started to play its games with renewed vigour. The K.P. Sharma Oli government is increasingly sending feelers to people living in three villages adjoining the Kalapani region in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand to shift their loyalties to Nepal so as to stake claim over the villages which are administered by India.

Coming at a time when the Nepal Army is believed to be assisting China expand its military bases close to Mount Kailash, China seems to be behind the latest move by Nepal, which is seen as a quid pro quo arrangement between the two neighbours.

In return, the Nepal government is promising

tonnes of money, land and houses along with Nepalese citizenship — most of which is believed to be funded by China.

Sources in the know of the Nepalese "operation" told *Deccan Chronicle* that for the past few days, "agents" working for the Nepal government have got in touch with people residing in Kuti, Nabhi and Gunji villages — located a few kilometres from Kalapani territory in Pithoragarh district — asking them to consider shifting loyalties to Nepal.

The locals of these three Indian villages, located at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, who share a 'roti-beti' relationship with the people of Darchula in Nepal, are getting multiple calls from people on the other side asking them to consider the "irresistible offer".

Information reaching Indian agencies is that the agents have been either



Temple at Kalapani.

— DC



One of the bridges between India and Nepal in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.

— DC

tions earlier that Nepal might resort to such moves, especially after it claimed Kalapani to be its territory, the attempts at wooing with the villagers with land, money and Nepalese citizenship has increased manifold even as tensions between India and China along the LAC is at an all-time high.

For quite some time now, Nepal has left the people in its border villages along the tri-junction between India, China and Nepal at the mercy of the People's Liberation Army of China which supplies food and essentials to the villagers to win them over, even as the Chinese Army has been steadily taking control of certain areas inside Nepalese territory.

In May, Nepal triggered a diplomatic row with India after it claimed Kalapani and Lipulekh in its political maps. Later, it showed Limpiyadhura within its boundaries.

been making calls directly to the villagers, claiming to be their "well-wishers", or taking the other easy way of making the locals of Darchula speak with their friends and relatives in the three villages.

Since decades, people on both sides have remained in constant touch with each other, hopping in and out of Indian territory

everyday as they either have business links or relatives on the other side.

Many Indian girls have married into Nepali families in Darchula and elsewhere in Nepal.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, India-Nepal border has been sealed for the last few months. People on both sides communicate with each other using

Nepal Telecom SIM cards.

With the frequency of such calls increasing by the day — which has now become a point of discussion in the three villages — the villagers are contemplating writing to the Centre that there is no question of shifting loyalties and that they firmly remain with India.

Many of them even held

Deoria case: CBI to file chargesheet against 4 babus

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

The CBI, probing the alleged sexual exploitation of minor girls at a shelter home in Deoria district in Uttar Pradesh, is all set to file chargesheet against four senior public servants of the state government and several private persons. Besides, the agency will recommend departmental action against lower level officials of the state government.

According to sources, investigation by the agency has revealed that these public servants allegedly released funds worth several crores to the accused NGO without any physical audit. "Despite serious complaints pertaining to the alleged finan-

cial irregularities against the Deoria-based NGO — Maa Vinধ্যavasini Mahila Evam Balika Sanrakshan Griha, senior public servants of the revenue department of the state kept on releasing funds to the shelter home. The accused NGO was running the shelter home", sources said.

The central probe agency will mention names of at least four senior public servants and others in its chargesheet, that will be filed very soon, they added.

The CBI had registered two FIRs against Gijrja Tripathi and Superintendent Kanchan Lata Tripathi of the Maa Vinধ্যavasini Mahila Evam Balika Sanrakshan Griha, Deoria in connection with the case.

Odisha minister admitted to hosp.

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 13

Odisha textiles, handlooms and handicrafts minister, Padmini Dian, and her husband, Sadashib Dian, and Nabarangpur Lok Sabha member, Ramesh Chandra Majhi, who tested positive for Coronavirus earlier last week, were on Sunday shifted to a Covid-19 hospital in the state capital after they complained of difficulty in breathing.

Dain, her husband, son and nephew tested positive for the virus on September 3, following which they were under home isolation.

When the minister and her husband faced difficulty in breathing late on Saturday evening, they were shifted to a Covid-19 hospital at Jeypore in Koraput district and later sent to SUM Covid-19 hospital in Bhubaneswar.

The Nabarangpur MP who was also under home isolation from September 4, was shifted to another Covid-19 hospital here

after developing breathing difficulties.

Another minister, Ranendra Pratap Swain, has been admitted to SUM Covid-19 hospital after his swab reports returned positive.

Till date, 18 MLAs, including Bhubaneswar (North) legislator, Susant Rout, Bhubaneswar (Central) MLA, Ananta Narayan Jena, Berhampur MLA, Bikram Panda, Chandbali MLA, Byomakesh Ray and Khandapada MLA, Soumya Ranjan Patnaik have tested positive for the virus.

Six ministers, including Sushanta Singh, Tukuni Sahu and Arun Sahoo have contracted the virus.

On Sunday, Odisha reported 3,913 new Covid-19 cases to go past the 150,000-mark for the total number of Coronavirus cases detected in the state since the outbreak of the disease this year.

Of the total 3,913 cases reported in the last 24 hours, 2,348 cases were detected from various quarantine centres while 1,565 are local contact cases.

TIGER FOUND DEAD IN MAHA SANCTUARY

Nagpur, Sept. 13: A sub-adult male tiger was found dead in Umred Pauni Karhandla wildlife sanctuary in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, a forest official said on Sunday. The carcass of the two-year-old big cat was spotted by forest staff during patrolling in Kuhl wildlife range, Field Director, Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Ravikiran Govekar said in a release. "The dead tiger was one of three sub-adult cubs of female tiger T17," it said. — PTI

Sena targets Akshay Kumar for silence on Kangana row

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, SEPT. 13

The Shiv Sena has now trained guns on actor Akshay Kumar asking why other Bollywood stars are silent about the conspiracy to defame Mumbai.

"Not all, but at least half of them should have expressed their views about Mumbai's defamation and said Kangana Ranaut's stand was not that of the entire Hindi film industry. Is Mumbai only for making money to them?" asked Sena MP Sanjay Raut.

Mumbai has given them everything. The bigger artists like Akshay Kumar should have come forward for Mumbai.

But they feel pain when it comes to expressing gratitude for Mumbai, he said in his weekly column Rokhthok (forthright) in the Sena mouthpiece Saamana on Sunday.

Referring to Kangana's statements, Raut said, "An actress calls Mumbai as Pakistan. She uses derogatory language against the Chief Minister of Maharashtra by sitting in Mumbai, but the people of the state should not react on it. What kind of one-sided freedom is this?"

The Shiv Sena MP alleged that there are systematic efforts to undermine the importance of Mumbai. Its continuous defamation is a part of this conspiracy. Some people think that Maharashtra will automatically collapse by damaging the glory of Mumbai, he added.

Raut also slammed the Maharashtra BJP for supporting Kangana in this matter. "It is really unfortunate that the BJP, which is the main opposition party in the state, has stood behind the actress, who has called Mumbai as Pakistan and BMC as Babar."

They want to win elections in Bihar by backing Kangana. For this, it is okay for them to insult Maharashtra. Not a single Marathi Union minister in Delhi has felt bad about Maharashtra's insult, he said.



Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut during a meeting with Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai on Sunday.

— PTI

Will face all political storms, fight Covid, says Thackeray

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, SEPT. 13

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday assured that he would fight with Coronavirus infection as well as all political storms in the state. While addressing the people through social media, Thackeray announced to start a campaign 'My Family, My Responsibility' from September 15.

Meanwhile, calling Chief Minister's address a big disappointment, the BJP said people were expecting him to explain the government's roadmap to tackle rising number of cases and deaths due to Covid-19. Despite the worsening situation in the state, the Chief Minister was seen only praising himself, the opposition party said.

Thackeray has been facing flak from detractors on both political and Coronavirus fronts. He said a conspiracy is afoot to malign Maharashtra. "Whatever political storms come, I will face... I will fight Coronavirus too," said the Chief Minister.

A day after Covid-19 infection cases in Maharashtra crossed the 10-lakh mark, Thackeray said his government has done effective work to tackle the pandemic.

Speaking in the backdrop of political criticism over demolition of actress Kangana Ranaut's bungalow in Mumbai and the way his government handled the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, Thackeray assured people that he would fight the political crisis too.

"I will have to remove

the mask of Chief Minister to respond to politics. I don't speak, it does not mean I don't have answers," Thackeray said.

Speaking on the state government's "Mission Begin Again" campaign during the pandemic, Thackeray said his administration effectively tackled the Covid-19 situation, cyclones and floods and will also deal with the political storm with people's support.

The Chief Minister said his government was doing its best to deal with all challenges. "We should share our responsibilities to make the 'my family, my responsibility' campaign (against Covid) which begins on September 15 a success. This war can be won only with people's wholehearted support," he said.

NCB ESTABLISHES CHAIN OF NARCO SUPPLY TO SSR

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, SEPT. 13

Following NCB raids in Mumbai and Goa and arrests of drug peddlers while probing the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide, the breakthrough has helped identify chain of narcotics that reached Rajput. The NCB has arrested one Dwayne Fernandes, who is the associate of Showik Chakraborty and is stated to have supplied drugs to the latter, meant for Rajput. Officials said that Fernandes is a Mumbai-based drug dealer and deals in curated marijuana and hash.

Other arrested peddlers have revealed the chain of supply of substances to the film stars and other celebrities. The investigation is now headed to identify these known personalities who were buying from these peddlers.

ASSEMBLY | POLLS

PM inaugurates 3 petroleum sector projects, gives big thumbs up to Nitish

Modi hails Bihar as 'powerhouse of talent'

Patna, Sept. 13: In the run up to the Assembly polls in Bihar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated three petroleum sector projects, gave a big thumbs up to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, and reached out to voters, calling the state a "powerhouse of talent".

Modi's praise of alliance partner Kumar came weeks ahead of the elections that are likely to be held in October-November, as he dedicated three petroleum projects worth nearly ₹900 crore to peo-

ple. These included a gas pipeline that extended from Durgapur in West Bengal to Banka in Bihar.

Banka was also the beneficiary of an LPG bottling plant while another such unit is located at Harsiddhi in East Champaran district.

"I had the opportunity of flagging off the work on extension of the gas pipeline a year-and-half ago. I am delighted to see its completion. The country and Bihar have come out of an era when a project was announced and a generation had to wait for

its completion. Nitish ji has played an important role in ushering in this change in the state," Modi said.

In his trademark style, the Prime Minister began his speech with a few sentences in Angika, the dialect spoken in Banka and adjoining districts.

He marvelled at the gas pipeline project which was no mean feat as it involved working across a stretch of nearly 200 km of difficult terrain dotted with many rivers, dense forests and hills.

"I would like to use the

terms gas-based industry and petro-connectivity, which may sound very technical but actually impact the lives of the common people," he said, addressing the function virtually from the national capital.

Just imagine what would have been the situation if people were to keep venturing out in search of wood and other fuel for cooking their meals.

The need is no longer there thanks to schemes like the Ujjwala Yojana which has ensured that LPG reaches households

of the poorest of the poor, he said while talking about the Coronavirus outbreak.

The Prime Minister recalled how people would queue up in front of the residences of MPs for a cooking gas connection from their quota. "There was a time when having an LPG connection was a luxury not many could afford," he said.

Launching a veiled attack on RJD chief Lalu Prasad, who he did not mention by name, Modi said Bihar has come out of an era when rail, road and

internet connectivity were made light of and people used to say of what use roads are for those who walk on their feet.

He said Bihar, like the rest of eastern India, never lacked *samarthya* (potential) and *sansadhaan* (natural resources) but suffered for want of political will and faulty priorities.

Being a land-locked state, Bihar was obviously at a disadvantage when it came to availing petroleum projects. All that is going to change, the Prime Minister said. — PTI

IN BRIEF

Swiss cops break up party

Geneva: Police in the Swiss capital Bern said they used water cannon and rubber bullets to disperse a crowd of mostly young people holding an illegal “street carnival”. Several hundred people gathered late Saturday in the northeast of the city around cars blaring music and floats. A huge banner in French read “Street Carnival”, according to a photo on aurka.com, the website of a Swiss photographer who specialises in demonstrations and street art. Police said they intervened when those taking part began heading toward the city centre and throwing bottles and stones at officers. It was not immediately clear why the gathering was deemed illegal. Demonstrators “set up barricades and set off fireworks”, a police statement said.

Vatican: Return to in-person Mass

Vatican City: The Vatican has said it was “necessary and urgent” to return to in-person Masses as soon as anti-Coronavirus measures permit. The head of the Vatican’s liturgy office, Cardinal Robert Sarah, on Saturday said in a letter to bishops conferences that virtual liturgies, while useful, were no replacement for the real thing. He said physical presence by the faithful in churches was “vital, indispensable, irreplaceable”. While some Catholic priests claimed Coronavirus lockdowns that shuttered churches infringed on religious liberties, Pope Francis has adhered to Italy’s strict lockdown. He halted all public Masses at the Vatican, livestreamed his morning liturgies during the peak of Italy’s outbreak, and at one point even admonished priests who balked at the measures for their “adolescent resistance”. The Vatican said on Saturday that Francis had approved Sarah’s letter to bishops conferences.

Protest outside Netanyahu house

Jerusalem: Thousands of Israelis demonstrated outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s official residence in central Jerusalem late Saturday, demanding he resign over his trial on corruption charges and what is widely seen as his mishandling of the Coronavirus pandemic. With Israel reporting record levels of new Coronavirus cases each day, the country appears to be headed toward a nationwide lockdown this week ahead of the Jewish New Year. Saturday’s demonstration came a day after Israel announced an agreement to establish diplomatic relations with Bahrain, the second Arab country to normalise ties with Israel in under a month and just the fourth overall. But the surprise announcement had little effect on the thousands of demonstrators gathering outside Netanyahu’s residence every Saturday throughout the summer to protest his corruption trial, handling of the health crisis and the resulting economic pain.

PHILIPPINES DEPORTS U.S. MARINE

Manila, Sept. 13: A US Marine convicted of killing a Filipino transgender woman was deported Sunday after a presidential pardon cut short his detention in a case that renewed outrage over a pact governing American military presence in the Philippines. Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton left a message to President Rodrigo Duterte and to the family of Jennifer Laude, who he was convicted of killing in 2014 after finding out that she was a transgender in a motel northwest of Manila. The message’s content will be released after his departure, his lawyer, Rowena Garcia-Flores, said. Philippine immigration officers and American security personnel escorted the 25-year-old Marine from his cell in the main military camp in metropolitan Manila to the airport, where he boarded a military aircraft. Ahead of the flight, he was subjected to a Coronavirus test, which turned negative, immigration spokeswoman Dana Sandoval said. “He’s been successfully deported,” Sandoval said. On Monday, Duterte granted an “absolute and unconditional pardon” to Pemberton in a move that caught many by surprise. The Philippine leader has long been a vocal critic of US security policies while reaching out to China and Russia.

Marching on in Minsk



Opposition supporters parade through the streets during a rally to protest against the presidential election results in Minsk on Saturday. Belarusians have been demonstrating against the disputed re-election of President Alexander Lukashenko for a month, with more than 100,000 people flooding the streets of Minsk for the four straight weekends.

— AFP

Afghan peace talks: The hard work begins

Search on for lasting ceasefire after decades of fighting

Doha, Sept. 13: Peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government negotiators get down to business Sunday, with the search for a lasting ceasefire one of many key issues up for discussion. A slick opening ceremony in the Qatari capital Doha on Saturday saw the Afghan government, and allies including the United States, call for a ceasefire.

But the Taliban, who have fought a guerrilla campaign against both since they were forced from power in 2001, did not mention a truce as they came to the negotiating table.

The head of the peace process for the Afghan government suggested to AFP that the Taliban could offer a ceasefire in

exchange for the release of more of their jailed fighters.

“This could be one of their ideas or one of their demands,” said Abdullah Abdullah, the chairman of Afghanistan’s High Council for National Reconciliation.

Negotiations will be arduous and messy, delegates warned during the opening ceremony, and are starting even as deadly violence continues to grip Afghanistan.

“We will undoubtedly encounter many challenges in the talks over the coming days, weeks and months,” US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said as he called for the warring sides to “seize this opportunity” to secure peace.

— AFP

AFGHAN RESOLUTION IS THE KEY TO REGIONAL PEACE, SAYS IMRAN

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 13

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday said successful culmination of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process was indispensable for Afghanistan and regional peace.

In a Facebook post, the Prime Minister reiterated the determination that Pakistan will continue to remain in full support and solidarity with the Afghan people as they march forward in this consequential journey for peace and development.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Pervez Khattak

said Pakistan was committed to bring peace in Afghanistan. He termed resumption of intra-Afghan dialogue a good omen for the region.

He said peace in Afghanistan is vital for the prosperity of Pakistan. Speaking about the national issues, the Defence Minister said the country had come out of the financial crisis and now the government had focused provision of relief to the people.

Pervaz Khattak said the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan will honour all pledges made with the people.

2 L.A. DEPUTIES SHOT, HUNT ON FOR ATTACKER

Compton (US), Sept. 13: The shooting of two Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies in an apparent ambush prompted a manhunt for the shooter, reaction from the President and protests outside the hospital where the wounded deputies were being treated Saturday night in California.

The 31-year-old female deputy and 24-year-old male deputy both underwent surgery Saturday evening, Sheriff Alex Villanueva said in a late-night news conference. Both graduated from the academy 14 months ago, he said. The deputies were shot while sitting in their patrol car at a Metro rail station and were able to radio for help, the sheriff said.

Villanueva expressed frustration as he urged people to pray for the officers.

It sparked thousands of reactions, including from President Donald Trump, who responded, “Animals that must be hit hard!”

— AP

Lens on foreign journos if giving ‘slanted view’ of Oz

Melbourne, Sept. 13: Foreign journalists working in Australia will come under the scrutiny of federal agencies if they provide a “slanted view” of the country, interfere with its democracy or steal the intellectual property, a senior minister warned on Sunday, amidst a diplomatic standoff with China. Australian Home Affairs Ministers Peter Dutton said there had been a concerted effort with Australian

federal police working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies to make sure that the government can address foreign interference wherever it may occur in the country.

“If people are here as journalists and they’re reporting fairly on the news, then that’s fine. And if people are masquerading as journalists or business leaders or whoever they might be, and there’s

evidence that they are acting in a contrary to Australian law, then ASIO and AFP and other agencies will act,” Dutton said.

“If there’s an attempt with interfering or conducting espionage-type activities, then we have a problem with that. But for a journalist coming into our country, applying scrutiny as anybody on your panel would today — we don’t have an issue,” he said.

— PTI

Lanka Constitution Amendment faces internal resistance

Colombo, Sept. 13: The Sri Lankan government’s proposed 20th Constitutional Amendment has faced internal resistance from within a faction of the ruling SLPP parliamentary group itself, ahead of its inclusion in Parliament’s order paper, the party members said on Sunday.

The government on Sept. 2 gazetted the 20th Constitutional Amendment draft, the new proposed legisla-

tion that would replace the 19th Amendment introduced in 2015 that curtailed the powers of the President and strengthened the role of Parliament. The 19A was seen as the most progressive pro-democracy reformist move since Sri Lanka came to be governed under the all-powerful executive presidency in 1978. It depoliticised the government administration by ensuring the indepe-

ndence of key pillars such as the judiciary, public service and elections.

The 20th Amendment proposes to restore full legal immunity to the President, removing the provisions made in the 19A to take legal action against the President. The office of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa in a statement on Saturday night said that a nine-member ministerial committee has been appoi-

nted to review the 20A in its present form and, if needed, a fresh gazette will be issued. Ever since the government gazetted the 20A, some of the ruling SLPP’s own parliamentarians and the party’s allies have been publicly expressing unhappiness over its certain provisions, the party members said. If the 20A is implemented in its present form, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa

will be the hardest-hit as his current powers as the premier would be diminished with his younger brother and the President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, assuming full executive power, they said.

Moreover, Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is also a two-time president, will not be able to contest for the presidential election again as the two term bar has been retained in the 20A draft,

the party members said. The draft legislation was to be placed in Parliament’s order book this week for debate and adaptation. However, it faced internal resistance from within a faction of the SLPP parliamentary group. And now, with Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is also the leader of the Sri Lanka People’s Party (SLPP), appointing a committee, this process could be delayed.

— PTI

China calls HK people held at sea ‘separatists’

Beijing, Sept. 13: The 12 Hong Kong people arrested at sea by mainland authorities last month were separatists, a spokeswoman for China’s foreign ministry said on Sunday, in response to her US counterpart’s characterisation of the arrest as a deterioration of human rights.

The comment came a day after relatives of the detainees held a news conference in Hong Kong demanding the urgent return of the 12 who were intercepted by the Guangdong coast guard on Aug. 23 on a boat bound for Taiwan.

Donning masks and hats to shield their identities, they made their first public appeal for help and information on their relatives’ plight, pleading for them to be allowed to consult lawyers appointed by their families and not the Chinese government and to be allowed to call relatives in Hong Kong.

US State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus tweeted on Saturday that their arrest was “another example of the deterioration of human rights in Hong Kong”, and called on mainland authorities to “ensure due process”.

The arrests came about two months after the mainland government imposed a security law on the special administrative region following months of pro-democracy demonstrations.

China’s Hua Chunying responded in another tweet. “Seriously?! Fact check: The 12 people were arrested for illegally cross-

US threat to world peace: China min

Beijing, Sept. 13: China’s Defence Ministry on Sunday blasted a critical US report on the country’s military ambitions, saying it is the US instead that poses the biggest threat to the international order and world peace. The statement follows the September 2 release of the annual Defence Department report to Congress on Chinese military developments and goals that it said would have “serious implications for US national interests and the security of the international rules-based order”.

Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Wu Qian called the report a “wanton distortion” of China’s aims and the relationship between the People’s Liberation Army and China’s 1.4 billion people.

“Many years of evidence shows that it is the US that is the fomentor of regional unrest, the viola-

tor of the international order and the destroyer of world peace,” he said. US actions in Iraq, Syria, Libya and other countries over the past two decades have resulted in the deaths of more than 800,000 people and displacement of millions, Qian said.

“Rather than reflecting on itself, the US issued a so-called report that made false comments about China’s normal defence and military construction,” he said in the statement. “We call on the US to view China’s national defence and military construction objectively and rationally, cease making false statements and related reports, and take concrete actions to safeguard the healthy development of bilateral military relations.”

The report examined the PLA’s technical capabilities, doctrines and the ultimate aims of China’s military buildup.

— AP

ing the border in waters. They are not democratic activists, but elements attempting to separate #HongKong from China,” she wrote. The Shenzhen city police, in its first notice since the arrest, on Sunday said the 12 Hong Kong citizens were under criminal detention on suspicion of illegally crossing the

border. The investigation is ongoing, it said.

“Police will protect the legitimate rights and interests of criminal suspects in accordance with law,” the police said.

The relatives on Saturday said they had been given no information on the allegations.

— Reuters

Blair, Major call for boycott of Johnson’s Brexit bill plan

London, Sept. 13: Britain’s former prime ministers from rival parties, Tony Blair and John Major, united on Sunday to call on members of Parliament to boycott Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s proposed law aimed at overriding parts of the Brexit divorce agreement.

Ahead of the Internal Market Bill coming up for debate in the House of Commons on Monday, Major as a member of Johnson’s own Conservative Party and Blair from the Opposition Labour Party warned that what is being proposed by the prime minister is “shocking” and has wide-ranging ramifications on all future trade negotiations, not only with the European Union (EU) but with other nations.

“The overt repudiation of the treaty — by seeking to override unilaterally the provisions agreeing to the application of certain EU rules to Northern Ireland — strikes at the very heart of the withdrawal agreement,” the duo wrote in a joint article for *The Sunday Times*.

IF THE government has concerns about specific parts of the withdrawal treaty, there are ready mechanisms within it to resolve them amicably; in the first instance by negotiation between the UK and the EU and, if that fails, through independent arbitration. It has chosen to ignore these options.

TONY BLAIR AND JOHN MAJOR, Britain’s former PMs

“If the government has concerns about specific parts of the withdrawal treaty, there are ready mechanisms within it to resolve them amicably; in the first instance by negotiation between the UK and the EU and, if that fails, through independent arbitration. It has chosen to ignore these options. Instead, it has thrown the withdrawal treaty into uncertainty and given the EU genuine reason to

question whether Britain can be relied upon in any future trade agreements with the EU,” they wrote.

Major was a Conservative prime minister from 1990 to 1997. His Labour successor Blair served as Britain’s prime minister from 1997 to 2007. Amid growing discord over the issue within his own party, Johnson has sought the backing of his MPs for the new Bill saying the EU is threatening to impose a customs border in the Irish Sea, separating Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK.

The Bill focuses on the Northern Ireland Protocol — the part of the Brexit divorce designed to prevent a hard border on the island of Ireland. If it became law, it would give UK ministers powers to modify or “disapply” rules relating to the movement of goods between Britain and Northern Ireland that will come into force from January 2021, unless the UK and EU are able to strike a trade deal ahead of that.

— PTI

FILM | FEST

Hungarian Kornel Mundruczo’s 1st English foray *Pieces of A Woman* is set in Massachusetts

And the Oscar goes to... ‘Princess’ Venessa Kirby

SUPARNA SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

It doesn’t happen often, but when it does, it creates what we call “the magic of cinema”. Bringing to life characters and a world that simply didn’t exist before a writer conjured them up requires a unique mix of individual pursuit of brilliance, but also a *jugalbandi* of skill, daring and commitment with others. A director who can imagine and create it, an actor who can make us believe in it, a cinematographer who captures it and an editor who eventually decides

what we see, how, when, and for how long.

No matter how well one of them does, creating that magic depends on what everyone does. Hungarian director Kornel Mundruczo’s first English language film, *Pieces of A Woman*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) on Saturday, strives for that kind of brilliance and achieves it in a bravura sequence that comes barely six minutes into the film and goes on for almost 24 minutes.

Based on a screenplay by Kata Webber, *Pieces of A Woman* is set in Massachu-

setts, US, where Martha (Venessa Kirby), a slim, chic executive, and her construction worker husband Shaun (Shia LaBeouf) have planned a home birth for their first child. They have bought a baby-friendly car, a room with a crib is ready, and the midwife has been booked. September 17. There is slight chill in the air. Winter is coming. And so is the baby.

Cinematographer Benjamin Loeb’s long, intimate sequence, shot by a hand-held camera, stays with Martha for the entirety of the birth of her baby. It starts with mild contrac-

tions, her water breaking, the contractions increasing and a replacement midwife turning up.

In this sequence, where there are few, carefully-concealed cuts, the camera stays close to Martha as a helpless Shaun tries his best to be of some use. It zooms in when Martha needs a hand to squeeze and

steps back as she gets delirious with pain and says she smells something rotten. We feel as if we too are attached to her, bobbing around Martha gently in amniotic fluid along with her baby. Your hair will stand on its end when Martha screams in pain, her veins popping out as she tries to push the baby out.

This visceral look at what child birth entails for a woman, eager and desperate to eject a piece of herself, is just the beginning of change — of Martha’s body and emotions.

Venessa Kirby, most well-known for playing Princess

Margaret in Netflix’s *Crown*, is stripped of all veneer of glamour and even dialogue in *Pieces of A Woman* as she has to first let a child rip through her, and then cradle a tragedy that keeps taking her apart, bit by bit.

Kirby carries this destruction, this loss in her body, in her silence, in her inability to tolerate even the most loving and benign of touches. They all feel as if they are taking a bite of her broken pieces. While Martha is pretending to live, a media and court room drama is playing out. But Martha is keeping everything and everybody at an arm’s

length. Her mother, Elizabeth (played with flinty self-assurance and infuriating interference by Ellen Burstyn), won’t have it. In the film’s second most powerful scene, Elizabeth tells her own story and the film again takes Martha apart so that she can piece herself back together.

Though it’s too early to tell, but for now my prediction is that the next Oscar for best performance female will go to Venessa Kirby. And I won’t be surprised if Ellen Burstyn stands smiling next to her, holding her own golden knight.



DECCAN Chronicle

14 SEPTEMBER 2020

It's status quo once again for Congress

The latest recast of the Congress leadership by its president Sonia Gandhi seems to be in line with the saying “the more you change, the more you remain the same”. The party has chosen to return to ad hocism, a strategy which has helped it float at many critical times but weakened it every time. Ms Gandhi, who returned to her post after being ‘interim president’ for a year, has picked the same people who have been at the helm of the party all these years, to assist her. The Congress Working Committee (CWC), once the most powerful political forum in the country, sees no change that reflects the changed political reality of the country.

The exercise comes in the background of 23 senior party leaders writing a letter to Ms Gandhi demanding that the party have a full-time president who can inspire the party cadre, more freedom to state units and election to the state units. It is to the credit of Ms Gandhi that she has included some of the letter writers, including veteran face Ghulam Nabi Azad and Jitendra Prasada, members of the CWC. She, however, dropped them from the new arrangement which will advise her on “organisational and operational” matters. That articulate faces of the party such as Dr Shashi Tharoor, who has been an effective voice of the party within Parliament where it is a famished lot, and outside has not been accommodated in any of the new committees, is a signal that the rebels will find it tough to go further up in the party hierarchy if they raise their voice for more democratisation. The party seems to have no plans to brook dissidence if it is aimed at its first family.

It is disappointing that the grand old party of Indian politics has chosen to ignore the signals that emanate from the ground asking it to reinvent itself and be the bulwark of resistance to the right wing politics that is bent on undoing every single block with which the republic is built. Instead of looking for fresh faces that can inject new enthusiasm into the minds of the party workers whom one would be able to find in every village, the choice of leadership has remained a game of musical chairs.

A series of challenges of unprecedented magnitude and reach, each one with a firepower that can seriously damage its future, faces India and the government and the party that leads it have conveniently chosen to ignore each one of it. It is estimated that India will have the most number of Covid infections by mid-October. The economy has been in tatters and the pandemic has pushed it further down. The border issue is far from over, though the determined efforts of the Armed Forces have been able to checkmate the enemy at the border. The country deserves an Opposition which can hold the government accountable to Parliament and the people, and the Congress has the leading roles in ensuring it. A vibrant and elected leadership alone can ensure it.

Vilification campaign

It turned out to be a false alarm. First, a tweet by the Swaraj Abhiyan leader and then a clarification issued by Delhi Police have confirmed that Yogendra Yadav, Sitaram Yechury, Jayati Ghosh and Apoorvanand have not been arraigned as accused in a supplementary chargesheet filed in connection with the death of a 17-year-old in the February riots in Delhi. It does raise a few uncomfortable queries, though, pertaining to both the source and the process resulting in the misleading news flash by the agency.

The leaders and activists, however, have been named in unauthenticated disclosure statements obtained by police from the accused and which form part of the chargesheet. It is not admissible in court but can form the basis of legal action against these individuals should there be found, or concocted, corroborative evidence. Prima facie, the allegation against them is about “provoking and mobilising” the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests in Jaffrabad on February 22. But since they were perfectly within their rights to criticise and rally public opinion against CAA, it is no more than the government's political position on the matter. “Maliciously the image of the government”, to quote from the second chargesheet, is no offence under the law.

The Delhi Police investigation into the riots has been loudly condemned by this newspaper for being shoddy in the extreme and ideologically charged. The original chargesheet was against Pinjra Tod members Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal, and Jamia Millia Islamia's Gulfisha Fathima. Incredible though it may appear to be, they are now being accused of instigating an unknown person to shoot Amaan, the 17-year-old riot victim. Curiously or not, Kalita and Narwal have written, “I refuse to sign”, in some pages of the statements in the new chargesheet.

Recently, hearing a bail plea by her, the Delhi High Court held that there is no evidence against Kalita of participating in any conspiracy. Clearly, these new “revelations” strategically hyped by the police is part of its partisan agenda to discredit the anti-CAA movement, discourage new participants and intimidate, harass and harm the protesters.

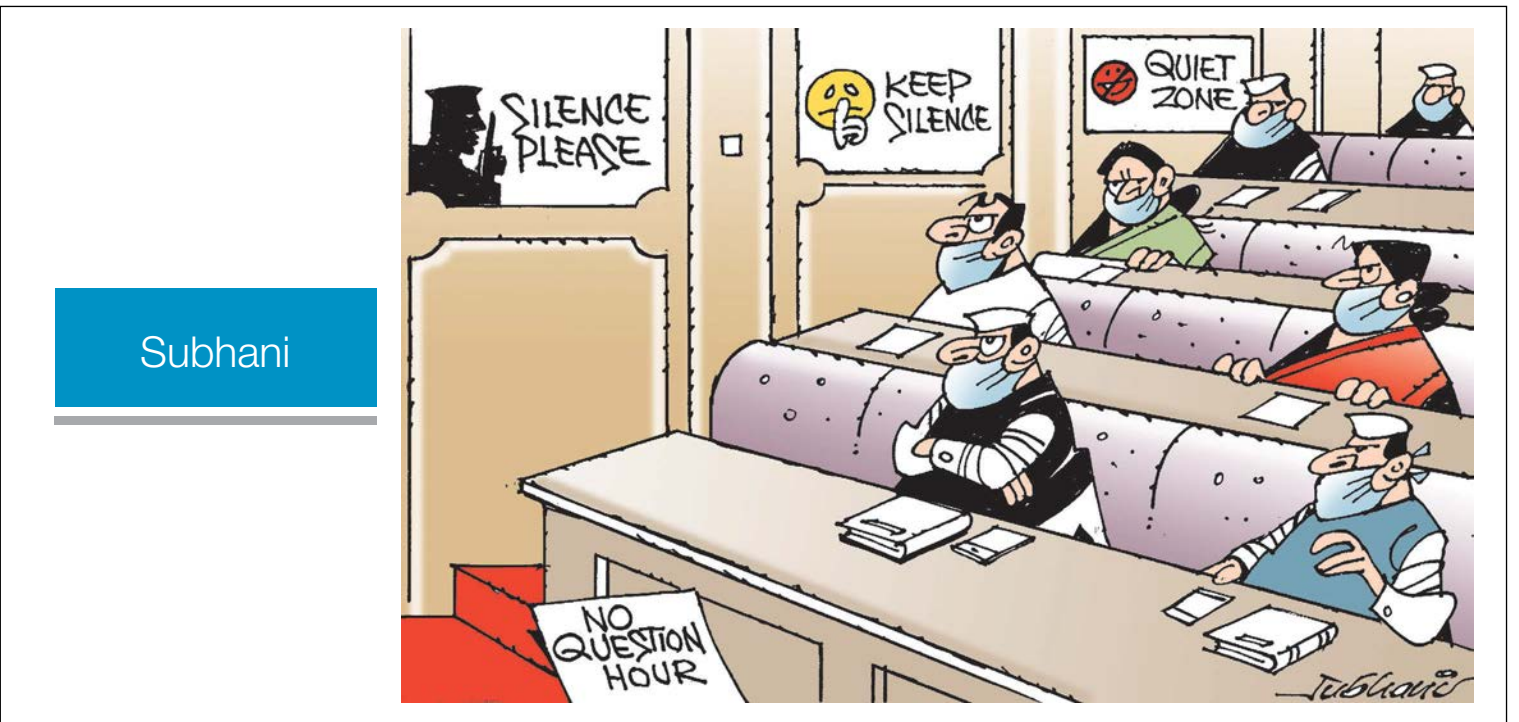
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Subhani

Staring at Dragon's eyes: India must stay on guard



Ruchi Ghanashyam

The fire that was lit by the Chinese in the Galwan Valley on June 15 continues to smoulder in eastern Ladakh. The worst incident of violence on the India-China border since 1967 claimed the lives of 20 Indian soldiers. Several weeks later, many efforts to resolve the situation are yet to yield the desired results. India has demanded China restore the status quo, while China blames India, claiming sovereignty over the area.

This is the second India-China standoff in recent memory. The tussle between the two militaries in Doklam in 2017 is still fresh in our memory. The Chinese attitude towards India has been evident for years, if not decades. Covert Chinese backing for anti-India groups in the Northeast has been known for long. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, its tight embrace of Pakistan, including support at the UN for Pakistan-based terrorist Masood Azhar, are mirrored in its anti-India activities elsewhere in our neighbourhood. Each of India's neighbours is vulnerable to Chinese stratagems: Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives or Bhutan.

China's aggressiveness isn't restricted to India's neighbourhood. Its activities in the South China Sea have alienated much of Southeast Asia, and raised alarm bells in several Western capitals. Its bellicose approach to Taiwan hasn't gone unnoticed in Washington or elsewhere. Even worse is its approach towards Hong Kong, where it is systematically undermining the “One country, two systems” principle, which was the basis for the governance of Hong Kong and Macau since they became China's

Special Administrative Regions in the late-1990s. Britain has taken the lead to speak out against the draconian security law that China imposed on Hong Kong in July.

Human rights violations across China are another issue that bothers the West. The heavy-handed tackling of unarmed protesters in Hong Kong was brought into the world's living rooms by international TV channels. The treatment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang province has alarmed not only the West but also Central Asia.

China has demonstrated a voracious economic appetite. Of late, it has increasingly given direct loans and trade credits to developing nations, much beyond their capacity to pay back. One report claims it has given \$1.5 trillion in such loans and credits to over 150 countries, and more than 50 developing nations owe more than 15 per cent of their GDP to China. It eyes the assets of nations unable to service their debts, though the Chinese media denies this.

China's approach to trade is no less aggressive. The United States and China are engaged in what is described as a trade war, while European and other countries are concerned over China's single-minded approach. Chinese companies like Huawei and many Chinese apps are increasingly attracting greater scrutiny. India, too, has taken action to ban several of these apps.

While disliking China's political and economic approach, most countries have looked the other way due to their growing dependence on Chinese finance and investments. The tipping point may have been reached as the world struggles to cope with the human and economic impact of the coronavirus that has brought most developed countries

virtually to their knees.

India faces a challenge from China on its borders. It also has an opportunity to engage with a world that is increasingly uncomfortable with China's actions. The engagement among the “Quadrilateral” (India, Australia, Japan and the US) has been revitalised. It is time that the “Quad” is expanded to include Britain, that has a direct interest in Hong Kong and is a long-time maritime power. In addition, Britain has a good understanding of this region. France can similarly bring greater depth to this initiative. Closer coordination between the Quad and Southeast Asia must also be on our agenda. Our engagements shouldn't be limited to the Indo-Pacific; strengthening ties with Central Asian nations should also be an important objective.

These efforts shouldn't be seen or projected as “anti-China”, and such coordination is vital to maintain secure and peaceful maritime movement in the Indo-Pacific. It could benefit development of the “blue economy”, studying the impact of climate change and disaster relief and management. Our engagements with the Quad also shouldn't be seen as a panacea for our border problems with China. We must resolve the current situation with China through dialogue, but our engagement with China must firmly convey our resolve to defend our sovereignty. India's preference for peace should not be mistaken for military inability or unwillingness. This “red line” must be understood by the Chinese. Within the bounds of this position, the creativity of our diplomats and policymakers can try and find a solution that is acceptable to both sides and which the Chinese leadership can take back to their people

The Chinese seem to have opened too many fronts. Despite its strength and power, China today seems to have few friends in the world.

without appearing to have surrendered or backtracked.

In war and diplomacy, it is always advisable not to open too many fronts simultaneously. The Chinese seem to have opened too many fronts. Despite its strength and power, China today seems to have few friends in the world. It's efforts to encircle India may have had dubious success, but its own overambition, bordering on arrogance, has led to the near encirclement of China itself.

Is it an arrogant misjudgement on China's part, which made it supremely confident of handling such widespread unhappiness of its actions across the globe? Somehow, it's difficult to accept that Chinese policymakers could have been so naive. Some blame internal struggle and dissonance within the Chinese leadership for the current overstretch. Others point to the centenary of the Communist Party of China next year and the desire of the leadership in Beijing to deliver the Chinese vision of itself as a great superpower at this important landmark. Covid-19's appearance as China is preparing to deliver this vision; its actions in Ladakh and other places while the rest of the world is preoccupied with the Wuhan virus could be a coincidence, unless the macho Chinese behaviour in Ladakh and south of its borders is aimed at diverting the attention of its own people.

China is busy spreading its wings. From Hambantota to Gwadar, from Djibouti to Greece's Piraeus Port, and now its efforts to establish its footprint in the islands of southern Italy, combined with its increasing assertiveness in Hong Kong and the South China Sea and Ladakh, paint a picture of a China that has decided its time has come. India must remain on guard, both militarily and diplomatically. When it comes to the crunch, our battles are our own!

The writer is a retired IFS officer who recently served as India's high commissioner to Britain

LETTERS

COVID CASES

It is alarming that 40 per cent of Indian population is already exposed to Covid-19 (Up to 130 cases are missed for every +ve test, DC, Sept. 12). We should not be content with just testing and treating those infected. Concrete steps must be taken to control and arrest the rising number of positive cases and deaths. Neither Central nor state governments appear to be acting in this direction.

S. Nageswara Rao
Hyderabad

IMPRESSIVE CARTOON

DC cartoons are very impressive. Saturday's cartoon presented the true position of the Grand Old Party. Kudos to the cartoonist.

Vikram Vivaan Raj K.N.
Hyderabad

HATS OFF TO KCR

The efforts of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao for more than three years to bring out the new Revenue Act and survey of lands should be appreciated. He is crusading reforms, doing justice to victimised *patladars* and punishing the corrupt revenue system. The survey will separate the real *patladars* and land-grabbers like milk and water and a conclusive title will be given.

T. Kailash Ditya
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

PM: Strong Centre alone can meet challenges

KASARGOD, SEPT. 13 The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, said today that the many difficult problems facing the country could be solved only if the Centre is able and strong and there is peace.”

Addressing her first election meeting soon after arrival here this morning of a three-day tour of Kerala, Mrs. Gandhi said the people of Kerala were educated and intelligent.

They should take into account all prevailing factors before taking a decision in the coming elections.

“We are today engaged in the great task of reconstruction of India. In that I hope you and I have to play our part,” Mrs Gandhi said. Mrs. Gandhi said that some parties were talking in terms of fighting against the Centre.

ending at Monday lunchtime.

But what about theatre? How many of us are prepared walk into a theatre to watch a play about Covid-19? At least it will be a live performance with properly socially distanced seating. Well, some people have done exactly that because Ralph Fiennes is enacting the role of a Covid patient at a time the government dithers over the next step, at the Bridge theatre. The playwright of *Beat the Devil* is David Hare — who apparently did get the infection — and then was inspired to write the play. Perhaps it is a great idea to stage this monologue — but honestly, even though the combination of Fiennes and Hare are dynamite, right now a monologue on Covid is the last thing I need.

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. Her latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life and Times of Devika Rani, will be out by November.

Apocalypse just around corner, Rule of Six can't ward it off

Kishwar Desai

London Diary



A big shock this week was the pause of the human trials for the “Oxford vaccine” as it is now known, when one volunteer fell ill. The vaccine is our eagerly awaited “Christmas present” ever since Prime Minister Boris Johnson had said there would be a vaccine by the end of the year, and we were dreaming of an unmasked Christmas. And now more sobering information comes to us that even vaccines which reach the human trial stage have only a 20 per cent chance of success and no one knows out of the five vaccine candidates that Britain has lined up — which one will eventually triumph. In any case no country plans to vaccinate the whole population — so new rules will have to be drawn up. Rule Britannia, as they say! But in these disrupted times, when everyone is stuck at home (and I have always maintained that I don't mind at all as I am now doing the final edit of my new book in which I will be slobberingly grateful to “self isolation”) — the

two sections of society who will always appreciate WFH are women and authors. For once I am in the winning team — being a woman and an author!

But meanwhile, we are now seeing The Return of Carona in the UK. This is a horrifying sequel to the first act. Covid cases are doubling every week and the dreaded R number is 1.7. As it happens, schools are starting again and within a fortnight universities will reopen. The government already looks indecisive as it did last April. Now it keeps on changing its mind as frequently as the weather changes. Can we blame them? There is no ready-made solution — and even those subjects which may have a solution such as Brexit are being tossed around. I always think of Boris as a “jolly” leader who somehow thinks that if you remain optimistic the problem will disappear. But Brexit plus Carona equals Chaos. Right now, the country looks unprepared for

the apocalypse round the corner.

But when in doubt invent a new rule! Rule Britannia! A new rule says that only six persons can gather together indoors or outdoors. So all those restaurants and pubs which did a roaring trade in the summer will be back under wraps. Offices were about to reopen and London transport would have carried more passengers on the underground. But now this has been put under a cloud. Of course before it comes into effect on Monday the weekend will be full of crowded beaches, pubs and restaurant. The stiff upper lip of the quietly obedient Briton is nowhere to be found, and instead we see lips firmly wrapped around beer glasses.

Indeed one argument is that it was the haste with which the government relaxed the lockdown to help the economy that may have caused the resurgence of the infection. For the first time since he became Chancellor, Rishi Sunak is

being questioned about the wisdom of his Eat Out to Help Out Policy which gave customers price cuts in restaurants for each meal they had on selected days of the week. And the opening of the pubs would have added to the return of Covid. But as has often happened since the epidemic started, scientists, civil servants, politicians have not agreed on anything. “The Rule of Six” sounds suspiciously like a Sherlock Holmes mystery — and possibly will remain one.

Of course football resumed this weekend but without spectators just as it was during the last season. People will still watch it online and at least there will something to talk about on Monday morning when they meet their mates or crowd out the phone lines of radio talk shows. The English male talks more about football than any other topic over the weekend — before the match on Saturday and then after final whistle and over the entire weekend

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,854.55	0.04
Nifty 50	11,464.45	0.13
\$S&P 500*	3,340.97	0.05
Dollar (₹)	73.53	-0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.32	1.30
Euro (₹)	87.06	0.17
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,452.191	0.36
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	39.83	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	0.669	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.674	-0.010

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Banks sanction ₹1.63 lakh cr to 42 lakh MSMEs

The finance ministry said banks have sanctioned loans worth over Rs 1.63 lakh crore to more than 42 lakh business units under the Rs 3-lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for the MSME sector. Of this, over Rs 1.18 lakh crore has been disbursed to 25 lakh enterprises, till Sept. 10. The scheme is the biggest fiscal component of the Rs 20-lakh crore Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package.

ICAI seeks more time to file FY19 GST returns



The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has written to the GST Council seeking deferment of the 2018-19 GST annual return filing deadline by three months till December 31. The last date for filing the annual return for 2018-19 for GST-registered taxpayer is Sept. 30. In its representation to the GST Council, the ICAI said majority of the offices are working only partially due to the pandemic.

FPIs pull out ₹3,510 crore from equities in Sept.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) turned net sellers in Indian markets by pulling out Rs 2,038 crore so far in September as they turned cautious in view of rising Indo-China tensions and weak global cues. According to the depositories data, a net Rs 3,510 crore was withdrawn from equities while Rs 1,472 crore was pumped into debts by them between September 1 and 11.

Covid cases account for 11% of health claims

Treatment for Covid-19 accounted for as much as 11 per cent of the total health insurance claims paid by insurance companies during the first five months of the current financial year, says a Policybazaar.com research. It said 89 per cent of health insurance claims during April 1 and August 31 were for other major illnesses, including cancer, heart problems, kidney and treatment.



Govt wants to expand domestic market Foreign listing to be tied to local listing

ADITYA KALRA, ADITI SHAH & ABHIRUP ROY
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, SEPT. 13

Indian companies that list overseas will have to later launch on a domestic bourse under policy changes being considered by government officials, sources told Reuters, a move that global investors fear will harm valuations.

India said in March it would allow local firms to directly list abroad to better access foreign capital for growth, but the rules have yet to be decided. Currently only certain types of securities such as depository receipts are able to be listed in foreign markets, and only after the companies go public in India.

The new policy, aimed at helping local firms achieve better valuations, could be a shot in the arm for Indian unicorn start-ups valued at over \$1 billion and Reliance's digital unit which is eyeing a US listing after raising over \$20 billion from global names like KKR & Co.

But in recent weeks Indian officials told global investors and companies in meetings they were considering mandating a secondary listing for local companies on Indian bourses after they list abroad, five sources said.

The time period under consideration for such a requirement ranges from six months to three years, sources said. A separate senior regulatory source in India said "dual listing was being



considered by the (finance) ministry for sure," but a final position on the matter has not been reached.

Japan's SoftBank and an Indian payment firm it backs, Paytm, as well as Reliance, and US-based Sequoia Capital have conveyed to the government the secondary listing provision risks splitting trading volumes, hurting long-term valuations and raising compliance needs and costs, the sources added.

"To require companies to subsequently list in India will make these rules meaningless," said a senior executive from a global venture-capital firm.

SoftBank and Sequoia have invested in various Indian firms like ride-hailing company Ola and hospitality firm Oyo. Foreign listings could provide exits for such investors at higher valuations but also allow Indian firms, especially from the tech sector, to access specialised investors abroad who can better value their companies.

The rules are being drafted by the finance and corporate affairs ministries,

in discussion with the capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India, and will be finalised in coming weeks.

Currently, Indian companies can list locally and then access foreign equity capital through instruments like American depository receipts (ADRs), a route used by Infosys and ICICI Bank.

India is concerned that the upcoming policy change will mean that companies hunting for higher valuations through access to a wider group of investors, would choose to only list abroad, the sources said. That risks hitting the growth ambitions of Indian capital markets and depriving local investors of the wealth-creation opportunity.

"The government needs to balance Indian aspirations so that (domestic) investors can invest in these companies," said Siddharth Pai, founding partner at investment firm 3one4 Capital. "This is a trailblazing endeavour, if India plays its cards right."

— Reuters

Dilip Buildcon in talks to sell 7 highway projects

New Delhi, Sept 13: Highways builder Dilip Buildcon Ltd (DBL) is in talks with large global financial investors to sell seven of its road projects.

The company that claims to be India's largest road construction company currently building 16 per cent of all National Highways, has already sold five of its projects to Cube Highways.

"After the successful transaction of selling HAM portfolio with Shrem group, we have sold yet another portfolio of 5 HAM projects to Cube Highways, focusing on the efficient use of equity," DBL said in its annual report.

It had won 12 HAM (hybrid annuity mode) projects in 2018-19.

The company is in talks with few "large global financial investors," in this regard, it said. "We will continue to emphasise on improving the Return on Equity by exploring possibilities for monetising the remaining 7 HAM projects out of the 12 we had won in FY19, for which we are in talks with a few large financial investors," it said.

To fuel highway projects, the government had earlier approved HAM under which it provides 40 per cent of the project cost to the developer to start work while the remaining investment is made by the developer.

—PTI

Non-tariff steps affect all Indian products: UN

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 13

Non-tariff measures like technical barriers to trade (TBT) and export-related measures affect all the products exported out and imported into India, finds a study by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad).

A total of 4,618 non-tariff measures (NTMs) have been issued by 17 Indian ministries and institutions. China has issued 7,332 NTMs, Australia 1,897 and Japan 1,278, finds a study by Unctad on NTMs in countries initially engaged in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations. The study includes countries like Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. Non-tariff measures are policy steps other than ordinary customs tariffs that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in goods.

TBT, which is any regulation, standard or procedure that can make exporting goods to a country difficult as well as other export-related measures, affects all the 11,483 products or HS codes traded by the country.



While TBT accounts for 36.24 per cent of the NTMs, sanitary and phytosanitary measures account for 50 per cent of the NTMs. Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures are quarantine and biosecurity measures which applied to protect human, animal or plant life or health from risks arising from the introduction, establishment and spread of pests and diseases and from risks arising from additives, toxins and contaminants in food and feed.

Such measures have been largely issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Both these ministries account for 63.6 per cent of total NTMs in India.

Animal and animal products, food, vegetables and chemicals mostly have SPS measures. Of all the product groups, food-stuff is the product group,

which has 100 per cent NTMs, followed by vegetable products (99.72 per cent) and animals and animal products (99.56 per cent).

As many as 7,557 products have four different NTMs and more. The product groups that mostly have four or more NTMs are textiles (88.9 per cent), machinery/electricals (80.4 per cent) and chemicals and allied industries (57.5 per cent).

Although the current database for NTMs with respect to India is relatively comprehensive, it requires regular updates to capture the impact on international trade, value chains, and business models, finds Unctad. Indian laws are often amended and continuously reviewed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ministry of Finance to ensure that India's trade practices and policy are fair, inclusive, profitable and feasible.

NVIDIA NEARS \$40 BILLION DEAL TO BUY CHIPMAKER ARM

DINESH NAIR,
LIANA BAKER & IAN KING
SEPT. 13

Nvidia Corp is nearing a deal to acquire SoftBank Group Corp's chipmaker Arm Ltd, according to people familiar with the mat-

ter, an acquisition that would extend its reach into mobile devices.

A transaction could be announced as soon as this week, said the people. The companies have been discussing a deal that would value Arm at about \$40 bil-

lion in cash and stock, two of the people said.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported Saturday that a deal worth more than \$40 billion could be sealed early this week. Nvidia and Softbank represeedined to comment. — Bloomberg

Over 13 lakh join stock rush in last one month

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 13

More than 13.21 lakh new retail investors were added in the BSE's registered investors' list in the last one-month period, indicating growing retail investors' interest in the equity market.

Maharashtra (2,77,588), Rajasthan (1,03,145), Gujarat (1,01,190), Uttar Pradesh (1,01,076), Andhra Pradesh (87,633) and Telangana (82,441) were states where the highest new unique client codes were added in the last one month.

Among the large states, Telangana registered the highest percentage increase in new client additions to the capital market at 6.70 per cent while Andhra Pradesh clocked 3.17 per cent rise.

Smaller states of North East are seeing the highest percentage increase due to smaller base—for example, Manipur (8.84 per cent/2,579 new investors).

Delhi showed relatively lower increase in new additions, with a 1.64 per cent rise, or 50,265 new investors.

"Over 35.97 lakh new retail investors were added since last quarter, taking total registered investors' number to over 5.42 crore," as per latest BSE data as on September 13.

Another evidence of large number retail investors investing in stocks has emerged from national depository Central Depository Services (CDSL) adding 50 lakh investors since January 2020.

"The net number of active demat accounts opened with CDSL has crossed a new milestone of 2.5 crore (25 million)," CDSL said at the beginning of September.

CDSL crossed the 2-crore mark in January 2020 and crossed the 2.5 crore mark as on August 31, 2020.

Speaking on the milestone achieved, CDSL MD & CEO Nehal Vora said, "The growth of investors, especially in the current unprecedented times, is a representation that the Investor is now moving to a self-sufficient environment with opening and operating demat accounts from the comfort of their homes."

New Delhi, Sept. 13: Regulator Sebi on Sunday said that mutual funds have many options to meet with the requirements of its circular pertaining to asset allocation framework for multi cap schemes based on the preference of their unit holders.

In a press release, the markets watchdog clarified that apart from rebalancing their portfolio in the Multi Cap schemes, mutual funds (MF) could inter-alia facilitate switch to other schemes by unit holders, merge their Multi Cap scheme with Large Cap scheme or convert their Multi Cap scheme to another scheme category, for instance, Large cum Mid Cap scheme.

The clarification came after the regulator tweaked asset allocation framework for multi cap mutual funds through a circular issued on Friday, requiring them to invest a minimum of 25 per cent each in Large, Mid and Small Cap stocks, and giving flexibility to the fund manager with the balance 75 per cent.

In its latest press release,



Sebi noted that some sections of media have reported various views on the circular and various conclusions are being drawn.

"Sebi is conscious of market stability and therefore has given time to the Mutual Funds till January 31, 2021 to achieve compliance with the circular through its preferred route of which rebalancing of the portfolio is only one such route," the regulator said.

It is reiterated that to achieve the desired objective of True to Label and A p p r o p r i a t e Benchmarking, Sebi will examine proposals of the industry received in this regard, it added.

Multi Cap schemes had

flexibility in terms of allocation to Large, Mid and Small Cap stocks but it was observed that some Multi Cap Schemes have skewed portfolios, with over 80 per cent of investment in large cap stocks akin to Large Cap schemes, and some Multi Cap schemes have near zero or insignificant asset allocation to small cap companies.

Therefore, in order to achieve the objectives of True to Label and Appropriate Benchmark, a need was felt to review the scheme characteristics of Multi Cap schemes and take necessary steps to clearly distinguish Multi Cap schemes from other category of schemes, Sebi noted.

"In order to diversify the underlying investments of multicap funds across the large, mid and smallcap companies and be true to label, it has been decided to partially modify the scheme characteristics of multicap fund," the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) had said in its circular on Friday.

— PTI

Tyre-maker ATG to invest ₹ 1,240 cr at Vizag plant

Mumbai, Sept. 13: Off-highway tyre-maker Alliance Tire Group (ATG), owned by the Japanese major Yokohama Group, is setting up its third plant in the country in Visakhapatnam with an investment of \$165 million (around Rs 1,240 crore).

The proposed plant will add over 20,000 tonnes per annum (55 tonne per day rubber weight) capacity to the 2.3-lakh-tonne annual production from two India plants and will be commissioned by the first quarter of 2023. The plant will generate around over 600 new jobs, adding to its 5,500-strong headcount, Nitin Mantri, chairman of Yokohama India and director of ATG, told PTI on Sunday.

ATG has one plant at Dahej in Gujarat with an annual capacity of 1.3 lakh tonne (360 tonne per day) and another at Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu with an annual capacity of 1 lakh tonne. The group has a 45,000-tonne plant in Israel as well where it has its main



R&D centre. The TN facility has an R&D centre.

These two plants produce all the three key off-highway tyre brands, of ATG Alliance for agricultural machinery, Galaxy for construction & industrial machinery, and Primex for forestry machinery. Over 90 per cent of the production is exported to over 120 countries.

Mantri said they were looking for a suitable location for the third plant for almost three years now and had identified Vizag before the pandemic broke out.

From a demand side we see one of the best farming seasons ahead here and forestry is also doing well globally. Only construction is down. — PTI

How flying business class feels more like economy now

ANGUS WHITLEY &
ANURAG KOTOKY
SEPT. 13

Forget the flute of chilled Moët & Chandon before takeoff, mid-flight gin and tonics and a roaming dessert trolley after dinner. Flying business class isn't what it used to be.

Efforts to minimise human interaction and reduce the risk of infection are taking the shine off the most expensive seats onboard commercial aircraft. Gone are the multi-course banquets and warm personal service, once the hallmarks of carriers like Singapore Airlines Ltd and Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. These days, what's left of premium-grade travel is functional, hygienic and closer

to cattle class – only with more legroom.

The limitations are one more headache for an industry grappling with a near-total collapse in demand and follow years of luxury onepmanship among carriers in a contest for the most profitable passengers.

Suddenly, it's harder to tell airlines apart when you're up the pointy end. That's making it tougher to win top-paying customers, and risks pushing some to the back of the plane.

"There's nobody to help you with your bag, you're not escorted to your seat, and there's definitely no pre-flight champagne," said Sandra Lim, who flew business class to Singapore from Los

Angeles with Singapore Air late last month. "It feels like it's reverted back to economy class."

Crew wore face masks and eye shields, and avoided contact and shared touch points where possible, Lim said. While passengers could ask for a drink, they weren't freely offered, and there were no menus. Meals came with everything on one tray, just like in economy, rather than in separate courses.

"When you strip away the food and service, it's just a mode of transport to get from point A to B," said Lim, a 38-year-old food and beverage consultant.

Some overseas routes have resumed, but traffic worldwide has barely started to creep back. International passenger



demand was down 92 per cent in July. The planes that were flying were typically about half full, according to the International Air Transport Association.

It's also not clear to what extent the premium mar-

ket, which IATA says generated 30 per cent of airlines' international revenues in 2019, can recover. Many grounded business travellers have become accustomed to video conferencing rather than making visits in person, and a global recession threatens corporate budgets.

LAG SA, owner of British Airways and Iberia, said in July that leisure demand will recover before corporate travel, and this "structural change" in the market will lead to new cabin layouts. On a conference call, IAG chief financial officer Stephen Gunning said British Airways retired its Boeing Co 747s early partly because they had so many premium seats.

Virgin Australia

Holdings Ltd chief executive officer Paul Scurrah said at a conference this month that business travel would rebound slower than the overall market as some companies maintain work-from-home policies. Qantas Airways Ltd CEO Alan Joyce was optimistic that demand would fully recover, but not until 2023 or 2024.

Low-cost airlines such as Ryanair Holdings Plc and EasyJet Plc, largely catering to short-haul leisure travellers, are likely to bounce back faster than airlines with a bigger international focus, UBS Group AG analysts led by Jarrod Castle said in a report last month.

According to Volodymyr Bilotkach, a lecturer in air-transport management

at the Singapore Institute of Technology, a single business class seat that lies flat needs to generate at least four times the profit of an economy seat to justify all the space it takes up in the plane.

Some airlines will use the pandemic to permanently downgrade their offerings in premium cabins to save money, said Jeremy Clark, who runs Malaysia-based JC Consulting, which advises carriers on catering and service.

"There will still be airlines that recognise the value good food and service bring to their brand in return for the relatively small cost of providing it," said Clark. "We're human beings. We like to be spoiled."

— Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Sree’s spot-fixing ban comes to end

New Delhi: India pacer S. Sreesanth's ban for alleged spot-fixing came to an end on Sunday, concluding a seven-year punishment that was originally meant to be for life and was aggressively contested by the flamboyant bowler. The 37-year-old has already made it clear that he intends to resume at least his domestic career at the end of the ban and his home state Kerala has promised to consider him if he manages to prove his fitness. "I'm completely free of any charges nd anything nd now gonna represent the sport I love the most.will give my very best to every ball I ball even (if) it's just practice," he tweeted on Friday, a couple of days before the end of his suspension. "Just have another 5 to 7 years max to give it all I've got nd I will give the very best to any team I play," he added. However, with the Indian domestic season postponed at present due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it remains to be seen when exactly Sreesanth is able to make a comeback if Kerala decides to give him a chance. — PTI

Ruturaj to undergo 2 more Covid tests

Dubai: Young Chennai Super Kings batsman Ruturaj Gaekwad, who tested positive for Covid-19 last month, will undergo two fresh tests starting Sunday and could miss the first few games of the IPL. Thirteen members of the CSK contingent tested positive for the virus and two of them were players — Gaekwad and Deepak Chahar. Chahar, along with 11 others, has recovered and resumed training after clearing his mandatory two tests. "Ruturaj will undergo two tests, today and tomorrow. If he tests negative, he will be back in team hotel bubble. The other staff members have tested negative and are now back to normal," CSK CEO K.S. Viswanthan said on Sunday. For Gaekwad, CSK will follow the established protocol and he will also have to undergo cardiovascular and lung function tests to ascertain his fitness if he clears the virus tests. — PTI

Messi plays 45 mins in friendly

Madrid: Lionel Messi started and played 45 minutes in Barcelona's first pre-season friendly on Saturday as Ronald Koeman showed no hesitation in reintegrating the Argentinian. Barca beat third tier side Gimnastic Tarragona 3-1, with Ousmane Dembele opening the scoring on his first appearance since November. Antoine Griezmann and Philippe Coutinho then each scored penalties, either side of Javier Bonilla pulling one back for the visitors. But Messi's return at the Johan Cruyff Stadium was perhaps the biggest plus for Koeman, who was taking charge of his first game since being appointed coach last month. — AFP

Honda riders slip in Misano

Misano Adriatico, Italy: Despite flashes of promise throughout the weekend, the Repsol Honda Team left the first of two races in Misano unrewarded despite efforts of Alex Marquez and Stefan Bradl. Putting a difficult Saturday behind him, Alex Marquez showed his maturity as he approached Sunday with an open mind. A strong performance in morning Warm Up, ending ninth and only 0.321 off the fastest time set by Takaaki Nakagami, proved there was promise in his race pace. A steady start as the lights went out saw Alex make up a handful of places early, the MotoGP rookie spending much of the race working on getting past Petrucci. Matching the speed of the leaders during the closing stages, Alex was forced to settle for 17th. Takaaki Nakagami took top Honda honours in ninth, his sixth top 10 finish in this season.

Live on TV

FOOTBALL
English Premier League: Brighton vs Chelsea from 12.30 am (Tuesday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

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NAOMI AGAIN!

Osaka beats Victoria to win second US Open crown

New York, Sept. 13: Japan's Naomi Osaka came from a set down to beat Victoria Azarenka of Belarus to win the US Open on Saturday and clinch her third Grand Slam title. Osaka, the fourth seed, overcame her unseeded opponent 1-6, 6-3, 6-3 inside a near-empty Arthur Ashe Stadium at Flushing Meadows. It brought 22-year-old Osaka's haul of tennis major trophies to three after her victories at the 2018 US Open and 2019 Australian Open.

"I didn't really enjoy that. It was a really tough match for me," Osaka said following her 1hr 53min victory. Azarenka, 31, sprinted to the first set in just 26 minutes, dominating Osaka with an 88 percent success rate on her first serve.

The Japanese was uncharacteristically sloppy, hitting a whopping 13 unforced errors.

Azarenka then went 2-0 ahead in the second set before Osaka fought back to break her opponent's serve twice and take a 4-3 lead.

The momentum had quickly swung in Osaka's favor and she broke a third time to take the match to a deciding set.

"I just thought it would be very embarrassing to lose this in under an hour so I just have to try as hard as I can and stop having a really bad attitude," said Osaka, explaining the turnaround.

Osaka enjoyed the first breakthrough of set three in game four when she broke Azarenka's serve to take a 3-1 lead. Azarenka then blew a golden opportunity to get back into the match, wasting three break points as Osaka recovered from 0-40 to hold for a 4-1 lead.

Azarenka saved four break points to make it 4-2 as she battled to keep the contest alive.

When she broke Osaka in game seven, the set was back on serve. But Osaka immediately



Naomi Osaka of Japan returns the ball during the US Open women's singles final against Victoria Azarenka of Belarus at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on Saturday. Osaka won 1-6, 6-3, 6-3. — AFP

broke back after Azarenka pushed a forehand wide to leave herself the opportunity of serving for the match and title. On Osaka's second championship point, Azarenka found the net.

'THIS WAS FUN'

Azarenka, a two-time

Grand Slam champion, was playing in her first tennis major final since losing the 2013 US Open to Serena Williams.

The last few years of the former world number one's career have been disrupted, firstly by injury then by a custody battle over her son, born

in December 2016.

But she enjoyed a fairytale run in New York, clinching the Western & Southern title before reaching Saturday's US Open final, where she lost for the third time.

"It's been a long road of getting here, but this was fun," she added. — AFP

CHAMP HINTS SHE'LL STEP UP RACE ACTIVISM

New York, Sept. 13: Naomi Osaka said she wants to be known for more than just tennis, suggesting she will keep campaigning for racial justice after winning her third Grand Slam at the US Open Saturday.

Osaka, of Japanese and Haitian heritage, wore different masks honouring victims of systemic racism and police brutality in the United States in each of the tournament's seven rounds.

The 22-year-old said thinking time during the coronavirus lockdown, which coincided with protests across the United States over the police killing of black man George Floyd, had led to her political awakening.

"I would definitely say it's been an important few months," Osaka said.

"For me, my life was always go-go tennis-wise, especially after the previous US Open that I won (in 2018). It definitely accelerated things, and I've never had a chance to slow down.

"The quarantine definitely gave me a chance to think a lot about things — what I want to accomplish, what I want people to remember me by. I came into this tournament, or these two tournaments, with that mindset."

Osaka first took an activist stance at the Western & Southern Open, a US Open tuneup event, when she threatened not to play her semi-final match in protest at the police shooting of black man Jacob Blake in Wisconsin.

Her decision prompted the WTA and ATP to postpone all semi-final matches by a day, inspiring Osaka to change her mind and make herself available for the final. — AFP

DDCA removes Justice Verma as its Ombudsman

New Delhi, Sept. 13: The Delhi & Districts Cricket Association on Sunday removed Justice (Retd) Deepak Verma from the post of Ombudsman during its Apex Council meeting, held virtually, and reinstated Justice (Retd) Badar Durrez Ahmed.

Justice Verma is also the Ombudsman of the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) and Apex Council felt that the one person can't hold the same post in two different state units.

All 11 members of the Council, including three government nominees, attended the meeting where it was "unanimously decided" to reinstate Justice Ahmed as Ombudsman.

"The decision (to replace Ombudsman) was unanimous. All his decisions were arbitrary without any consultation with the Apex Council. There were legal fees running into crores and support staff weren't being paid," a member of the Apex Council said on the condition of anonymity.

"We have appointed Justice Badar Durrez Ahmed. He has given his

consent. The decision will be ratified at the next AGM," he added.

It was also learnt that Saurabh Chaddha was appointed legal counsel of the DDCA.

However, all these appointments can not last not more than a month as DDCA needs to hold election by October 30 and a change in regime will mean new policy decisions.

Support Staff Issue

Most of the member of the support staff associated with various Delhi teams (age group, women, men) have finally been paid 50 per cent of their contract amounts, including Ranji team's former coach K. P. Bhaskar.

"Bhaskar's original contract was for ₹30 lakh provided the team qualified for the knockouts. Since Delhi didn't qualify for the knock-outs under his coaching, he was supposed to be paid ₹24 lakh (as per agreement). Out of ₹24 lakh, ₹12 lakh has already been paid. In the next few weeks, we hope to clear the entire amount," a senior official, who is dealing with players' payment informed. — PTI



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah scores his side's fourth goal against Leeds United in their Premier League match at the Anfield Stadium in Liverpool on Saturday. — AP

Super Salah seals it for Liverpool

London, Sept. 13: Mohamed Salah hit a hat-trick as Liverpool kicked off their Premier League title defence with a thrilling 4-3 win against Leeds on Saturday.

Just 48 days after last season's delayed conclusion, the Premier League returned with a bang as Liverpool and Leeds served up a feast of goals to open the 2020-21 campaign.

Liverpool didn't have it all their own way as Leeds came from behind three times before Egypt forward Salah finished them off with two minutes left.

Leeds are back in the top-flight for the first time in 16 years and Marcelo Bielsa's team deserve credit for putting Liverpool under enough pressure.

Salah won a fourth-minute penalty when his shot hit Leeds debutant Robin Koch on his outstretched arm and he dis-

THE RESULTS	
Liverpool (Salah 4-pen, 33, 88-pen, Van Dijk 20)	4
Leeds (Harrison 12, Bamford 30, Klich 66)	3
Crystal Palace (Zaha 13)	1
Southampton	0
West Ham	0
Newcastle (Wilson 56, Hendrick 87)	2

patched the spot-kick himself.

Leeds fashioned a stunning equaliser in the 12th minute when on-loan Manchester City midfielder Jack Harrison cut past Trent Alexander-Arnold and Joe Gomez before drilling a superb low finish into the bottom corner. — AFP

Mayhem at Mugello as Hami clinches 90th race

Mugello (Italy), Sept. 13: Lewis Hamilton won a chaotic, crash-littered Tuscan Grand Prix on Sunday, extending his lead at the top of the Formula One drivers' championship.

Reigning champion Hamilton finished ahead of his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas to claim his 90th F1 victory in a race which only 12 drivers finished, moving the Briton to within one win of equalling Michael Schumacher's all-time record.

"It's was all a bit of a daze," said Hamilton to Sky Sports.

"It was incredibly tough today... All the those restarts, the con-

centration that's needed during that time, it was really, really hard."

Hamilton, 35, is now on 190 points, some 55 ahead of Bottas and is also on course this season to equal Schumacher's record of seven world titles after claiming his sixth win in nine races this year.

Alex Albon finished third, claiming his first podium finish for Red Bull, after a thrilling drive to compensate his team for the early exit of Max Verstappen in the first of two multi-car collisions in a race of three Safety Car interventions. The race took two hours and 25 minutes to complete, with the spells behind the Safety Car adding up to 76 minutes.

Two spectacular multi-car collisions brought Sunday's Tuscan Grand Prix to a chaotic standstill and reduced the field to just 13 of the original starters, but despite all the carnage no driver was injured. — AFP



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton celebrates after winning the Tuscany Grand Prix at the Mugello circuit in Scarperia, Italy, on Sunday. — AP

Has SASCOC decision put SA cricket in jeopardy?



Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

There are a few days to go before the grand entertainment of cricket hits Indian television screens. As teams are preparing for the Indian Premier League (IPL) that kicks off on September 19, an important bit of news did not find much space among the reams being written about the blue riband tournament run by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

A few days ago, South Africa's Olympics body South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SAS-

COC) asked key members of Cricket South Africa (CSA) to step down from their posts and took over the administration of cricket in the country. To CSA, which has been in the deep end with allegations of corruption, racism and many other evils, SASCOC's directive has dug the hole deeper, casting a pall of gloom for cricketers and fans in the country.

Even as the 10-odd South African (SA) cricketers are busy shaking the rust, caused by a long absence of competitive cricket, in the Arabian desert for the IPL,

the question on the minds of their colleagues who are not as lucky is a terrible one directly concerning their future. South African cricket in the recent past has undergone turmoil, losing much talent, thanks to the Kolpak ruling which hit their country the hardest.

SASCOC's decision now puts a cloud over the future of SA cricket on the whole depending on which way the International Cricket Council (ICC) will interpret it. According to an article in the ICC constitution, cricketing matters of each member country must be handled autonomously only by the board without interference from the government or other public or quasi-public body. The debate whether SASCOC's ruling constitutes government

interference or not is something which ICC's legal team must be pondering over at this point in time.

SASCOC has strongly denied that their directive constitutes meddling by the government and stresses that it has not acted under any kind of directive from the country's rulers and is a completely independent act. While the legal eagles will be busy trying to decide SASCOC's stand, it will be pertinent to note that there is a precedent of familiar cases that have happened in the past.

SA's neighbours, Zimbabwe, were suspended by the ICC in July last year for alleged intrusion by their government in Zimbabwe Cricket's (ZC) affairs. Thus the country became first full member

of the ICC to be banned from playing any form of cricket. A similar fate was suffered by Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN), an associate member and a rising force in the Subcontinent. Both countries were brought back into the ICC fold in October 2019.

According to their website, SASCOC is the Sports Confederation for all Sports Federations in the Republic of South Africa, and of course, is recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC), amongst others. The latest media release by them confirms that CA is its member and is required to comply fully with their constitution. SASCOC claims that it has acted in good faith, and in the best

interests of the sport.

What then constitutes 'government interference' in the constitution of the ICC? If an association has members of that country's ruling party on their board, will their opinion or acts be defined as those suggested by the government? In the case of Pakistan Cricket Board, their country's head of state automatically becomes their patron-in-chief. When Imran Khan, the current head takes a call on cricketing matters will it be termed as one taken by an eminent cricketer (their most successful cricket captain) or the head of their government?

Closer to home, though the committee formed under Retd. Chief Justice R. M. Lodha did not stop politicians from holding posts in the BCCI, the

Supreme Court (SC) suggested a ban on government servants and ministers donning the role of cricket administrators. Laws are meant to be laid and enforced for the betterment of the populace, in this case for the game to prosper.

From an ICC perspective, for now, SASCOC's action will cause furrows among their legal team and the country will be under close scrutiny.

It will be prudent for ICC to take a relook at their constitution and come out with clear guidelines which leave little room for doubt for their members, going forward. They could well consider the statement of Chief Justice T. S. Thakur who had said: "Politicians as a category cannot be barred. There is a politician in everyone."