





## IN BRIEF

## Observe 'dry day' to fight dengue: Govt

**New Delhi:** The Delhi government has directed all schools in the national capital to observe "dry day" once a week during which coolers, flower pots, bird pots, water containers, stagnant water and other possible sites be checked thoroughly to prevent mosquito breeding. The move is part of the awareness campaign for school students against vector-borne diseases like dengue, malaria and chikungunya. "The rainy season is most conducive for vector-borne diseases like dengue, chikungunya and malaria which spread during this time every year. These are all mosquito generated diseases and they sometimes gain epidemic proportions if preventive measures are not taken. "Prevention is the best method to control any disease. In order to control and prevent the outbreak, it is essential to prevent breeding of mosquitoes and students should be made aware of this," the Directorate of Education (DoE) said in a letter to school principals.

— PTI

## Mobile on EMI: 2,500 duped, 1 arrested

**New Delhi:** Delhi Police has arrested a 32-year-old man from Ghaziabad for allegedly duping over 2,500 people on the pretext of getting them mobile phones on EMI through fake websites. Police said that the accused identified as Jitender Singh disclosed to the police that he along with his associates — Praveen Kumar and Rajat Shukla — indulged in defrauding people by offering them to provide mobile phones on easy monthly installments. However, after taking a small amount as down payment from them, they would vanish, police said, adding Singh confessed to have duped over 2,500 people across the country this way. The police said that efforts are being made to trace Singh's associates Kumar and Shukla. The matter came to notice when a probe was initiated on January 9 on the complaint of one Irfan Pathan, who alleged that in December last year, he wanted to buy a mobile phone and came across a website — [www.mobilityworld.in](http://www.mobilityworld.in) — which offered them on EMIs at cheap rates.

## 60-year-old killed over AC installation

**New Delhi:** A 60-year-old man was killed allegedly during a scuffle over air-conditioner installation in east Delhi's Vishwas Nagar area, police said on Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Dharmpal, a resident of Vishwas Nagar, they said. The incident took place on Tuesday afternoon. Police received information regarding a quarrel in NSA Colony, Vishwas Nagar and reached at Hedgewar Hospital where they found that Dharmpal died during treatment. "The deceased's son said that on Tuesday afternoon, his neighbours and other persons quarreled with him and his family members on the issue of installation of AC," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Amit Sharma said. They alleged that the compressor unit of the AC was near the neighbour's house which irritated the accused.

## Delhi records 4,473 Covid-19 cases

■ Highest single-day spike so far; death toll reaches 4,839 ■ 45% jump in number of containment zones

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

Delhi's Covid-19 tally rose to more than 2.30 lakh after 4,473 fresh cases were reported on Wednesday, which was the highest single-day spike in the national capital recorded so far.

The previous highest single-day spike was 4,321 cases, which was recorded on Saturday last week.

Thirty-three fatalities pushed the death toll in the national capital to 4,839, according to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department. Four of these 33 deaths are from the previous days.

The Covid-19 death toll in Delhi stood at 4,806 on Tuesday. The active cases tally on Wednesday rose to 30,914 from 29,787 on the previous day, as per the bulletin. The Wednesday bulletin said that the death toll from the coronavirus infection has risen to 4,839 and the total number of cases have climbed to 2,30,269.

The number of containment zones in Delhi jumped to 1,637 on Wednesday from 1,560 on Tuesday. The Delhi government has also significantly ramped up testing in the



A robot operates inside a Covid-19 ICU ward at a hospital in Greater Noida on Wednesday. — BIPLAB BANERJEE

last few days.

The number of tests conducted and corresponding fresh cases reported from September 1-15 in that order are: 14,389 (1,358); 20,437 (2,024); 24,198 (2,312); 28,835 (2,509); 32,834 (2,737); 36,219 (2,914); 38,895 (2,973); 36,046 (3,256); 22,954 (2,077); 45,797 (3,609); 54,517 (4,039); 58,340 (4,308); 60,580 (4,266); 60,076 (4,321); 56,656 (4,235); 44,884 (3,229) and 62,669 (4,263).

On Wednesday again, over 4,000 cases were recorded for the 62,593

tests conducted the previous day. The number of rapid-antigen tests conducted on Monday stood at 51,318 while the RT-PCR, CBNAAT and True NAAT tests figures were 11,275 in all adding to 62,593, according to the bulletin. The number of tests done per million, as on Wednesday, was 1,21,556 while the total number of tests stood at 23,09,578.

The positivity rate on Wednesday stood at 7.15 per cent, up from 6.8 per cent the previous day

while the recovery rate was 84.47 per cent, the bulletin said, adding that the case fatality rate stood at 2.1 per cent. Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Secretary Vijay Dev reviewed COVID-19 management along with district magistrates in a meeting, according to the bulletin. Since August 18, cases again have been coming in four-figure count in the city.

According to the bulletin, out of the total number of 14,521 beds in COVID hospitals, 6,783 are vacant. It

## Delhi BJP prez tests Covid +ve

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Wednesday said that he has tested positive for Covid-19. "Last week, I took a COVID test after having light fever. Its report was negative. I was tested again since I was feeling unwell. The report has now come as positive," Mr Gupta tweeted in Hindi.

Mr Gupta said that he was already in quarantine during the last week and advised those who had come in his contact to get themselves tested.

Delhi BJP media cell head Ashok Goel said Mr Gupta was found positive in his third Covid-19 test. "Previous two tests, including a RTPCR showed him negative."



Adesh Gupta

"The Delhi BJP president undertook a rapid antigen test last week and later an RTPCR test, both of which showed him to be Corona negative. But, feeling body ache yet no fever, he once again got himself tested through RTPCR, report of which came on Wednesday and showed him to be Covid-19 positive," said Mr Goel.

Party leaders said Mr Gupta's parents who lived in his ancestral village in UP had also previously tested positive for Coronavirus and were treated in Delhi about 15-20 days ago.

said that 2,736 beds in COVID care centres are occupied by people under quarantine, including travellers who have returned by Vande Bharat Mission and bubble flights.

The bulletin said that 1,94,516 patients have recovered, been discharged or migrated so far. The number of people in home isolation stands at 17,324.

## Govt assures all help to rlys in shifting slum dwellers

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

The Delhi government on Wednesday assured its "full cooperation" to the railways in shifting slum dwellers living along train tracks in the city and offered to prepare a detailed plan for their rehabilitation.

Delhi government's Urban Development Minister Satyendar Jain in a letter to Union Railways Minister Piyush Goyal said that cooperation of all the agencies will be needed to resettle slum dwellers.

"Shifting of slums will require a detailed plan. If the Railways Ministry approves, Delhi can prepare the plan," Jain said in his letter. He also assured "full cooperation" of the Delhi govern-

ment and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in providing houses to the slum dwellers. In a relief to thousands of slum dwellers residing along the 140 km railway tracks in Delhi, the Centre informed the Supreme Court on Monday that they would not be removed till a final decision is taken by the government.

The Centre said that a final decision would be taken in consultation with the railways, the Delhi Government and the Urban Development Ministry. The court said that no coercive action be taken against the slum dwellers for four weeks.

The top court on August 31 had directed the removal of around 48,000 slum dwellings along the railway tracks in Delhi.

► **POLICE HAVE** so far arrested 21 people and 15 names mentioned in the chargesheet are based on scientific, documentary and testimonial evidence gathered during investigation. Chargesheet against the remaining six names will be filed after collecting sufficient evidence.

will be filed after collecting sufficient evidence and completing statutory and procedural requirements.

Among those named in the charge sheet are Pinjra Tod members and JNU students Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) student Asif Iqbal Tanha, former

Congress Councillor Ishrat Jahan, Meeran Haider, Jamia Coordination Committee members Safoora Zargar, former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) councillor Tahir Hussain and activist Khalif Saifi. Apart from these, the names of Mohammad Pervaz, Ahmed, Mohammad Illas, Shahdab Ahmad, Taslim Ahmad, Salim Malik, Mohammad Salim Khan and Athar Khan also appear in the charge sheet as key conspirators.

According to police, the chargesheet includes accounts of over 700 witnesses, technical evidences WhatsApp chats and call data records (CDR's). "Police teams have specifically mentioned about the

WhatsApp chats on February 24 as evidence in the charge sheet. That was the time when riots were happening in the city. At that point, the key conspirators were guiding their foot shoulders about violence in the Northeast area. They were directly in touch with rioters," said the sources.

Police sources also said that the conspirators used a WhatsApp group, which is now closed, for violence in two areas. "Twenty-five WhatsApp groups were especially created for protest sites in the city," said the sources.

"The impression was given that they were an anti-CAA protest group, but through these groups conspirators were being guided," he added.

## St Stephen's releases first list with 99.25% cut-off

## 'DU cut-offs likely to go higher with many students scoring above 95%'

**New Delhi, Sept. 16:** With the St Stephen's College pegging its highest cut-off at 99.25 pc for BA (Hons) Economics, Delhi University officials on Wednesday said cut-offs are going to be higher than last year as a large number of students have scored above 95 per cent in CBSE class 12 exams this year.

The university has received a maximum of 2,85,128 applications

from CBSE Board students.

Shobha Bagai, Dean (Admissions), DU, said: "The cut-offs are likely to be announced after October 12. We have sent the schedule to the administration. The administration is waiting for the UGC calendar. We should hopefully announce the schedule for cut-offs in this week."

— PTI

for science and humanities stream students.

This year's cut-off for the course is higher by 0.25 per cent for commerce and science students.

Last year, the college had pegged the cut-off for BA (Hons) English at 98.75 per cent for commerce students, 98.25 per cent for humanities students and 98.75 per cent for sci-

ence students. The cut-off for BA History (Hons) stands at 99 per cent for commerce students and science stream students, and 98.25 per cent for humanities students.

The cut-off for BA (Hons) Philosophy stands at 98 per cent for commerce, 98.75 per cent for Humanities and 97 per cent marks in the subject while SC, ST and general applicants need 95 per cent in the subject.

For English honours applicants, students need to have scored 90 per cent in English Core or 85 per cent in English Elective. For the BA programme, the cut-off for students from commerce and science backgrounds stands at 99 per cent while for humanities stream students it is 98 per cent.

— PTI

## HC seeks immigration dept's stand Senior citizen harassed at airport for 11 years

**New Delhi, Sept. 16:** The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought response of the Bureau of Immigration and the Central Passport Organization on a senior citizen's plea claiming that for the past 11 years whenever he travels abroad he is subjected to harassment and interrogation at the airport due to an LOC against his namesake.

Each time after the interrogation, the authorities are satisfied he is not the one against whom the look out circular (LOC) is issued, but the whole thing is repeated when he travels abroad the next time, he said.

Justice Navin Chawla, while issuing notice to the Bureau of Immigration and the Central Passport Organization seeking their response, also asked them to see how the issue can be resolved and listed the matter for hearing on October 20.

The high court was hearing the plea of Ashok Agarwal, represented by advocate Pranjal Kishore, who has sought rectifica-

tion or removal of any adverse remarks on his passport so that he is not stopped and questioned each time he travels abroad.

In his plea, he has contended that he has not faced any legal proceedings in the country, but since 2009 whenever he travels abroad, he is interrogated at the airport.

"After every such interrogation, the immigration authorities conclude that they mistakenly identified the petitioner (Agarwal) as the person against whom the said LOC had been issued," the petition has said.

It has also claimed that vide separate emails dated August 31, 2017 and March 14, 2018, the Foreigners Regional Registration Officers of Mumbai and New Delhi assured him that corrective steps have been taken to ensure that he is not interrogated during international travel.

However, despite the assurances, the interrogation and the harassment of the petitioner has continued, the petition has contended.

— PTI

## Noida reports 223 new cases

**Noida, Sept. 16:** Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar on Wednesday recorded 223 new Covid-19 cases, taking the district's infection tally to 10,705. The number of active cases rose to 1,966 from 1,928 on Tuesday, according to the data released by the UP Health Department for a 24-hour period.

On the brighter side, 185 more patients got discharged during the period and the total number of recoveries in the district reached 8,691, the data showed. The district, adjoining Delhi, has so far recorded 48 deaths linked to the pandemic, with one of the lowest mortality rates — 0.44 per cent — in the state, it showed.

Gautam Buddha Nagar now ranks seventh among the 75 districts in the state in terms of active cases as well as in recoveries, and 29th in death toll, according to the figures. There were 67,002 active cases across UP as on Wednesday. So far, 2,58,573 patients have recovered across the state.

— PTI

for humanities stream students.

In Economics, the college has put a rider that applicants need to score at least 95 per cent in mathematics to secure a seat.

Those under Church of North India Delhi Diocese (CNID) and Church of North India (CNI) need to have 70 per cent marks in the subject while SC, ST and general applicants need 95 per cent in the subject.

For English honours applicants, students need to have scored 90 per cent in English Core or 85 per cent in English Elective. For the BA programme, the cut-off for students from commerce and science backgrounds stands at 99 per cent while for humanities stream students it is 98 per cent.

— PTI

## Wild animal rescue centre in city likely by year end

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

Delhi is likely to get its first wild animal rescue centre by the end of the year, forest and wildlife department officials said on Wednesday. There is no such private or government facility in the national capital. The forest department along with NGOs has been rescuing stranded or injured animals and rehabilitating them at Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary in South Delhi, an official said. The facility will come up on a 1.24-acre plot in Rajokri where a monkey rescue centre is lying abandoned.

Three rapid response teams of five members each will be constituted to rescue stranded animals and rehabilitate them at the Rajokri facility. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority has sanctioned funds for these purposes.

## Renowned arts scholar Kapila Vatsyayan dead

**New Delhi, Sept. 16:** Scholar, author and connoisseur of the arts Kapila Vatsyayan died at her Delhi home on Wednesday. She was 92.

"She passed away at 9 am today at her home in Gulmohar Enclave," Kanwal Ali, secretary of the India International Centre where she was a lifetime trustee, told PTI.

Vatsyayan, who was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 2011, was the founding director of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. A former nominated member of the Rajya Sabha, she was also chairperson of the Asia Project at the IIC.

The renowned scholar of art history, architecture and Indian classical dance was born in New Delhi in 1928 and did her masters in English Literature from Delhi University and in Education from the University of Michigan in the US.

Vatsyayan, the younger sister of poet and critic Keshav Malik, is survived by her younger brother Subhash Malik. She married legendary Hindi litterateur Sachchidananda Vatsyayan Agvaya in 1956, and continued with her married name even after their separation in 1969. The final rites were held at the Lodhi Cremation Ground on Wednesday afternoon.

She authored nearly 20 books on different forms of art and their histories in her long career.

Her notable works include "The Square and the Circle of Indian Arts" (1997), "Bharata: The Natya Sastra" (2006), "Dance in Indian Painting" (2004), "Classical Indian Dance in Literature and the Arts" (2007), and "Transmissions and Transformations: Learning Through the Arts in Asia" (2011).

Tributes poured for the culture czarina, who occu-



Padma Vibhushan and scholar Kapila Vatsyayan with former PM Manmohan Singh and former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (file photos).

— PTI



piated a unique space all her own. From politicians and academics to writers and artists, many people remembered her as an institution builder who had contributed immeasurably to the world of art.

IIC president N.N. Vohra said in a statement that Vatsyayan had made "invaluable contribution" to the growth of the institution.

"The gap caused by her passing on cannot be filled. She will be missed by the Centre's members and

many others in various parts of the world who had got to know her," he said.

Renowned Hindi writer Ashok Vaiphey said Vatsyayan's death was a "personal loss".

"I deeply mourn the passing away of Kapila Vatsyayan, a great scholar, a sharp mind, a creative person and a great institution-builder.

"The world of culture in India loses a doyen, a tireless promoter and a bridge-maker amongst the arts, thought and imagination.

Also a personal loss to many like me," he wrote on Facebook.

Wishing strength to her family and friends, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot wrote, "My heartfelt condolences at the passing away of former MP, Padma Vibhushan Kapila Vatsyayan ji, a leading scholar of Indian classical dance, architecture & art history."

Eminent sarod player Amjad Ali Khan said she was a leading scholar of Indian classical dance, art, architecture, and art history.

Producer of the Jaipur Literature Festival, Sanjoy K Roy described her as "the last of the greats".

Several institutions that Vatsyayan was associated with took to social media to pay their respects.

IGNCA in a Twitter post said she was known for "integrating India's rich cultural past with its present for future". — PTI

## CORRIGENDUM OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Northern Railway Moradabad Division invited Expression of interest on date: 17.08.2020 to work as a rail aggregator / handler for collection and transportation of cargo, whose suggestions and questions were sought till 10.09.2020.

A meeting was held in the Divisional Office with interested customers / agencies / companies and other units, in which many parties were unable to give their proposals till the scheduled time and the parties requested for some extra time to submit the proposals. In view of the demand of the parties, the last date for sending all the proposals has been extended up to 12.10.2020.

Offers of interested parties are invited by 12.10.2020 to Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/FS, Divisional Railway Manager Office, Moradabad-244001 and can be sent to e-mail: 1. [pmcml.mb@gmail.com](mailto:pmcml.mb@gmail.com) 2. [srcdcmfsmb@gmail.com](mailto:srcdcmfsmb@gmail.com) and Whatsapp number: 9760534973.

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## SHORT TAKES

## All Odisha MLAs to undergo RT-PCR test

**Bhubaneswar:** As Monsoon Session of Odisha Legislative Assembly (OLA) set to begin on September 29, Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro on Wednesday said all legislators have to undergo RT-PCR test to attend the business of the House. Apart from the lawmakers, their personal security officers (PSOs) and drivers will also face the same test to be able to enter the Assembly premises. "There will be an RT-PCR test exercise for all the members of the Odisha Legislative Assembly along with their PSOs and drivers from 7.30 AM to 9.30 AM on September 27 and 28 on the Assembly premises by a team of doctors. If any member feels uncomfortable during the session, they may go for Antigen test by the doctors at the above said place," the Speaker said in an official advisory. The state government wants to ensure execution of all precautionary measures for containment of Covid-19 during the session.

## Maha: Former MLA Ghandat joins NCP

**Mumbai:** Former Maharashtra MLA Sitaram Ghandat joined the Sharad Pawar-led NCP here on Wednesday. Ghadat, who won the 2009 state Assembly election as an Independent from Gangakhed in Parabhani district, was welcomed into the NCP by senior party leader and state Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. During a function at the NCP's head office here, Pawar expressed hope that with the induction of Ghandat, the party would be strengthened in Parbhani district of Marathwada. Ghandat, who joined the NCP along with his supporters, said he will work "selflessly" for strengthening the party. Maharashtra ministers and NCP leaders Jayant Patil and Nawab Malik were also present during the programme. — PTI

## HC allows IPS Bhatt's plea in '96 drug case

**Ahmedabad:** The Gujarat high court on Wednesday allowed former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt's plea seeking a direction to a court at Palanpur in Banaskantha district to not conduct virtual hearings of applications in a 1996 alleged drug planting case, and adjourn it till the physical hearings resume. The applications pending before the Palanpur court are related to the case of planting of drug to allegedly frame a lawyer from Rajasthan. Bhatt was arrested in the case by the CID in September 2018. Bhatt is currently serving life sentence in a separate custodial death case. The court of Justice Vipul Pancholi allowed Bhatt's plea, his lawyer Saurin Shah said. — PTI

## Pondi CM praises L-G for dip in Covid cases

**Puducherry:** Chief minister of Puducherry V. Narayanasamy on Wednesday attributed the dip in Covid-19 cases here to Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi's cooperation and the team spirit of all engaged in combating the pandemic. Addressing a virtual press conference, the Chief Minister, who has been at loggerheads with the Lieutenant Governor since she assumed office in May 2016, said, "All sections and also cooperation of the Lt Governor have been playing a pro-active role in fighting Covid-19." He further said this unified approach is responsible for the decline in the cases of infection. "All are putting in team work and there is also cooperation of the Lt Governor to fight the pandemic," he said. — PTI

## 3 killed, 9 injured in Odisha road mishap

**Baripada (Odisha):** Three persons were killed and nine others injured when an auto-rickshaw carrying them was hit by a truck in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district on Wednesday, police said. Some tribal students and their guardians were going to Suliapada from Dhokota village to collect free ration when the truck dashed into their three-wheeler on National Highway 49 near Bangiriposi, they said. Two persons, identified as Faguram Hembram (14) and Mansingh Marandi (35), died on the spot, while Manku Marandi (45), mother of a student, succumbed to her injuries. — PTI

## Opp. targets Govt on tackling Covid

'Govt delayed imposition of lockdown due to gala welcome for US President Trump in Feb.'

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

The Opposition parties on Wednesday hit out at the center over the Covid-19 response in a short duration discussion in the Rajya Sabha. Taking on the Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, Deputy Leader of Opposition Mr Anand Sharma questioned the government's claims that the lockdown prevented up to 29 lakh Covid-19 cases. He said people of the country should know if the lockdown really helped in containing the spread of the

disease. "The minister said in a statement on Tuesday that it has been estimated that this decision prevented approximately 14-29 lakh cases and 37-78 thousand deaths... how have you derived this figure? What is the scientific basis, the House must be informed," Mr Sharma said. He further added that the day the lockdown was imposed the country had 600 cases which have now increase to 50 lakh cases.

While TMC member Mr Derek O' Brian raised the issue of better coordination between states and centre.

He said that the Union government needs humility to work with states to move forward. also said the central government should not use the pandemic "to convert democracy into autocracy" and urged it follow best practices from states to deal with the crisis. The senior TMC leader also termed the PM CARES Fund as the most "opaque" fund in the world. He added, "The problem is when things are going good, you want to take the credit. When things are tough, you start talking about chief ministers."

Mr Tiruchi Siva (DMK) alleged late action by the government in initiating steps to tackle Covid-19 and said this delay has led to the present situation. "The first case was detected in January and the self-imposed curfew started from March 23," he said. According to him, the lockdown was delayed for the "gala welcome" of the US President Donald Trump, who was here on a two-day visit on February 24 and 25 this year. Mr K Keshava Rao of TRS said that there was a need for better coordination between the Centre

and the state governments, which are handling the pandemic on the ground. Mr. Elamaram Kareem (CPI-M) cited data from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy to claim that around 15 crore people have lost jobs and alleged that the government has not taken any steps to address the situation. Mr. Manoj Jha of the RJD also raised the issues of workers who were turned down by their employers during the pandemic. He also questioned the lockdown process, saying it was done in a "highly unscientific" manner.

## ■ 'Will help farmers get better price'

## 'Will boost agri': BJP defends 3 farm sector Bills

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

With the Modi government facing criticism over three farm sector related bills introduced in the ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament to replace the ordinances promulgated earlier, the BJP on Wednesday claimed that three bills — one has already been passed by the Lok Sabha — are far-sighted and will boost agriculture production while asserting that the minimum support price (MSP) will continue to stay. Many farmers groups in Punjab and Haryana have been protesting against the bills, which have been opposed by the BJP's own ally SAD.

BJP president JP Nadda, while addressing the media on the issue, said the bills will help farmers get better price for their produce through a transparent system. Asserting that poor, marginalized and farmers are at the core of Modi government's policies, the BJP president also said that the party has spoken with the SAD and addressed their concerns over the bills. He also attacked the Congress for doing politics over the bills and said while the



Indian National Congress MP Jasbir Singh Gill at Parliament House during ongoing Monsoon Session in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

opposition party mentions reforms in agriculture and farming sector in its manifesto, it opposed the same in Parliament. The government has introduced The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill to replace the ordinances promulgated earlier.



Samajwadi party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav eats biscuits while son Akhilesh Yadav sits beside in former's office at Parliament House on Wednesday. — FACEBOOK

## Post Jaya LS speech, security beefed up at Bachchan homes

**Mumbai, Sept. 16:** Security has been increased outside bungalows of Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan in Mumbai, a day after she told Parliament that the film industry was being defamed by some and asked the government to protect and support it, a police official said.

"Amitabh Bachchan already has X category security cover. After the speech (in Parliament by Jaya Bachchan), we stepped up peripheral security and increased patrolling outside their bungalows in Juhu," the official said.

The Bachchans have "Jalsa", "Janak" and "Pratiksha" bungalows in



Jaya Bachchan

Juhu. They live in "Jalsa" and "Pratiksha".

The official said the security has been stepped up as a precautionary measure to avoid any untoward incident in view of Jaya Bachchan's speech.

Batting for Bollywood that has been under a cloud since the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in June on the floor of the Rajya Sabha, Jaya Bachchan on

Tuesday argued for government support to the entertainment industry and slammed those tarnishing its image.

In her speech, she had used a Hindi proverb to say those defaming the industry were biting the hands that fed them.

Though Bachchan did not take any names, her speech came a day after BJP's Lok Sabha MP and Bhojpuri actor Ravi Kishan said there was a problem of drug addiction in the film industry.

She had also said she completely disagrees with those who term the entertainment industry a "gutter", a term used by actor Kangana Ranaut to describe Bollywood in a tweet last month. — PTI

## Legislators' trial should be time bound, Centre tells SC

PARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought information on the criminal cases involving allegation of heinous crime, corruption and money laundering against the sitting and former lawmakers being investigated by the CBI where there is no stay by the higher courts, as Centre today told the court that trials of the lawmakers should be time bound.

"If there is a case where central agency is not proceeding despite no stay" by the higher courts, Justice Surya Kant asked as court was told that the cases against politicians were moving at a snail pace for one reason or the other.

Speaking for himself, solicitor general Tushar Mehta told a bench comprising Justice N.V. Ramana, Justice Surya Kant and Justice Hrishikesh Roy that there should not be stay of the trial of the lawmakers including former even if high court is considering challenge to some aspect of the orders passed by the trial court.

Appearing for the Centre, Mr Mehta suggested that even the high courts should decide the matter coming before them involving the trial of lawmakers in a time bound manner in a month's time.

Justice Surya sought the details of the status of cases being investigated by the central agencies, including CBI, where there is no stay.

## Centre showing 'brazen duplicity' over J&amp;K: PDP

First PDP meet takes place after removal of Article 370

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16

People's Democratic Party (PDP) on Wednesday accused the Central government of "brazen duplicity" over Jammu and Kashmir and said that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

It also said that its "fight" against "bulldozing J&K's identity and rights will continue uncompromisingly".

A statement issued after a meeting of the party's youth wing, the first since August 5 last year, the PDP said, "On one hand, BJP government is participating in dialogue with Taliban, talking reconciliation with PLA who have invaded Ladakh and discussing with Nagaland insurgents separate Constitution and flag, but at the same time, it is using

the statement of p[arty's youth wing said, 'The party has reaffirmed its pledge to continue fighting for the aspirations and rights of people of J&K and resist by all democratic ways the onslaught by the Central government.

anything but dialogue to deal with the mess created by them after illegal scrapping of special status if J&K. This is unacceptable."

The statement also said, "The party has reaffirmed its pledge to continue fighting for the aspirations and rights of people of J&K and resist by all democratic ways the onslaught by the Central government".

"In the first ever meeting of its youth wing after August 5, 2019, the party emphasised that the consti-

tutional fraud perpetrated on the people of J&K and the subsequent bulldozing of constitutional rights will always remain unacceptable and would be fought uncompromisingly," the statement added. The meeting was presided over by PDP vice president Abdur Rehman Veeri and addressed to among others by its general secretary Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura and youth wing president Waheed ur Rehman Parra.

National Conference vice president, Omar Abdullah welcomed the first political meeting held by the PDP.

"Good to see @YouthJKPDP make a start with political meetings. Political activities must resume unhindered & the administration is duty bound to ensure a level playing field for all political parties," Abdullah tweeted.

## Govt wrong on J&amp;K house arrests: Parties

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16

Various mainstream and separatist parties in Jammu and Kashmir have ridiculed the home ministry's claim that no leader in the Union Territory (UT) is currently under house arrest.

While former minister and senior People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader, Naem Akhtar, claimed that he and as many as 35 other mainstream leaders stayed under house arrest till Wednesday morning, a statement issued by separatist All Parties Hurriyat Conference here said that its chairman and Kashmir's chief Muslim cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq continued to be under house detention since August 5 last year.

"On that day, police vehicles were parked on both the gates of his house compound and since he is not being allowed to move out

and even go to Jama Masjid (Grand Mosque) where he would deliver customary sermons on Fridays," the amalgam faction said.

Minister of state (home) G. Kishan Reddy, in a written reply to a question raised by Trinamool Congress MP Saugata Ray said in Lok Sabha on Tuesday that no leader in J&K is currently under house arrest. He, however, admitted that 223 people in J&K are under detention. He said, "As on the 11 September, 223 persons are under detention. No person is under house arrest in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir."

"The situation on the ground is contrary to what the Home Ministry has claimed. After the authorities revoked my detention under the Public Safety Act (PSA) in the third week of June this year I was placed under house arrest. I'm not being allowed to go out," said Mr Akhtar.

## NEWS BRIEFS

## Manmohan, Chidambaram, other MPs seek leave from Parliament

**New Delhi:** At least 14 Rajya Sabha MPs, also including former prime minister Manmohan Singh, former Union minister P Chidambaram, senior Congress leader Oscar Fernandes and AIADMK's A Navaneethakrishnan have sought leave of absence from the ongoing monsoon session of Parliament on medical grounds. Chairman M



Manmohan Singh and P. Chidambaram. Venkaiah Naidu, who informed this on Wednesday, said that he had received letters from Dr Singh and 13 other MPs seeking leave of absence on medical grounds.

## TN CM: Dowry deaths, stalking will see more stringent penalty

**Chennai:** Punishment for offences against women and children including causing deaths by demanding dowry, stalking and selling minors for prostitution would be made more stringent in Tamil Nadu, chief minister K. Palaniswami announced in the Assembly on Wednesday. Steps would be taken to bring amendments to the Indian Penal Code by tak-



K. Palaniswami. ing the Centre's nod to provide a higher level of punishment for offences against women and children, he said. The proposed move is to ensure better safety and security for women and children, he said making a statement in the House. — PTI

## RS passes Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill

**New Delhi:** Parliament on Wednesday passed the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill, 2020, which accords an institution of national importance status to a Jamnagar-based cluster of Ayurveda institutes. The bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha in March, was passed by the Rajya Sabha by voice vote. Three Gujarat based institutes are - Institute of Post

Graduate Teaching and Research in Ayurveda, G u l a b k u n w e r b a Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya and Institute of Ayurveda Pharmaceutical Sciences, which will now be merged into an institution.

Responding to queries after the debate, Union health minister Harsh Vardhan said selection of the Jamnagar institute was not "arbitrary" or "biased".

## LS passes bankng bill to bring all cooperative banks under RBI

**New Delhi:** Aiming to safeguard the interests of lakhs of investors associated with cooperative banks across the country, especially in the wake of the FMC Bank collapse, the Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2020 which brings all 1,482 urban and 58 multi-state cooperative banks under the supervision of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman

while replying to a short discussion on the legislation, allayed the fears of several lawmakers that the proposed legislation would not infringe on the jurisdiction of states, and that RBI has the mandate to monitor them.

The Union Cabinet had in June this year, approved the ordinance to bring cooperative banks under the supervision of the RBI to strengthen their functioning.

## Deb defends 'monkey, tiger' comment on journalists

**Agartala, Sept. 16:** As the three-day deadline set by the journalists to withdraw his comments against

the media ended, Tripura chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb has said he didn't threaten anybody but wanted to alert people against "propaganda and conspiracies" as part of which "monkeys are often turned into tigers or tigers are turned into monkeys".

But, dissatisfied journalists on Wednesday said they would continue with their protest on the issue and approach governor R.K. Bais, Union home minister Amit Shah and the Editors Guild of India. Mr Deb said that his comments were not to insult or hurt anyone. — PTI

## SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON



KARAN

General public is hereby informed that this person namely Karan S/o Dashrath Singh R/o H.No. A-26, Zamrudpur, G.K., New Delhi Age : 22 years, Height : 5'7", Build : Normal, Complexion : Sallow, Face : Oval, wearing light yellow colour T-shirt and dark blue colour Jeans pant, has missing since 24.08.2018 from the Jurisdiction of P.S. Greater Kailash, New Delhi. In this regard DD No. 40-A dated 24.08.2018 P.S. Greater Kailash, New Delhi has been lodged.

Any person having information or clue about this missing person may kindly inform to the following:-

E-mail: cbc@cbl.gov.in SHO : P.S. Greater Kailash, New Delhi, Website: http://cbl.nic.in Tel. No. 011-26241076, 262410767 Fax: 24368639, Tel. No. 24368638/24368641 DP20S/SD/2020



## SHORT TAKES

**Gold case: Main accused gets bail**

**Kochi:** A court on Wednesday granted bail with stringent conditions to a key accused in the gold smuggling case in Kerala. K.T. Ramees was granted bail by the special court (Economic Offences) in the case registered by the Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate. The Customs had alleged that smuggled gold was sold in Kerala and outside the state through a well established channel in which Ramees is a key member. However, Ramees will continue to remain behind bars as he is facing the NIA investigation into the alleged terror link in the gold smuggling case. Granting bail, the court directed the accused to execute a bond of ₹2,00,000 with two solvent sureties each for the like sum and the sureties shall produce their original title deeds for verification. — *PTI*

**35 Covid deaths in armed forces: MoS**

**New Delhi:** Some 35 defence forces personnel have died due to Covid-19 pandemic, Parliament was informed on Wednesday. "The number of Covid cases in Army, Navy and Air Force are 16,758, 1,365 and 1,716 respectively," said MoS defence Shripad Naik in a written reply in Lok Sabha. "The number of deceased due to Covid-19 in the Army and Air Force are 32 and 03 respectively and 'NIL' in case of Navy," he said. The minister informed Parliament that as per the extant rules, there is no special compensation for deaths occurring due to infectious diseases while in service. However, all deaths while in service are awarded terminal benefits, he added.

**Guj man kills wife, 2 kids, ends life**

**Bhavnagar, Gujarat:** A 40-year-old man allegedly committed suicide after killing his wife and two daughters in Gujarat's Bhavnagar town on Wednesday evening. As per the preliminary probe, Prithviraj Jadeja shot his wife Bina (38) and daughters Nandini (15) and Yashashvi (11) before turning the gun on himself, said a police official. He also killed the family's pet dog during the blood bath, said sub-divisional police officer Safin Hasan. "It appears that Jadeja, resident of Vijayrajnagar area, first shot dead his wife, two daughters and the family's dog and then shot himself," Mr Hasan said, adding that probe was on as to why he committed the act. — *PTI*

**Drug case: 2 actors quizzed in K'taka**

**Bengaluru:** Actor-couple Diganth Manchale and Aindrita Ray were questioned for four hours on Wednesday by the central crime branch (CCB) in connection with the drug abuse in the Kannada film industry. The two, who were summoned by the CCB, will be asked to appear again for further inquiry at a later date, Bengaluru joint commissioner of police Sandeep Patil told reporters. "In connection with this case (drug case), we had summoned Diganth and Aindrita Ray.. they had appeared for the inquiry. A detailed inquiry was done and we got lots of information," he said. After being questioned by CCB officials, Diganth said he and his wife were cooperating with the investigation. — *PTI*

**Meghalaya CM pushes for a 'Gorkhaland'**

■ Continued from Page 1  
public as the Monsoon Session of Parliament is in progress and there are growing demands by NDA allies in Darjeeling for finding a permanent political solution. Meanwhile, the Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League (Pratap Khati camp) has thanked Mr Sangma for extending his support to their long-pending demands. Mr Sangma is the second chief minister to lend support to the demand for a "Gorkhaland" When Pawan Chamling was the Sikkim chief minister, he got a resolution adopted in the state Assembly on March 29, 2011, terming "Gorkhaland" as a genuine and legitimate demand of the people of the hills of North Bengal.

# Uproar in J&K's Sopore after youth dies in police custody

Police denies family's charge, claims he was working for militant outfit

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16

J&K's north-western town Sopore and its neighbourhood are tense in the aftermath of alleged extrajudicial killing of a local youth. Internet services were early Wednesday withdrawn from the area and the police and paramilitary reinforcements fanned out "as a precautionary measure".

The police, however, claimed the youth, Ifran Ahmed Dar, was an "overground worker (OWG)" of a separatist militant outfit who tried to escape from their custody and that later his corpse was found in a neighbouring village. They, however, didn't say how he was killed.

The family of the youth termed it as "cock and bull

■ **THE FAMILY** of the youth termed it as 'cock and bull story' and also denied Dar was involved in any unlawful activity

story" and also denied Dar was involved in any unlawful activity. "The police are lying. My brother was killed in cold-blood. He would work with me at our family shop from 7 am to 9 pm. He had nothing to do with militancy or militants," said his elder brother Javaid Ahmed. A statement issued by the J&K police said that 23-year-old Dar was found dead after he escaped from police custody.

Dar was picked up by the police from his residence in Sopore's Sidiq Colony at around 12.45 pm on Tuesday and, as per the

police claim, two Chinese hand grenades were recovered from his possession following which the police registered an FIR under Section 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act at a local police station, the statement said.

"During the course of probe, a police team visited Chairdaji area of Tuijar-Sharief (about 13-km from Sopore town) along with the OGW for effecting some more recovery on his disclosure," the police said. The police statement added, "The OGW while taking advantage of darkness and terrain managed to escape regarding which a separate case FIR No. 71/2020 U/S 224 IPC was registered in Police Station Bomai and during search the body of OGW was found

near a stone quarry of Tuijar-Sharief." The police statement did not say how Dar was killed.

His brother Ahmed said that he too was picked up by the police for questioning a couple of hours after their house was searched by the police and his younger brother taken along. "I was unwell and when they thought my condition might deteriorate, I was sent home at 11 pm," he told reporters.

Strongly denying that his brother or any other family member was involved in militancy, Ahmed said, "He was not just my brother, he was my friend too. He would share each and everything with me. He would work at our shop from 7 am to 9 (or 10 pm). Nothing was hidden to me."

## India raises issue of snooping with Chinese official

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

The Indian government on Wednesday formally raised the issue of alleged snooping by Chinese company Zhenhua Data Information Technology, with the Chinese ambassador Sun Weidong.

"The Government of India is deeply concerned with any report that suggests that foreign sources are accessing or seeking to access the personal data of our citizens without their consent. The Government of India takes very seriously the protection of privacy and personal data of Indian citizens," sources said.

As per leaked data, Zhenhua was allegedly spying on several persons globally, including Indian top leaders, judges and military commanders.

"China has said that Zhenhua is a private company and stated its position publicly," sources said.

The Chinese foreign ministry later in a statement denied reports of snooping, saying the firm under scanner — Shenzhen Zhenhua — instead of collecting data "only mobilises data which is open and available online."

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang

■ **THE CHINESE** foreign ministry in a statement denied reports of snooping, saying the firm under scanner — Shenzhen Zhenhua — instead of collecting data 'only mobilises data which is open and available online'

Wenbin said: "I noticed the company's response that the report is seriously untrue. The company said clearly that it's a private company, and its clients are research institutions and business groups. I would like to stress that as a staunch defender of cyber security, China opposes and fights all cyber crimes. We would like to enhance dialogue and cooperation with other countries to jointly build a peaceful, secure, open and cooperative cyber space."

"China is ready to enhance cooperation and communication with all sides, make and abide by global rules that reflect the will and respect the interests of all countries, prevent all practices that use one's technological advantage to undermine other countries' security, and safeguard global data security," the Chinese spokesperson said.

## SUSHANT PROBE NCB staffer is Covid +ve, Shruti grilling called off

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

The Narcotics Control Bureau's (NCB) grilling of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's former manager Shruti Modi had to be called off abruptly after one of the members of the special investigation team tested positive for Covid on Wednesday. The remaining team is under quarantine currently. The officials said they would summon her again after following due protocol.

The Central agency said that the questioning was terminated after Ms Modi reached the NCB office at around 10 am and the officials learnt of one of their team members being infected. The officials said that the test was an antigen test and that all other SIT members have been placed under self-quarantine. The agency had also scheduled questioning of the deceased actor's talent manager Jaya Saha. The probe had gathered pace with the arrest of several drug peddlers. The same also helped establish a link on how the narcotics substances reached Rajput via Rhea's brother Showik Chakraborty.

## SC will look into Marriage Act over privacy concerns

PARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought response from the Centre on a plea challenging the provision of the Special Marriage Act, 1954, mandating the publication of the details of the couple intending to marry, including putting them on the notice board of the registrar of marriages.

Issuing a notice, Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, heading a three-judge bench, in a poser asked, "What if the children run away to get married? How would the parents know

about the whereabouts of their children? If a wife runs away, how would the husband come to know?"

The poser from the CJI came as senior counsel Kalesswaram Raj argued that provision of the Special Marriage Act was violative of the right to privacy pointing to top court judgment holding that right to privacy was a fundamental right read in Article 21 of the constitution.

As Chief Justice Bobde asked how could they object to the putting up the application for marriage on the notice board or its publication thereby

defeating the intended purpose of the provision, Mr Raj said that they were only objecting to the public display of the decision of the couple to marry and not the inquiry part of it, which can take place.

A plea by Nandini Praveen — a third year law student in Kerala — has challenged Section 5, 6(2), 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the Special Marriage Act, being violative of Article 14 (equality before law), Article 15 (Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth) and Article 21 (Protection of life and personal liberty).

## 11 die as boat carrying 30 capsizes in Kota

**Kota (Rajasthan), Sept. 16:** At least 11 people, including women and children, were killed after a boat carrying over 30 devotees to a temple in Rajasthan's Bundi district capsized in the Chambal river on Wednesday morning, officials said.

Three people are still missing while 20 devotees were rescued, they added.

Belonging to the Khatoli Itawa area of Kota, they were going to the Kamleshwar temple in Indergarh of Bundi to offer prayers.

The accident took place around 8.45 am near Gotra village under the Khatoli

police station, about 110 kilometers from Kota district headquarters.

The depth of the river where the boat overturned is around 40-45 feet, an official said, adding a rescue operation was launched by the SDRF and the NDRF.

At least 11 people have been killed in the mishap in Khatoli while the search for three others is under way. District Collector Ujjawal Rathore said, adding that 20 people were rescued.

According to local residents, 35-50 people were on board with 14 to 15 motor-

## PM Modi expresses anguish over deaths

**New Delhi:** PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday expressed anguish over the loss of lives after a boat capsized in Kota. "Anguished by the capsizing of a boat in Kota, Rajasthan. My thoughts are with those who have lost their near and dear ones: PM @narendramodi," the PMO tweeted quoting Mr Modi. — *PTI*

bikes when the accident took place, he added. The district collector

## '3 incidents of firing at LAC in eastern Ladakh'

PAWAN BALI  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

There have been at least three incidents of firing at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh where Indian and Chinese troops are engaged in a four month long military stand-off.

Also, sources said that despite an in-principle agreement for the military dialogue, Chinese army has still not confirmed a date for Corps commander-level talks.

Out of these firing incidents, two happened at the Southern banks of Pangong Tso and one in the finger area on its northern banks. The Indian Army has officially acknowledged only one firing incident which took place on September 7 at Mukhpari in the Chushul sector.

However, sources said that the first firing inci-



Indian Army personnel get Bofors guns ready for operations in Ladakh.

dent actually took place earlier, between August 29-31 when the Indian Army in a pre-emptive move occupied strategic heights on the Kailash range which overlook entry points of the Spangur gap in the Chushul sector.

The third and bigger firing incident happened on September 8-9 when the Indian Army occupied higher positions overlooking Chinese posts on the ridgelines of finger 4. Chinese troops were also trying to come near

Indian positions and both sides fired more than 100 rounds.

All these incidents involved warning shots being fired in the air and not directly at each other. But, it remains a fact that for the first time in 45 years fire are being shot at the LAC by both sides.

The Indian Army changed the rule of engagement at LAC after the Galwan Valley clash on June 15 where Chinese had used improvised weapons including iron rods studded with nails to attack Indian soldiers breaching the agreements between the two countries. Now Indian army's local commanders are free to use any weapon under their command when threatened by Chinese troops.

Sources said the situation in eastern Ladakh remains tense with the Indian Army and Air Force at a high alert.

## Official asked to clear consignment between Mizoram-Myanmar border

## Bid to bribe, influence Assam Rifles DG

PAWAN BALI  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

An attempt was made to influence and bribe the director general of Assam Rifles to clear trucks consignment between Mizoram-Myanmar border which is one of the routes used to smuggle drugs and bring illegally other products into the country without paying due import taxes.

"On September 8, there was an attempt made by a trader posing as an ex-CISF soldier to influence DG Assam Rifles for get-

ting trucks through check posts in Mizoram. After interaction with the DG on video phone, the individual left behind a packet with gold jewellery which was promptly reported to law enforcement agencies," said sources. An FIR was filed with the police and the issue was also brought into the notice of the Union home secretary and senior Army officials.

According to the complaint filed with SP Shillong on September 8, one Jagdish Sharma approached the office of director general of the

■ Mizoram-Myanmar border is one of the routes used to smuggle drugs and bring illegally other products into the country without paying due import taxes

Assam Rifles (DGAR) at Shillong, claiming that he had come from Delhi to meet the DG and was an ex-CISF personnel.

However, since he was not quarantined after reaching Guwahati he was asked to speak to the DG on phone. "The individual in interaction informed

the DG that he was a trader who wanted DG's assistance in getting his trucks passed through security checks posts in Mizoram," said the complaint filed with the police. Mr Sharma said that he was not from CISF but he knew some retired CISF officer and had used his reference to meet the DG. "The DG told Mr Sharma that he should approach the state government of Mizoram with his problem and get it resolved on his own. Thereafter, Mr Sharma asked for the DG's cell number which the DG

denied and the DG told him to leave the video phone itself," said the complaint. While leaving Mr Sharma handed over sweets for the staff of DG HQs. "On being informed that Mr Sharma had left sweet packets, the staff officer to DG Assam Rifles directed to distribute the sweets amongst the staff. One of the staff informed DG's office that there was a box too along with the sweets. The officer called for the packet and on opening found gold coloured chain kept in the jewellery box," said the complaint.

## 3 arrested for attack on Raina's kin in Pathankot

**Chandigarh/Pathankot, Sept. 16:** The Punjab police on Wednesday claimed to have solved the case of attack on former cricketer Suresh Raina's relatives in Pathankot with the arrest of three persons.

Those arrested are members of an inter-state gang of robbers, they added.

Eleven other accused are yet to be arrested, Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta said here.

Raina, meanwhile, arrived in Pathankot during the day to be with the family. The attack had taken

place in Pathankot's Tharyal village on the intervening night of August 19 and 20.

Raina's uncle, Ashok Kumar, a contractor, had died on the spot, while Kumar's son, Kaushal, succumbed to injuries on August 31.

Kumar's wife, Asha Rani, is still in hospital in a critical condition. Two others injured in the attack have been discharged.

Talking to reporters in Pathankot, Raina thanked CM Capt. Amarinder Singh for extending help and also praised the police, saying it was doing a good job. — *PTI*

## Prez to address NEP meet in J&K Sept 20

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16

President Ram Nath Kovind will visit Srinagar on Sunday to address a one-day session on the implementation of the new national educational policy in the country.

It would be his first visit to J&K after the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two UTs on August 5, 2019.

President Kovind had on August 7 last year signed the Article 370 gazette, revoking the special status to J&K. The move came after both Houses of Parliament passed a resolution in

this regard. According to a statement, the University of Kashmir in collaboration with the J&K government is organising the one-day "brainstorming session" on the implementation of the National Education Policy at Srinagar's Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre September 20.

The NEP was approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, and, as per the government, it is meant to provide an overarching vision and comprehensive framework for higher education across the country.

Birla, who is an MP from the Kota-Bundi constituency of Rajasthan, too expressed grief over the incident.

Local Congress MLA Ramnarayan Meena expressed sorrow over the tragedy and demanded that the relief amount be increased. I have written to Mr Gehlot to increase the compensation, Mr Meena said, alleging that negligence by local officials resulted in the mishap.

When local officials were aware of the movement of the boat, they should have informed their seniors, he said. — *PTI*



## THE ASIAN AGE

17 SEPTEMBER 2020

### Rajnath disappoints: A lot left unanswered

Defence minister Rajnath Singh's much-awaited statement in both Houses of Parliament on Tuesday on the situation in eastern Ladakh was disappointing on several counts, as the country sought clarity from the highest quarters on one of its biggest crises. The minister, however, told us very little we didn't already know, and though he put the current confrontation between the two sides in the historical context of the fractured India-China relationship, beyond acknowledging the obvious fact that this standoff was qualitatively different from earlier ones, in the scale of the troops involved and the number of friction points, and that India was "facing a challenge", we were none the wiser. He told us due to the two sides' differing perceptions of the Line of Actual Control, India and China needed a common perception of the LAC to avoid emergence of new friction points, a process China has been stalling since 2003 as it sees advantage in the continuing ambiguity. All this is well known. There were expressions of hope. If the Moscow agreement between external affairs minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi was "sincerely implemented" by the Chinese, peace would return! Did we not know that already? Mr Singh offered a timeline of the border standoff since early May but left out one crucial bit: the September 7 incident in which shots were fired at the LAC for the first time in 45 years.

Unlike many of his Cabinet colleagues, Mr Singh enjoys a well-deserved reputation for plain speaking, of telling it like it is, as he demonstrated earlier during this crisis while visiting the troops in Ladakh. Therefore, while speaking at Parliament's first meeting after the crisis broke, more was expected of him: that he would share with the country the real story of what was happening, of what had gone wrong. No one expected him to share operational details of ongoing or future Army operations. Despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's truly puzzling declaration at the virtual all-party meeting on June 19 — days after the Galwan incident in which 20 Indian soldiers, including a commanding officer, and an unknown number of Chinese troops were killed — that no Chinese forces were on Indian soil, the Indian Army and others have acknowledged, before and afterwards, that all-out efforts were on to ensure that the People's Liberation Army goes back to its side of the de facto border. Mr Singh could have shed more light on this. His statement made no mention of the 20-km-deep intrusion by the PLA in the Depsang Plains at all. Many such questions, on which the country was hoping for clarity, remain unanswered.

Mr Singh urged MPs to pass a resolution expressing confidence in the armed forces in these difficult times. There is no doubt that all sections of the nation are united on that issue. But in not responding to questions raised by the Congress and others, the government may inadvertently have missed a great opportunity. It has often been said that the India-China competition will define our "Asian century". Here was a chance to show the huge difference between democratic India and the Communist Party oligarchy that runs the People's Republic. An endorsement by a legislature that asks searching, critical questions of the executive would have sent out a message to the world that Xi Jinping's rubber-stamp National People's Congress simply cannot.

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### A welcome ruling

The Supreme Court order on Wednesday prohibiting Sudarshan TV from telecasting the future episodes of a TV show portraying the entry of Muslims into the civil service as an attempt to infiltrate it is welcome for more than one reason. First, the apex court thought it fit that an early intervention to stop the programme which it found "insidious" was warranted and waiting for the statutory authorities to consider the complaints against it would make "irreversible damage". Second, it showed there are existing legal ways to confront such programmes that make use of the fundamental right to speech and expression and create animosity among sections of society. Third, the existing constitutional institutions are still able to assert their independence and decide the fine line between the use and abuse of the right to free speech, thereby obviating the creation of another government mechanism to regulate the media.

The bench while hearing the petition read out Clause 6 (c) of the programme code the ministry of information and broadcasting framed under the Cable TV Network (Regulation) Act, 1994, which prohibited the transmission of programmes that contain attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes. This clause makes it incumbent on the part of the government to act and ensure that peace and harmony prevailed in the country and people with vested interests are stopped in their course before weakening the nation's social fabric through such TV programmes. It is curious that the Union government was seen in the court fighting for media freedom. The court's insistence that "no freedom is absolute, not even journalistic freedom" was met with a comment by the solicitor-general that the freedom of a journalist is supreme and any regulation of the same would need extensive debates. Debates are fine, the government must remember, but insidious programmes are not.

#### THE ASIAN AGE

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Subhani



## Freedom and bias: How Facebook comes of age



Shashidhar Nanjundaiah

What a year it is turning out to be for Facebook!

Its sway over voters has made incumbent governments in several countries seek to exact their pound of flesh. As a self-proclaimed proponent of free speech with limited control over content, the social media company now finds itself stuck in both legal and moral conflicts in many countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Australia and elsewhere.

The ongoing deposition before India's parliamentary standing committee on information technology was always going to be a perfunctory but important attempt to raise questions of Facebook's influence over societies and their behaviour. The committee is multi-partisan, but the original agenda — whether Facebook has systematically favoured the BJP — was so politically divisive that such a panel could have never found a consensus unless the agenda was broadened to a generalisation.

Potentially, the deadlock in the deposition heralds some independence for Facebook. The Congress Party and the Trinamul Congress say Facebook has displayed a pro-BJP stance, while the government claims the contrary, even accusing Facebook's employees of abusing the Prime Minister. In the end, Facebook can claim that since both sides are claiming bias, they cancel each other out and that there is no real bias. That is why it was important that the parliamentary committee work pragmatically towards a united, non-partisan and achievable public goal — helping to independently curb hate.

#### WHO IS 'WE'?

Economic and political power makes great nego-

tiators. But for Facebook, this is a battle of identity. Three recent episodes are of relevance:

1. Facebook will soon add additional text to its terms of use to consolidate its position. In effect, Facebook has emerged from the shadows to stake its claim as a private company with full authority to tweak its rules, not as the public service that it can be mistaken for.

2. Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad shot off a strategically timed letter — coinciding with the parliamentary committee deposition — accusing Facebook's staff in India of colluding to discredit the government.

3. Following Facebook India MD Ajit Mohan's deposition, its global leaders Neil Potts and Mark Zuckerberg have issued statements that assure the world that Facebook is a neutral carrier and that hate speech will not be tolerated on it.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY GAME

Facebook has turned its attention over the past two years to issues pertaining to privacy and complications arising from its business-to-government deals. While governments seek a piece of the content action, is Facebook's government business jeopardising its founding principles?

It is clear that many, even quasi-democratic, governments want more control over social media content and content in general. In Thailand, a constitutional monarchy, the government asked

This year, and not 2016, when Facebook was first accused of gerrymandering, marks its growth from innocence to experience

that access to a group of voices against the government be blocked, and Facebook is suing the government to dispute such a restriction. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte's supporters are known to have peddled fake news on the platform. The country's largest news network had to shut shop recently, thanks to governmental machinations. In Australia, the battle is to make social media accountable for borrowed content. Facebook has threatened to block news from Australian newspapers in retaliation over an impending pay-per-use law that seeks to shield its news media and requires Facebook to share revenues for news items taken from the newspapers.

Platforms such as Facebook face the consequences of not having thought through risks and challenges and pay the price of democratising processes. As a free marketplace of relationships and ideas — "the digital equivalent of a town square", as co-founder Mark Zuckerberg wrote in 2019 — Facebook needs better control over credibility. A growing number of people with Facebook accounts have chosen to stay away because they are dismayed at what they see in that ecosystem. Facebook can help by making its users media literate. As the social media grows and as we become more social media literate, the distinction between satire and fake news, between claims and opinions, and between facts and myths grows on us. Organically, media literacy is a longitudinal process. But intervention can accelerate the education.

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This year, and not 2016, when Facebook was first accused of gerrymandering, marks its growth from innocence to experience. How the company pivots this experience will determine its future.

The writer has led reputed institutes of higher education and is the founder of "Being Responsible", which does media literacy programmes for schools

#### LETTERS

#### PM CARES?

Most MPs found Covid positive on the first day of the parliament session are from BJP. Does this speak of our casual approach to the pandemic? The daily positive case count has jumped to a lakh. There is no record of workers who lost their lives while travelling. No figure on the jobs lost and no figure of donations received in PM-Cares. What are the figures that mattered? How many MLAs need to be bought to topple the Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan and how much to be paid to each "desperate" MLA to change sides. Does this government really care for the poor? Think with your heart, not your mind.

Syed Abdul Monim  
Navi Mumbai

#### FAKE NEWS

AS THE COVID-19 epidemic in India is spiralling out of control, fake news of an imminent lockdown from September 25 had been doing the rounds. The message claimed that the government had been directed by the National Disaster Management Authority to re-impose the lockdown. The Press and Information Bureau did well to issue a fake news alert so people do not panic. This is an earnest request to them to stop circulating this message via WhatsApp and other social media platforms.

Belal Shafiq  
Lucknow

#### GET INDIANS HOME

IT WAS HEART-WRENCHING to watch the viral video on social media which claimed that thousands of Indians, mostly from UP and Bihar, are lodged in Saudi Arabian jails for more than six months. The victims, job seekers all, are said to be very depressed, even suicidal. Some are also seriously ill. The government of Saudi Arabia has recently lifted the lockdown. All governments have evacuated their citizens, but no permission has been received from the Indian government so far. I urgently beseech the Narendra Modi government to help these people return to their families.

A.M.S Nadwi  
Lucknow

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu



### PM Modi plugs 'Karmayogi' in pep talk to IPS probationers

A total of 131 IPS probationers, including 28 women, who completed 42 weeks of basic course phase-1 training at the prestigious Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad had a rare opportunity to interact with Prime Minister Narendra Modi through a video conference. He is known to do this infrequently, but it thrills those who chance into one.

During the basic course training at SVP NPA over two segments, probationers are imparted training in various indoor and outdoor subjects like law, investigation, forensics, leadership and management, criminology, public order and internal security, ethics & human rights, modern Indian policing, fieldcraft and tactics, weapons training and firing. This was their final training before field postings in their respective state cadres.

In his address to the 2018-batch of IPS probationers, the Prime

Minister urged them to excel in their careers. He also used the opportunity to plug the government's new theme "Mission Karmayogi", a scheme for capacity building of civil servants, a task which the National Police Academy has been performing quite ably since its inception back in 1948. The theme immediately got national attention, way beyond police lines, as expected. The academy director, Atul Karwal, a 1988-batch IPS officer from Gujarat cadre, presided over the Dikshant (convocation) Parade and addressed the probationers.

#### MESSAGE TO J&K BASUS

The message is loud and clear from the Modi sarkar that no anti-national rhetoric, especially by government employees shall be tolerated at any cost. One year after the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has constituted a six-member committee, headed by

J&K chief secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, to look into cases related to government officials allegedly indulging in anti-national activities.

The high-level committee has been empowered to scrutinise cases and recommend action against those officials involved in anti-national activities under Article 311(2)(c). Apart from the J&K chief secretary, the others members of the high-level committee include administrative secretary of the Home department, J&K DGP, administrative secretary of the general administration department, additional DGP, CID and administrative secretary of the department of law, justice.

Experts say any government official, including IAS and IPS officers if found guilty by the committee for "anti-national" activity can be dismissed from service without an inquiry.

According to sources, it is rumoured that many government

officers are under the scanner in Jammu and Kashmir for their involvement in 'anti-national' activities.

#### MEDIA AND MUMBAI POLICE

What made seven former DGPs and a police commissioner approach the Bombay high court in the Sushant Singh Rajput case?

The media's obsession with the Sushant Singh Rajput death case has overridden the raging corona pandemic, our stalled economy and the Chinese threat on the border. After the CBI, Enforcement Directorate and sundry agencies have been brought in by the Centre, the Mumbai Police has been forced into a corner. It has been accused of political bias and for botching up the investigation, though in the freestyle mud wrestling that the nation has seen, it is hard to determine who is cleaner.

Now, the former IPS officers have urged the court to put an end to the

"media trial" and the "unfair, malicious and false media campaign" against the Mumbai police in the case. The petitioners include former Maharashtra DGPs M.N. Singh, P.S. Pasricha, D.K. Sivanandan, Sanjiv Dayal, Satish Mathur, K. Subramanyam and former additional DGP K.P. Raghuvanshi, and former Mumbai police commissioner D.N. Jadhav. According to the petition, the adverse media campaign "appears to have been designed with sinister motives to tarnish the fair image of the Mumbai police".

Significantly, the petition urges courts to frame rules or guidelines which would help media cover investigations that are sub-judice. But, for now, it is a no-holds-barred approach as far as some sections of the media are concerned.

Share a babu experience!  
Follow dilipthecherian@  
Twitter.com . Let's  
multiply the effect.



## IN BRIEF

**Wartime killings:  
7 held in Bosnia**

**Sarajevo:** Authorities in Bosnia on Wednesday arrested seven Bosnian Serb former military officers and troops suspected in the killing of 44 Bosniak civilians during the 1992-95 war. In all, nine people are suspected of the September 1992 crime in the area of Sokolac, in southeastern Bosnia, Bosnia's prosecutor's office said in a statement. Bosnian Serbs separated men from women in the Bosniak village of Novoseoci before taking the men away to a nearby waste dump where they were killed.

**Philippine copter  
crash kills four**

**Zamboanga:** A Philippine air force helicopter on its way to airlift troops wounded in a recent suicide bombing crashed on a southern island Wednesday, killing all four crew members on board, officials said. The Sikorsky S-76A took off from southern Zamboanga city for a flight to nearby Sulu province and crashed midway in rainy weather in the hilly village of Upper Manggas on Basilan island. The two pilots and two other crew members were killed. They were bound for Jolo town to airlift troops who were wounded in two Aug. 24 bombings.

**Quake shakes  
Kathmandu**

**Kathmandu:** A strong earthquake of 6 magnitude shook Nepal's capital Kathmandu and surrounding areas on Wednesday, forcing people to rush out of their houses. According to the National Seismological Center, the 6 magnitude quake occurred in the country's Sindhupalchowk district near Tibet border at 5:19 am. The epicentre of the earthquake was Ramche village in the district, 120 km east of Kathmandu. A mild tremor of 3.8 magnitude was also felt at the same place at 6:10 am, it said.

**Greek camp fire:  
13 detained**

**Athens:** Thirteen people have been detained on the Greek island of Samos after a fire threatened the local migrant camp, police said Wednesday, days after another blaze destroyed Europe's largest migrant camp on Lesbos. "We are examining the possible participation of these suspects in the incident," a Samos police source said. The officer declined to identify the nationalities of the suspects. It broke out in a forested area near the Samos camp late on Tuesday, but firefighters were able to place it under control. The Lesbos fire at Moria camp on September 8 left over 12,000 asylum seekers homeless.

**3 FATF-RELATED  
BILLS PASSED IN  
PAK, 1 BLOCKED**

**Islamabad, Sept. 16:** A joint sitting of Pakistan's Parliament on Wednesday passed three crucial Financial Action Task Force-related legislations, as part of the government's efforts to escape from being black-listed by the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog.

President Arif Alvi called the joint sitting of both houses of Parliament on Wednesday evening after Senate earlier in the day rejected the Anti-Terrorism Act (amendment) Bill, 2020, making it the third FATF-related legislation to have been blocked by the Opposition-dominated upper house.

Last month, the Anti-Money Laundering (Second Amendment) Bill and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Waqf Properties Bill, were rejected by Senate. The three legislations were part of efforts by Pakistan to move from the FATF's grey list to the white list. Under the 18th Amendment, if a bill passed by one house of Parliament is rejected by the other, it can become a law only if it is passed by a joint sitting of the two houses.

Prime Minister Imran Khan attended the joint session which was chaired by National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser. The opposition staged a walk out after most of their proposed amendments to the bills were rejected and they were not allowed to speak.

Khan thanked lawmakers who voted in favour of the legislations for "standing with their country". He said that the opposition's "attitude" on the bills showed that the "interests of [opposition parties] and their leaders were the opposite of Pakistan's interests".



Water floods a road as the outer bands of Hurricane Sally come ashore in the Gulf Shores, Alabama. The storm is bringing heavy rain, high winds and a dangerous storm surge from Louisiana to Florida. — AFP

**Sally pummels Alabama  
with heavy rain, outages**

**Pensacola (US), Sept. 16:** Hurricane Sally made landfall Wednesday near Gulf Shores, Alabama, as a Category 2 storm, pushing a surge of ocean water onto the coast and dumping torrential rain that forecasters said would cause dangerous flooding from the Florida Panhandle to Mississippi and well inland in the days ahead.

Moving at an agonisingly slow 3 mph, Sally finally came ashore at 4:45 a.m. local time with top winds of 105 mph (165 kmh), the National Hurricane Center said. Sally's northern eyewall had raked the Gulf Coast with hurricane-force winds and rain from Pensacola Beach, Florida, westward to Dauphin Island, Alabama, for hours before its centre finally hit land.

Some 150,000 homes and businesses had lost electricity by early Wednesday, according to the poweroutage.us site. A curfew was called in the coastal Alabama city of Gulf Shores due to life-threatening conditions.

In the Panhandle's

● **SOME 150,000** homes and businesses had lost electricity by early Wednesday, according to the poweroutage.us site. A curfew was called in the coastal Alabama city of Gulf Shores due to life-threatening conditions.

Escambia County, Chief Sheriff's Deputy Chip Simmons vowed to keep deputies out with residents as long as physically possible.

The county includes Pensacola, one of the largest cities on the Gulf Coast. "The sheriff's office will be there until we can no longer safely be out there, and then and only then will we pull our deputies in," Simmons said at a storm briefing late Tuesday. This for a storm that, during the weekend, appeared to be headed for New Orleans. "Obviously this shows what we've known for a long time with storms — they are unpre-

dictable," Pensacola Mayor Grover Robinson IV said. Stacy Stewart, a senior specialist with the hurricane centre, said the rainfall will be "catastrophic and life threatening" over portions of the Gulf Coast, Florida panhandle and southeastern Alabama, and will continue well after landfall, with the storm producing heavy rainfall Wednesday night and Thursday over portions of central and southern Georgia.

Sally was a rare storm that could make history, said Ed Rappaport, deputy director of the hurricane center. "Sally has a characteristic that isn't often seen and that's a slow forward speed and that's going to exacerbate the flooding," Rappaport said. He likened the storm's slow progression to that of Hurricane Harvey, which swamped Houston in 2017. Up to rears) of rain could fall in some spots, and "that would be record-setting in some locations," Rappaport said in an interview Tuesday night. — AP

**EU: UK cannot change  
withdrawal agreement**

**Brussels, Sept. 16:** European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Wednesday that the United Kingdom cannot unilaterally change the EU-UK bilateral withdrawal agreement without destroying global trust in the country.

Insisting that chances for a future trade deal are slipping away by the day, von der Leyen told the European Union's legislature that plans by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to renege on parts of the withdrawal agreement signed by both of them dimmed those hopes

even further.

What's more, she insisted that Britain is throwing its good name to the wind by not respecting a deal it signed and approved last December. "It cannot be unilaterally changed, disregarded or disciplined. This is a matter of law and trust and good faith," she said in her State of the Union address. She rubbed it in by quoting from a 1975 speech by British conservative icon Margaret Thatcher.

"Britain does not break treaties. It would be bad for Britain, bad for our relations with the rest of

the world and bad for any future treaty on trade," von der Leyen quoted from Thatcher. Johnson has called his plan to unilaterally rewrite Britain's divorce deal with the EU an insurance policy against the bloc's unreasonable behaviour.

Johnson said a planned law designed to override portions of the Brexit withdrawal agreement he agreed to was needed because the EU might "go to extreme and unreasonable lengths" in its treatment of former member Britain.

— AP

## FILM | FEST

**South Korean director Lim Sun-ae's *An Old Lady* ends with a nod to the MeToo movement****Woman, 69, raped. Where did you pause? At rape, or 69?**

**SUPARNA SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

Woman, aged 69, raped by a 29-year-old man.

We often read this sort of headline in newspapers. But where do we pause? At rape, or at 69 and 29?

South Korean writer-director Lim Sun-ae's film, *An Old Lady*, asks that question, and then she wants us to consider: Is there an age limit to being raped? *An Old Lady*, which is playing at TIFF, opens to a black screen. We hear two people talking. It seems one is a nursing assistant, and he is with a female patient who has

come for physiotherapy for her frozen shoulder.

"No one would guess your age," he says. "Do you swim? Your legs... you don't look old at all." He puts the infrared lamp on. "How long will it take?" she asks. "Nine minutes."

The screen lights up and we stare at a row of curtained cubicles. There's a loud beep and in one of them and the red light goes off. We are left with the feeling that something has happened. But the patient, Hyo-jeong (Ye Su-jeong, known for her role in *Train To Busan*), seems normal as she chats with Mr Nam (Ki

Joo-bong) who has come to pick her up. He owns a small book store, and she works for him. She was once his nurse.

At home, Hyo rubs her wrists. He notices a bruise on her arm. The nursing assistant was clumsy with the needle, she says. Later she says to him, "I should report it to the police."

**Trump: Vaccine could  
be ready in a month**

**Philadelphia, Sept. 16:** US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that a Coronavirus vaccine may be available within a month — an acceleration of even his own optimistic predictions — but added that the pandemic could go away by itself.

"We're very close to having a vaccine," he told a town hall question-and-answer session with voters in Pennsylvania aired on ABC News.

"We're within weeks of getting it you know — could be three weeks, four weeks," he said.

Only hours earlier, speaking to Fox News, Trump had said a vaccine could come in "four weeks, it could be eight weeks". Democrats have expressed concern that Trump is putting political pressure on government health regulators and scientists to approve a rushed vaccine in time to help turn around his uphill bid for reelection against challenger Joe Biden on November 3.

Experts, including top US government infectious diseases doctor Anthony Fauci, say vaccine approval is more likely toward the end of the year.

At the ABC town hall Trump was asked why he'd downplayed the gravity of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has now killed close to 200,000 people in the US.

Trump replied by saying: "I didn't downplay it. I actually, in many ways, I

**SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL NOT HELP  
COMBAT COVID-19, SAYS UNGA PREZ**

**United Nations, Sept. 16:** Social distancing at the global level will not help as no country could combat Covid-19 alone, President of the UN General Assembly's 75th session Volkan Bozkir has said, asserting that multilateralism is the "panacea" to all the problems in the world.

Bozkir, addressing the UN ambassadors and delegates, said that since the beginning of the crisis earlier this year, critics of multilateralism have become more vocal and the pandemic has been used to justify unilateral steps and weaken the rules-based international system. "In the past six months, our plans for the 75th year of the United Nations have changed. Today, we have other urgent priorities. Our masks remind us of the very serious threat we face... They remind us we are in

this together," Bozkir said at the 75th session of the General Assembly commenced on Tuesday.

Wearing masks, UN diplomats and envoys sat socially distanced in the iconic General Assembly Hall as the high-level annual session begins in a largely virtual format this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"International organisations have been reproached and the need for international cooperation has been questioned. These criticisms are not baseless but their conclusions are misguided," the veteran Turkish diplomat said.

Giving a clarion call for strengthening multilateralism to combat the pandemic, Bozkir said, "Make no mistake: No state can combat this pandemic alone. Social distancing will not help at the international level.

— PTI

up-played it in terms of action." But Trump himself told journalist Bob Woodward during taped interviews for the new book "Rage" — published Tuesday — that he had deliberately decided to "play it down" to avoid alarming Americans.

Returning to one of his most controversial views on the virus, that has rav-

aged the economy and which government scientists say will remain a danger for some time, Trump insisted "it is going to disappear". "It would go away without the vaccine but it's going to go away a lot faster with it," he said.

Challenged about how the virus would go away by itself, he said "you'll

**Israel hits Gaza after rocket  
fire during US ceremony**

**Jerusalem, Sept. 16:** The Israeli military struck Hamas militant sites in the Gaza Strip early Wednesday in response to rocket fire toward Israel the previous night that coincided with the signing of normalisation agreements between Israel and two Arab countries at the White House.

The barrage against Israel began Tuesday night just as the ceremony in Washington was getting underway to formalise the new agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Two Israelis were lightly wounded. The rocket fire continued overnight, with sirens sounding across southern Israel. The military said five projectiles landed in open areas with the rest intercepted by Israel's rocket defence system. In response, the military said it struck about 10 sites belonging to Gaza's militant Hamas rulers, including a weapons and explosives manufacturing factory, underground infrastructure and a military training compound.

The renewed exchange offered a stark reminder that the festive events in Washington would likely do little to change Israel's conflict with the Palestinians. In addition to the bilateral agreements signed by Israel, the UAE and Bahrain, all three signed a document dubbed the "Abraham Accords" after the patriarch of the world's three major monotheistic religions.

The Palestinians are opposed to the agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, viewing them as a betrayal of their cause by the Arab

**IRAN SAYS UAE, BAHRAIN WILL BEAR  
'CONSEQUENCES' OF ISRAEL DEALS**

**Tehran, Sept. 16:** Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain will be responsible for any "consequences" resulting from their normalisation of relations with Tehran's arch-foe Israel.

The remarks came a day after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the foreign ministers of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates signed agreements establishing full diplomatic ties at a ceremony at the White House.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting, Rouhani said Israel was "committing more crimes in Palestine every day".

"Some of the region's countries, their people are

pious Muslims but their rulers neither understand religion nor (their) debt... to the nation of Palestine, to their brothers speaking their language," he said in televised remarks.

"How could you reach out your hands to Israel? And then you want to give them bases in the region? All the severe consequences that would arise from this are on you."

US President Donald Trump said that similar Washington-brokered deals were close to being signed between Israel and several Arab countries, including Iran's regional rival Saudi Arabia.

"After decades of division and conflict we mark the dawn of a new Middle East," Trump said.

— AFP

countries, which agreed to recognise Israel without securing territorial concessions. They vow that the agreements, and any others that may follow, will not undermine their cause. Neither President Donald Trump nor Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mentioned the Palestinians in their remarks at the signing ceremony, but both the UAE and Bahraini foreign ministers spoke of the importance of creating a Palestinian state. Upon his departure back from Washington, Netanyahu said he was not surprised by the rocket attack or the timing of the militants.

"They want to take pe-

ce backwards but they won't succeed," he said. "We will strike hard against all those who seek to harm us and reach out a hand in peace to all those whose hand is reached out to peace with us."

The Islamic militant group Hamas has ruled Gaza since 2007, when it seized power from the internationally-backed Palestinian Authority. Israel and Egypt have imposed a crippling blockade on the coastal territory since then. A number of Palestinian militant groups operate in Gaza, but Israel holds Hamas responsible for all attacks and typically responds to rocket fire with airstrikes on militant targets.

— AP

develop like a herd mentality," apparently meaning the concept of herd immunity, when enough people have developed resistance to the disease to effectively stop transmission.

"It's going to be herd developed and that's going to happen. That will all happen but with a vaccine, I think it will go away very quickly. But I really believe we're rounding the corner," he said.

The president, who is rarely seen wearing a mask in public and long refused to push Americans to adopt the habit, said "a lot of people don't want to wear masks and people don't think masks are good." Asked what people he meant, Trump answered: "Waiters". "They come over and they serve you and they have a mask," he said. "I saw it the other day when they were serving me and they're playing with the mask. I'm not blaming them. I'm just saying what happens: They're playing with the mask. So the mask is over, and they're touching it, and then they're touching the plate, and that can be good." Polls show that a majority of Americans disapprove of Trump's handling of the health crisis.

The latest *NBC News/SurveyMonkey Weekly Tracking* poll Tuesday found that 52 percent of adults do not trust Trump's statements about an upcoming Coronavirus vaccine, compared to 26 percent who do. — AFP



Yoshihide Suga

**SUGA IS JAPAN  
PM, RETAINS  
MOST MINISTERS**

**Tokyo, Sept. 16:** New Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, elected by parliament on Wednesday after pledging to pursue his predecessor Shinzo Abe's policies, formed a 20-member Cabinet that retains many ministers.

Here are some key appointees: Defence Minister: Nobuo Kishi (new) — Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's younger brother, he was adopted soon after birth by his mother's brother, who was childless. His grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi, was a deeply conservative former prime minister. He has close ties to Taiwan and its president, Tsai Ing-wen.

Foreign Minister: Toshimitsu Motegi (retained) — A trade minister in Abe's earlier Cabinet, Motegi was a key figure in reaching a toughly negotiated US trade deal following demands from President Donald Trump that Japan narrow the trade imbalance.

Deputy PM and Finance Minister: Taro Aso (retained) — A governing party heavyweight who served as prime minister for one year, Aso was an influential lawmaker in the Abe government. — AP



A scene from *An Old Lady*, starring Ye Su-jeong.

*An Old Lady* is framed in a way that everything seems to be against the woman who claims she was raped by the handsome nursing assistant, Lee Joong-ho. He's

29, and she's 69 and in a live-in relationship. That makes the young cops snigger. It was not rape. It was consensual sex, Lee tells the cops. Though Hyo's polygraph

tells them that she may be telling the truth, there are bruises and she has the stained clothes she wore that day, old people, you know, they forget, they mix up things. And in any case, he says he didn't do it. He's 29. Handsome.

The burden of proof on the elegant, stylish Hyo keeps mounting. She must convince the cops first, to even attempt a proper investigation. She must herself prove to them that it was rape and not consensual sex. She is forgetting things. Maybe dementia is setting in. Maybe... But those flashes keep interrupting, dis-

turbing her. The bruise on her wrist is fading, but it still aches.

Director Lim Sun-ae has said that she was riled up to make *An Old Lady* by a real-life case in which the warrant dismissal letter said, "There is not much reason for a young man to rape an old woman."

*An Old Lady* ends on an empowering note, with a nod to the MeToo movement. But it leaves you wondering how many women must still be keeping their sexual assault, rape a secret because they are scared they'll be asked, "Who will rape an old lady?"



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,302.85	0.66
Nifty 50	11,604.55	0.72
S&P 500*	3,413.64	0.37
Dollar (₹)	73.52	0.18
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.85	0.13
Euro (₹)	87.26	0.300
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	53,030	137 0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.18	1.65
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.992	-0.037
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.667	-0.012

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

BHEL ties up with SwissRapide for Maglev trains

BHEL has tied up with SwissRapide AG to bring Maglev trains (magnetic levitation) to India. The Maglev Rail system hovers in the air instead of rolling, due to magnetic levitation, thus the vehicles have no physical contact with the guideway. This enables the system to be highly energy efficient, allows operating speeds of easily up to 500 km/h and significantly reduces the total cost of system ownership.

DP World, Israeli company to bid for Haifa port



Dubai-based port operator DP World said it would partner with an Israeli firm in a bid to take over the country's Haifa port, the largest shipping hub for the emirate. DP World said it signed MoU with DoverTower, a company owned by Shlomi Fogel, the co-owner of Israel Shipyards and the Port of Eilat. The two firms also will explore creating a direct shipping route from Dubai's massive Jebel Ali port to Eilat, the statement said.

Krishnakumar, family sell 42 L Mindtree shares

Mindtree co-founder Krishnakumar Natarajan and his family have sold over 42 lakh shares of the company, reducing their combined shareholding to 2.29 per cent. The transactions were carried out by Krishnakumar N., wife Akila Krishnakumar and sons Siddharth and Abhirath in multiple tranches between April 30 and September 14, a regulatory filing said. This reduced their combined holding from 4.84 per cent to 2.29 per cent.

Marico enters ayurveda space with Saffola

FMCG firm Marico announced its foray into the traditional ayurveda products through its popular brand Saffola. The company has introduced Saffola ImmuniVeda range in the healthy foods and immunity-boosting space. The new range consists of Saffola Kadha Mix and Saffola Golden Turmeric Milk Mix, both made with the goodness of traditional recipes along with added ingredients, Marico said.

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RBI remains 'battle-ready' to back economy Economic recovery to be gradual: Das

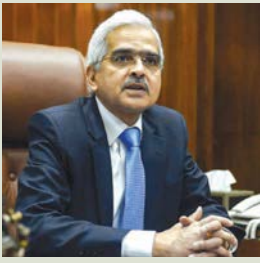
FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

The country's economic recovery is likely to be gradual as efforts towards reopening the economy are confronted with rising Covid-19 infections, Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday. He said the economic recovery is not fully entrenched and that the GDP data for the first quarter (Q1) was a telling reflection of how Covid-19 has affected the economy.

The economy contracted by a record 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter as the pandemic outbreak and the subsequent lockdown brought economic activity to a complete halt. For the full year, the economy is expected to contract by 8-14 per cent.

"The end-August press release of the National Statistics Office (NSO) was a telling reflection of the ravages of Covid-19. Nevertheless, high frequency indicators of agricultural activity, the purchasing managers index (PMI) for manufacturing, and private estimates for unemployment point to some stabilisation of economic activity in Q2, while contractions in several sectors are also easing. The recovery is, however, not yet fully entrenched and moreover, in some sectors, upticks in June and July appear to be levelling off. By all indications, the recovery is likely to be gradual as efforts towards reopening of the economy

RISING INFECTIONS POSE A CHALLENGE



► Recovery is not yet fully entrenched and in some sectors, upticks in June and July appear to be levelling off

► Immediate policy response to Covid has been to prioritise stabilisation of the economy

are confronted with rising infections," said Das while addressing the Ficci national executive committee meeting.

The central bank chief said the policies for durable and sustainable high growth in the medium-run after the crisis are equally important and listed five critical areas, which according to him, would determine the ability to step up and sustain India's growth in the medium-run: (i) human capital, in particular education and health; (ii) productivity; (iii) exports, which is linked to raising India's role in the global value chain; (iv) tourism; and (v) food processing and associated productivity gains.

"While dealing with the immediate crisis management challenges, we need to strategically prepare for our combined overriding goal—the pursuit of strong and sustainable growth. The private business sector has a critical role in each of the five areas I covered today. The enabling policy environment would

evolve around the initiatives taken by India's businesses to seize these opportunities and actualise the potential of the Indian economy as a rising economic power of the 21st century. Covid-19 has changed our lives and it is increasingly clear that life will never be the same again. We should look upon these fundamental changes as opportunities rather than threats, converting them into game changing new vistas of progress," said Das.

The governor said the RBI remains 'battle-ready' to take measures to support the economy as and when needed and that the immediate policy response to Covid in India has been to prioritise stabilisation of the economy and support a quick recovery.

Das said that despite a large government borrowing programme, the steps taken by the RBI to ensure ample liquidity has ensured that bond yields remain low and are currently the lowest in the past 10 years due to surplus liquidity.

NSE to exit Cams in over ₹2,000-cr IPO

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

The initial public offering (IPO) by Chennai-based Computer Age Management Services (Cams) will open on September 21, with a price band of Rs 1,229-Rs 1,230 per equity share of Rs 10 face value.

Cams is India's largest registrar and transfer agent of mutual funds. It processes 69.6 per cent of the assets under management of the mutual fund industry.

US private equity firm Warburg Pincus holds 43.50 per cent stake in Cams through its investment holding firm Great Terrain and has been identified as promoter of Cams.

The entire public offer is an offer for sale (OFS) by NSE Investments, another investor in the company. At the upper price band, the IPO will be raising Rs 2,242 crore.

As the IPO is an offer for sale of equity shares, Cams will not receive any proceeds from the offer, the company said.

"A Sebi letter dated February 4, 2020 to the NSE had issued directions that NSE's entire stake in the company (Cams) held through NSE Investments, is required to be divested within a period of one year from the date of receipt of the Sebi letter," the red herring prospectus said.

After the public issue, shares of Cams will be listed on the BSE.

Bids by anchor investors will be submitted, and allocation to them will be completed on September 18, one working day prior to public bid/ offer opening.

In the offer, allocation to qualified institutional buyer (QIBs) will not be more than 50 per cent of the net offer, non-institutional bidders will be not less than 15 per cent of the net offer and retail individual bidders will be allocated remaining 35 per cent of the net offer.

Kotak Mahindra Capital, HDFC Bank, ICICI Securities and Nomura Financial Advisory are the book running lead managers to the issue.

Frustrated ONGC exits Sudan over pending dues

New Delhi, Sept. 16: Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) has exited from Sudan oilfields after the African nation refused to pay for oil it lifted from the fields.

ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the overseas investment arm of the state-owned firm, as also its Chinese partner CNPC and Malaysia's Petronas have withdrawn from the block, a company official said.

OVL had a 25 per cent stake in Block 2A&4 in Sudan while CNCP had 40 per cent and Petronet 30 per cent. Sudan's Sudapet had 5 per cent interest.

Sudan had since 2011 not paid OVL and partners for oil the country bought from the block. Sudan's dues towards OVL totalled \$430.69 million, the official said.

OVL initiated arbitration proceedings against the Government of Sudan to recover the dues and has terminated the exploration and production sharing agreement, he said.

OVL had also not been paid about \$99 million for the 741-km pipeline it built from Khartoum to Port Sudan.

The project cost and rental of \$254 million was to be paid by Sudan in 18 half-yearly equated instalments of \$14.135 million each starting from December 30, 2005. OVL got 11 instalments (\$155.48 million) till December 2010 and none after that. —PTI

Prepaid meters must for new power connections: Draft rules

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

Every new electricity connection will come with a smart prepayment meter or a prepayment meter, as per the Draft Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020.

According to the new rules circulated by the power ministry for comments, no connection will come without a smart prepayment meter or a prepayment meter. Any exception to this should be approved by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Smart prepayment meters should be read remotely once in every month and in case of other prepayment meters, they should be read by a representative of the distribution licensee once in three months. Consumers with smart prepayment meters will be given access to check their consumption on a real time basis.

The draft also recognises consumer as a prosumer if he generates renewable energy (RE). "While the prosumer shall maintain his consumer status and have the same rights as consumer, he will also have the right to set up renewable energy generation units, including roof-top solar PV systems, either by himself or through a service provider," the draft bill says.

The total generation capacity of the RE units should not exceed the



limit prescribed by the commission.

Based on the application received from the prosumer, a technical feasibility study should be completed within 20 days. He would be compensated automatically for those parameters that can be monitored remotely. The distribution licensee will create an online facility on which the prosumer can register and claim compensation amount.

The draft rules also calls for setting up a call centre for consumer services by the commission and a grievance redressal mechanism. The grievance redressal forum will be headed by an officer of the licensee and have two to three members as representatives of consumers and prosumers.

The power ministry has sought suggestions on the draft rules till September 30.

ICICI launches home loan for informal workers

FC BANKING BUREAU MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

ICICI Home Finance on Wednesday said it has launched a new loan scheme 'Apna Ghar Dreamz', with credit amount in the range of Rs 2 lakh to 50 lakh, for skilled workers employed in the informal sector in Delhi.

The scheme is meant for skilled workers such as carpenters, plumbers, electricians, tailors, painters, welders, auto mechanics, manufactur-

ing machine operators, computer mechanics, water machine repair technicians, small and medium business owners and grocery store owners in the city, the company said in a release.

The loan scheme is targeted at the informal segment of the population who wish to purchase their own home, but may not have all documents that a formal financial institution would require, ICICI Home Finance said.

Customers seeking to

avail the special 20-year tenure loan would need to provide documents such as PAN and Aadhaar details, and bank statement of past six months.

The customers should have a minimum account balance of Rs 1,500 for loan up to 5 lakh and Rs 3,000 for loan above 5 lakh.

Customers can also avail of benefits of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, a credit-linked subsidy scheme for LIG/EWS and MIG I & II homes, the company said.

Govt loses appeal against Vedanta on \$499 million arbitration award

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

In a major set-back for the government, the Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld an arbitration award relating to recovery of \$ 499 million towards the cost of development of Revva oil and gas field that a Kuala Lumpur tribunal had ruled in favour of Vedanta and Videocon. The court said the award does not contravene the public policy of India.

The Ravva oil and gas fields, off the coast of Andhra Pradesh, were developed between 2000 and 2007 based on the production sharing contract (PSC) valid for 25 years.

The top court ruling now allows Vedanta and Videocon to recover \$499 million for the development of project, an amount that was capped at \$198 million by the Centre.

The government had moved the top court against the Delhi High Court's February 19, 2020, judgment upholding the tribunal award.

Rejecting the government's contention that



award was against the public policy of the country, a bench comprising Justices S. Abdul Nazeer, Indu Malhotra and Aniruddha Bose said, "We conclude that the enforcement of the foreign award does not contravene the public policy of India, or that it is contrary to the basic notions of justice."

Affirming the February 19 judgment of the Delhi High Court, the top court said the award of January 18, 2011 passed by the tribunal is held to be "enforceable in accordance with the provisions of Sections 47 and 49 of the Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1996."

Referring to the government stand that the PSCs are "special contracts" pertaining to the exploration of natural resources, which concerns the public policy of India, Justice Indu Malhotra, speaking for the bench said, "We are of the view that the disputes raised by the claimants emanate from the rights and obligations of the parties under the PSC. The award is not contrary to the fundamental policy of Indian law, or in conflict with the notions of justice, ... the performance of the obligations under the PSC were not contrary to the interests of India."

The court also noted that the PSC contract that was entered on October 28, 1994 for a period of 25 years ended on October 27, 2019 and the same has been extended for a further period of 10 years, through the mutual agreement between the parties.

Having noted the extension of the contract, the court said, "This itself would reflect that the performance of the obligations under the PSC were not contrary to the interests of India."

Covid-related products clock \$632-million export revenues

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

India exported \$632 million worth PPE kits, masks and sanitizers between April and August.

The country has increased its production capacity of several Covid-related products like sanitizers, PPE kits and masks during the lockdown and after that. Initially the government had banned the export of many of these products apprehending a possible scarcity within the country.

In March, export of masks, ventilators as well as textile raw material used for masks and coveralls and sanitizers were prohibited. By May-June, exports of many of the products were allowed.

Despite hand-sanitizer consumption going up by 60-fold, India had excess production to cater to the export markets. Indian companies started producing PPE kits only after the pandemic broke out.

Between April and August, the manufacturers were able to export Covid-related products worth \$632.23 million, as per the data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Of these, organic surface-active agents (other than soap) and other washing preparations accounted for \$146 million, instruments and appliances of medical science \$106 million, other articles of plastics \$179 million, made up articles \$72 million and antibacterial formulations

accounted for \$47 million.

The US was the largest buyer of different categories of products, including instruments and appliances of medical science, other ophthalmic instruments and appliances, other articles of plastics and made up articles.

Singapore was the largest buyer of breathing appliances and gas masks. Burkina Faso mainly bought parts of garments and clothing accessories. Vietnam was the largest buyer of disinfectants and UAE mostly imported soap and organic surface-active products and preparations. India exported these products to several countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

Apple debuts discount watch

San Ramon (US), Sept. 16: Apple introduced a cheaper version of its smartwatch, its latest attempt to broaden the appeal of its trend-setting products while many consumers are forced to scrimp during the coronavirus pandemic.

The scaled-down Apple Watch follows on the heels of a budget iPhone the company released five months ago as the economy cratered and unemployment rates rose above the levels reached during the Great Recession more than a decade ago.

Apple also took the wraps off a new high-end watch model, a next-generation iPad and a couple of new subscription services during a virtual event held on Tuesday.

The company normally also rolls out its new iPhones at this time of



Canaccord Genuity analyst T. Michael Walkley estimates about 51 million Apple Watches will be sold this year, a 5 per cent increase from last year. The research firm GlobalData pegs Apple's share of the USD 64 billion smartwatch market at roughly 60 per cent.

The new discount model, called the Apple Watch SE, will sell for \$279 and be available beginning Friday. The price is a markdown from the \$399 that Apple is asking for the next version of its higher end watch, the Series 6. Apple watches have been selling for an average of \$377, based on Walkley's calculations.

Apple added more features to help the watch monitor its owner's health, including a sensor that can read blood oxygen levels. —AP



## SHORT TAKES

## Hari in joint lead after three rounds

**Chennai:** Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna claimed a share of the top position with Armenian GM Levon Aronian after posting two wins and a draw in three rounds of rapid competition in the St Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament.

The India No.2 started with a win over US Grandmaster Leinier Dominguez, before settling for a draw with Iranian prodigy Alireza Firouzja in games played late on Tuesday. In the third round, Harikrishna pulled off a victory over experienced Russian Alexander Grischuk in 41 moves.

World champion Magnus Carlsen was fifth with three points. After a win over Hikaru Nakamura in his opener, the Norwegian went down to Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi in the second round. A draw with Wesley So in the third left the world no.1 in fifth spot.

Harikrishna outwitted the American in 51 moves with black pieces, to begin his campaign in the elite 10-player event. — PTI

## Bernal bows out of Tour de France

**Grenoble, France:** Last year's winner Egan Bernal withdrew from the Tour de France on Wednesday with the defence of his title already in tatters. The 23-year-old Colombian's team Ineos announced he was dropping out ahead of the key 17th stage.

Bernal came into the Tour with a back injury and missing key allies and two of his team then suffered injuries before Bernal himself suffered a meltdown on a tough ascent on Sunday that effectively ended his 2020 campaign as he fell eight minutes behind the pace. "This is obviously not how I wanted my Tour de France to end, but I agree that it is the right decision for me in the circumstances," Bernal said in a statement from Ineos.

Slovenian rider Primož Roglič leads the Tour, riding for the Jumbo team that has eclipsed Ineos this year. — AFP

## Tiger gears up for US Open golf

**New York:** Tiger Woods returns to the US Open at Winged Foot this week with a score to settle against a course he regards as one of the three toughest in the world.

During more than a decade of dominance between Woods' first major victory in 1997 and his 14th major at the 2008 US Open, the former world number one played in 46 consecutive majors. That streak of 46 tournaments included only one missed cut — at the 2006 US Open held at Winged Foot. Woods, who collected the 15th major of his career at last year's Masters, is preparing for another demanding assignment in New York this week.

The 44-year-old believes only Oakmont in Pennsylvania and Carnoustie Links in Scotland run Winged Foot close in terms of difficulty.

"It's right up there next to Oakmont and I think Carnoustie as far as just sheer difficulty without even doing anything to it," Woods said Tuesday. — AFP

## Djokovic behaves better, in 3rd round

**Rome:** Novak Djokovic behaved better Wednesday in his first match since being defaulted from the US Open. The top-ranked Serb was mostly courteous with the chair umpire and had no interaction with the line judges during a 6-3, 6-2 win over local wild-card entry Salvatore Caruso in his opening match at the Italian Open. The performance came in sharp contrast to the scene in New York 10 days ago, when Djokovic was disqualified for unintentionally hitting a line judge in the throat with a ball. Djokovic said earlier this week that the incident taught him "a big lesson."

"I was actually looking forward to (playing again) as soon as possible after what happened in NY," Djokovic said. — AP

## Live on TV

## TENNIS

**Rome ATP Masters:** Matches from 2.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

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## BEAT THE HEAT

## Adapting to UAE climate biggest challenge, says ABD

**Dubai, Sept. 16:** South African star AB de Villiers believes the biggest challenge for all teams in the upcoming Indian Premier League will be adjusting to the prevailing hot and humid conditions in the UAE.

Most games will be played in the night but the conditions would still be challenging.

"I am not really used to these kind of conditions to be honest. It's very hot, it reminds me of a Test match we played in July in Chennai once where Viru (Virender Sehwag) scored 300. It was one of the hottest weather conditions I have experience in my life," he said in an interview posted on RCB's Twitter handle.

"The humidity is similar to that, even at 10 at night. When I arrived here I checked the weather conditions of a few months and it seems to be getting better. It is definitely going to play a part and you have to make sure you have the energy for the backend of the innings or last 5 overs of your bowling spell," he added.

De Villiers said he would also miss playing in front of packed crowds in India with the event to be played behind closed doors in UAE due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

De Villiers said young Australian wicketkeeper batsman Joshua Philippe is an exciting cricketer and he would love share his knowledge with the Australian opener in RCB dressing room.

The 36-year-old dashing cricketer, said not just him, every player is just happy to be back on the field after international cricket came to a halt in mid-March because of the pandemic.

De Villiers' first foray into the cricket field amid the pandemic was the inaugural 3TC Solidarity Cup organised by Cricket South Africa in July.

RCB will open their IPL campaign against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Dubai on September 21. — PTI



Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni in action in this file photo.

## Waiting for Dhoni delight: Viru

**Mumbai, Sept. 16:** Virender Sehwag expects this year's IPL to be "extra special" and a major reason for that is Mahendra Singh Dhoni getting back on the pitch after announcing his international retirement following a year-long sabbatical from the game.

"I think this tournament will be extra special for everyone — the players as well as the audience... watching Dhoni back on the pitch is sure to be a delight. There's so much

in store, need I say more?" Sehwag, who will be co-hosting a show 'Power Play with Champions' on Flipkart Video, said.

Dhoni, who surprised everyone with his decision to call it quits from international cricket in mid-August, will be back in action when he leads the Chennai Super Kings in the IPL.

Sehwag said cricket is an integral part of an Indian's life and the fans have waited long for the sport to return.

Meanwhile, former Australian cricketer Dean Jones reckons Suresh Raina's absence from the IPL would be a major concern for Chennai Super Kings.

"Raina's absence is a major concern this time and he is in the top 5 run getters in IPL. He is a left hander and plays spin very well and the weakness for CSK could be that majority of their players are right handed," Jones told *Star Sports*.

— PTI

## BOOM BEST T20 BOWLER, SAYS AUSSIE PACER

**Abu Dhabi, Sept. 16:** Mumbai Indians' Australian recruit James Pattinson has called Jasprit Bumrah the best T20 bowler in the world and said he was looking forward to working along side the India pace spearhead in the upcoming IPL.

"Personally, it's just fantastic to work with some of the best bowlers in the world. Obviously, Bumrah is probably the best T20 bowler in the world. And Boult (Trent Boult) is up there as well. So, for me it will be a great experience to be around those guys," Pattinson said.

The reigning champions named Pattinson as a replacement for seasoned Lasith Malinga, who has decided to skip this edition of the IPL due to personal reasons.

— PTI

## Ex-athletics head gets 2-yr jail term

**Paris, Sept. 16:** Former track federation president Lamine Diack was sentenced Wednesday to two years in prison for his role in a scheme that allowed Russian athletes who paid hush money to keep competing when they should have been suspended for doping.

The guilty verdict in a Paris court represented a spectacular fall from grace for the 87-year-old Diack, who was the powerful head of the IAAF from 1999-2015.

The court also sentenced Diack to another two years of suspended jail time and fined him \$590,000.

Diack was found guilty of multiple corruption charges and of breach of trust but acquitted of a money laundering charge. At Diack's trial in June, prosecutors requested a four-year jail term and a fine of \$590,000. The judge, Rose-Marie Hunault, detailed his role in the payoff scheme, dubbed "full protection," that squeezed Russian athletes suspected of doping of about \$3.74 million in hush money. "The money was paid in exchange for a program of 'full protection,'" she said, adding the scheme allowed athletes who should have been suspended "purely and simply to escape sanctions."

The court also handed guilty verdicts to five other people, including Diack's son, Papa Massata Diack, who worked as an IAAF marketing consultant.

— AP

## FIRST VACCINE TO OLY BOUND ATHLETES: AFI

**New Delhi, Sept. 16:** Athletics Federation of India (AFI) on Wednesday said it has requested the government to give priority to Olympic-bound athletes when a Covid-19 vaccine is available.

Several countries, including India, are trying to develop a Coronavirus vaccine. The Indian government is considering inoculating the front line workers, army personnel and certain categories first.

"We have already discussed this with the government and told them we will need it (vaccine) for our athletes going to the Olympics," AFI President Adille Sumariwalla said during a webinar.

"We need to make sure once the vaccine comes out, they (Olympic-bound athletes) should be amongst the first batches to get it and the discussion regarding that has already happened," he further added.

Asked if any player is apprehensive about getting inoculated, like tennis star Novak Djokovic, or if the vaccine could cause problem with dope control, national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand said the athletes are looking forward to it.

— PTI



Jamal Murray (left) of the Denver Nuggets drives the ball against Lou Williams of Los Angeles Clippers during their NBA Playoffs at AdventHealth Arena at the ESPN World Of Sports Complex in Lake Buena Vista, Florida on Tuesday. Nuggets won 104-89. — AFP

## Murray puts LA through wringer

**Los Angeles, Sept. 16:** Jamal Murray scored a game high 40 points and Nikola Jokic had a triple double as the Denver Nuggets stunned the Los Angeles Clippers 104-89 in game seven to reach their first Western Conference finals in 11 years.

The underdog Nuggets became the first team in NBA history to rally from a 3-1 series deficit twice in the same postseason.

Jokic completed his triple double by the third quarter of Tuesday night's contest in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Florida, finishing with 16 points, 13 assists and 22 rebounds.

His rebound count is the most by a Nuggets player in an NBA playoff game, breaking his old record of 19.

An odd couple for sure. A Serbian and a Canadian pair that has engineered

the biggest upsets of the 2020 postseason so far.

Denver will once again be the underdogs when they face LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers in the conference finals beginning Friday.

Meanwhile, in the Eastern Conference finals, Bam Adebayo made a clutch block with 2.5 seconds left in overtime as the Miami Heat beat the Boston Celtics 117-114 in the opening game of the series. Adebayo leapt high to take what appeared to be an easy dunk away from Celtics star Jayson Tatum to preserve the Heat's slim lead, 116-114.

Adebayo then capped the scoring by sinking a free throw at the other end.

Tatum, who finished with a game high 30 points, missed a desperation 29-foot three-pointer at the buzzer.

— AFP

## INDO-AMERICAN SONIA GRIZZLIES ASST COACH

**Houston, Sept. 16:** Memphis Grizzlies, an American professional basketball team which competes in the NBA, has hired an Indian-American as its assistant coach.

Sonia Raman joins Vin Bhavnani (Oklahoma City Thunder) and Roy Rana (Sacramento Kings) as the only coaches of Indian origin in the National Basketball Association.

Raman becomes the 14th female assistant coach in the history of the NBA and the 10th among current coaching staffers in the league. She becomes the seventh female coach to be hired as an assistant in the league since the beginning of the 2019-20 season. — PTI



Bournemouth's goalkeeper Asmir Begovic dives to save a penalty shot from Luka Milivojevic of Crystal Palace during their English League Cup second round match at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth on Tuesday. Bournemouth won 11-10. — AFP

## Palace lose kickathon

**London, Sept. 16:** Bournemouth beat Crystal Palace 11-10 in an unusually long penalty shootout to advance to the third round of the English League Cup after the game ended at 0-0 after 90 minutes.

As the sides remained deadlocked after five penalties each, even both goalkeepers had to take spot kicks and they both missed.

Eventually David Brooks scored his second penalty for Bournemouth

and Luka Milivojevic's second was saved by goalkeeper Asmir Begovic to knock out the Premier League side.

Bournemouth, which was relegated from the Premier League in July, plays Manchester City in the next round.

Meanwhile, Jack Grealish celebrated his new contract at Aston Villa by scoring the decisive goal in a 3-1 victory over Burton.

The match looked to be heading for a penalty

shootout after Ollie Watkins had scored Villa's equaliser late in the first half to cancel out Colin Daniel's opener for the third-division team after only 68 seconds.

But Grealish struck a volley from the edge of the area to put Dean Smith's team in front in the 88th minute.

Also, Sebastian Haller scored twice before Felipe Anderson added a late third as West Ham advanced past Charlton 3-0. — AP