


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VISAKHAPATNAM | WEDNESDAY | 9 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER

 **Max:** 34.6°C
Min: 26.4°C
RH: 77%
Rainfall: Trace
Forecast: Partly Cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
34/26°C

COVID-19 CUNT




CASES	DEATHS
(+87,066)	(+1,085)
43,63,843	73,894

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,392)	(+11)
TS: 1,45,163	906
(+10,601)	(+73)
AP: 5,17,094	4,560

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

 **2,76,39,033**
 **DEATHS**
8,99,172
 **COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES**
213
worldometers.info/
coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Bahula Saptami till 2.04 am (Wednesday)
Star: Kritika till 11.12 am
Varjyam: 4.47 am to 6.32 am (Wednesday)
Durmuhurtam: 11.49 am to 12.37 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Muharram 20, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.50 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.45 pm
Maghrib: 6.15 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.05 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.44 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.47 AM
MOONSET TODAY 11.17 AM

COUNTER POINT



Replace my photo with Sushant's in the election poster!

BRIEF

APCETs to begin from Sept. 10

Vijayawada: The APCETs will be conducted in Andhra Pradesh from September 10 to October 5, including EAMCET following Covid-19 protocol. The JEE mains exam was successfully completed and the government is making all arrangements for the smooth performance of all CETs. Separate exam rooms are provided to the students with mild symptoms during tests at the exam centres. The minister for education, Adimulapu Suresh, announced the exam dates of all common entrance tests and said they will be held following the Covid-19 guidelines issued by the Centre.

■ Full report on Page 2

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Stand-off between China and Australia over journalists



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Kamath panel on debt restructuring

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Elise in wonderland at US Open



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FIRST LAC FIRING IN 45 YEARS

Chinese Army attempts to occupy Indian peak, when opposed PLA troops fire in air to intimidate Indians

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 8

Tensions with China seem to be intensifying in Ladakh with the Indian Army saying on Tuesday that in a major escalation of the ongoing face-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Chinese troops fired shots in the air on Monday night to intimidate its soldiers after failing to capture an Indian position in the Chushul sector. This is the first time in 45 years that a shot has been fired at the LAC.

According to sources, on Monday night, Chinese troops, armed with guns and what looked like their traditional Guandao weapon (a single-edge blade on the end of a pole), attempted to dislodge Indian troops from Mukhpari, one of the highest peaks in the Chushul sector.

Since Indian soldiers were on a height, they could see Chinese action and warned them to move back, and that's when they fired shots in the air.

Officials said some 30-40 PLA soldiers are involved in a direct face-off with Indian soldiers in the general area of Mukhpari. The situation in the area is tense and even a small incident can lead to a big escalation.

China, however, accused Indian troops of crossing the LAC and firing shots at Chinese border personnel.

"Through diplomatic and military channels, we have made stern representations asking the Indian side to stop its dangerous actions, immediately withdraw the people who crossed the line and discipline the frontline troops and those who fired the warning shots and make sure similar incidents won't happen again," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, said at the ministry briefing in Beijing on Tuesday. The Indian Army dismissed Chinese allegations and Brigadier-level talks were held on Tuesday to try to de-escalate the situation.

The Cabinet Committee on Security, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, held a meeting on Tuesday to discuss the aggression shown by the Chinese Army. A series of other high-level meetings were held in New Delhi on the evolving situation in the Ladakh sector.

The period between



Chinese soldiers, armed with guns and *guandao*, a traditional weapon used in martial arts, arrive at Mukhpari and Rezang La on Monday before closing in on Indian posts along the Line of Actual Control.

Nepal copters active in China's support near U'khand border

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC
HYDERABAD SEPT. 8

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

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



A Nepal Army helicopter (circled) is seen flying around the Lipulekh pass near border trijunction between India, Nepal and Tibet Autonomous Region of China.

Nepal border, close to the hill state of Uttarakhand, where massive deployment of forces is underway.

Over the past couple of months, Nepal Army choppers have been seen undertaking multiple sorties — something which sources describe as quite unusual — as the Himalayan nation has, more or less, left the people living on its border with India and China at the mercy of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of

China. The PLA is said to be not only supplying food and other essentials to the villagers but is also believed to be slowly taking control of certain areas inside Nepalese territory.

Informed sources told *Deccan Chronicle* that while the annual trade at Purang town in Tibet — where traders from the three countries gather each year — had been suspended this year due to Covid-19, so also the Kailash Mansarovar yatra, the passes remained inaccessible for civilians.

This made the task of enhancing its military bases near Mount Kailash easier for the Chinese PLA.

Satellite images show the deployment of surface-to-air missiles and the ongoing construction activity to expand the base. The pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar traverses the Lipulekh pass.

China's People's Liberation Army has confirmed that five youths missing from Arunachal Pradesh have been found by them and their handing over process to Indian authorities is being worked out, Union minister Kiren Rijiju said on Tuesday. The five youths had gone missing on Friday from the Sino-Indian border in

advantage to dominate the area and keep a watch on Chinese garrison.

External affairs minister S Jaishankar had said the situation is "very serious" and called for "very, very deep conversation" at a political level.

Five Indians found on Chinese side

New Delhi, Sept. 8: China's People's Liberation Army has confirmed that five youths missing from Arunachal Pradesh have been found by them and their handing over process to Indian authorities is being worked out, Union minister Kiren Rijiju said on Tuesday.

The five youths had gone missing on Friday from the Sino-Indian border in

Chinese friends will find a mutually acceptable solution through dialogue. We will be happy to see positive results," the senior Russian diplomat said on Tuesday.

Opposing any escalation of Sino-Indian border tensions, Babushkin said, "We are encouraging the countries for dialogue to expand common ground ... We are supporting the principle of dialogue ... We would encourage every effort (for peace) ... Russia promotes a political solution and a diplomatic solution."

Oximeter price sets new record

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

Given the huge demand for pulse oximeters as people check oxygen saturation levels in their body, a section of pharmacists and traders are duping gullible patients by selling them at an exorbitant price to make easy money in several parts in Andhra Pradesh.

As the doctors have been

advising people to check oxygen saturation levels in their bodies at regular intervals in a day as it indicates any infection in their lungs, a good number of people are on a spree of purchasing pulse oximeters and checking their SP02.

Taking advantage of the situation, pharmacists are procuring them at a cost of about ₹600 each from manufacturers based in India

and selling them at prices ranging from ₹2,300 onwards with a profit margin of more than 100 per cent.

Though some pharmacists are procuring the oximeters from standard manufacturers who give details, others are procuring them from Delhi and Mumbai with no details of the manufacturer.

■ Page 2: Patients seek price control for oximeter

STRICT ACTION IN CHARIOT FIRE CASE: MINISTER

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, SEPT 8

Endowment minister Vellampalli Srinivas on Tuesday said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has instructed officials to take stringent action against culprits involved in the fire accident of a temple chariot at Antarvedi.

During his visit Antarvedi along with his cabinet colleagues, P. Viswaroop and Ch. Srinivasa Venugopal Krishna, the endowment minister said temple executive officer N. Surya Chakram has already been transferred and two temple officials were suspended after the incident and a thorough investigation has been ordered.

The minister said a new chariot would be built before the celestial marriage of the Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in February and steps would be taken to ensure that such incidents do not happen in future.

BRIBERY | RACKET

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

Several officers had paid lakhs of rupees as bribes to some people who posed as agency officials, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) found during surprise checks carried out at government offices in eight districts.

Some government officers had complained that they had paid huge amounts to

the fake ACB officials, who reportedly called them over the phone and threatened them with action for corruption. The amounts ranged from ₹25,000 to ₹5 lakh.

In Srikakulam district, it was found that a panchayat engineer paid ₹50,000 on November 27, 2019, to fake ACB officials after receiving threat calls. ACB sleuths inspected the office of deputy executive engineer, roads and buildings (R&B), at Amudalavasla

● **IN ELURU**, a deputy collector and an executive officer of Dwaraka Tirumala Devasthanam paid ₹1.97 lakh when he was threatened that his pension would not be paid and he would face trouble.

● **IN VISAKHAPATNAM**, a joint chief of inspector of factories paid ₹5 lakh through his attender.

and found that the last work cleared by the official was in March, and attendance registers were not being maintained properly.

In Visakhapatnam, a joint chief of inspector of factories paid ₹5 lakh through

his attender. In Eluru, a deputy collector and an executive officer of Dwaraka Tirumala Devasthanam paid ₹1.97 lakh when he was threatened that his pension would not be paid and he would

sion came four days after defence minister Rajnath Singh told Chinese defence minister General Wei Fenghe at a meeting in Moscow that it must not try to change the status quo at LAC.

Officials say that the

Rhea arrested on drug charges

SAURABH JOSHI | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 8

After three rounds of questioning, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) arrested Rhea Chakraborty on Tuesday on charges of drugs consumption and peddling in a case related to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

A court later rejected her bail petition and remand-

ed her to judicial custody till September 22.

Earlier, after Rhea submitted a complaint to the Bandra police station on Monday, the Mumbai police have filed a case against Sushant Singh Rajput's sister Priyanka and Dr Tarun Kumar of Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital for criminal conspiracy and abetment to suicide. The case has now been transferred

to the CBI for investigation. On Tuesday evening, Rhea was taken to Sion Hospital for routine medical examination and Covid-19 test.

"All the arrested accused would be jointly questioned further after Rhea's custody is granted to NCB. She was grilled on Tuesday again before being arrested," said an official privy to the investigation.

Anti-corruption sleuths raid government offices to find out officials being duped by fraudsters

Fraudsters use ACB tag to collect bribes from officials

face trouble.

In Vijayawada, an executive engineer, rural water supply, in Gudibanda, paid ₹3.5 lakh on December 8, 2019. In Ongole, a motor vehicle inspector in Markapuram paid ₹4.94 lakh to a fake ACB officer in two instalments.

In Nellore, a revenue divisional officer in Atmakur paid ₹25,000 as bribe. The assistant EO, deputy commissioner's office, GST state tax, paid ₹30,000 in two

spells. A factories chief inspector paid ₹2 lakh and the ACB officials noticed that he failed to inspect factories located in his jurisdiction from September. He also failed to maintain records and registers and to conduct mock drills properly.

A motor vehicle inspector in Gudur paid ₹2 lakh. In Tirupati, an executive engineer, R&B, Chittoor, paid ₹2 lakh in two instalments after receiving threatening calls from one Srinath

Reddy claiming to be an inspector, ACB in Vijayawada.

The ACB found during its checks that the municipal commissioner, Palamaneru failed to check and supervise registers. In Kadapa, deputy superintending engineer, irrigation circle, Kadapa, paid ₹1.5 lakh in two instalments following a call from one Srinath Reddy claiming to be a deputy superintendent of police at ACB, Vijayawada.

SHORT TAKES

GOVT TRANSFERS
4 IAS OFFICERS,
CS ISSUES G.ODC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

The state government transferred four IAS officers on Tuesday. Ms Nilam Sawhney, chief secretary, issued GO RT No 1414 in this regard.

Interestingly, 1987-batch IAS officer and special chief secretary to the government (Endowments) J.S. Venkateswara Prasad, was transferred and posted as director general, AP HRDI, Bapatla. According to the sources, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was unhappy with his performance.

M.N. Harendhira Prasad, deputy secretary in the finance department & CEO, CFMS (APCFSS), who is playing an important role in the finance department in releasing of all funds was transferred and posted as joint collector (Rythu Bharosa & Revenue), Nellore district.

M. Girija Shankar, an IAS officer of 2001 batch and commissioner, panchayat raj & rural development, is placed in full additional charge of the post of secretary to government (Endowments), until further orders.

Kothamasu Dinesh Kumar, sub-collector, Tenali, was transferred as municipal commissioner, Nellore.

Kathawate Mayur Ashok, who came to AP on inter-cadre transfer from Bihar, was posted as sub-collector, Tenali.

HC EXTENDS STAY
ON ARREST OF
EX INTEL CHIEFDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

The AP High Court reserved its order and extended the interim stay on the arrest of senior IPS officer and former state intelligence chief A.B. Venkateswara Rao here on Tuesday.

The High Court bench headed by Justice M. Satyanarayana Murthy held hearing in the case following a petition filed by the IPS officer earlier raising apprehension on his arrest by the police in a case related to his alleged involvement in irregularities in purchase of surveillance equipment from Israel-based firm and awarding the contract to the company owned by his son.

Petitioner's counsel B. Adinarayana Rao argued that the petitioner had a fundamental right to dignity and privacy under article 21 of the Indian Constitution and said that his apprehension that the police would take action prejudicial to his interests was genuine.

However, advocate general S. Sriram said that the senior IPS officer in his petition against his suspension did not implead anybody against whom he made allegations and further said that the official did the same thing again in this petition also. He argued that though the petitioner informed the court that he would not interfere in the inquiry, his ability to alter the narration of witnesses was recorded and it would be placed before the court, if it wanted.

FAPCCI WEB
SESSION FOR
ENTREPRENEURS

Vijayawada: Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FAPCCI) is conducting web-based sessions on Export Marketing - Procedures and Documentation, for three days, from September 10 to 12.

FAPCCI programme coordinator Sk Sahabuddin said that to encourage new entrepreneurs to foray into export business, FAPCCI is conducting lectures by eminent speakers and senior officials from Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), banks, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) and Customs.

APSP additional DGP (law and order) A. Ravisankar said that 90 per cent of the 119 stipendiary constables were graduates and post-graduates and they completed a nine-month training.

MUSLIM LAWYERS
SEEK SHARE IN PP
APPOINTMENTS

Vijayawada: State unit of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) has demanded fair chance for Muslim advocates in the appointment of public prosecutors and official receivers at various district courts.

A delegation of IUMLAP, led by its state president Sk Basheer Ahmed, met deputy chief minister and minister for minorities welfare S.B. Amzath Basha at Secretariat on Tuesday and submitted a memorandum in this regard.

Quality check



Fishermen grade the fish for exporting from the fishing harbour in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. With the ease of lockdown major content of fish is being exported from the Visakhapatnam harbour to other parts of the world.

— K. MURALI KRISHNA

Jagan cracks down on
sand and liquor mafias

CM assures his full cooperation to officials to curb the menace

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEP. 8

Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, gave a green signal to officials to take strict action against sand and liquor mafias.

On the illegal transport of sand and liquor, the CM assured officials that he is with them and to take stringent action against the mafia with no fear of social status, political pressure or caste power. “The Chief Minister is with you, Anything Illegal, please don't hesitate,” he said.

Instructions were given to ministers and MLAs not to tolerate these mafias. The CM stated that there is no need of sparing anybody in these illegal activities and there would be no political involvement or pressures hence the officials should act tough to curb the mafias.

During his Spandana video conference with district collectors and SPs,

● Instructions were given to ministers and MLAs not to tolerate these mafias.

● The CM stated that there is no need of sparing anybody in these illegal activities and there would be no political involvement or pressures hence the officials should act tough to curb the mafias.

Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy directed officials to complete identifying boundaries, marking stones, taking photographs of beneficiaries standing in their allotted sites, record and file the details on the web, land and recognition of forest rights (ROFR) databases. He said that the distribution of RoFR pattas to tribals in 35 scheduled zones would take place on October 2, commemorating Gandhi Jayanti.

On village secretariats, he said that the biometric attendance system is being implemented in village/ward secretariats and every employee should work sitting in the office. He said that attendance

and joint collectors four times in a week, Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy said. “HoDs and secretaries should also visit village/ward secretariats twice in a month and this activity would be monitored from the Chief Minister's office. A call centre has been set up with 200 employees and they were monitoring the services being provided in village/ward secretariats.”

Exams for 16,208 vacant posts in Village/ward secretariats would be conducted on September 25 and 26 and 2,228 exam centres are ready for the exams.

With regard to NREGA, the CM said the state has received an additional 4.25 crore working days and there is a chance of ₹4,000 crore material component to the state. He directed the officials to work keeping a target of utilising ₹10 crore material component in a week in every district.

Kurnool collector's choice of
TD success story irks YSRCD. SIVA RAMI REDDI
| DC
KURNOOL, SEPT. 8

Kurnool district collector G. Veera Pandian who is among 12 district collectors short-listed from across the country for the prestigious Prime Minister's award for innovation in “Promoting Livelihood”, kicked up a controversy as he chose to showcase the Telugu Desam regime's success story — Ksheera Sagar Sadanam, a cattle hostel at Thadakanapalle, on Wednesday.

Touted as first of its kind, the cattle hostel was inaugurated by N. Chandrababu Naidu on January 2, 2017 when he was CM.

Built at ₹2 crore funds from NREGS on the outskirts of Thadakanapalle in Kallur mandal, shelters 250 cattle in four sheds.

It was built as part of Swacha Bharat Abhiyan to ensure cleanliness in the homes of farmers by

● “Navarathnalu is a great concept that transformed livelihood, but no one thought of it,” a YSRC leader said.

shifting cattle to the outskirts.

Panyam MLA Katsani Rambhupal Reddy said though former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated it, the original concept was floated by him in 2011.

He said it was his idea to set up the cattle hostel. As the political situation was fluid during the Congress regime (2009-14), the project was buried in the bureaucratic shuffling.

Therefore, he emphatically said that Thadakanapalle which was part of his constituency, could well be showcased for PM award.

District TD president Somisetty Venkateswarlu said the ‘cattle hostel’ was inaugurated by Chandrababu Naidu and if someone takes credit we can't

SEB SUCCESSFULLY CURBED LIQUOR SMUGGLING, SAND MINING

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

State Special Enforcement Bureau commissioner Vineet Brijlal stated that they were able to control smuggling of liquor from

neighbouring states and illegal sand mining.

The officials held a meeting here on Tuesday to mark the successful completion of four months since the bureau's inception. Speaking on the

occasion, Mr Brijlal said that by using high-end technology, they were keeping close vigil at state borders and carrying out intense checking to curb smuggling of liquor and illegal transport of sand.

Covid-19 tests at
all govt hospitalsDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday directed officials to conduct Covid-19 tests at all government hospitals, PHCs, UHPs and area hospitals, so that people could get prompt services.

Presiding over the Spandana video conference programme with collectors and SPs from his camp office, the CM directed district collectors to initiate measures for providing results RTPCR and Truenat within 24 hours of taking samples and within 30 minutes in case of rapid examinations. He wanted steps to ensure that primary and secondary contacts of positive cases are kept under home quarantine for containing the spread of Coronavirus. Medical kits with all the required medicines must be provided to those under home isolation. He asked joint collectors to monitor supply of such kits.

The Chief Minister reiterated that focus should be on conducting more number of tests. Awareness must be created with in public over getting themselves tested for Covid-19 at facilities provided by the government. Pointing out that everyone will

have to learn living with Coronavirus, he instructed officials to remain vigilant and take timely action. They must make best use of the 104 call centre to create awareness among people.

The Chief Minister asked officials to expedite the process of recruiting medical professionals exclusively for Covid-19 duty. “The state government has already taken a decision to recruit 17,000 additional medical staff for treatment of Coronavirus patients. Besides this, the government has taken a decision to recruit 11,000 trainee nurses,” he said.

Officials informed the CM that 16 new teaching hospitals will be established in the state. Their tender process will commence next month. 11 teaching hospitals are already functioning across the state and with the new ones the state will have a total of 27 teaching hospitals.

The process of identifying land for Urban Health Clinics is also being expedited.

Deputy Chief Minister Alla Nani, ministers Botsa Satyanarayana and Adimulapu Suresh, and senior officials were among those at the Spandana programme.

YSRC GOVT'S NEGLIGENCE CAUSING
SPIKE IN COVID CASES, SAYS NAIDUDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday accused YSRC government of “negligence”, which has led to a record rise in Coronavirus cases within Andhra Pradesh.

Seven of the country's 15 worst-hit districts are in AP which recorded one lakh cases in just 10 days, when the first one lakh

cases took 138 days, he pointed out.

Addressing party workers and senior leaders via video conference, the TD president said over 13 per cent of the country's current infections are being reported from AP, indicating an alarming rate of Coronavirus spread in the state.

He expressed concern over the abnormal delay in supply of oxygen cylinders at Covid hospitals.

Activists stage
protest at AntarvediVADREVV SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, SEPT. 8

Tension gripped Antarvedi village in Sakshinipalli mandal of East Godavari district on Tuesday as activists of Hindu organisations staged a protest in front of the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple, where the chariot had been gutted in a fire on Sunday.

The agitators tried to cross the barricades put up at the temple and gherao three ministers who were at the temple, which resulted in jostling between the police and the protesters. The police resorted to a lathi charge to disperse the agitators.

According to sources, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, Ramadandu Hindu Mahasena, Hindu Dharma Prachara Parishad, Siva Shakthi and other organisations, had given a ‘Chalo Antarvedi’ call. This attracted activists from Krishna and East and West Godavari districts. They took out a procession holding placards and religious flags. Elsewhere, some organisations like the Pallava Sena and devotees of Lord Narasimha Swamy sat on relay fasts near the temple, seeking action on the arsonists who set fire to the chariot.

The agitators raised slogans against the government and demanded that the culprits should be punished. Noticing this, the police put up barricades. Meanwhile, ministers Vellampalli Srinivas, P. Vishwaroop and Ch. Srinivasa Veugopal

Krishna and Razole MLA, Rapaka Vara Prasad, came to the temple. The agitators tried to gherao Srinivas. The police quickly took the ministers inside the temple. The agitators reportedly damaged the minister's car. Their surge towards the temple resulted in a mild lathi charge.

Meanwhile, some miscreants reportedly pelted stones at the windows of a church nearby and damaged the gate and parapet wall of an old church. However, Eluru range DIG, K.V. Mohan Rao said that the police rushed to the spot and prevented them from attacking the churches. Sakshinipalli police took seven persons related to damage to property into custody and shifted them to police station.

Dr A. Ravishankar, inspector-general of police (law and order), said that a comprehensive investigation was being conducted into the gutting of the chariot and five teams, each headed by a DSP, had been formed to conduct the probe. He said that forensic experts had gathered some clues as well as CCTV footage of the fire.

Requesting people to maintain restraint and support the police in the investigation, Ravishankar warned that anyone who tried to damage places of worship of other religions would face stringent action. He also said that special forces from APSP in Kakinada had been deployed at Antarvedi to maintain law and order.

SCHOOLS LIKELY
TO REOPEN
ON OCTOBER 5DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

Hinting that schools are likely to re-open on October 5, Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, has directed officials to focus on completing the Nadu Nedu programme in schools by September 30 without any compromise in quality.

During the Spandana video conference here on Tuesday, Jagan instructed district collectors and joint collectors to monitor the quality of Nadu Nedu work and to speed up the work. He stated, “Though initially only a set of nine projects were included under Nadu Nedu, now one other task, the construction of kitchen sheds, was also included. The work should be completed by the month-end as schools are likely to re-open on October 5.”

Officials informed Jagan that slab work has to be done in 1085 toilets and 55,607 anganwadi centres are also going to be re-vamped under the Nadu Nedu initiative. In this context, as 22,979 anganwadis are being operated in rental spaces, officials were told to shift them into permanent buildings. For 12,018 centres, the allocation of land has to be done and 1200 new buildings were almost completed. The officials have been instructed to complete all the work by the end of this month.

Taking serious note of irregularities in sand mining and illegal transportation, Jagan ordered officials to take strict action against those involved, irrespective of their social status.

YSR Aasara will be launched on September 11, with a budget of ₹6,700 crore to benefit 90 lakh women of various self-help groups, said Jagan.

CETS IN STATE
WITH COVID-19
PROTOCOLDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

The APCETs will be conducted in Andhra Pradesh from September 10 to October 5, including Eamcet following Covid-19 protocol.

The JEE mains exam was successfully completed and the government is making all arrangements for the smooth performance of all CETs. Separate exam rooms are provided to the students with mild symptoms during tests at the exam centres.

The minister for education, Adimulapu Suresh, announced the exam dates of all common entrance tests and said they will be held following the Covid-19 guidelines issued by the centre.

The common entrance tests start with AP ICET, which takes place in four sessions on September 10 and 11. The AP ECET will follow on September 14 and AP Eamcet will be held between September 17 and September 25.

AP PGECET will be held on September 26, AP PGECET from September 28 to 30, AP EDCET and AP LawCET on October 1 and APPECET will be held from October 2 to 5.

Candidates can check information related to exam dates, download of admit cards, exam day instructions on the APSCE website www.sche.ap.gov.in.

As many as 2,72,720 candidates have registered for Eamcet, 64,884 candidates for AP ICET, and 37,167 have applied for AP ECET.

Keeping students' health in view, the number of examination slots have been increased to accommodate fewer students in each slot, said Suresh, adding that all examination centres will be sanitised with sodium hypochlorite after each session and the centre will also house sanitisers, gloves, face masks and thermal scanners to ensure a safe environment.

Mr Suresh assured parents that all safety precautions will be taken for the smooth performance of all CETs.

IN BRIEF

COPS ARREST 3,
SOLVE 58
CASESK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 8

The city police arrested three persons who were involved in 58 cases of property offences that were reported in Vizag city, Vizag Rural, Vizianagaram and West Godavari districts. The police recovered over 1,240 gm of gold ornaments worth ₹27.18 lakh, over 1,700 gm of silver ornaments worth ₹1 lakh and ₹1.69 lakh in cash, all together ₹29.95 lakh from the gang.

Addressing a press conference, the commissioner of police, Manish Kumar Sinha, said that the arrested have been identified as Bathula Prabhakar alias Rahul Reddy, 24, a native of West Godavari district, Pedapati Naveen, 21, a resident of Vizag city and Kuppa Taviti Raju, 28, a native of Vizianagaram.

Raju was receiving stolen property from Prabhakar and Naveen. Sinha said that recently, a few unidentified persons broke into the house of bishop K. Rajendra Singh, located in the Paradesipalem area in Vizag city and decamped with over 500 gm of gold jewellery and ₹2 lakh cash between August 16 and 17 when he was not in the house.

Based on the complaint, the police formed special teams to identify and nab the property offenders. The police examined the CCTV footage and the available clues at the spot. They managed to nab the prime accused in the burglary case Prabhakar near Gnanapuram Railway station in Vizag city and recovered the stolen property from his residence in Gopalapatnam area in the city.

The police also nabbed Prabhakar's associates Naveen and Taviti Raju. Prabhakar confessed that they were involved in over 58 property offences and stole over ₹34.21 lakh worth property. The police managed to recover 87 per cent of the stolen property in the over 58 cases.

VMRDA
TO REOPEN
TOURIST SPOTSDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 8

With the Unlock-4 guidelines easing restrictions on several activities, the Visakhapatnam Metro Region Development Authority (VMRDA) is gearing up to reopen all the entertainment and tourist places to the public from Thursday onwards. The Authority has closed all the tourist places and parks in its jurisdiction since March 23 to stem the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are several tourist attractions and parks being maintained by VMRDA such as Kailasagiri, VUDA Park, DrYSR Central Park, Thotlakonda Buddhist complex, Tenneti Park, INS Korusura Submarine Museum, TU-142 Aircraft Museum and Kailasagiri rope-way.

JUTE MILL TO
PAY ₹25 CRORE
TO WORKERSDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 8

Minister for tourism and culture Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao said the management of Chittivalasa Jute Mills has agreed to pay an amount of ₹25 crore to the employees by the end of December.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, the minister said the management agreed to pay the first installment of ₹11 crore in October and ₹7 crore each in November and December.

Union leaders agreed to the management's offer to pay the amount in three installments during the talks held in the morning on Tuesday.

According to Mr Srinivasa Rao, the management also agreed to pay ₹25,000 each to 694 casual workers. As per the agreement between union leaders and the management, around 6,500 workers would benefit.

According to the agreement, each regular worker would get ₹12,800 for five months and apprentice worker ₹10,000. This amount would be paid in one year.

The Chittivalasa Jute Mill management had declared lockout on April 20, 2009. On August 20, 2009 the state government had issued a GO No. 1265, stating that the lockout was unlawful. This was challenged in the high court by the management but it was dismissed.

Pandemic unrelenting in AP

Prakasam has recorded the highest number of new case with 1,457

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 8

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

In the Covid-19 bulletin issued here on Tuesday, out of 70,993 samples tested, 10,601 individuals are Covid-19-positive. Out of 42,37,070 samples tested so far in the state, 4,15,765 patients have been discharged after recovery while 96,769 patients are active with the infection and are undergoing treatment.

Prakasam district has recorded the highest number of new infections with 1,457, followed by East Godavari with 1,426, 1,178 in Chittoor, 1,122 in West Godavari, 1,042 in Nellore, 801 in Kadapa, 702 in Guntur, 598 in Vizianagaram, 514 in Kurnool, 505 in Srikakulam, 441 in Anantapur, 426 in Visakhapatnam and 389 in Krishna.

With regard to cumulative Covid-19 positive cases, East Godavari has been the worst affected district with 69,686, followed by 49,16 in Kurnool, 46,325 in Anantapur, 44,975 in West Godavari, 44,614 in Chittoor, 41,618 in Visakhapatnam, 41,602 in Guntur, 39,269 in Nellore, 32,729 in Kadapa, 30,950



A groom tying a mask to the bride at Kanakadurga temple after darshan of Goddess due to Covid-19 in Vijayawada on Tuesday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

in Prakasam, 29,048 in Srikakulam, 25,103 in Vizianagaram, 19,064 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Guntur registered 10 deaths from Covid-19, followed by eight each in Anantapur and Chittoor; seven each in Kadapa and Prakasam, six each in Nellore and Visakhapatnam, five each in East Godavari, Krishna and West Godavari, three in Srikakulam, two in Kurnool and one in Vizianagaram.

Prakasam, 16,020 in Krishna, 15,837 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Guntur registered 10 deaths from Covid-19, followed by eight each in Anantapur and Chittoor; seven each in Kadapa and Prakasam, six each in Nellore and Visakhapatnam, five each in East Godavari, Krishna and West Godavari, three in Srikakulam, two in Kurnool and one in Vizianagaram.

Chittoor recorded the highest number of cumulative deaths so far at 489, followed by Guntur with 438, 435 in East Godavari, 401 in Kurnool, 379 in Anantapur, 365 in West Godavari, 353 in Nellore, 337 in Prakasam, 330 in Visakhapatnam, 318 in Krishna, 270 in Srikakulam, 264 in Kadapa and 181 in Vizianagaram.

The state health authorities have discharged 11,691 Covid-19 infected patients after recovery from various hospitals in

the state in the last 24 hours.

AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 79,346 samples per one million population and has recorded a Covid-19 positive rate at 12.20. Maharashtra has tested 37,726 with a positive rate at 19.60 and Telangana has tested 44,961 with a positive rate at 8.08, showing AP as the most responsible state in terms of testing and facing the pandemic head-on.

Covid casts shadow on SV Zoo park

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 8

With its gates closed to public and regular revenue source in hibernation since the Covid-19 lockdown, animal feeding, payment of salaries to caretakers and maintenance have become a challenging task for the officials at Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park here.

Though the zoo authorities have so far managed with the savings from the revenue in the previous years, the funds are slowly exhausting and they are now looking for generous public donations and animal adoptions.

Spread over 5,532 acres and home to nearly 1,145 animals, birds and reptiles, the zoo is known to be one of the largest in Asia and attracts around eight lakh visitors annually.



White tigers in the enclosures at Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park in Tirupati.

ally. Most of the visitors

are devotees of Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala from all over the country. On an average, 2,170 visit the zoo every day and the number would be twice as many during weekends. On an average, the zoo generates around ₹2 lakh per day through sale of

entry tickets.

Since its closure more than five months ago, the zoo is said to have incurred an estimated loss of ₹3.46 crore. It needs ₹1.64 lakh per day towards maintenance, animal feed, staff salaries and other miscellaneous expenses. Speaking to *Deccan*

Chronicle, zoo curator M.

Hima Sailaja said, "The savings are now being utilised for essential expenses like salaries, electricity charges and other emergencies, while the money for feeding animals is being provided by the government. If the situation continues, we will soon run out of the

savings."

To tide over the crisis, the zoo is now hoping that animal lovers, celebrities and businessmen will come forward to adopt animals, which means they would sponsor the expenses for their maintenance. "Taking care of various animal species would give immense joy and pride to those who adopt them. By this act, one would get a feeling of participation in conservation of our rich heritage," the curator noted.

In recognition of donors and animal adopters, the zoo will display their details on a plaque in front of the enclosure in the zoo. All the donations and adoption contributions are exempt from income tax under Section 80G I-T Act 1961 and an official certificate of adoption will be handed over to donors, she said.

Patients seek price control for oximeter

FROM PAGE 1

Yet others are procuring oximeters of sub-standard quality claiming to be made in China and are selling them at a cheap cost with no details of manufacturers at a cost ranging from ₹600 and above.

A pharmacist said, "I have received a message on my WhatsApp with an offer price of ₹330 for a pulse oximeter. I immedi-

ately called up the mobile number from which I received the message and asked whether I can get details of manufacturer, tax bill and one-year warranty. My call was ended abruptly with the person saying that such details will not be available. The devices being offered must be highly sub-standard quality. I am afraid that if a layperson purchases such a device and checks his SP02 and finds

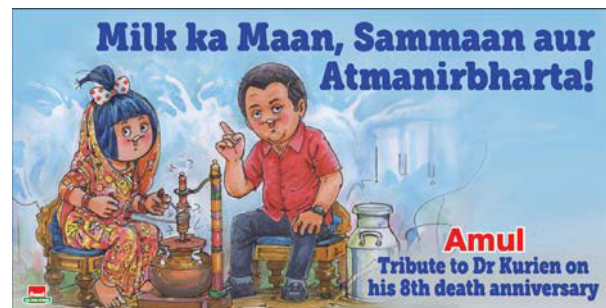
it to be at 80, he will suffer a heart attack and die even though the device is faulty and the SPO2 level indicated was wrong."

Some pharmacists say that though a licence is required to manufacture and sell a clinical thermometer to check the temperature of the body from the drugs control administration (DCA) authorities, there seems to be no such control on the manufacture and sale

of pulse oximeters. However, the DCA also seems to be unclear whether oximeters are incorporated in the medical device rules, 2017, to obtain licence for manufacture and sale as there has not been much focus on such devices till now.

The former vice president of the All India chemists and druggists association, Ramakrishna Rao, said, "Pulse oximeters are

being sold by some pharmacists and traders at high prices to enhance their margin of profit given the good demand for such devices in the state at the moment. However, we advise the people to purchase only standard quality devices made by Indian manufacturers, to seek a bill and a warranty for a year, so that they will not be duped with sub-standard devices."



APPRECIATION FOR VZM COLLECTOR

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 8

The District Collector Dr M. Hari Jawaharlal got appreciation from Director-General, National Centre for Good Governance for his presentation at a one-day workshop organised by NCGG on September 4 on "Good Governance

Practices in Aspirational Districts in pandemic".

The Director General wrote a letter to Chief Secretary of AP in this regard and requested to enter this into his personal record. The workshop was attended by minister of state for personnel, pensions, public grievances and administrative reforms.

NTPC SIMHADRI
DEVELOPS
UNIQUE MODELDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 8

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Date and Time of the Entrance Exam		
Course	Date	Time
B.F.A (Applied Art, Painting, Sculpture & Animation)	18-10-2020	10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
B.F.A (Photography)	19-10-2020	10:00 AM to 12:30 PM
B. Design (Interior Design)	19-10-2020	2:00 PM to 5:00 PM

For detailed information regarding eligibility, intake, fee, rules of reservation, time table, syllabus and model question paper etc., visit www.jnafau.ac.in or contact 040-23319462.

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Expression of Interest document with detailed scope of work is available on the Authority's website (<http://www.greaternoidaauthority.in>) from 9 September 2020. The EOI needs to be submitted in softcopy on the email ID health@gnida.in with subject "EOI for Decentralized Waste Management in Greater Noida". The hard copy is to be sent on above mentioned address and addressed to DGM (Health). Last date of submission is 24 September 2020.

D.G.M. (Health)

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SHORT TAKES

3 ARRESTED FOR HOISTING 'PAK FLAG' IN J&K TOWN

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, SEPT. 8

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

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

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

BJP CHALLENGES NEELAM GORHE'S ELECTION

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, SEPT. 8

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

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

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

MP BJP LEADER JOINS CONG AHEAD OF BY-POLLS

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, SEPT. 8

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PLA confirms 5 missing youths found

Modalities to hand over youths to Indian authorities are being worked out, says Union minister Rijiju

New Delhi, Sept 8: China's People's Liberation Army has confirmed that five youths missing from Arunachal Pradesh have been found by them and their handing over process to Indian authorities is being worked out, Union minister Kiren Rijiju said on Tuesday.

The five youths had gone missing on Friday from the Sino-Indian border in the Upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh.

"China's PLA has responded to the hotline message sent by Indian Army. They have confirmed that the missing youths from Arunachal Pradesh have been found by their side. Further modalities to handover the persons to our authority are being worked out," Rijiju tweeted.

Rijiju, the minister of state for youth affairs & sports, hails from Arunachal Pradesh and is an MP from the state.

The incident of five missing youths came to light when two members from their group, who had gone for hunting in the jungle together, returned home and informed the families of the five that they had been whisked away by the Chinese troops from Sera-7, an Army patrol zone located about 12 km further north of Nacho.

Nacho is the last administrative circle along the McMahon Line and is around 120 km from the district headquarters Daporijo.

Those who were allegedly kidnapped by the Chinese army have been identified as Toch Singkam, Prasat Ringling, Dongtu Ebiya, Tanu Baker and Ngaru Diri.

On Monday, China brushed off questions over the whereabouts of the five youths and needed India, saying it has never recognised Arunachal Pradesh which it claims is part of south Tibet.

"China's position on the east sector of the China-India boundary, or Zangnan (the southern part of China's Xizang (Tibet)), is consistent and clear," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told a media briefing in Beijing, adding the Chinese government has never recognised the so-called Arunachal Pradesh".

"I'm not aware of the



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

— PTI

situation you mentioned," the spokesperson said when asked about any updates about the missing Indian nationals.

The development comes at a time when the Indian army has enhanced its deployment along the 3,400 km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) in view of the tense border situation with China in eastern Ladakh.

In March, a 21-year-old man was abducted by the PLA from Asapila sector near the McMahon Line. While his two friends managed to escape, Togley Sinkam was taken away at gunpoint, his family had said. He was released by the Chinese army after 19 days in captivity.

The Indian Army had on September 2 provided food, warm clothes and medical assistance to three Chinese citizens who had lost their way in sub-zero temperatures at an altitude of 17,500 feet in a border area in North Sikkim.

The Indian Army personnel deployed in the area also guided the Chinese citizens, including a woman, to return to the Chinese side and reach their destination. — PTI

China talks of approaching harsh winter, hopes for disengagement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RAFALE JETS TO BE FORMALLY INDUCTED INTO IAF TOMORROW

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

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

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

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

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

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

The delivery of all 36 aircraft is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021. A second batch of four to five Rafale jets are likely to arrive in India by November.

Farooq Abdullah hits back at Ram Madhav

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, SEPT. 8

A day after Bharatiya Janata Party's national general secretary, Ram Madhav, accused Farooq Abdullah and Jammu and Kashmir's other regional mainstream leaders of "trying to inject a dangerous Islamist discourse into the state politics", the latter on Tuesday hit back saying that it were the saffron party and its ideological parent Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which are paying communal politics and that the same will result into their extermination.

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

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

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

command of Lion of Kashmir? The unity among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs)", he said.

He added that the reason behind Sheikh becoming instrumental in changing the name of J&K Muslim Conference to National Conference way back in 1938 was because he knew people from all faiths were part of the struggle against the autocratic rule in the princely state.

Madhav had in an article appearing in *Greater Kashmir* newspaper alleged that the NC leadership and other signatories of 'Gupkar Declaration' were 'trying to take the people of Kashmir for a ride to chase a chimera'.

On August 4, 2019, a day before Jammu and Kashmir was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories, the leaders of the state's regional parties including NC and People's Democratic Party (PDP) and their allies in Congress and CPIM had met at Abdullah's residence along Srinagar's Gupkar Road and signed a joint statement named as 'Gupkar Declaration' through which they vowed to protect the special status, identity and autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir and fight tool and nail attempts to split it up.

IN BRIEF

B'desh blast toll rises to 27

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

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

Bruce Williamson dies of Covid

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

Murderer sworn in as Lankan MP

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

PAK MINE BLAST DEATH TOLL AT 19

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

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

He said the rescue operations were hit due to darkness on Monday night and that heavy machinery had been mobilised on Tuesday for rescue operations. Deputy Commissioner Ifthikhar Alam said the death toll is expected to rise, according to the daily. Around 45 labourers were busy in excavation operations when the mine collapsed, the *Dawn* newspaper reported.

The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said nine people have been rescued, it reported.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Maria Kolesnikova

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

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

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

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

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

China says Oz TV anchor detained

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

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

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

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

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Last 2 Oz journalists flown out of China amid diplomatic standoff

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

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

CHINA DETAINS 23 IN CRACKDOWN ON INNER MONGOLIA PROTESTS

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

The 23 detentions were across eight banners, the regional word for counties, according to an *Associated Press* tally of nine local police reports over the past several days. The reasons range from "organising and collecting signatures for a petition" to "picking quarrels and stirring up trouble". Others were for "flagrantly insulting a deceased former leader of the country" and "sharing videos in a WeChat group to obstruct the implementation of the national textbooks policy". WeChat is a popular messaging app in China. The local government is also exerting pressure in other ways.

Authorities in Zhenglan banner announced that they had suspended two members of the ruling Communist Party without pay for failing to carry out the policy. Police in Chifeng city said Monday they handed over Communist Party members, including two elementary school teachers, to a local party disciplinary committee for investigation. — AP

THE AUSTRALIAN Government has provided consular support to two Australian journalists in China to assist their return to Australia. Those Australians have now arrived in Australia. Our Embassy in Beijing and Consulate-General in Shanghai engaged with Chinese Government authorities to ensure their wellbeing and return to Australia.

MARISA PAYNE, Oz foreign minister

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

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

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

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

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

Trump supporters rally where far-right group member was shot

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

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

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

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

Harris will never be Prez: Trump

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

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

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

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

group of Black Lives Matters counter-demonstrators, firing paint-gun pellets at them. There were skirmishes, and the Black Lives Matter group dispersed shortly after local police arrived on the scene. Organisers of the earlier vehicle rally said they did not plan to enter Multnomah County, where Portland is located. Oregon City is about 32 kilometres south of Portland. — AP

LABOUR DAY: DON, JOE SPAR OVER ECONOMY

Harrisburg, Sept. 8: Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden and President Donald Trump spent Monday diminishing each other's credentials on the economy and understanding of the American worker as the presidential campaign entered its final, post-Labour Day stretch.

While workers live by an "American code", Biden said Trump "lives by a code of lies, greed and selfishness" as he met with labour leaders in Harrisburg. Trump, meanwhile, tried to put the halting economic recovery under the best light in a White House press conference where he said Biden and his mate, Kamala Harris, would "destroy this country and would destroy this economy". — AP

Stop interrupting witnesses, Assange told

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

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

interrupted defence witness Clive Stafford Smith, who was giving evidence. Assange's outburst couldn't be heard by journalists following proceedings by video link.

Assange is fighting an attempt by American prosecutors to extradite him to the US to stand trial on spying charges.

US prosecutors have

indicted the 49-year-old Australian on 18 espionage and computer misuse charges over WikiLeaks' publication of secret US military documents a decade ago.

The charges carry a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison. Assange's lawyers say the prosecution is a politically motivated abuse of power that

will stifle media freedom and put journalists at risk around the world.

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

MONEY | MATTERS

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos tops table while President Trump is ranked 339th

7 Indo-Americans in Forbes' rich list in US

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

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

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

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

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

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

\$3.4 billion. His Symphony Technology Group brings in \$2.5 billion in annual revenues and Wadhvani combined nine of his companies that were AI-focused into a new group called SymphonyAI in 2017.

On the 299th spot is Shah, 46, who has a net worth of \$2.8 billion. Khosla, 65 is ranked 353rd with a net worth of \$2.4 billion. Khosla cofounded computer hardware firm Sun Microsystems in 1982 and spent 18 years at venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers

before launching his own fund. On the 359th spot is Shiram, 63, who has a net worth of \$2.3 billion.

Gangwal, 67 is ranked 359th on the list and has a net worth of \$2.3 billion. On the 359th spot is Bhursi with a net worth of \$2.3 billion. Bhursi is CEO of business software firm Workday, which he cofounded with Dave Duffield, the founder of PeopleSoft. Bhursi started his career in the early 1990s at business software firm PeopleSoft, where he rose to become vice chairman. — PTI

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

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

DECCAN Chronicle

9 SEPTEMBER 2020

KCR's land revenue law may well be momentous

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

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

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

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

Mutations will be hassle-free with a single website, named Dharani, will handle all land records and transfers.

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

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

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

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

But for once, there is hope.

Come clean on economy

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

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

The nation is witnessing a strange economic phenomenon where the people find it difficult to make ends meet; it's day-to-day subsistence for them, while a handful of corporate honchos go on accumulating wealth. The loss of more than two crore jobs during the pandemic is sure to exacerbate the situation.

It's not just Mr Gandhi who has expressed disappointment at the way the government responds to the crisis; eminent economists such as Dr Raghuram Rajan have demanded course correction. The BJP and the ruling dispensation cannot go on evading the tough questions; shooting the messenger does not kill the message.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

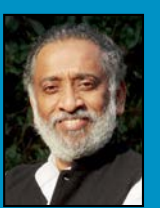
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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Civil servants under watch for corruption

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

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

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

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

Will corrupt babus get the message?

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

The virtually last-minute announcement has finally ended

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

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

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

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

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

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

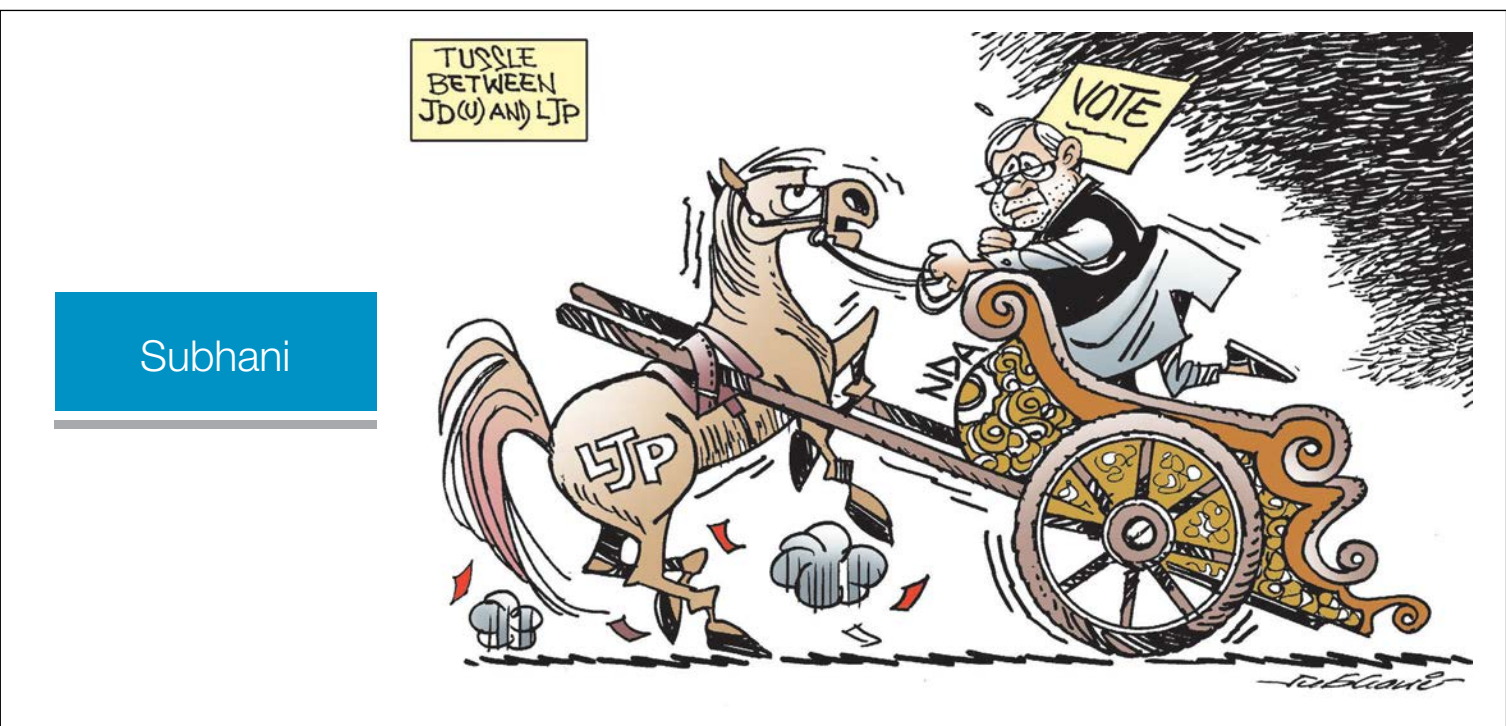
The website of the department of personnel and training (DoPT) still shows Mr Faesal as a serving officer, even though he plunged into politics for a year and a half. Since his resignation has not been processed, Mr Faesal can still withdraw his resignation. But

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

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

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

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



Subhani

Understand the politics behind China tensions



N.V. Subramanian

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is an analyst and journalist based in New Delhi

LETTERS

DRUG SHORTAGE

The alarming rate at which Covid-19 positive cases are increasing in the state means there is requirement of more and more life-saving Covid drugs for treatment. That on an average over 75 persons per day are perishing due to the virus in the state is not to be taken lightly. If the shortage of life-saving drugs is due to high number cases and related issues, then the situation could be corrected. But any mischief and artificial shortage should not be tolerated and dealt with an iron fist. Needless to mention, we have to live with Coronavirus for few more months as the vaccine is far away.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

LOCKDOWN MUST

Now that we are second in the world in the number of Covid-19 cases, if we do not take remedial measures, we will occupy the first place soon. It is shocking that the public does not follow the guidelines in wearing masks and keeping physical distancing. Ventilators too are in short supply. Hence it is inevitable for the government to clamp lockdown once again.

K. Lakshman Rao
Visakhapatnam

FALL FROM GRACE

World No. 1 tennis player Novak Djokovic fell from grace after hitting the line judge with the ball (DC, Sept. 8). He has to realise that one's demeanour is more important than fame and fortune. He needs to grow and learn from this. The incident is an eye-opener for all sports stars.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

Pan AM Boeing blown up in Cairo

CAIRO, Sept. 8
 A Pan American Airway Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet, hijacked yesterday by Arab Commandos while en route from Amsterdam to New York was blown up at Cairo airport early today shortly after landing and disembarking its 152 passengers and 18 crew. Nothing was left of the machine but a smoking mass of twisted metal witnesses said. Two gun shots were heard soon after the plane had landed. It had arrived here from Beirut.

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,365.35	-0.14
Nifty 50	11,317.35	-0.33
S&P 500*	3,361.59	-1.91
Dollar (₹)	73.59	-0.32
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.58	0.41
Euro (₹)	86.97	-0.11
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,989.122	0.23
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.14	-1.87
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.056	0.063
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.667	0.056

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Over 42 cr poor given ₹68,820 cr under PMGKY

The finance ministry said more than 42 crore people have received Rs 68,820-crore assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. As per the latest data, Rs 17,891 crore has gone towards payment of first instalment of PM-Kisan. Under the scheme, 8.94 crore beneficiaries got Rs 2,000 in their accounts. Also, Rs 30,925 crore was credited to 20.6 crore women Jan Dhan account-holders in 3 instalments of Rs 500 each.

Railways generate over 8L man-days under Garib Kalyan



The Railways have generated more than 8 lakh man-days of work in six states under a scheme launched in June this year, the ministry said. The Garib Kalyan Rojar Abhiyaan was launched with an initial funding of Rs 50,000 crore. The Railways are executing various works under it, including construction of approach roads for level crossings, development and cleaning of silted waterways, trenches and drains, etc.

Japan's economy shrinks 28% in second quarter

Japan's economy shrank at a record rate in the April-June quarter, worse than initially estimated. The Cabinet Office said Japan's seasonally adjusted real GDP contracted at an annualised rate of 28.1 per cent, worse than the 27.8 per cent figure given last month. Other data showed cash earnings improving somewhat, and consumer spending and other business activity is expected to rebound.

Samsung to create 5G infra for Verizon

Samsung Electronics Co will develop 5G network infrastructure for Verizon Communications under a \$6.65 billion deal. The contract runs through 2025, according to a Samsung corporate filing. Samsung and Verizon have worked together before. In 2018, Samsung technology was behind a 5G home service that Verizon offered to customers in some US states. China's Huawei Technologies wasn't in the running for the contract.



■ Pain may persist for power, infra firms Small gains for large sectors from recast

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEPT. 8

The guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India based on K.V. Kamath committee recommendations may help bail out borrowers in real estate, traders, hotels/restaurants sectors, but resolving stress in lumpy power and infrastructure sectors through this mechanism would be a challenge without economic revival, say analysts.

The Kamath committee, which suggested restructuring of Covid-stressed corporate loans across 26 sectors, identified five key ratios with different limits across sectors to be used as the threshold in implementing a resolution plan. According to the panel, sectors affected by Covid-19 account for Rs 38 lakh crore of banking sector debt, forming 37 per cent of the total banking system debt.

A one-time restructuring, including loan moratorium extensions, for stressed companies and individuals could delay or help moderate the bad loan (NPA) pain in the near to medium-term for the banking sector.

Anand Dama, banking analyst at Emkay Global, said, "We believe that the current corporate one-time restructuring framework for only standard cases with maximum tenor extension of two years in identified stressed sectors... (due to) limited time period, upfront heavy provisioning requirement,



stringent financial thresholds for eligibility and supervisory mechanism is far better than corporate debt restructuring which was extensively used to suppress NPAs and had a success rate of as low as 15 per cent. We believe that the restructuring mechanism may help the stressed borrowers mainly in real estate, traders, hotels/restaurants, etc., but resolving stress in lumpy power/infra sector through this mechanism will be challenging without economic revival and sectors specific packages/initiatives by the government."

Niranjan Hiranandani, president, ASSOCHAM, said, "No doubt, the threshold for five ratios that banks need to monitor while putting a resolution plan for the stressed borrower will bring transparency and efficiency, but the whole gamut depends on the recovery path for each of the sectors." However, the two years' time frame to achieve the threshold for all the ratios may not be sufficient for highly stressed companies," he said.

"Among banks, the total exposure toward the key troubled sectors forms 15-31 per cent of the total fund-based exposure. Overall, we believe this is a prudent attempt by the expert," said Alpesh Mehta, analyst at Motilal Oswal.

The RBI on Monday has announced a resolution framework for accounts adversely impacted by Covid-19. The K.V. Kamath panel has identified 26 sectors that have been impacted by Covid-19 with varying severity—mild, moderate, and severe. It also suggested financial parameters based on leverage, liquidity, and the debt serviceability of the company and thus identified five key ratios in considering a resolution plan—(a) total outside liability / adjusted tangible networth (b) total debt/Ebitda (c) current ratio (d) debt service coverage ratio, and (e) average debt service coverage ratio.

The borrower's resolution plan would be prepared based on pre-Covid-19 performance, and the Covid-19 impact on 1HFY21 financials would be used to project future cash flows.

INDIA'S HIRING OUTLOOK BLEAKEST IN 15 YEARS: SURVEY

New Delhi, Sept. 8: India is witnessing the weakest hiring sentiment in 15 years with just 3 per cent companies planning to add staff in the next three months, a survey of over 800 employers said on Tuesday.

According to the ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey, that covered 813 firms across India, Indian employers report cautious hiring plans for the final quarter of 2020.

As per the survey, 7 per cent of employers anticipate an increase in payrolls, 3 per cent forecast a decrease and 54 per cent expect no change. Once the data is adjusted to allow for seasonal variation, the outlook stands at 3 per cent, it said.

"Hiring sentiment is the weakest since the survey began 15 years ago, remaining relatively stable when compared with the previous quarter, but declining by 16 percentage points in comparison with this time one year ago," the survey said.

The strongest hiring pace is recorded in the small-sized organisations followed by the medium-sized and large-sized firms. From a region perspective, north and east regions indicate a more positive outlook compared to the west and south, the survey said.

"Post the 'right sizing' exercise aligning themselves to the current market demands, organisations are now looking at improving productivity, new forms of employee engagement, getting furloughed employees back and implementation of technology," said Sandeep Gulati, group MD of ManpowerGroup India.

The survey said nearly 44 per cent of employers reported that they may return to pre-Covid-19 hiring within the next nine months whereas 42 per cent are unsure about returning back to normalcy from the hiring perspective.

About 42 per cent companies suggest they plan to bring them back furloughed employees with reduced hours. —PTI

Fitch, Sachs cut FY21 India growth estimates

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEPT. 8

Sensing deeper trouble for India's economy, global rating agencies Fitch Ratings and Goldman Sachs on Tuesday projected the country's annual GDP to contract by 10.5 per cent to 14.8 per cent, significantly below their earlier forecast.

While Fitch revised down its gross domestic product estimate for India to -10.5 per cent for this fiscal, sharply from its earlier projection of -5 per cent, Goldman Sachs went a step ahead and forecast a 14.8 per cent contraction in India's economic growth, revising down its earlier estimate of 11.8 per cent contraction.

Fitch said the imposition of sporadic shutdowns has disrupted economic activities across the country.

"India imposed one of the most stringent lockdowns worldwide in 2Q20 (April-June) and domestic demand fell massively. Limited fiscal support, fragilities in the financial system, and a continued rise in virus cases hamper a rapid normalisation in activity," Fitch said.

"All the indicators, be it mobility or consumption, are pointing towards a 'much weaker' economic recovery," said Sunil Kumar Sinha, principal economist, Fitch Group, adding, "We have slashed our GDP forecast for this fiscal year to (-) 10.5 per cent, a huge revision of (-) 5pp compared to the June Global Economic Outlook (GEO)." A host of indicators across the majority of GEO economies point to a faster sequential increase in GDP in 3Q20 to date than we were previously anticipating," it said.

Goldman Sachs analysts believe the economy will contract 13.7 per cent for the September 2020 quarter and 9.8 per cent for the December 2020 quarter.

"Our estimates imply that real GDP falls by 11.1 per cent in 2020, and by 14.8 per cent in FY21," they said.

The revised projections come within days of government data showing that GDP shrank by a steep 23.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2020-21. Economists said the growth numbers for Q1 could be revised lower later after data from the informal sector is accounted for.

PUBG set to return sans Tencent

New Delhi, Sept. 8: PUBG Corporation, the unit of a South Korean company behind Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG), will no longer give Tencent Games the rights to publish its popular mobile game in India, it said in a blog.

The company's announcement came a week after India banned the game along with 117 other Chinese-origin apps.

"Moving forward, PUBG Corporation will take on all publishing responsibilities within the country," the company said, adding that it was exploring ways to provide gaming experience to Indian users in the future.

It was not immediately clear if the move would spur Indian authorities to revoke their ban.

Tencent, which ran the franchise in India, confirmed that PUBG Corp would take on the responsibilities of publishing the mobile game in India.

"Our existing cooperation with PUBG Corporation in global markets other than India is not affected," Tencent said in a statement.

The ban on PUBG in India, the game's biggest market by users, has shocked and angered gamers.

Seizing the opportunity, an Indian firm and a Bollywood actor are together planning to launch a locally made tactical mobile game by the end of October. —Reuters

StanChart fined ₹100 cr for Fema violation in TMB deal

SUVASHREE GHOSH & ANTO ANTONY SEPT. 8

India's anti-money laundering agency fined Standard Chartered Plc Rs 100 crore (\$13.6 million) for breaking foreign exchange rules when it worked on the takeover of a local bank, marking one of the country's biggest penalties imposed on an overseas lender.

An eight-year probe found that Standard Chartered violated the so-called Foreign Exchange Management Act when it worked with a group of investors to buy a stake in Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd in 2007, according to an August order from India's enforcement agency that was seen by Bloomberg.

"Senior officials at Standard Chartered saw an investment in TMB shares as an opportunity that might ripen into an eventually larger ownership for the bank," Sushil Kumar, the enforcement agency's special director, said in the order.



A representative for the British lender confirmed receipt of the order, adding that the bank was evaluating it and so unable to comment further.

Standard Chartered -- India's largest foreign bank by branches--also acted as a custodian for shares on the deal, according to the order. Tamilnad Mercantile was fined almost Rs 17 crore for similar charges, the order said.

A spokesman at Tamilnad Mercantile declined to comment, while the Enforcement Directorate didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

The case dates back to about 13 years ago when Tamilnad Mercantile transferred 46,862 shares to overseas investors, including GHI Ltd, Swiss Re Investors, FI Investments and Cuna Group, without seeking permission from the Reserve Bank of India, according to the order. Some of those shares were then transferred to Sub-Continental Equities Ltd, an affiliate of StanChart in April 2008, without the central bank's permission, it said.

The transfers were done through escrow accounts with StanChart, which acted as a transaction agent and a lender to one of the investors on the deal, the order said.

"Standard Chartered through its affiliate Subcontinental was a proposed and eventually an actual investor in TMB shares to be purchased through the escrow agreement arrangements," Kumar said.

—Bloomberg

Govt to sell 15-20% stake in IRCTC

New Delhi, Sept. 8: The government plans to sell about 15-20 per cent stake in IRCTC via offer for sale (OFS) and would like to complete the transaction in minimum number of tranches.

Last month, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam) had invited bids from merchant bankers by

September 10 for managing the sale in Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corp (IRCTC).

However, it did not disclose the quantum of stake on offer in the Request for Proposal.

Following this, a pre-bid meeting was held on September 4 with potential bidders. Dipam has now posted

its response to the queries raised by potential bidders on its website.

To a query on intended stake dilution, it said, "The indicative percentage is 15 per cent to 20 per cent. The exact details will be shared with the selected merchant bankers." The government currently holds 87.40 per cent stake in IRCTC. —PTI

Kochhar sent to ED custody till Sept. 19

SHAHAB ANSARI MUMBAI, SEPT. 8

The special court under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act on Tuesday remanded Deepak Kochhar, husband of former ICICI bank CEO Chanda Kochhar, to the Enforcement Directorate's custody till September 19. The Kochhar's custodial interrogation is necessary in the money laundering case registered against him, observed the court. Judge Milind V. Kurtadikar

also rejected Kochhar's request for allowing home food in the ED custody.

Additional solicitor general (ASG) Anil Singh appeared before the court via video conferencing on behalf of the ED, seeking Kochhar's custody. He said Kochhar is not cooperating in the money laundering investigation, relating to a Rs 300-crore loan given to Videocon International Electronics Ltd (VIEL) in 2009.

According to the prosecution,

ICICI Bank sanctioned this loan while Kochhar's wife (Chanda Kochhar) was the chairperson of the sanctioning committee.

The probe agency has claimed that in this case the Kochhars received bribe instantly. The remand application of the ED read that the next day of receiving the loan amount on September 8, 2009, VIEL transferred Rs 64 crore to the NuPower Renewables Ltd (NRL), which is managed, owned and controlled by Deepak Kochhar.

RIL unveils details of O2C biz spinoff plan

New Delhi, Sept. 8: Reliance Industries Ltd's new oil-to-chemical business unit will hold its oil refinery and petrochemical assets and retail fuel business but not upstream oil and gas producing fields such as KG-D6 and textiles business, the firm said, detailing hiving-off plans.

RIL has started work on hiving off the oil-to-chemical (O2C) business into a separate unit for a possible stake sale to companies such as Saudi Aramco.

Reliance O2C Ltd will house oil refining and petrochemical plants and

manufacturing assets, bulk and wholesale fuel marketing, and RIL's 51 per cent interest in retail fuel joint venture with BP of the UK, according to the Scheme of Arrangement.

The O2C unit would also house RIL's Singapore and the UK-based oil trading subsidiaries and marketing subsidiary, Reliance Industries Uruguay Petroquimica SA.

It would also house Reliance Ethane Pipeline Ltd that operates a pipeline between Dahej in Gujarat and Nagothane in Maharashtra as well as 74.9 per cent stake that RIL

holds in the joint venture with Sibur.

RIL's very large ethane carriers, gas pipelines such as one that transports coal-bed methane from its CBM blocks, overseas oil and gas asset holding company Reliance Industries (Middle East) DMCC, and domestic exploration and production assets would not form part of the O2C unit, it said.

Also, RIL's textiles business as operated out of the Naroda site, Baroda township and land, including cricket stadium, Jamnagar power assets, and Sikka Ports and Terminals

Ltd would also not be part of the O2C unit.

RIL values the O2C business at \$75 billion and has been in talks with Saudi Aramco for sale of a 20 per cent interest.

"The nature of risk and returns involved in the O2C business are distinct from those of the other businesses of RIL and the O2C business attracts a distinct set of investors and strategic partners," the company said.

RIL said it has been exploring various opportunities to bring in strategic/other investors in the O2C business. —PTI

Mutual fund NFOs play on diversification theme

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 8

Diversification is the theme playing out in the mutual fund industry to attract old and new investors in uncertain times.

Multi-asset funds or global equity exposure is the current buzz in the industry.

Recent new fund offerings by Axis Mutual Fund (Axis Global Equity Alpha Fund of Fund), Nippon India MF (Nippon India Multi-Asset Fund), SBI Mutual Fund (SBI Magnum Children's Benefit Fund) and Mirae Asset Mutual Fund (Mirae Asset Equity Allocator Fund of Fund) offer diversification, breaking new grounds in terms of the asset allocation-mix offered in a single mutual fund, compared to the past NFOs.

This is happening at a time when retail investors have started booking profit in equity mutual funds and seeking to play safe in a volatile market conditions as even debt funds are not considered safe for capital protection these days.

"As you don't know what will happen tomorrow to one asset class, asset allocation has become very important as the proverb goes 'do not put all your eggs in one basket,'" said Ashwin Patni, head-products and alternatives, Axis Asset Management Company.

Allocation to global equities can improve the risk-return profile of Indian investors because of diversification benefits, according to Axis Mutual Fund.

India has around 5,000



companies listed on the stock exchange but accounts for only about 3 per cent share of world's market capitalisation. Axis Global Equity Alpha Fund of Fund will invest in Schroders Global Equity Alpha Fund to provide geographical diversity to Indian investors looking to have exposure in global stocks

listed in the US and other developed markets.

Nippon India Multi-Asset Fund is investing across five asset classes—domestic equity (50 per cent), international equity (20 per cent), commodities (15 per cent) and fixed income (15 per cent).

Diversification within the same asset as well helps in portfolio diversi-

fication and hedge against inflation/geopolitical risks, according to Nippon India Mutual Fund.

SBI Magnum Children's Benefit Fund will invest in equity & equity-related instruments, including equity ETFs with a minimum of 65 per cent going up to 100 per cent, debt, including debt ETFs and money market instruments up to a maximum of 35 per cent, in REITs & InvITs up to 10 per cent, and up to 20 per cent in Gold ETFs.

Mirae Asset Equity Allocator Fund of Fund will invest in Nifty-50 ETF, Nifty Next 50 ETF, and Midcap150 ETFs, providing investors some protection from current market volatility as the exposure would be quite diverse to large and mid cap stocks.

VACCINE-MAKERS PLEDGE NOT TO RUSH TO MARKET

NAOMI KRESGE SEPT. 8

Drugmakers racing to produce Covid-19 vaccines pledged to avoid shortcuts on science as they face pressure to rush a shot to market. In a public letter, the companies agreed to submit the vaccines for clearance only when they're shown to be safe and effective in large clinical studies. The CEOs of nine frontrunners for a coronavirus inoculation signed the pledge: AstraZeneca, BioNTech, GlaxoSmithKline, J&J, Merck & Co, Moderna, Novavax, Pfizer and Sanofi.

"In the interest of public health, we pledge to always make the safety and well-being of vaccinated individuals our top priority," they wrote. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Coach Poonia is Covid positive

New Delhi: Dronacharya awardee athletics coach and former international hammer thrower Virender Poonia has tested positive for Covid-19 and has been admitted to a hospital in Jaipur. The 47-year-old Virender is the husband of Olympian discus thrower and sitting Rajasthan MLA Krishna Poonia. He is now admitted to the Railway Hospital in Jaipur. He, however, said he is doing “fine”. “Last week I had body pain and sore throat and so I went for Covid-19 testing and it turned out to be positive. The result came on Saturday,” Virender said. “Today is the fourth day (after testing positive) and I am alright. There is still body pain and sore throat but I am hoping to get better.” Virender, a Railways employee, won a bronze in hammer throw in the Asian Junior Championships in 1992 and finished fourth in the 1998 Asian Senior Championships. He was Krishna’s coach when she won the discus throw gold medal in the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games. He received the Dronacharya Award in 2012. — *PTI*

Ailing Ali asked to stop training

New Delhi: Promising India defender Anwar Ali has been asked to stop training as his latest medical reports are being sent to the Asian Football Confederation, months after being diagnosed with a congenital heart condition, which has put a question mark on his career. One of the impressive performers of the 2017 U-17 World Cup at home, Anwar underwent blood tests, a CT scan and an MRI at a top private hospital in Kolkata last week, the reports of which had been sent to the All India Football Federation’s medical committee. “His reports have been sent to the AFC and till a final decision is taken, he has been asked to stop practice. A decision on his future in football should come by this weekend,” I-League chief executive officer Sunando Dhar said. The centre-back’s career has been left hanging in the balance ever since he was diagnosed with a congenital heart condition last year. — *PTI*

Italy edge Dutch, Norway win big

Paris: Nicolò Barella extended Italy’s two-year unbeaten run as he scored the winner in Monday’s 1-0 victory away to the Netherlands in the Nations League while Erling Haaland netted twice for Norway in a 5-1 thrashing of Northern Ireland. Roberto Mancini’s Italy saw their record 11-match winning streak end with last week’s draw against Bosnia and Herzegovina but got the best of the Netherlands in Amsterdam courtesy of Inter Milan midfielder Barella’s header in first-half stoppage time. “It was a great performance by the entire team, we played with personality. We earned a great result and we are all happy, especially with the performance,” said winger Lorenzo Insigne. “We could have scored more goals and killed the game but we still earned the three points. That is what counts most.” — *AFP*

Clippers out-gun Nuggets, in lead

Miami: Paul George scored 32 points and the Los Angeles Clippers turned up the heat defensively on Monday in a 113-107 win over the Denver Nuggets for a 2-1 lead in the NBA Western Conference semi-finals. Kawhi Leonard added 23 points, 14 rebounds and six assists for the Clippers, coming up big on both ends of the floor as Los Angeles powered to the finish in the see-saw battle. Denver, blown out in game one but coming off a convincing game-two victory, led 78-68 midway through a third quarter. — *AFP*

Live on TV

US OPEN TENNIS

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

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Elise in wonderland

Mertens sends 2nd seed Sofia packing, Serena advances

New York, Sept. 8: Serena Williams battled into the quarter-finals of the US Open on Monday as top men’s seeds Dominic Thiem and Daniil Medvedev sailed through to the last eight at Flushing Meadows. After Williams kept her bid for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam singles title alive, second seed Sofia Kenin was sent crashing out in the last 16 by Belgium’s Elise Mertens. Kenin, the highest seeded player left in the tournament and winner of the 2020 Australian Open, was bundled out of the last 16 6-3, 6-3, in 1hr 14 mins by Mertens. Mertens, the 16th seed, will now play Victoria Azarenka of Belarus in the quarter-finals. Kenin, who had not lost a game in her first three

rounds, never got her service game together against Mertens. The 21-year-old Moscow-born player won only 56 percent of first serve points compared to 75 percent for Mertens. Unseeded Azarenka came from a set down to oust 20th seed Karolina Muchova 5-7, 6-1, 6-4 in 2hr 30min. Earlier, Williams had to summon up every last ounce of strength to depose 15th seed Maria Sakkari in three hard-fought sets. The 38-year-old American needed almost two and a half hours to dislodge her 25-year-old Greek opponent 6-3, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3 inside an empty Arthur Ashe Stadium in New York. The American will play Tsvetana Pironkova for a place in the semi-finals

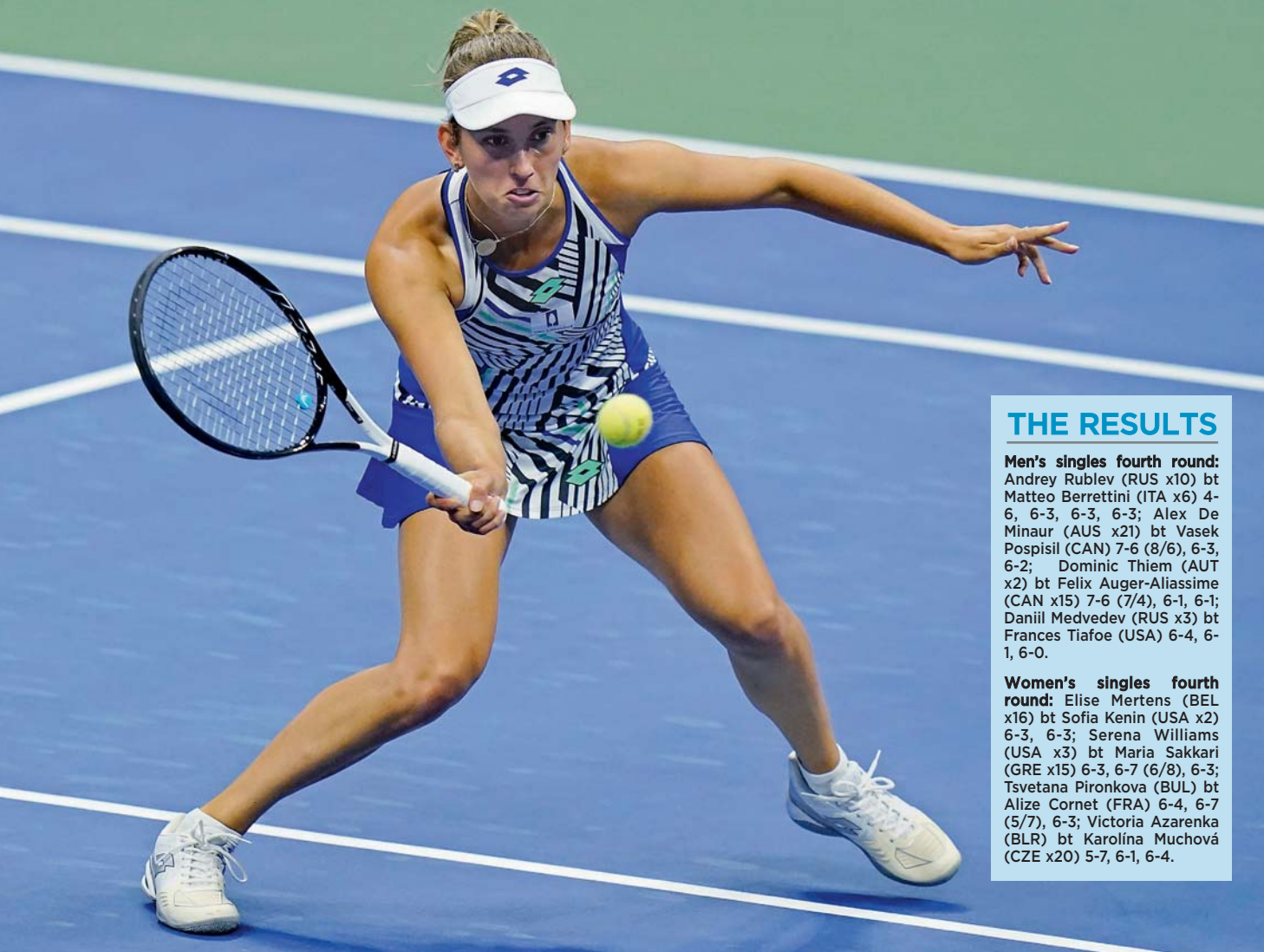
BOPANNA-SHAPOVALOV OUSTED FROM US OPEN

New York, Sept. 8: The Indian challenge came to an end at the US Open with the quarterfinal loss of Rohan Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov in the men’s doubles event here. Bopanna and Shapovalov lost 5-7, 5-7 to Dutch Jean-Julien Rojer and Romania’s Horea Tecau in the last-eight match which lasted one hour and 26 minutes on Monday. Bopanna and Shapovalov lost their serve once in each set and could not convert the only break chance that came their way in the second set. It was Bopanna’s best performance at a Slam since he made the quarterfinals at both the US Open and the French Open in 2018. — *PTI*

after the Bulgarian ousted France’s Alize Cornet in another draining three-setter. ‘ABSOLUTELY UNREAL’ Pironkova, playing her first tournament in three

years after a lengthy break in which she gave birth to her son, prevailed 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 at the Louis Armstrong Stadium. “It’s absolutely unreal, I really can’t believe it,”

said Pironkova, whose last tournament appearance before this year’s US Open was the 2017 Wimbledon championships when she exited in the second round. In the men’s draw, second-seeded Thiem raced into the round of eight with a three-set demolition of Canadian rising star Felix Auger-Aliassime. Thiem dismantled the 20-year-old 15th seed 7-6 (7/4), 6-1, 6-1 in 2hr 7min. He will play Australia’s 21st seed Alex de Minaur for a spot in the semi-finals after the Australian breezed past unseeded Canadian Vasek Pospisil 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 6-2, in 2hr 17 min. Third seed Medvedev blew away unseeded American France Tiafoe 6-4, 6-1, 6-0 in only 1hr 38 min. — *AFP*



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

Roland Garros to No Barty at French Open

Paris, Sept. 8: Spectators will be allowed at the French Open this month despite the growing number of coronavirus cases in the country, organizers said. Organizers unveiled the health protocols for the clay-court grand slam, which will take place at Roland Garros in western Paris from September 27 after being postponed from its May start due to the pandemic. “Since the international circuit restarted, Roland Garros will be the first tournament with the privilege of hosting an audience,” French Tennis

Federation president Bernard Giudicelli said on Monday. In accordance with the latest government guidelines capping attendance to 5,000 people in regions such as Paris, the federation has scaled down its plans. The federation wanted to welcome 50% to 60% of capacity, the equivalent of about 20,000 fans per day. Instead, Roland Garros will be divided into three zones based on the three main courts, with 5,000 people each for the Philippe Chatrier and Suzanne Lenglen courts. — *AP*



Ashleigh Barty

for my decision — the first is the health risks that still exist with Covid. “The second is my preparation, which has not been ideal without my coach being able to train with me due to the state border closures in Australia.” Barty is based in

Brisbane while her coach, Craig Tytzer, is in Melbourne and unable to travel as the city battles a significant second-wave virus outbreak. She announced in late July that she would sit out the US Open, currently underway in New York, with defending men’s champion Rafael Nadal and world number two Simona Halep among those who also opted out because of the pandemic. At the time, Barty was still monitoring the situation with the French Open, which is due to start on September 27, but said Tuesday her withdrawal was the latest development in “a challenging year for everyone.” — *AFP*

MANKADING | IN IPL

Ponting speaks in Ashwin’s support

Dubai, Sept. 8: Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting says he is on the “same page” as off-spinner R. Ashwin regarding running out non-strikers for backing up too far before a ball is delivered. Ashwin, who was in the spotlight last IPL after dismissing Jos Buttler during a Kings XI Punjab versus Rajasthan Royals encounter, did something that his current IPL coach didn’t endorse. However, Ashwin and Ponting have had an open discussion here over the mode of dismissal and by the former Australian captain’s own admission, they have reached a common ground. “He (Ashwin) made me get on a podcast with him when I first arrived here to have a good open chat about it,” Ponting told ‘Cricket.com.au’. “I think we’re both on the same page. He feels he did everything in the rules and laws of the game and he’s absolutely right,” Ponting said. In fact, Ponting found logic in Ashwin’s rationale. “He’s saying, ‘What if it’s the last ball of the IPL, what if I’m bowling and the batting teams needs

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

two runs to win and the non-striker is charging halfway down the wicket? What do you expect me to do?” “There’s an argument there as well, but as I said to him, I would expect that he would hold on to the ball and not Mankad and tell the batsman to stay in his crease next time and see if he’s good enough to try and close the game out for us.” Ponting however, made it clear that there is no place for “cheating” which is the case when non-strikers tend to back up too far. “It shouldn’t get to that stage anyway, batsmen shouldn’t be cheating. That’s what batsmen are doing, batsmen are actually cheating by trying to steal a yard or two here or there. It’s something that needs to be addressed,” he said. — *PTI*

YUVRAJ EYES A STINT IN BIG BASH LEAGUE

Melbourne, Sept. 8: Flamboyant Indian batsman Yuvraj Singh, who retired last year, is eyeing a stint in the Big Bash League and Cricket Australia is trying to help him find a team, a media report has said. No Indian player has ever featured in the BBL as the country’s cricket board (BCCI) doesn’t allow active players to take part in overseas league. The 38-year-old Yuvraj had retired from international and domestic cricket last year, clearing the decks to ply his trade in foreign leagues across the globe. According to a report in *Sydney Morning Herald*, Yuvraj’s manager Jason Warne of W Sports & Media has confirmed that Cricket Australia was trying to find a franchise that would be interested in the former Indian all-rounder. “We’re working with CA to try to find him a home,” Warne said on Monday. — *PTI*

150-160 is handy, says RCB coach

Dubai, Sept. 8: A score of 150 to 160 will be a competitive one in Dubai or Abu Dhabi track, reckons RCB coach Mike Hesson, who is happy to have identified his team’s designated death bowlers, an area that has let them down during earlier Indian Premier League seasons. The length of side boundaries are bigger in grounds like Abu Dhabi and that will bring down the average team total. “Here 150-160 will be good scores in some grounds and it will be different. Chinnaswamy (in Bengaluru) is a great batting wicket, smaller boundaries and scores (team totals) are (on) higher (side),” Hesson told RCB’s YouTube channel. He said that on certain grounds, spinners will come in handy, especially when the surface is a bit skiddy. “On certain grounds yes. It depends, like Abu Dhabi, seamers had played a big role there and probably (the pitch) doesn’t (offer) spin as much as the other two

grounds (Dubai and Sharjah). It does skid. We need the ability to adjust to conditions on the day as well,” Hesson said. “Bowling at the death in Abu Dhabi will be quite different from bowling at Chinnaswamy. The lengths you bowl and we have identified our death bowlers,” Hesson said. RCB has failed to make it to play-offs since their 2016 final appearance and Hesson said that there has been a holistic review of the situation. “We spend a lot of time in reviews and we addressed where we are strong, whom we need to retain, what gaps we need to fill. We spent a huge amount of time identifying who those players were, more importantly what their roles were,” he said. Although he didn’t name Chris Morris, Hesson hinted that the South African’s inclusion certainly provided RCB with a potent death overs bowling option. “We have got some experienced players in that space,” Hesson said. — *PTI*

Every brand may have a ‘Dhoni’ living inside it



Dr Raj Mohan Tella
Guest Column

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

I turn to the philosopher Peter Koestenbaum to unbundle the Dhoni magic. Koestenbaum states that there are four ways or dimensions of a leader — vision, reality, ethics and courage in his Leadership Diamond Model. To begin with visioning, which simply means to think big and new. You would recollect how Dhoni envisioned a young and energetic team way back in 2008, while setting into

motion the gradual phasing out of established seniors. I am not suggesting that a business phase out veterans, but am only drawing the focus to the necessity of a vision for the enterprise. When businesses have a vision or a well-articulated destination, then everyone and all the energies of a business are focused to achieving that. Next comes reality, which means responding to facts without illusions. If you are a Dhoni follower, you would recognise the great’s cricketing brain, where every decision of his was based on homework, facts and an intuitive capability of marrying all the pointers to conceptualising out of the box

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

moves. To succeed, brands too have to rely on facts; research and understanding of audience needs, map trends, develop customer affinity and blend all of these to trigger those unique marketing/ branding victories. Then comes ethics — sensitivity and empathy. Which player doesn’t vouch for learning from Dhoni? You would have

seen him interacting with the juniors in the team, guiding the bowlers from behind the wicket and leading the way by example. For brands listening can be core strength. The more they listen to their audiences, the sharper their insights. Customers, influencers, social media advocates, suppliers, vendors, employees and more — giving them an ear and empathising with them only makes a brand and the leadership more sensitive to the existing and emerging needs. Koestenbaum’s last dimension is courage. Greatness is about the ability to act, initiate and risk. You and I know that one innings, which won India,

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

dimensions to play. There is a good chance you will embark upon a journey of useful change and repurposing. Begin by asking fundamental questions and what could emerge is the presence of one or two dimensions and not all four of them in your brand. Then the task is cut out. Engineer the missing dimensions into your business environment and thinking. For I believe that every business and brand may have a ‘Dhoni’ living inside them. You could give it that winning nudge towards greatness. (Dr Raj Mohan Tella is the founder of Brandlogues, a global brand consulting firm. He can be reached at rajmohan@brandlogues.com)