

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
NELLORE | MONDAY | 7 SEPTEMBER 2020



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BJD MP to get divorce from actress wife



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Harris won't trust Don word on Covid vaccine

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Chennai to take on Mumbai in opener



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WEATHER

Max: 34.5°C
Min: 27.2°C
RH: 69%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: clear.
Max/Min temp. 34/27°C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+90,890)	(+990)
42,00,366	71,663
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+2,574)	(+9)
TS: 1,40,969	886
(+10,794)	(+70)
AP: 4,98,125	4,417
CASES AROUND THE WORLD	
2,72,15,198	
DEATHS	
8,85,932	
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	
213	
worldometers.info/coronavirus	

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrpada Bahula
Panchami till 9.38 pm
Star: Bharani full day
Varjyam: 4.11 pm to 5.59 pm
Durmuhurtam: 12.38 pm to 1.27 pm; 3.05 pm to 3.54 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
HUIRI CALENDAR
Muharram 18, 1442 AH
PRAYERS(SHAHI MASJID)
Fajar: 4.46 am
Zohar: 12.09 pm
Asar: 4.32 pm
Maghrib: 6.21 pm
Isha: 7.32 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.18 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.06 AM
MOONSET TODAY 9.48 PM

COUNTER POINT



We will supply everything... junior artistes, technicians, costumes, drugs...

IN BRIEF

Full refund for lockdown tickets

New Delhi: Full refund shall be provided by airlines immediately for tickets booked during the Covid-19 lockdown for domestic or international travel within the lockdown period, civil aviation regulator DGCA has proposed in the Supreme Court. For all other cases, the airlines shall make all endeavors to refund the collected amount within 15 days, the Director General of Civil Aviation said in an affidavit. The DGCA said that after various rounds of deliberations between the stakeholders including the airlines, they have arrived at a proposed workable solution.

Guarding skies



An IAF fighter jet flies over Ladakh amid the prolonged India-China stand off in the region on Sunday. Indian and Chinese militaries held another round of talks on Sunday to calm tensions as the situation remained “delicate” with both sides rushing additional troops and weapons after last week’s confrontations.

— PTI

India on alert along LoC as China uses proxy Pak

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

Following specific intelligence inputs that China could use Pakistan to trigger large-scale violations along the border, the Border Security Force and the Army have been put on high alert along the international border and the Line of Control (LoC). “We have specific inputs that Pakistan could try and foment trouble along the borders. But we have taken adequate preventive measures and substantially increased our security presence along the Indo-Pak border,” a senior BSF official said. India and China are engaged in a four-month long tense military stand-off in the Ladakh sector and tensions between the

● **A SENIOR BSF official said they had specific inputs that Pakistan could try and foment trouble along the borders and have taken adequate precautions**

two armies flared up again last week after India, in a preemptive move, occupied around two dozen peaks on the southern banks of Pangong Tso and Spanggur Gap.

Given the tense situation along the Indo-China border, there are intelligence inputs that in an attempt to divert the focus and attention of Indian security forces, China could use Pakistan to start an armed offensive along the border and LoC by violating cease-fire. Earlier, the home min-

istry had increased the presence of forces along some parts of the Indo-China border, particularly in Sikkim and Uttarakhand.

Close to 100 companies or 10,000 personnel of para-military forces have been rushed to border areas. Most of the additional security companies that were deployed along Chinese borders are those that were pulled out of Jammu and Kashmir a couple of weeks back. Both ITBP and SSB have beefed up security in the Doklam region in Sikkim and Kalapani region in Uttarakhand following increased Chinese activity. CDS General Bipin Rawat had on Thursday said that Pakistan could try to take advantage of any threat along India’s northern borders.

Phase-II clinical drug trial at KGH

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 6

King George Hospital (KGH) began clinical trials of drugs developed by Navitas Life Sciences (NLS) in association with DRDO.

According to Dr P.V. Sudhakar, principal of Andhra Medical College and superintendent of KGH, this is a phase II clinical trial of the drug for the treatment of moderate to severe Covid-19 cases.

“The first results would be known in two months and the reports would be sent to NLS and DRDO,” said a senior doctor, who is part of the clinical trials. Dr Y. Gyana Sundar Raju, professor of general medicine, is the principal investigator of the study.

The state government last month had approved two clinical trials in AMC and KGH according

to a communiqué issued by the Directorate of Medical Education.

The second trial, part of phase-2 and 3, is a single blind randomised control study to determine the safety and immunogenicity of the Coronavirus vaccine developed by the Serum Institute of India. This study has the support of Indian Council for Medical Research, AMC and KGH and Dr B. Devi Madhavi, professor of community medicine, is principal investigator.

A team of experts from various departments are co-investigators for the studies. A notification will be issued calling for volunteers soon, a senior professor of AMC said.

The approval for conducting clinical trials for Covaxin developed by Bharat Biotech and ICMR, is still pending with the Directorate of Medical Education.

THREE YSRC LEGISLATORS TEST COVID +VE

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 6

Three MLAs of ruling YSR Congress have contracted Coronavirus. One of the three — Pithapuram MLA Pendem Dorababu — has been airlifted to Bengaluru on Sunday after his condition worsened.

Dorababu tested positive for Covid-19 on Saturday. He was admitted to a private hospital in Kakinada. As his condition deteriorated, he was airlifted in a helicopter to Bengaluru.

Dorababu is the first MLA of AP to be shifted to a neighbouring state for treatment.

Two other MLAs, who have been infected with Covid, are Dr. Tippestwamy of Madakasira and Meka Venkata Pratap Appa Rao of Nuzvid.

■ **Page 3: Nuzvid MLA is in quarantine in Hyd**

India overtakes Brazil in Covid as Unlock 4 starts

30% of new virus cases reported worldwide from India

S. UMAMAHESHWAR | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 6

India on Sunday surpassed Brazil’s Coronavirus tally and is now behind only the United States as far as Covid-19 cases are concerned. The country has reported 90,890 new cases on Sunday, taking its aggregate case count to 42,00,366, compared to Brazil’s 41.23 lakh cases.

With the Unlock 4 guidelines coming into effect from Monday, there could be a further spurt in cases as they allow large-scale public transport systems like Metro Rail to resume and also let more people participate in social events.

Though India had tentatively crossed Brazil’s figure on Saturday, the Latin American country re-established its unenviable lead on India later on as it came out with its fresh numbers. However, with the difference between India and Brazil widening to 77,000, India went out of reach for Brazil, which has been

● **INDIA NOW has 15 per cent of the total global Coronavirus patients.**

● **THE COUNTRY went up the ladder for Coronavirus infections in spite of testing six times fewer people compared to the US and Brazil.**

● **IF IT matched the testing metric of the US and Brazil, India could have long been the world’s number one in Coronavirus infections.**

reporting a daily case addition of around 45,000 as against India’s 85,000.

According to health economist Rijo M. John, India now contributes about 30 per cent of daily cases reported across the world.

India now has 15 per cent of the total global Coronavirus patients. The country went up the ladder for Coronavirus infections in spite of testing six times fewer people compared to the US and Brazil.

If India were to match the testing metric of the US and Brazil, the country could have long been occupying the world’s number one in Coronavirus infections.

A serosurvey in Pune concluded that over half of its population would have been contracted by the virus. The survey in most other cities indicated an infection rate of over 20 per cent. In Hyderabad, a study showed that actual infected patients in the city could be six times more than the official figure.

As many as 1,065 deaths were reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total fatalities in the country to 70,626 and is ranked third in the world behind the US and Brazil. The current Case Fatality Rate in India is 1.72 per cent.

Though government officials have been quoting low death rates to deflect criticism over ineffective handling of Covid pandemic, a report in the scientific journal *Lancet* expressed doubt about the country’s official

Covid-related death figures.

According to official Union health ministry data, India’s recovery rate, at the same time, has picked up. For the second successive day, India clocked a record recovery of more than 70,000 patients in a single day. The total numbers of recoveries have reached nearly 32 lakh, taking the country’s recovery rate to 77.32 per cent.

According to economist Prof Shamika Ravi, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have been two of the largest Covid-19 India hotspot states since the beginning. “Tamil Nadu is showing stabilisation at 6,000 cases daily, while Maharashtra is still on exponential growth — reporting higher daily cases — now at 17,500 daily,” she said. For several days now, AP has been reporting over 10,000 cases a day and stands just behind Maharashtra in the daily caseload. On Sunday Maharashtra reported 23,350 cases and AP 10,794.

60-yr-old temple chariot destroyed

VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, SEPT. 6

The chariot of the ancient Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Antarvedi in Sakshinethipalli mandal of East Godavari district was gutted in a fire at about midnight of Saturday. It is said that the teakwood chariot was made 62 years ago, and stood 40-feet tall.

After the celestial marriage of the lord performed

during the Hindu month of Magha (February), the deities are carried in the chariot at the head of a procession.

According to sources, the fire in the chariot woke up people in the neighbourhood who immediately called the fire department.

The fire personnel rushed to the spot but the chariot was gutted by then.

The police deployed forensic and Clues teams to gather clues to investigate

whether there was any foul play and pressed into service a dog squad to track any possible perpetrators of the act. Apart from a possible conspiracy, police is also examining whether there was any other reason for the fire, like a short circuit.

It was said that some beggars were moving in the vicinity of the temple.

■ **Page 2: Sangh members seek EO’s suspension**

MENTALLY-ILL MAN ARRESTED FOR FIRE

Kakinda, Sept. 6: A mentally disturbed person was picked up by police suspecting that he might have a role in setting fire to the chariot at Antarvedi of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple, said East Godavari SP.

— DC

■ **Full report on Page 2**

STATUTE | CHECK Judgment gave permanence to Indian Constitution

Seer behind defining verdict dead

Kasaragod (Kerala), Sept. 6: Kesavananda Bharati, 79, on whose petition the Supreme Court delivered the landmark judgment on the celebrated doctrine of basic structure of the Constitution, died here on Sunday.

Police said Kesavananda Bharati Sripadagalvaru died at the Edaneer Mutt here due to age related ailments. “As per the information with us, he passed away at around 3.30 am on Sunday,” police said.

The case in which Bharati



Kesavananda Bharati

had challenged Kerala Land Reform laws nearly four decades ago set the principle that the Supreme

Court is the guardian of the basic structure of the Constitution and the verdict involved 13 judges, the largest bench ever to sit in the apex court.

While the seer did not get the relief he wanted, the case became significant for its landmark judgment which clipped the widest power of Parliament to amend the Constitution and simultaneously gave judiciary the authority to review any amendment.

Former Judge of Madras High Court Justice K

Chandru said: “The Kesavananda Bharati case is significant for its ruling that the Constitution can be amended but not the basic structure.”

Senior Advocate Arvind P. Datar said when some parcels of land of the Edaneer Mutt were acquired under the land reform laws of Kerala, Bharati moved the Kerala High Court against it and partially succeeded.

■ **Page 2: SC said Parliament can’t emasculate Constitution**

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SHORT TAKES

PARLIAMENT CANT EMASCULATE BASIC FEATURES

FROM PAGE 1

However, when the 29th Constitutional Amendment was adopted by Parliament giving protection to Kerala laws, the seer moved the Supreme Court challenging it.

The apex court ruled that the 29th Amendment is valid and held that the two Kerala land Acts that were included in the Ninth Schedule are entitled to the protection of Article 31B of the (validation of certain acts and regulations) Constitution.

The verdict had held that though Parliament has power to amend under Article 368 of the Constitution, it did not have the power to emasculate its basic features.

The case of Kesavananda Bharati vs State of Kerala was heard for 68 days and continues to hold the top spot for the longest proceedings ever to have taken place in the top court.

The hearing in the case commenced on October 31, 1972, and concluded on March 23, 1973 and it's the most referred to case name in Indian Constitutional law.

"Kesavananda Bharati Swamiji, the seer of Edneer Mutt was a rare blend of philosopher, classical singer and a cultural icon. His patronage of Yakshagana was crucial in reviving this traditional theatre form in Karnataka. #Kesavananda-Bharati," Naidu tweeted.

The Prime Minister said on his twitter handle, "We will always remember Pujya Kesavananda Bharati Ji for his contributions towards community service and empowering the downtrodden. He was deeply attached to India's rich culture and our great Constitution. He will continue to inspire generations. Om Shanti." —PTI

MAN, DAUGHTER KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENT

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 6

A 34-year-old man and his four-year-old daughter died on the spot when their two-wheeler was hit by a lorry from behind at Chodavaram road in Anakapalle mandal in Visakhapatnam district on Sunday morning. The man's wife escaped unhurt.

The deceased were identified as A. Raju and A. Hayathi, both residents of Malkapuram area and native of V. Madugula mandal.

According to reports, the incident reportedly occurred when the trio was heading to their native village. While Raju and Hayathi died on the spot, the wife of Raju escaped with minor injuries.

ONE SPILLWAY GATE LIFTED AT SRISAILAM

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, SEPT. 6

With rising water levelled in both Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers, Srisaillam dam has opened one spillway gate on Sunday. Priyadarshini Jurala project on Krishna river is discharging 52,000 cusecs of water into the Srisaillam reservoir while Sunkesula Barrage is letting out 4,345 cusecs of water. The dam received a total of 56,238 cusecs of water until Sunday evening.

The water level at Srisaillam reservoir is measured at 884.9 feet against the total height of 885 feet. The quantum of water stored is 215.3263 TMC against its full capacity of 215 TMC.

However, the dam officials released 96,567 cusecs of water including 28,029 cusecs to Nagarjunasagar by lifting seven crest gates so far.

Probe ordered into fire mishap

Authorities were probing whether the fire was the result of negligence or sabotage

Sangh seeks EO's suspension

FROM PAGE 1

CCTV cameras were said to be not functioning at the spot, which led to religious organisations to suspect the role of some endowment officials in the incident.

East Godavari SP Adnan Nayeem Asmi said wrongdoers would not be spared in the event that the fire was deliberately caused by some persons.

He said that as per the complaint lodged by the temple authorities, the Sakshinetipalli police had registered a case and were investigating. He said that special teams had been formed to investigate the fire.

BC welfare minister Ch. Srinivasa Venugopala Krishna, Amalapuram MP Chinta Anuradha, Razole MLA Rapaka Vara Prasad, East Godavari collector D. Muralidhar Reddy, SP Asmi, and others visited the spot on Sunday.

Collector Muralidhar Reddy said that a committee comprising the superintendent of police, district fire officer, AP Transco superintendent engineer and other officials had been appointed to inquire into incident.

The members of the RSS, Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad took up an agitation in the temple premises and demanded the suspension of temple executive officer N.S. Chakram for the fire. They tried to drag him out of his office but were foiled by the police. They demanded that the government should make another chariot before the celebrations of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy.

BJP and Jana Sena leaders visited the temple and

LORD RAMA AND ARJUNA TOOK DARSHAN AT SHRINE

VADREUV SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 6

The Lord Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Antarvedi, located on the sea shore of Sakshinetipalli mandal of East Godavari district, has a history that is believed to date back thousands of years. It is also among the famous Narasimha Swamy temples.

As per the Puranas, Lord Rama, Goddess Sita and Lakshmana took darshan of the Lord at the temple, as did Arjuna in Dwaparayuga.

The temple is believed to have been built in 300 BC. About 100 years ago, a fisherman, Koppinathi Krishnamma, donated thousands of acres of land to the temple. Devotees believe that Lord Narasimha Swamy would protect them from natural disasters. Others visit the temple, believing the Lord would keep away poverty and help them develop their businesses.

Former minister Gollapalli Surya Rao visited the temple after Sunday's chariot fire.

expressed their resentment at the incident. Ayyaji Vema, BJP Amalapuram parliament district president and former MLA, said the endowment department had failed to keep away beggars in the vicinity of the temple as they are making use of Ganja and other anti-social activities.



The chariot of lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Antarvedi before and after it got fire in the early hours of Sunday in East Godavari district.



● Minister Venu said that the new chariot would be made by the time of the celestial marriage of the Lord. He said that the incident has been taken to the notice of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and endowment minister V. Srinivas.

● Endowment minister Velampalli said the social media campaign alleging diversion of endowment funds to the welfare department was false.

The community had sanctioned funds to the Brahmin Corporation.

On other issues, he said that an ACB probe had been ordered into the illegals registered at the Srisaillam temple and a vigilance probe had been ordered into the Simhachalam temple issues.

Police pick up mentally ill person in chariot burning

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, SEPT. 6

A mentally disturbed person was picked up by police suspecting that he might have a role in setting fire to the chariot at Antarvedi of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple.

East Godavari superintendent of police Adnan Nayeem Asmi told *Deccan Chronicle* that the man was moving under suspicious circumstances around the temple. He said that the police teams speeded up investigation to take into custody more suspects.

The police are said to

● Jana Sena leaders said that if the CC Cameras have functioned, the culprits would have found and they blamed the endowment department officials on the incident.

● Peddapuram MLA Nimmakayala China Rajappa expressed shock and said that a detailed probe should be conducted into the incident.

ing short circuit and resultant burning of the chariot. BJP state president Somu Veerajulu wrote a letter to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and expressed his anger over the burning of the chariot. He said that similar earlier incidents in temples were attributed to the acts of mentally ill persons and demanded probe by a sitting High Court judge.

AP Archaka Samakhya state general secretary Agnihotram Atreyababu and organising secretary Peddinti Rambabu requested the endowments minister to provide protection to temple properties.

have found a stick that might have touched a live wire while some prankster was trying to stir a beehive in a tree beside the chariot, caus-

Naidu demands rehabilitation

MD ILYAS VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 6

Former chief minister and Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday slammed the YSRC government for "harassing" evacuees of Gandikota project in Kadapa district by denying them rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) package. He asked the government to explain how the displaced families could be expected to vacate their villages without getting compensation.

Mr Naidu alleged that the authorities were forcing over 2,369 families of Tallapodduru village to move out without first settling their R&R package. Alleging discrimination in payment of compensation, the former CM said only 500 families were given rehabilitation package while the rest in the village were left out.

He further suggested that the authorities keep in mind the danger posed to the public by Coronavirus and restrain from evicting the villagers.



TD demands explanation from Jagan on Discom dues

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 6

Leader of Opposition in AP Legislative Council, Yanamala Ramakrishnu on Sunday accused the Jagan Mohan Reddy government of having ulterior plans to impose an overall financial burden of ₹24,000 crore on the Discoms by not making required payments to them every year. He demanded the CM to explain why his regime has not yet cleared ₹4,802 crore dues to the Discoms in the very first year itself. He lamented that the YSRC government was not only destroying the power sector but also cutting the throats of farmers by installing smart meters on agricultural pump sets.

Mr Ramakrishnu said suggested the YSRC regime check its default in payments to the power utilities before making allegations against the previous TD rule. He mentioned that the Discoms faced a deficit of ₹6,052 crore last year, but the government cleared just ₹1,250 crore leaving pending payments of ₹4,802 crore. He further men-

TD SHEDDING CROCODILE TEARS ON FARMERS' ISSUES, SAYS NANI

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 6

Appealing to the farmers not to fall prey to the false propaganda of Chandrababu Naidu and vested interests, information minister Perni Venkataramaiah alias Nani said that Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government will provide free power to the farmers and the smart meters are only to bring in accountability and transparency in to the system.

Speaking to media here on Sunday, the Minister said, Chandrababu Naidu has ditched the farmers during his tenure, where he did not pay ₹970 crore to the farmers towards paddy procurement and the previous Telugu Desam government owed ₹8,000 crore to Discoms. Mr Nani claimed that

Mr Naidu has no moral right to speak on agriculture as he always considered it was a non-profitable venture which does not contribute to the State economy.

He failed to waive the loans of farmers as promised but had only cleared a fraction of it which shows his intent and he speaking for farmers' cause was futile.

He stated that though Chandrababu government had ordered for firing at agitators seeking roll back of power tariff hike at Basheebagh earlier, TD leaders are now shedding crocodile tears on farmers' issues to mislead farming community.

Mr Nani clarified that the State government will not put any additional burden on farmers with the introduction of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

tioned that the Discoms would be pushed into losses up to ₹24,000 crore, and

all this burden would have to be borne by the next government alone.

Land-grabbers arrested in Vizag

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 6

The city police restored another stretch of land to its rightful owner and arrested six persons accused of land grabbing.

The police identified the arrested persons as Jami Satya Ravi Kishore, Ganta Ravi Kishore, Pilla Ramu, Pothina Yallayamma, Pothina Potnuri Narasayamma and Yeddi Pilli Paidikonda, all belonging to Visakhapatnam city.

Giving details of the case, ACP (north), A. Ravi Shankar Reddy, said Datti Laxmanarao, from Venkataramapuram, Gowrammapeta, Vizianagaram said he and two others purchased 1146.13 square yards and another bit of land measuring 125.86 square yards, covered in survey number No. 249/10, Durganagar, Madhura-wada, Visakhapatnam by way of registered sale deeds.

They purchased the land from Dhanaraj Kalyani in 2003 and later constructed a compound wall. Since then, they have been in peaceful possession of property, paying property taxes.

He said the accused persons created a fraudulent and forged document and executed a deed of parti-

● THE ACCUSED trespassed on the property, damaged part of the compound wall and constructed a thatched shed.

● THE MAIN ACCUSED in the case, Kishore, erected a board of ownership and employed some labour to keep watch on the board.

tion into five unequal shares to an extent of 2,323 square yards and got it registered at a sub-registrar's office at Dwarakanagar in Visakhapatnam.

The accused trespassed on the property, damaged part of the compound wall and constructed a thatched shed. The main accused in the case, Kishore, erected a board of ownership and employed some labour to keep watch on the board.

The ACP said that after investigation, all the six persons were arrested and remanded to the court for judicial custody.

He said a close watch has been kept on land-grabbing activities and legal action will be initiated against those involved in grabbing government or private lands.

COUNTER | CLAIM

Rankings worked out through a survey during January and February 2020: Minister

TD takes credit for EoDB rank, YSRC dismisses claim

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 6

The opposition Telugu Desam and ruling YSR Congress claimed the credit for the top rank secured by the state in Ease of Doing Business (EoDB).

Soon after the Union finance ministry announced the nation-wide rankings, TD leaders were quick to claim that the honour was the fruit of the hard work done by the previous Chandrababu Naidu govern-

ment. Countering the opposition claim, the ruling party said the top EoDB rank was testimony to the excellent performance and recognition for Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's government.

Leader of opposition in the Legislative Council Yanamala Ramakrishnu termed it as a shame on the part of the YSRC government to claim the credit for the EoDB top rank achieved by the state even though Niti Aayog's Export

● Minister for industries Mekapati Gautam Reddy was of the view that the top rank represented the ease of doing business in the state with increased transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the government regulatory functions

Preparedness Index gave AP 20th place reflecting poor performance of the Jagan government.

He asserted that the EoDB

first rank was the result of earlier TD government's performance.

TD national general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh criticised Mr Jagan for 'hanging his stand' on EoDB after coming to power. He said Jagan called those who gave EoDB top rank to AP unwise and stupid, but after becoming CM, he swallowed his pride and boasting about the top rank as an achievement of his government though it was actually a progress report on the pre-

vious TD's rule.

"The same Mr Jagan who once spread lies that not a single job was created during the Chandrababu Naidu regime was now forced to accept the fact that over 39,450 industries and 5.13 lakh jobs were created during the previous government," the TD MLC said.

Former state Planning Board vice chairman Ch. Kutumba Rao echoed the sentiments of Mr Lokesh. Minister for industries Mekapati Gautam Reddy

was of the view that the top rank represented the ease of doing business in the state with increased transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the government regulatory functions. These rankings worked out through a survey of the investor community during January and February 2020 truly stood testimony to the investor-friendly commitment of the state and transparent governance, the minister said and dismissed the TD claim.



IN BRIEF

Free yoga training for Tirupati public

Tirupati: With an aim to strengthen one's immunity and beat the severe acute respiratory syndrome illness, caused by Covid-19, the Municipal Corporation of Tirupati (MCT) has launched a free yoga training program for city residents here on Sunday. The corporation has collaborated with Chittoor District Yoga Association for the training programme and professional yoga trainers were involved to conduct the programme at the open auditorium in Prakasam park. Along with the over 150 city residents, municipal commissioner P.S. Girisha also participated in the training session, led by District Yoga Association president Srinivasulu Naidu and practised different basic yoga asanas. The Commissioner said that the free yoga training program has been started with an aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 by educating people and creating awareness among them.

Withdraw decision to fix metres: CPM

Rajahmundry: The CPM Rajahmundry unit demanded the state government to withdraw GO No. 22 on fixing agri smart metres to farmers pumpsets. Addressing the party activists at the CPM district committee meeting here on Sunday, CPM Rajahmundry unit secretary T. Arun Kumar said that the merging the free power scheme with the cash transfer system and fixing of agri smart metres will become a curse to the farmers in the future. When the people are facing hardships due to Covid-19 crisis, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to burden the people in the name of reforms. He criticised Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for not making any effort to bring funds from the Union government. He suggested the Chief Minister to focus on collecting the dues and funds from the Union government rather than thinking of fixing agri smart metres. All the opposition parties in AP have been opposing the merger of the free power scheme with the fund transfer scheme and fixing of metres to the farmers pumpsets.

■ When the people are facing hardships due to Covid-19 crisis, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to burden the people in the name of reforms, the CPM leader said and criticised Jagan Mohan Reddy for not asking the Centre to release dues to the state

Test in Covid times

Job aspirants wear protective face masks as they come out of an examination centre after taking part in the UPSC preliminary examinations for National Defence Academy at Dr L Bullayya College in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

Covid cases touch 5L
State registers 70 new deaths in the last 24 hours

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 6

Registration of above 10,000 Covid-19 positive cases per day in Andhra Pradesh continued on the 11th consecutive day on Sunday with registration of 10,794 new virus cases during the past 24 hours.

With this, the total number of Coronavirus cases in AP has reached 4,98,125 on Sunday among which 99,1689 are active cases, 3,94,019 patients have recovered and 4,417 patients have died.

Among all the districts in Andhra Pradesh, East Godavari is at the top in registering the highest number of Covid-19 cases. The single-day highest cases on Sunday have, however, been reported from Nellore district.

The state registered as many 70 new deaths during the past 24 hours. The

highest number of nine deaths has been reported from Chittoor district, followed by eight each in Anantapur, Guntur and Prakasam, seven in Kadapa, five each in West Godavari, East Godavari and Visakhapatnam, four each in Krishna, Kurnool and Nellore, two in Srikakulam and one death in Vizianagaram district.

As many as 72,573 Coronavirus tests have been conducted in the past 24-hours, 10,794 of them turned out positive.

AP has so far tested a total of 4,10,780 samples for Coronavirus and is at the top place in the country in conducting of Covid-19 tests.

As many as 11,915 patients have recovered from Coronavirus in the past 24 hours and discharged from various hospitals in the state.

The single day highest

number of 1,299 Covid-19 cases has been registered in Nellore district in the past 24-hours, increasing the total to 37,278 in which 6,673 are active cases. The second highest number of 1,244 cases has been registered in East Godavari district, increasing the total to 66,948 in which 14,454 are active cases.

West Godavari district is in the third place registering 1,101 new positive cases, increasing the total positive cases to 42,903 in which 2,832 are active cases. Chittoor district registered 927 new Corona positive cases in the past 24 hours, increasing total positive cases to 42,561 in which 8,979 are active cases.

904 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Kadapa district, increasing the total positive cases to 31,481 in which 8,052 were active cases. 818 new Corona positive

cases have been registered in Srikakulam district, increasing the total positive cases to 27,984 in which 7,065 are active cases.

Anantapur registered 753 new positive cases in the past 24 hours, increasing the total positive cases to 45,300 in which 6,020 are active cases. 703 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Guntur district, increasing the total positive cases to 40,135 in which 7,597 are active cases.

593 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Vizianagaram district, increasing the total positive cases to 23,911 in which 8,876 are active cases. 573 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Visakhapatnam district, increasing the total positive cases to 40,787 in which 6,503 are active cases.

2 more rest houses converted to CCC

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, SEPT. 6

The Chittoor district administration has converted two more TTD rest houses – Sri Govindaraja Swamy and Sri Kodandarama Swamy choultries, into Covid care centres and enhanced the overall bed-strength to 5,200. Tirupati MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy, collector Bharat Gupta, SP Ramesh Reddy inaugurated the facilities here on Sunday.

Speaking to mediapersons, MLA Mr Bhumana said, in view of possible spike in the Covid-19 cases due to the arrival of Tamil Nadu based pilgrims to the city during the auspicious Peratasi month, I have requested the TTD administration to cancel the issuance of time slotted sarva darshan token in Tirupati, though several pilgrims were disappointed with this decision.

sion.

The MLA further appealed to the denizens to get treatment in government hospitals for free of cost instead of spending huge amounts by going to corporate hospitals. Mr maintained that he had availed treatment in state-run Ruia hospital after he got infected with the virus.

Collector Dr Narayana Bharath Gupta said that they had increased the number of beds from up to 5200 with the support of Covid-19 co-ordination committee in the district.

The collector advised patients who are not having facilities for home isolation, to admit at the government hospitals for treatment. He explained that around 150 patients from Kadapa district are being treated in SVIMS, Ruia and also ESI hospitals, apart from patients from Chittoor district.

Kadapa-Tirupati highway DPR begins

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC KADAPA, SEPT. 6

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is preparing a detailed project report for the construction of a new four-lane highway from Kadapa to Tirupati.

The central government has approved the construction of a new greenfield express highway connecting Kadapa and Chittoor districts. It is learnt that in addition to widening the existing two-lane road only in a few places, new road construction will be given high priority.

In addition to the accident-free road construction, the new road is designed to greatly reduce travel time. Traffic congestion on this road was surveyed between 2016 and 2018. It was found that more than 20,000 vehicles were moving per day. The Kadapa-Renigunta route,

which was originally an inter-district highway, was identified as NH-716 two years ago. The present two-lane road has many curves, turns. Accidents often occur due to non-visibility of upcoming vehicles due to the hilly terrain.

Following the orders of the central government, the NHAI is proposing a new greenfield express way from Kadapa to Renigunta which is expected to be complete by 2024-25. It is 117.6 km from Kadapa to the district border, Kukkaladoddi area. From there to Renigunta, it is about 20 kilometers.

A new four-lane road is being proposed on the other side of the Mumbai-Chennai railway line. For this, 446 hectares of land will be acquired in the district. A toll plaza will be set up at the existing two-lane road from the ring road junction to Kadapa General Hospital to Bhakarapeta.

COMPLETE DRAINAGE WORKS: DY CM

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, SEPT. 6

Deputy Chief Minister S.B. Amjad Basha directed the officials to complete all the drainage works in the Kadapa Municipal Corporation limits.

He held a meeting with the municipal public health engineering officials at his office. He said that proposals were sent to complete the underground drainage works in 3 and 4 divisions at a cost of ₹121 crore.

He directed the officials to call tenders to complete these works when the amount sanctioned by the government. Ordered that authorities to take steps from time to time to prevent a drainage problem

Woman Covid patient dies by suicide at Nellore GGH

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, SEPT. 6

A 60-year-old woman, who was undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at the Government General Hospital in Nellore, allegedly died by suicide early on Sunday morning.

The incident has sent shock waves among patients and staff of the GGH. The woman's son has, however, lodged a complaint at Dargamitta Police Station seeking a probe into her death.

According to Dargamitta circle inspector Nageswaramma, the victim, a resident of Municipal Quarters at Kondadibba in Mulapeta area of Nellore city, was admitted to a private hospital in Nellore on

■ **HER SON** Ganesh, in his complaint, stated that his mother had complained of frequent vomiting since her admission to the ward. She called him on Friday night and told him that she was not feeling well, as she had vomited several times.

September 1 for some ailment. Next day, the private hospital asked her to get a Coronavirus test done at Nellore GGH after she showed some symptoms of the virus.

She tested positive on September 3 and was admitted to the isolation ward in GGH.

Her son Ganesh, in his complaint, stated that his mother had complained of frequent vomiting since

her admission to the ward. She called him on Friday night and told him that she was not feeling well, as she had vomited several times.

On Sunday, at around 4.30 am, Ganesh got a phone call from a woman, believed to be another patient in the isolation ward, informing him that his mother's body has been found on the second floor of GGH.

The son immediately rushed to the hospital and saw his mother's body.

He lodged a complaint with the police stating that he was suspicious about her death and demanded a probe. Dargamitta police have registered a case with crime number 397/2020 under section 174 CrPC. Investigation is underway.

2 Mee Seva operators held for fudging cards

HOSKOTE NAGA BHUSHANAM | DC ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 6

In a major breakthrough, Tadipatri police busted a five-member gang, including two Mee Seva centre organisers, over fabricating of Unique ID records by using fake Pan cards, making them eligible to get government schemes like YSR Cheyutha.

The police identified the gang fabricated at least 800 records in Aadhar card details by collecting hefty amounts from people in Guntakal and Tadipatri areas since January.

It is suspected the Mee Seva organisers in many parts of the state are involved in fudging the details of people using

fake Pan cards.

Anantapur SP Satya Esubabu said Tadipatri Rural police arrested a gang of five for changing details on Aadhaar cards through illegal methods.

The SP said that the gang was involved in the illegal activity for the last 8 months.

The gang was collecting huge amounts from the people to change their details on the cards and make them eligible for government schemes, mainly YSR Cheyutha and old age pensions.

Four laptops, four keyboards, four mikes, two iris scanners, one xerox machine, paper cutter, four biometric devices, Mee Seva key pen drive, laminator, printer, 3 color printers and others were seized.

₹50K solatium to bereaved kin of scribes dying of Covid

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, SEPT. 6

Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu announced financial assistance of ₹50,000 each to the bereaved families of journalists, who lost their lives due to Covid-19 and other health issues in the recent past in Nellore district.

The Vice President, who virtually interacted with local journalists on Sunday morning from his New Delhi residence, enquired the scribes on the current scenario in the district due to the Covid-19 pandemic and also asked them about their personal issues.

Some senior scribes explained to the Vice President about the

pathetic condition of the families of late journalists Murthy, Dileep, Ramanaiah, Nagarjuna, Chakrapani and Markandeyulu, who recently died due to Covid-19 and other health issues. They also requested Venkaiah Naidu to provide financial assistance to them.

Responding to this, Mr Naidu said that he would extend all support to the bereaved families and announced an immediate financial assistance of ₹50,000 on behalf of his family to the bereaved families.

He said he would take up the matter with the Union minister for information and public relations when scribes requested him to consider journalists as front-

line warriors and extend insurance and financial aid from the government in case of any eventuality.

Assuring them all support from the government, Mr Naidu noted that journalists too have been the frontline warriors in the fight against the pandemic by providing news and information to the people and enlightening them.

Senior journalists took to the notice of the VP about the shortage of beds and equipment in the government general hospital at the district headquarters. Reacting to this, Mr Venkaiah assured that he will put all efforts for arranging CT Scan, MRI and other facilities at the government general hospital.

Nuzvid MLA in quarantine in Hyd

From Page 1

MLA Pratap had been actively involved in public events since the past five months and tested positive two days ago. He has, however, maintained that he is in good health and is currently under quarantine in Hyderabad.

CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy called Tippetwamy and inquired about his health condition. The CM has wished speedy recovery for Pratap and Dorababu too.

According to sources, Dorababu's relatives run a hospital in Bengaluru. After they came to know that he was suffering from Covid-19, they decided to airlift him to their hospital in the neighbouring state.

The MLA obtained a "No Objection Certificate" from the district authori-

ties before he was airlifted to Bengaluru. Two of his family members accompanied him in the same helicopter. His followers also gathered at the Police Grounds and gave him a send-off.

Meanwhile, Polavaram MLA T. Balaraju has also fallen ill and has isolated himself at his home.

Deputy Chief Minister Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas (Nani), who holds the Medical and Health portfolio, said Balaraju had strived hard during the recent floods and had fallen ill. He has been advised rest at home. The Deputy CM wished speedy recovery for Balaraju.

Earlier, a dozen YSRC MLAs had contracted Coronavirus. They have all undergone treatment and recovered successfully.

16-YEAR-OLD DROWNS IN PENNA

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, SEPT. 6

A sixteen-year-old boy Ranjith from Proddutur Rameswaram drowned in Penna river on Sunday morning.

He, along with his friends, went to Penna for swimming but was carried away after entering the water.

The fire department recovered his body. The officers alerted the people living near the river not to enter into the waters for a few days. This morning, water was released to Penna river from Mylavaram reservoir and the flow is heavy due to which drowning could occur. When the level of water is high, it is better not to step into it, the officials added.



Health worker collects swab for Covid-19 in Vijayawada on Sunday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

Covid hits matka gambling

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL, SEPT. 6

Te pandemic-induced lockdown has hit matka operators during the Covid crisis. This has resulted in fewer number of cases being registered against matka operators in Kurnool district.

Kurnool, Nandyal and Adoni are hubs of matka business with large number of daily wage earners.

Matka, the game of chance as people bet on probability of winning two digits between 01 and 99. The first digit is called "open" and the next digit is called "close".

The combination of open and close is called "bracket number". Digits are chosen from random playing cards or triplets, said an operator.

Compared with previous years' crime rate, only 50 per cent cases were registered this year.

Kurnool district police registered 89 cases this year as on August 31, 2020, against the matka organisers while 296 cases were reported in 2019.

On an average, at least 24 cases were registered per month in the previous year while this year registered on 12 cases in a month.

While ₹2.31 lakh have been seized on an average per month during raids in 2019, this year the seized amount shows only ₹1.01 lakh per month out of total ₹7,11,740 from January, 2020 to July 31.

Matka has taken deep roots in the district. With the expectation of winning 80 times on bet, several people, including daily wage laborers, women, unemployed, are addicted to it.

In Budawarpet of Kurnool city, considered as center of Matka trade, daily crores of rupees changes

hands. Superstition and matka or gambling have been constantly linked with each other so much so that in Kurnool district alone, about ₹5 crores is bet on different double digit combinations in the hope of becoming "super rich overnight".

Kurnool, Adoni, Dhone, Nandyal, Atmakur and Yemmiganur towns are the hubs of players. Kurnool SP K. Fakkeerappa said that a comprehensive strategy has been worked out to eradicate matka operations from the district. He said that they registered a PD Act against the Matka organisers and agents. Already the police opened rowdy sheets and booked cases under PD Act on a few of 'matka dons' including most wanted people in matka gambling Asadulla resident of Kurnool city and Veeranna, resident of Adoni town.

Oxygen pipe leaks in Anantapur

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 6

Panic situation was witnessed at FM ward of Anantapur general hospital on Sunday night after oxygen began leaking from the supplying pipe.

A major mishap averted after the alert staff arrested leakage of oxygen in the ward where most of

the Covid patients were undergoing treatment.

Patients were immediately shifted to other wards.

Assistant collector Surya and hospital superintendent Dr. Ramaswamy Naik rushed to the spot and initiated necessary measures.

Collector Gandham Chandrudu said leakage

at oxygen pipeline will be rectified. He also directed the hospital superintendent to take necessary action to stop repetition of such incidents.

However, for some time, the patients felt some tense moments when they asked to shift to some other ward suddenly. Later, the patients calmed down after some time.

SHORT TAKES

AMBULANCE DRIVER HELD FOR RAPE OF PATIENT

Pathanamthitta, Sept. 6: A 19-year-old woman Covid-19 patient was allegedly raped by an ambulance driver while shifting her to a first line treatment centre near here, police said on Sunday.

Taking note of it, the state women's commission registered a case on its own into the incident, which drew wide condemnation from the Opposition Congress and BJP, even as health minister K.K. Shailaja said strict instructions had been given to take strong action against the culprit.

"This is an unfortunate incident. We have given strict directions to take strong action against the culprit," she said in Thiruvananthapuram.

The ambulance driver Noufal (29) was taken into custody on Sunday based on a complaint by the victim's mother to the hospital authorities and the police.

UJJAIN TEMPLE TO OFFER 'PURE MILK' TO STATUE

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, SEPT. 6

The ancient shrine of Mahakaleswar in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh is planning to raise cows to meet the demand for milk in the wake of the recent directive by the Supreme Court to offer only pure milk to the jyotirlinga in the temple.

The temple administration is working out a plan to procure 150 Gir cows and to raise them in the shrine to make their milk available to the devotees to offer to the jyotirlinga, worshipped in the sanctum sanctorum of the eighteenth-century shrine.

"The temple administration is mulling over procuring Gir cows, a famous breed in India, to raise them in the gaushala or cowshed of the temple to meet the demand for pure milk in the shrine," temple administrator, S.S. Rawat, told this newspaper on Sunday.

According to him, around 1,000 litres of milk is being offered to the jyotirlinga by devotees every day.

The temple can build its captive reserve of pure milk to make it available to the devotees by raising the cattle breed, a senior temple administrator said.

GANJA SMUGGLERS THRASH HOME GUARD TO DEATH

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 6

A home guard died after allegedly being thrashed by a group of ganja smugglers near Chaulimendi under Balimela police limits in Odisha's Malkangiri district on Sunday. According to reports, more than 100 persons disguised as kanwariyas were carrying the contraband using slings.

Acting on a tip-off, the police on Saturday night intercepted them near Chaulimendi for search.

The accused attacked the cops, during which home guard Banabasi Maharana was grievously injured. The accused fled the spot after assaulting the cops.

The victim was rescued and rushed to the Mathili Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries on Sunday morning while undergoing treatment.

SHEIKH HASINA PAYS TRIBUTE TO MUKHERJEE

Dhaka, Sept. 6: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday paid rich tributes to India's former president Pranab Mukherjee and said he was a true friend of Bangladesh, as the country's Parliament adopted a condolence motion over his death.

He was a true friend of Bangladesh since our 1971 Liberation War, Hasina told the maiden session of Parliament called for the second time since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The country's Parliament adopted a condolence motion to mourn the demise of Mukherjee and several distinguished Bangladeshis who died recently.

Mukherjee, 84, died on Monday in New Delhi following a 21-day battle with multiple ailments.

The former president was cremated with full state honours on Tuesday.

TA battalions deployed along LAC

TA units are in addition to 2 Mountain Divisions from Bareilly, HP-Ladakh Scouts, SFF

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD SEPT. 6

With situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh hotting up leading to massive deployment of forces — especially those well-versed with the art of survival in inhospitable terrains and harsh weather and fight the enemy — Territorial Army (TA) battalions, comprising people from Ladakh are the latest addition in the troop deployment at strategic points to thwart any designs of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China. The TA had played a key role alongside the Army in the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars.

The TA units, sent recently to the strategic heights to assist the Army, are in addition to the deployment of two Mountain Divisions from Bareilly and Himachal Pradesh — Ladakh Scouts, Special Frontier Force besides the existing three divisions of 14 Corps apart from the Indian Air Force — making it the first of its kind deployment at the LAC, post the 1962 Sino-

● **TERRITORIAL ARMY** is a unique concept wherein any citizen can join the force while continuing with their main profession and serve the Army when required.

India war:

Each division has between 17,000 and 20,000 soldiers. Recently, the Army has put on hold the premature retirement of thousands of JCOs and jawans, who have been asked to be ready for deployment at short notice.

The TA shot to prominence after cricket stars like Kapil Dev, M.S. Dhoni, Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot and some from the South Indian film industry joined the force and underwent training.

Sources told *Deccan Chronicle* that the "home and hearth" units of the TA, which was raised on the concept of the "son of the soil," is coming in handy at this crucial time. The soldiers in this force are locals who are well-versed with the terrain and geography of the area

and have the required survival skills. During peace time, these units, though well-trained, are used for mundane tasks within Army establishments.

While the TA has been supporting the Army in carrying out anti-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir, this would be the first time that they have been given bigger operational roles in the ongoing stand-off with the PLA. Known as the 'citizen's Army' wherein any citizen can volunteer to join the TA and serve the Army when required, the TA units form the second line of defence.

"Since the unit comprises Ladakhis, who are tough, intelligent and know the region like the back of their hand, it was decided to deploy them at various heights," sources said.

Raised in October 1949, the size and task of TA has increased manifold over the years. It now has a strength of about 45,000 and sources said there are major plans in the pipeline to further make the TA strong and give bigger roles.

Govt to improve livelihood of those living on borders

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, SEPT. 6

Amid escalating border tension with China, the Government of India has embarked upon an ambitious multi-pronged strategy to strengthen the border management along the international border with China by launching schemes aimed at improving the standard of living of people in those areas where they can become important stakeholders in border management.

The secretary of the border management wing of the ministry of home affairs Sanjeeva Kumar visited Ladakh to monitor the implementation of the border area development scheme along the border with China. Authoritative security sources in the ministry of home affairs told this newspaper that the ministry has asked

respective state governments and union territories to prepare the schemes in consultation with the border guarding forces and submit it to the border management wing of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Pointing out that improving road connectivity is the key component of the scheme, security sources said that the ministry has already started massive exercise to improve the connectivity along the international border with China.

Stressing the need for augmenting connectivity along the China border under the present circumstances security sources said that several road projects are at various stages of implementation. Creation of border outposts is another key component of the scheme. Infrastructure develop-

ment from zero to ten kilometres from the international border is given priority under the border areas development scheme, security sources said adding that adequate funds are being pumped in for speedy implementation of the schemes submitted by the state governments.

Informing that the government of Arunachal Pradesh, which has a long international border with China, is doing a good job in improving infrastructure along the international border with the funds provided by the ministry, security sources said that senior officers are in constant touch with the chief secretaries of the border states and a team of senior officers headed by Sanjeeva Kumar, Secretary, Border Management, has also been monitoring the execution of the schemes.

THACKERAY GETS THREATENING CALL, SECURITY BEEFED UP

Mumbai, Sept. 6: An unidentified man allegedly called up Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's personal residence 'Matoshree' in Bandra here, saying that he was calling from Dubai on behalf of fugitive underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, a police official said on Sunday.

The caller rang up twice around 10.30 pm on Saturday, following which the police beefed up security at Thackeray's bungalow located in Kalanagar Colony, the official said.

"Someone called up on 'Matoshree' phone number two times on Saturday night and said Dawood Ibrahim wanted to talk to the CM. However, the telephone operator did not transfer the call to the CM," the official said.

"The caller did not reveal his identity, but only said that he was calling from Dubai on behalf of Dawood Ibrahim. Both the calls were received around 10.30 pm," he added. — PTI

Offering prayers



Devotees offer prayers at the Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah after it reopened in New Delhi on Sunday, during Unlocked 4.0. Union minister for minority affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi was among the people who paid obeisance to Sufi saint at Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia .

— PTI

K'TAKA LABOUR MANTRI TESTS +VE FOR COVID

Bengaluru, Sept. 6: Karnataka Labour Minister A. Shivaram Hebbar on Sunday said he and his wife have tested positive for the Covid-19 and would be under treatment in their home itself being asymptomatic.

"Me and my wife underwent Covid-19 test and have been found positive for the virus. Since there are no symptoms of Covid-19, we decided to remain in home quarantine on doctors' advice and are getting treatment at home," Hebbar tweeted.

Rahul slams govt for 'faulty GST'

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi lashed out at the centre over the contraction of the economy and linked it with a 'faulty GST'. "Another big reason for record GDP contraction is Modi government's Gabbar Singh Tax (GST). Many have been badly affected by this — lakhs of poor families, crores lost their jobs, states' economy was affected (sic)," he said in a post on Twitter.

In a video, which he shared with the post, the former Congress president is heard saying: "GST

was the second biggest attack on the unorganised sector: GST was UPA's idea — one tax, intended to simplify the system.

NDA's GST was different — four different types of tax slabs, up to 28 per cent tax, it has become complicated. Small enterprises cannot pay this amount. These four slabs are only meant to help the privileged, the country's most powerful businessmen in the country."

He added: "NDA's GST has left states at receiving end. Centre is not able to pay the states. The GST is not just a failure, it's an attack on poor." In the last

couple of days, the Congress leader has been doing a series of videos attacking the government over its policies.

In his third video of the four-part series, he also accused the government of allowing 15-20 businessmen of having the reach to manipulate the tax payment and farmers, labourers and small businesses of not having similar leverage.

Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party on Sunday hit back saying "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing" and asked when will the Congress leader stop lying.

Reminding the former Congress president that he had to once "apologise" to the Supreme Court for one of his lies, the ruling party claimed that the Congress leader wants to have a tax regime where airplane and slippers are taxed same and essential commodities and services which have no tax are brought under the tax regime.

The BJP has claimed that the contraction in the GDP was from April to June when the country was under complete lockdown and barring essential services there was no economic activity.

MARITAL | DISPUTE

Varsha reportedly stayed with her husband only 18 months

Mohanty filed divorce petition: Lawyer

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 6

The controversy surrounding BJD MP, Anubhav Mohanty, allegedly harassing his actress wife Varsha Priyadarshini, took a new twist on Sunday after the lawmaker's legal counsel informed the media that his client has filed a divorce petition in the court of principal judge, Family Court, Patiala House, New Delhi, seeking a divorce.

"My client has filed a

divorce petition under Section 13 (i)(a) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 on the grounds that the marriage between the two has never been consummated and as such no child was born. Though the couple got married on February 8, 2014, Varsha stayed with her husband only for 18 months. The married life was full of cruelty, tyranny, misery, harassment and suffering for Anubhav and his family members," Ashwini Dubey, the legal counsel of the lawmaker, told a local television channel here

over the telephone from Delhi.

In his divorce petition, a copy of which is with this newspaper, the respondent (Priyadarshini) fears the pain while thinking about having sexual intercourse. As such, she never allowed the petitioner (Anubhav) to consummate their marriage. Whenever the petitioner tried to even touch the respondent, she never allowed it. This behaviour made the petitioner uncomfortable and unhappy. The petitioner never felt he was married as the respondent never gave

him the pleasure of being married, reads the petition.

The petition says that the respondent did not allow the petitioner to establish a physical relationship on their first night after marriage and clearly told the petitioner that she is going to take three-four months to get comfortable and would allow physical relations only then. The petitioner appreciated the feelings of the respondent and gave her time to become comfortable.

The content of Anubhav's divorce is in

sharp contrast with the allegations levelled by Varsha.

In a petition filed before the sub-divisional judicial magistrate court, Cuttack, Varsha has charged Anubhav with domestic violence.

The actress, while accusing Anubhav of being an alcoholic, has said that though she insisted on a child, the actor did not show any interest.

Varsha has demanded a monthly maintenance and an indemnity of ₹15 crore from her actor-turned-lawmaker husband.

AHEAD OF POLLS, BJP RELEASES POSTER SEEKING JUSTICE FOR SSR

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, SEPT. 6

A BJP poster campaign seeking justice for actor Sushant Singh Rajput, has created a flutter in poll-bound Bihar.

Opposition parties are of the view that posters and pamphlets have been released to influence voters ahead of the assembly elections scheduled in October-November this year.

Talking to reporters in Patna, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) spokesperson, Mrityunjay Tiwari, said, "Tejaswi Yadav was the first to demand a CBI probe into the case but

never used it for political reasons. It's tragic to see BJP doing politics over someone's dead body."

Dismissing the opposition's allegations, BJP leaders in Patna said that the posters were released by the art and culture wing of the party and has nothing to do with politics. According to BJP spokesperson, Nikhil Anand, "Sushant is the son of the soil who represented Bihar in Hindi cinema. His untimely death has been a shock to all of us which is visible not only in the Bihar but globally. Bihar BJP has stood by the demand of justice for the late actor."

SHORT TAKES

BERLUSCONI
RESPONDING TO
VIRUS DRUGS

Rome, Sept. 6: Former Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi is responding “optimally” to Covid-19 treatment but is the most vulnerable type of patient and is in “the most delicate phase” of the virus, his personal doctor said on Sunday.

Dr Alberto Zangrillo repeated Sunday that he nevertheless remained “cautiously optimistic” about Berlusconi’s recovery. The three-time premier turns 84 in a few weeks and has had a history of heart problems that required being fitted with a pacemaker several years ago.

Zangrillo suggested Berlusconi wouldn’t be released anytime soon, recalling that the virus “requires adequate treatment and takes its time.”

SPEAKING ILL OF
PEOPLE WORSE
THAN VIRUS: POPE

Vatican City, Sept. 6: Speaking ill of other people and spreading gossip is worse than Covid-19 and Satan is the worst offender of all, Pope Francis said on Sunday.

When people see someone making a mistake, “the first thing we usually do is go and tell someone else about it. Gossip like this closes off the community,” the pope said in comments on a passage in the Bible where Jesus talks about what must be done to welcome back into the community those who have committed errors.

“The great gossip is Satan who always says bad things about people,” Francis said.

Satan “is a liar who seeks to divide the Church, to drive our brothers apart, so that they are no longer a community,” he added.

MOM KILLS 5
KIDS, GERMAN
CITY MOURNS

Berlin, Sept. 6: More than 800 people came together for a memorial for the five children who were allegedly killed by their mother at their home in the western city of Solingen, the German news agency dpa reported on Sunday.

Neighbours, friends and others mourning the deaths of the five young children lit candles Saturday night in front of the building where they had lived. They brought flowers, toys and balloons with the names of the dead children them: Melina, Leonie, Sophie, Timo and Luca, dpa reported.

“It’s hard to mourn on your own, to express your sadness,” Hans-Peter Harbecke, a neighbourhood organiser, told public broadcaster WDR. “It’s easier when you’re together, it’s more intensive as a community.” Prosecutors have charged the 27-year-old mother of the five children, who were found dead at their home on Thursday, with murder.

The killings have caused widespread shock in Germany. Investigators have said that postmortem examinations on the children, who were between 1 to 8 years old, showed signs of sedation and suffocation, but it was still unclear how exactly they died.

HEZBOLLAH,
HAMAS CHIEFS
MEET OVER TIES

Beirut, Sept. 6: Leaders of Lebanon’s Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas movement, both enemies of Israel, have met to discuss diplomatic normalisation between the Jewish state and Arab countries, a report said on Sunday.

They stressed the “stability” of the “axis of resistance” against Israel, the Hezbollah-run Al-Manar TV channel reported, without saying where or when the meeting took place.

Hassan Nasrallah, head of the Iran-backed Shiite Hezbollah movement, was pictured meeting Ismail Haniyeh, who heads the political bureau of Hamas, the Islamist movement that control the Gaza Strip.

They discussed “political and military developments in Palestine, Lebanon and the region” and “the dangers to the Palestinian cause” including “Arab plans for normalisation” with Israel, Al-Manar said.

The meeting comes after an August 13 announcement that the Jewish state and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to normalise ties.

While the US-backed diplomatic drive aims to boost a regional alliance against Iran, Palestinians have condemned it as a “stab in the back” as they remain under occupation and don’t have their own state.

1 killed, 7 hurt in late-night
stabbings in Birmingham

Victims were drinking, dining at outdoor tables, UK cops launch manhunt

London, Sept. 6: UK police said a murder inquiry has been launched on Sunday after one man was killed and seven people injured in multiple stabbings overnight in the city of Birmingham.

According to reports, West Midlands Police believe the victims were picked at random and do not believe the incident was terror or gang related. While a man and a woman are battling serious injuries, the injuries of five others are not thought to be life-threatening, the force said.

A hunt has been initiated for a male suspect, who is believed to have gone on a stabbing spree, starting at Constitution Hill in Birmingham. “The events during the early hours of this morning are tragic, shocking and understandably frightening,” said Chief Superintendent Steve Graham, responsible for policing in Birmingham.

“Please be assured that we are doing absolutely everything we can to find whoever was responsible and try to understand what exactly happened. We have well-rehearsed plans for dealing with major incidents,” he said, calling on the public to remain vigilant and report anything suspicious.

The force is also calling for anyone with CCTV or mobile footage to contact the police. The police believe the incidents, which took place between 12.30 am and 2.20 am local time, are linked and are following a number of lines of enquiry.



Police forensics officers gather evidence inside a cordon on Hurst Street, following a major stabbing incident in the centre of Birmingham, central England, on Sunday.

An increased uniformed and armed response has been put in place across the city. The West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson, said: “Last night’s events are truly terrible and have shocked the people of Birmingham, the West Midlands and the country.”

“My first thoughts are with the victims and their families at this time. I have every faith in West Midlands Police who are working extremely quickly on this investigation.”

Earlier, the police had declared a “major incident” as cordons were put up and an investigation was launched following reports of the stabbings.

A major incident describes any situation involving serious harm or a security risk to the public and covers special arrangements for all of the emergency services to work together.

West Midlands Police said they are uncertain as to the motive behind the stabbings and are working to establish the details after they were called to reports of one stabbing just after midnight in the city centre.

Officers have set up a cordon at the junction of Hurst Street, a popular nightlife area in the city centre referred to as the Gay Village, and Bromsgrove Street. Emergency services attended and some of the injured people were rushed to local hospitals.

A heavy police presence remains in the area as officers urged people to remain calm and stay away from the area as cordons remain in place.

Many people had been seated at outdoor tables eating and drinking on Saturday evening just before the incident. The streets in the area had already been closed to traffic due to Coronavirus restrictions.

— *PTI*

— *PTI*

SPACE | MISSION

China’s reusable spacecraft lands successfully

Beijing, Sept. 6: China’s reusable experimental spacecraft, which was launched into orbit two days ago, successfully returned to its predetermined landing site on Sunday, according to the official state media.

The spacecraft was launched on board a Long March-2F carrier rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Friday. The successful return marks an important breakthrough in china’s research on reusable spacecraft technology, which will provide a more convenient and economical way for the peaceful use of space, state-run CGTN TV reported.

Chinese military officials, who were tight-lipped about the launch earlier, said there were many firsts in this launch. “The spacecraft is new, the launch method is also different,” they said.

An official, quoted by the Hong Kong-based South

China Morning Post on Sunday, declined to comment on the details of the

mission but suggested “maybe you can take a look at the US X-37B.”

The X-37B is an unmanned space plane that operates like a smaller version of the space shuttle, which is launched by a rocket and cruises back to earth for a runway landing.

It has flown four classified missions to date, carrying secret payloads on long-duration flights in Earth orbit, the Post report said. Friday’s launch comes weeks after China launched Tianwen-1, the country’s first Mars mission, from Hainan in late July.

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DECCAN Chronicle

7 SEPTEMBER 2020

No more slogans please, we need hard measures

The war on Coronavirus, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised to win for us in 21 days, gets more hopeless by the day with the daily increase in caseload crossing 90,000, a figure higher than all other nations. India added the last million to the number of infected people in 13 days, a record of sorts in pandemic history the world over. With 41 lakh infections, India is set to become the nation with the second largest number of Covid-19 patients, overtaking Brazil soon.

The nature of the pandemic has also been shifting. Those states which fared better in early stages are now becoming increasingly vulnerable. The southern states of Telangana state, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka see no let-up in new cases; even Kerala has started reporting cases upwards of 2,500 every day. Delhi is reported to be witnessing a relapse with the numbers increasing. Telangana state's finance minister is the latest high-profile person to contract the virus.

The saving grace till now has been the case fatality rate which has been quite low but experts fear that the situation could change as the pandemic moves towards the villages from cities and towns where the health infrastructure is in better shape. It is in this context that the criticism of Congress leader and former finance minister P. Chidambaram must be looked at. He has pointed out that India is the only country that has not benefited from the lockdown. When lockdown was declared, India had less than 500 cases but the number rose to 5.6 lakh when it ended on June 30. The economic cost is going to be humongous if it cannot arrest the spread of the pandemic. The nation's GDP experienced a historic contraction by 23.9 per cent in the first quarter. It will be cold comfort to

think that the period was spent mostly in lockdown. This quarter, which started with half-a-million infections, will see the number multiplied several times when it ends. It is time the government explained to the people what its game plan was when it declared the lockdown and set a deadline to win the war, and how it all went awry. The lockdown had not only shut down the economy completely, it had also put people to untold miseries. Millions of guest workers were made to trek their way back home in villages from the towns and cities and several of them fell and died by the wayside. There was little help coming from the government; even the courts refused to see the unfolding human catastrophe in the earlier days.

It will be suicidal for the nation to return to lockdown; instead, it must launch a massive awareness campaign on the pandemic and educate the people on the need of social distancing. It must also ramp up the health-care infrastructure in the interiors. Instead of advising the resource-starved states to borrow, the government must loose its pursestrings instead. The time for hollow slogans and meaningless gestures has passed long ago.

Kesavananda's lessons

At a time when socialism has emerged as a saviour to the suffering in a Coronavirus-hit world, the Supreme Court's landmark Kesavananda Bharati judgment holds a few lessons. It was this judgment that led to the formulation of the basic structure doctrine for the Constitution, one that has been cited over and over again to settle multitudes of lawsuits having far-reaching impact on our society and governance.

Led by then chief justice of India S.M. Sikri, the 13-judge Constitution bench's 7-6 verdict in the apex court's longest trial at 68 days put much-needed curbs on a government's unbridled majoritarianism, holding the Constitution of India above it, ruling that even Parliament cannot tamper with the basic structure of the document, in particular Part Three concerning fundamental rights. The seminal verdict included the concept of the welfare state in the ambit of that basic structure.

Today a tribalist, populist government is invoking *force majeure* to escape accountability after single-handedly decimating the economy. Its stooges have filed a petition in court to remove the words "socialist" and "secular" from the Preamble.

Few are aware that *Kesavananda (1973)* validated the Constitution amendments enacted by the then Indira Gandhi government to uphold the nationalisation of banks and abolition of privy purses. The judgment also defined the extent to which Parliament could limit property rights, in order to redistribute large land holdings to cultivators.

Kesavananda Bharati, pontiff of Kasaragod's Edneer Mutt, who, at 29, contested in court the Kerala government's move, under two state land reform acts, to take partial control of his temple property, is no more. But the eponymous judgment that bears his name is a legacy critical to India's functioning as a parliamentary democracy.

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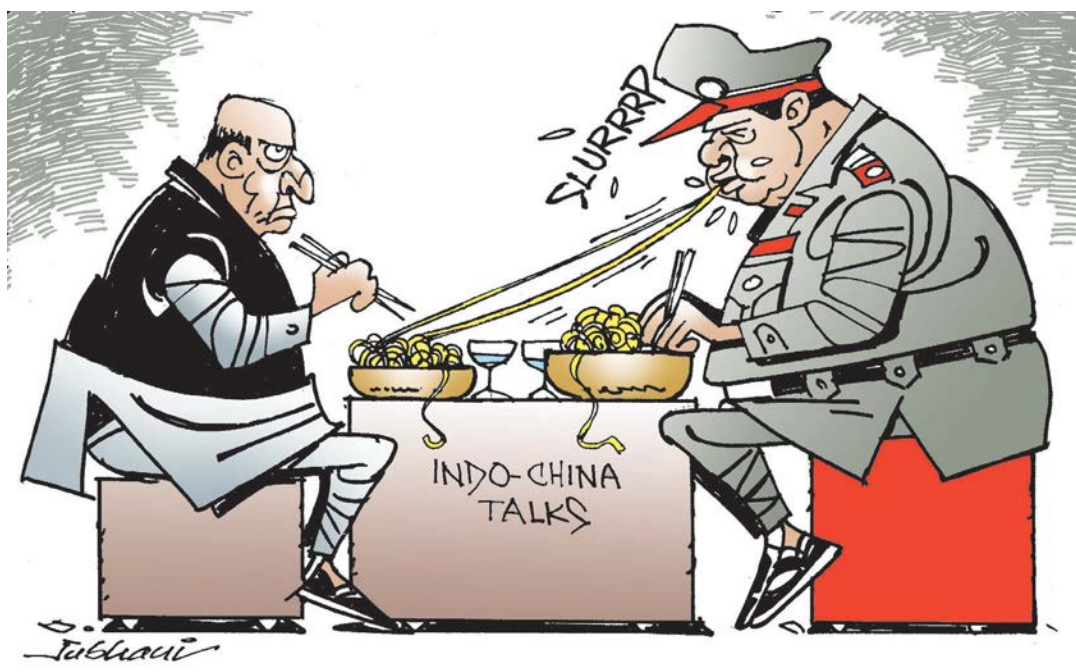
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Subhani



A controversial judge with a tumultuous legacy



Faizan Mustafa & Pranav Verma



View with apprehension the attitude of judges", remarked Lord Atkin in his storied dissent in *Liversidge* (1941), "who show themselves more executive-minded than the executive". Justice Arun Mishra has demitted office, and it is worth evaluating the implications of his tenure on the independence of the judiciary. As his critics have argued, his tenure may have contributed even more to the already alleged transformation of the Indian Supreme Court into an executive court — or, as Lord Atkin warned against, a court more executive-minded than the executive itself.

Growing deference to the executive: Constitutional democracies are predicated upon a natural and healthy tension between the executive and the judiciary, with the latter serving as a counter-majoritarian check upon the former. However, the first clear indication in recent years of this basic principle having come under strain was the public adulation by Justice Arun Mishra (appointed as Supreme Court judge on July 7, 2014, after the UPA government had twice blocked his well-deserved elevation) for the Prime Minister, calling him "an internationally acclaimed visionary", and "a versatile genius who thinks globally and acts locally". Justice M.R. Shah who sat on many benches with Justice Mishra too in 2018, immediately after taking over as Chief Justice of Bihar, had called Prime Minister a "model and hero". True, an overwhelming majority of Indians similarly admire Prime Minister but should a judge say so publicly is the moot question. To be fair, Justice Mishra's praises were not unprecedented by any means. It was, in fact, a grim reminder to an earlier time where the Supreme Court bent way

over backwards for the executive. When Mrs Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980, Justice P.N. Bhagwati wrote to her, that "... I am sure that with your iron will and firm determination, uncanny insight and dynamic vision, great administrative capacity and vast experience, overwhelming love and affection of the people and, above all, a heart which is identified with the misery of the poor and the weak, you will be able to steer the ship of the nation safely to its cherished goal." Interestingly, the same Justice Bhagwati in *State of Rajasthan* (1977) had favoured mass dissolution of nine elected Congress governments by the Janata government by observing that "never in the history of this country has such a clear and unequivocal verdict been given by the people, never a more massive vote of no-confidence in the ruling party".

It appears that the clock seems to have started to run backwards for the Supreme Court, unlearning the lessons on the need for an independent judiciary acting as a check over the untrammelled powers of the executive. Justice Ranjan Gogoi's nomination to Rajya Sabha and his justification of acting as "bridge between Parliament and judiciary" rather than a watchdog over the legislature and government gave further credence to the allegation of an executive court.

That the judiciary is independent from the executive is equally a matter of perception as it is of fact — i.e. it must not only be independent, but in order to inspire confidence, it must also appear to be so. The government is the biggest litigant — ie in 80 per cent cases — before the courts, and the implications of such praises of

the chief executive upon an ordinary citizen's perception of the top court are axiomatic.

A strained relationship with the Bar: Justice Mishra

also leaves behind a legacy of a liberal and frequent use of contempt threats against the Bar. In fact, long before the contempt case against Mr Prashant Bhushan was instituted, the judge threatened contempt action against senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan while the latter was arguing for Justice Mishra's recusal in the Indore Development Authority Case (2019). Justice Mishra not only threatened contempt in the midst of the oral arguments, but also promised to "see through" the conviction. On senior lawyers' objection, he offered *dandavat pranam* ie prostration in abject apology.

The Indore Development Authority Case (2019) also reignited the debate on recusal by judges when Justice Mishra steadfastly denied

multiple pleas seeking his recusal on the ground of him leading a bench which was to re-examine his own earlier opinion passed as part of a smaller bench — this raised a significant perception of bias. Lord Esher in *Allison* (1894) observed that the question is not that the judge, in fact, was biased. It is the "perception" of bias that has to be the guiding factor. The Indian Supreme Court, too, in *Ranjit Thakur* (1987) held that judge should look at the party's perception.

The ghost of the judges' press conference: The year 2018 marked a watershed moment for the Indian Supreme Court when four of its senior-most judges took to the media and alleged through an open press conference, that sensitive cases were being allotted to a select few judges. The then future CJI Ranjan Gogoi, during the press conference, indicated that the assignment of Judge Loya's case to Justice Arun Mishra was

one of the reasons that forced the judges to go public. Justice Mishra in Bhushan's sentence order said that it must be the court's first and the last occasion that judges had gone to press (Para 44).

Justice Mishra was part of 540 benches and delivered as many as 132 judgments, which means he really worked very hard. Several matters with significant stakes for the central government came to be heard by benches which were led by Justice Mishra — these include, the Rajasthan disqualified MLAs case; the dispute over the control of Delhi government over services; the Karnataka disqualified MLAs case; the CBI director Case; the AGR dues case; Sahara papers; a total of eight cases pertaining to the Adani group. The last being Adani Power Rajasthan Ltd (2020) delivered last Monday benefitting the Adani Group with Rs 5,000 crore. He delivered a controversial judgment in *Haren Pandya* (2019) convicting the accused who were acquitted by the Gujarat high court. Justice Mishra has also held in *Davinder Singh* (2020) that sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes is permissible. His judgment in *Chebrolu Leela Prasad Rao* (2020) quashing 100 per cent ST reservation of primary teachers in ST areas was also seen as diluting the reservation scheme. The final order was eviction of 48,000 slum clusters. In many cases, Justice Mishra overlooked the earlier precedents. But Justice Mishra's judgment in *Vineeta Sharma* (2020) upholding coparcenary rights of Hindu daughters is widely appreciated.

Justice Mishra's tenure at the Supreme Court would be located in the context of the court's overtly deferential approach towards the executive, a strained relationship with the Bar, and a continuing lack of clarity in allocation of sensitive cases, all of which seem to have contributed to the tumultuous legacy that he leaves behind.

Faizan Mustafa is a constitutional law expert. Pranav Verma is an LLM student at Cambridge University. The views are personal.

LETTERS

KUDOS TO AP

Kudos to AP on its 1st rank (AP No. 1 in ease of doing biz, TS pushed to third, DC, Sept. 6). It is a harbinger for AP's future euphoric economic condition and for better generation of employment opportunities.

Jagannadham Chowdari
Srikakulam

During Covid times, it is heartening to read that AP stands on top in the Ease of Doing Business (DC, Sept. 6). The state should not be complacent with the ranking. It is only a beginning and has a long way to go.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

COVID CASES

India has fast reached the second position in the world in Covid tally by crossing Brazil with 40 lakh cases. With over 90,000 cases in a single day it has set a dubious world record. There seems to be no respite in sight. Though it may be a reflection of large number of tests, it cannot give solace as the detection of new cases is not followed by strict isolation.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

CHINA'S AGGRESSION

The belligerence of China on the border is to weaken India economically and cause instability. It is to divert the attention of the nation. Pakistan and China must realise that a showdown will be disastrous for all. We only wish that wise counsel prevails on China and they restore status quo at the border.

D.S.P. Rao
Kakinada

PRINCES TO BE DE-RECOGNISED

NEW DELHI, Sept. 6 Rulers of former Indian States are being "derecognised" forthwith. This will imply the abolition of privy purses and privileges enjoyed by them. The President is expected to issue an order under Article 366 (22) of the Constitution.

The sensational decision was taken by the Union Cabinet last night after being in session for 75 minutes at the Prime Minister's residence. Mrs Indira Gandhi summoned a meeting of her colleagues soon after the Rajya Sabha rendered infructuous the Government's move for the abolition of privy purses and privileges. By a fractional margin — decimal 33 votes to be precise — the Constitutional Amendment Bill for the former rulers under Article 366 (22). ₹

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

ter's residence. Mrs Indira Gandhi summoned a meeting of her colleagues soon after the Rajya Sabha rendered infructuous the Government's move for the abolition of privy purses and privileges. By a fractional margin — decimal 33 votes to be precise — the Constitutional Amendment Bill for the former rulers under Article 366 (22). ₹

G. Kishan Reddy



NEP presents Telangana with opportunity to course-correct

A lot has been deliberated on the transformative potential of the recently issued National Education Policy (NEP). The policy that has stood out for introducing sweeping changes in school and higher education is a boon for Telangana where it will improve learning outcomes, especially for socially and economically vulnerable students.

It is important to understand the performance of Telangana in education. The performance grading index used by the ministry of education ranks Telangana at 17 out of the 37 states and Union territories in 2018-19. The broad-based metrics included learning outcomes and quality, access, equity, infrastructure and facilities, and governance processes. Telangana was ranked 30th in infrastructure and facilities and 20th in access. It also performed below-par in two other parameters — learning outcomes and quality, and access to education.

The National Achievement Survey, conducted by NCERT, too, revealed that the performance of Telangana students from classes five to eight as

poorer in comparison to students from other southern states. Even the Comptroller and Auditor General in its audit report in 2018 pulled up Telangana, where 14.26 per cent of primary school students and 21.47 per cent of upper primary school students scored less than 40 per cent between 2014 and 2017.

It is thus imperative for Telangana, which is financially well endowed, to implement the NEP.

The NEP understands the critical importance of good quality childhood care and education (ECCE). Experts believe that over 85 per cent of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of six. By bringing ECCE to the centre of education with an explicit focus on building foundational and numerical skills for every child by end of Grade 3, a quantum improvement in learning outcomes is expected. The NEP also aims for a holistic, comprehensive education as it breaks down prevailing insularity by introducing the 5+3+4+4 system of school education.

The NEP further strikes the right chord in terms of equity and access.

Schools are often regarded as the second home in a child's life and this will thus, in turn, build an inclusive and empathetic society. In both domains of school and higher education, the NEP has opted for restructuring of the system in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and recreational opportunities to prevent any form of exclusion or isolation of disadvantaged communities. The NEP aims to provide food and nutrition in terms of breakfast and midday meals in government schools. This will encourage parents of children, who often have to make their child work for their next meal, to send them to school.

Another striking example to improve equity is the attempt to include the mother tongue as the medium of both educational and vocational education. By including regional languages, in this case Telugu, as a medium of instruction, NEP 2020 strives to focus the child's energies on learning concepts rather than a new language. The NEP also acknowledges special mechanisms required to ensure that children belonging to tribal communities receive the benefits of

these interventions. The decision to promote tribal languages will contribute to their educational empowerment. Telangana has at least 10 districts with scheduled areas and children belonging to Lambada, Koya, Gond, Yerukala, Chenchu and other communities will stand to benefit.

One of the reasons for poor infrastructure and facilities of schools is lack of funds with states. The NEP stipulates the Centre and states work together to increase public investment in the education sector to six per cent of GDP. The Telangana state government's budget allocations to education for the 2020-21 fiscal saw a reduction from previous allocations. This is of major concern given that data recorded by the 2011 census shows Telangana's literacy rate as 66.4 per cent, much below the national average of 74.4 per cent.

Lastly, the NEP has proposed sea changes in higher education that will better align with the needs of a changing employment market. Telangana has a Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 36.2 per cent. The NEP issues a bold call for enhancing GER in higher edu-

cation including vocational education to 50 per cent by 2035. It also aims to enhance access by establishing more high-quality higher education institutes (HEI) in aspirational districts and special education zones containing larger numbers of social and economically disadvantaged groups. By 2030, the NEP aims to have at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in/near every district. Aspirational districts in Telangana such as Jayashankar Bhoopalpally, Kumarambheem Asifabad and Khammam will benefit.

Education is a concurrent subject and this stipulates the collaboration of both the Centre and the state to enact proposed reforms. State governments will also now need to act in a manner in which we can truly usher in the vision of India as a "knowledge powerhouse" as envisaged by the Prime Minister. This is an opportunity that the state of Telangana cannot afford to miss at any cost.

The writer is Union minister of state for home affairs and represents Secunderabad in the Lok Sabha

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,357.18	-1.63
Nifty 50	11,333.85	-1.68
S&P 500*	3,426.96	-0.81
Dollar (₹)	73.14	0.48
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.22	0.46
Euro (₹)	86.62	0.27
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,770.56	0.10
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.66	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.930	0.034
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.721	0.00

* As of Friday/Saturday

Faceless vetting of all imports by December 31

The Customs Department will roll out pan-India faceless assessment for all imported goods by October 31, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has said. While faceless assessment for import of certain goods was already rolled out in Bengaluru and Chennai ports on June 8, it was extended to Delhi and Mumbai Customs on August 3. This will now be extended in phases to all ports across the country by December 31.

Thriveni Earth bags ₹31,428 cr NTPC contract



Thriveni Earthmovers has bagged a contract worth Rs 31,428 crore from NTPC to develop and operate Talaiipalli coal mine in Chhattisgarh. "Thriveni Earthmovers... a Coimbatore-based mining company, has bagged another mine development and operation contract from NTPC on August 26, with a contract value of Rs 31,428 crore," an official said. NTPC had terminated the contracts awarded to BGR Mining & Infra.

EV charging kiosks at 69,000 pumps mull

The Centre is mulling setting up at least one electric vehicle (EV) charging kiosk each at nearly 69,000 petrol pumps across the country to induce people to go for electric mobility. The government is also thinking of making it compulsory to install EV charging kiosks at all company-owned, company-operated petrol pumps of state refiners. Power minister R. K. Singh suggested oil ministry officials to issue an order in this regard.

Airtel launches 'unlimited' net plans at ₹499

Bharti Airtel launched 'unlimited' category broadband plans starting at Rs 499 per month, which will come bundled with subscription to video entertainment apps and high definition set-top box (STB) against refundable deposit. The move comes within a week of Reliance Jio revising broadband plans with unlimited data usage and bundling subscription fee of video entertainment apps in them.



■ Rangarajan says half the economy may do well Chances of positive growth this fiscal

New Delhi, Sept 6: A small positive economic growth in 2020-21 may not be ruled out as sectors like agriculture and essential goods and services were fully operational in the first quarter despite coronavirus-induced lockdown, according to a paper co-authored by former RBI governor C. Rangarajan.

Although many international and national agencies have projected a sharp contraction in the GDP in 2020-21—ranging from World Bank's projection of 3.2 per cent to SBI's 6.8 per cent—there are reasons to believe that the outcome may be better than these strong contractionary prospects, the paper said.

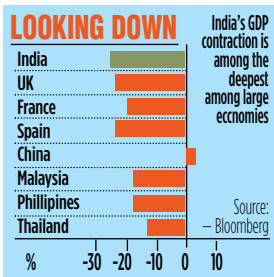
"We may note that some key sectors like agriculture and related sectors, public administration, defence services and other services may perform normally or better than normal given the demand for health services," said the paper authored by Rangarajan and India EY India chief policy advisor D. K. Srivastava.

However, the paper, titled 'India's Growth Prospects and Policy Options: Emerging from the Pandemic's Shadow' also stated that the story of the Indian economy as it unfolds under the impact of Covid-19 is disquieting.

The report said half the economy could support positive growth. It pointed out that goods and services categorised as essential



C. Rangarajan



TATA STEEL PRODUCTION BACK AT 100% CAPACITY, SAYS NARENDRA

New Delhi, Sept. 6: Tata Steel's production level has now recovered to 100 per cent as the company sees a revival in domestic demand in the current quarter led by a good monsoon and rural economy, its CEO and MD T. V. Narendran has said.

The company is now less dependent on exports compared to the first quarter, he added. Due to the lockdown,

steel makers like Tata Steel were forced to cut down their operations by up to 50 per cent in April. The players also had to turn to exports to find markets for their produce. However, with the relaxation of lockdown norms, the company ramped up its production in a phased manner. "Production is running at 100 per cent," Narendran told PTI.

goods and services in other sectors, technically called 'permitted goods and services' together with agriculture and public administration, defence and other services, may have a weight in the range of 40-50 per cent of total output. "These were fully operational even in the first quarter of 2020-21. Thus, nearly half of the economy may perform normally or better than normal over the full 2020-21," it said.

Also, given the current geopolitical situation, the government at the central and state levels have become more active in attracting investment from abroad. "Thus, a small positive growth may not be ruled out," the paper said.

India's economy has suffered its worst slump on record in April-June quarter of 2020-21, with the GDP contracting by 23.9 per cent.

—PTI

Suddenly ed-tech is hot, gets over \$1 bn from PE/VC funds

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 6

Companies in the online education space have attracted over 200 per cent more private equity and venture capital funding in the first eight months of this year compared to last year.

Between January and August this year, ed-tech companies have received a total funding of \$1,191 million across 36 deals. In the same period last year, they could garner only \$373 million across 31 deals—a growth of 219 per cent. During the entire calendar year 2019, the space had witnessed just 43 deals aggregating to \$409 million, as per data from Venture Intelligence.

The growth in investments also saw ed-tech companies increasing their share in the total venture capital funding in the first eight months of this year to 23.1 per cent against 5.2 per cent in 2019. Though the ed-tech space has seen a gradual rise of investments and share in the past five years, 2020 saw a quantum jump. In 2015, ed-tech companies had



received just \$84 million and had a minimal share of 1.1 per cent in the venture capital funding.

Emergence of newer companies to tap the opportunity in online education combined with maturing of some of the larger companies has led to the increase in the funding. However, the pandemic was a game-changer. The new education policy of the government too enhances the role of online in continuous learning.

"In this pandemic situation where every other sector is struggling to survive, ed-tech is one and only sector that has seen maximum traction from VC/PEs, and the ed-tech industry has seen the highest investments in the last 3 months. Due to Covid-19, the complete education sector has

Over ₹10 L cr loans may come up for restructuring: Bankers

New Delhi, Sept. 6: Banks may restructure loans of more than Rs 10 lakh crore, largely attributed to five-to-six critical sectors, including aviation, commercial real estate and hospitality, according to bankers.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman last week asked banks and NBFCs to roll out one-time loan restructuring scheme for Covid-19 related stress by September 15.

According to a top official of a public sector bank, it is win-win for both lenders and borrowers.

Explaining the rationale, the banker said, companies will try to save their

business from turning non-performing asset (NPA) and buy crucial time for getting cash flow back for servicing the debt.

Secondly, banks have to make only 10 per cent provision against restructured account as compared to 15 per cent if the same account turns into NPA, the official said, adding that the lure of 5 per cent conservation of capital will also push banks for recast.

Given the benefit, the official said, it is estimated that 12-15 per cent of total loan book would avail of one-time restructuring.

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are already covered under the ongoing restructuring scheme which was tweaked recently to cover those impacted by Covid-19 crisis.

A total Rs 100 lakh crore worth of loan is outstanding in the banking system.

Another banking official said nearly half of the 30 per cent of the total loan book which sought moratorium that ended on August 31 may opt for restructuring.

Companies in about half-a-dozen vulnerable sectors—hospitality, aviation, entertainment, commercial real estate and travel

& tourism—whose businesses have been impacted severely due to the Covid-19 crisis will make a bee-line for the scheme.

The K. V. Kamath committee report is expected to give financial parameters like hair cut, debt service coverage ratio, debt-equity ratio post-resolution and interest coverage ratio for recasting corporate loans for over half a dozen vulnerable sectors, the official added.

Last month, Punjab National Bank managing director S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao said about 5-6 per cent of loan book would go for restructuring as per RBI guidelines. —PTI

SBI mulls VRS for 30K staff

New Delhi, Sept. 6: In a bid to optimise its costs, the State Bank of India (SBI) has planned a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS). About 30,190 employees are eligible to opt for the scheme.

The country's largest lender has a total employee strength of 2.49 lakh, at the end of March 2020, down from 2.57 lakh in the previous year.

According to sources, a draft scheme for VRS has been prepared and the board approval is awaited. The proposed scheme—Second Innings Tap VRS-2020—is aimed at optimising human resources and costs of the bank. Besides, by

PTI, said it will provide an option and a respectable exit route to employees who have reached a level of saturation in their career; may not be at the peak of their performance, have some personal issue or want to pursue their professional or personal life outside the bank.

The scheme will be opened to all permanent officers and staff who have put in 25 years of service or completed 55 years of age on the cut-off date.

The scheme will open on December 1 and remain open till the end of February.

As per the proposed eligibility criteria, a total of 11,565 officers and 18,625

staff members will be eligible for the scheme. The total net savings for the bank would be Rs 1,662.86 crore if 30 per cent of eligible employees opt for retirement under the scheme, as per estimates based on July 2020 salary.

"The staff member whose request for retirement under VRS is accepted will be paid an ex-gratia amounting 50 per cent of salary for the residual period of service (up to the date of superannuation), subject to a maximum of 18 months' last drawn salary," the draft report said. Other benefits like gratuity, pension, provident and medical benefits will be given to employees seeking VRS.

A person retired under the scheme will be eligible for engagement or re-employment in the bank after a gap of two years.

Ahead of amalgamation of SBI's five associates with it in 2017, the merging subsidiaries had announced VRS for their employees. In 2001 also the bank had announced VRS to optimise human resources.

However, the scheme is not finding favour with bank unions. Such a move at a time when the country is in the grip of a pandemic reflects the anti-worker attitude of management, Ashwani Rana, vice-president, National Organisation of Bank Workers, said. —PTI

Equity mutual funds see redemptions in August

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 6

Retail mutual fund investors booked profit in equity mutual funds in August too, just like in July, encouraged by gains in the broader market and need to protect their savings in times of job losses and salary cut.

Equity mutual funds have seen almost daily redemptions last month, barring a few days of net buying, as per August month data now available with Securities and Exchange Board of India. Data released by custodians to Sebi shows August saw redemptions worth Rs 8,358.68 crore from equity mutual funds, a tad lower than Rs 9,195.04 crore reported in July 2020.

In August, equity mutual funds saw redemptions on all but four trading days during the month. Only on August 31, when the equity market fell sharply due to Indo-China border stand-off and extremely negative first quarter GDP data fears, equity mutual funds turned net buyers by a sizable amount of Rs 891.58 crore, being the highest single day investment in the month.

The redemption trend remained similar to those seen in the month of July and the first day of September also saw redemption worth Rs 263.68 crore. Monthly data to be released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India later during the week, will throw more light on equity mutual fund trends in August.

At the same time fixed income/debt mutual funds have seen investments worth Rs 24,293.21 crore in August as against Rs 31,897.85 crore in July, indicating investors are moving away from equity mutual funds but getting back to debt investment.

Debt mutual fund investments had turned negative in April (-Rs 9,797.50 crore) after Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund had closed six funds abruptly on April 23, 2020.



Financial advisers give women a ride

RONOJOY MAZUMDAR SEPT. 6

Women looking to manage their investments wisely now have another thing to worry about: whether the advice they are getting is biased.

A two-year academic study covering every local financial-planning firm in Hong Kong found consultants frequently pushed women into chancier investments than they recommended for men with similar risk appetite.

"Advisers think they can fool the women and get away with selling them advice with subpar results," study co-author Utpal Bhattacharya of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology said, suggesting that's because they perceive women to be less financially literate than men. "This is what we call statistical discrimination."

The motivation, the researchers suggest, is the financial planners saw an opportunity for commissions. The logic goes that women were less likely to be able to spot bad advice and more likely to buy products if the recommendation chimed with what they wanted to do anyway.

It's an attitude that could cost not only clients but backfire on the advisers themselves. A separate gender-bias survey from Bank of America Corp recently found wealthy female investors who have negative experiences with their financial advisers are in fact more likely than men to fire them. —Bloomberg



Vaccine-makers plan to resist Trump pressure

ROBERT LANGRETH SEPT. 6

Drugmakers are planning a public pledge to not send any Covid-19 vaccine to the FDA for review without extensive safety and efficacy data, according to people familiar with the effort.

The joint stance is seen as a bulwark against political pressure being applied on the Food and Drug Administration to get a vaccine out as soon as possible. It is likely to be announced in a multi-company statement as soon as this week. The plans, which could still change, were described by people involved in the effort on condition of anonymity.

The companies involved in the discussions include Pfizer Inc, Moderna,

Johnson & Johnson, GlaxoSmithKline, Sanofi and possibly others. All are developing vaccines for Covid-19.

The drug industry has long relied on the FDA as a gold-standard seal of approval for its drugs and vaccines, assuring patients that the products are safe and effective. But in the middle of the pandemic, the agency has made several controversial decisions to allow emergency use of therapies without rock-solid evidence they work.

A vaccine, which will need to be taken by millions of healthy people, requires significant uptake to be effective in battling down the virus in the US. One recent poll found that a majority of the public thought a vaccine approval would be



driven by politics.

Health officials inside the Trump administration have said the process will be based entirely on science, and FDA commissioner Stephen Hahn has said he would not participate if he thought a vaccine were being rubber-stamped.

At the same time, the president has accused the agency of slowing work to hurt him politically, and said he believes a vaccine will be ready before

election day on Nov. 3.

At a news conference at the White House on Friday, President Donald Trump said a vaccine could be ready "maybe even before November first" or "some time in the month of October."

"I think you're going to see results that are shockingly good," Trump said. It's not clear what Trump was talking about, since results of trials are typically kept confidential while they're ongoing, with occasional looks by a panel of experts to see if there are safety issues, or overwhelming signs a product is working or failing.

Much of the vaccine work is being done under the umbrella of the government's Operation Warp Speed, which has struck deals with drug-

makers to fund development and manufacturing.

Others in the administration, including Moncef Slaoui, the chief adviser for the Warp Speed programme, have tamped down those expectations. Slaoui told National Public Radio last week that it's "extremely unlikely" a vaccine would be ready by election day.

In an interview with the news organisation Axios last week, Eli Lilly & Co chief executive officer David Rickes said that most companies in the industry wouldn't submit a Covid-19 product to the FDA until they were confident in the science behind it. The company is developing a Covid-19 treatment, but isn't among the companies that are part of the vaccine effort. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Gasly wins after Hamilton penalty

Monza, Italy: Pierre Gasly won an extraordinary Italian Grand Prix at Monza on Sunday for his maiden Formula One success in his 55th race and the first by a French driver since 1996. Alpha Tauri's Gasly benefitted from a 25-minute red flag suspension after Charles Leclerc crashed his Ferrari. Spain's Carlos Sainz was second in a McLaren with Canada's Lance Stroll of Racing Point in third. Pole sitter Lewis Hamilton was on his way to a comfortable win before a 10-second stop-go penalty pushed the Mercedes world champion to the back of the pack. The six-time champion eventually ended up in seventh place. "It was such a crazy race and we capitalised on the red flag," said Gasly who was dropped by the Red Bull team last season. "I have been through so much in the space of 18 months, to get my first win in Formula 1 I am struggling for words." — *AFP*

Mick grabs first F2 win of season

Monza, Italy: Mick Schumacher, son of legendary Formula One driver Michael, won for the first time this season in the European Formula 2 Championship on Saturday at Monza in Italy. The 21-year-old German finished 3.185 seconds ahead of Italian Luca Ghiotto with Dane Christian Lundgaard in third. Schumacher's fourth consecutive podium finish, and seventh this season, lifted him to third in the driver standings on 131 points. Schumacher had hit a wall in qualifying on Friday and told the F2 website that he had his mechanics on the Italian Prema Racing team to thank for his win. "It was a long night for the boys," he said. "They stayed up until 2am yesterday and worked on the car to get it ready. They did that and they did it in style, so I am very, very proud of them." — *AFP*

Nuggets numb Clippers in playoff

Miami: The Denver Nuggets bounced back with a vengeance on Saturday, powering to a 110-101 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers to even their NBA playoff series 1-1. It was all-square between the Toronto Raptors and Boston Celtics, too, after the Raptors notched a second straight win, 100-93, to knot their Eastern Conference semi-final series 2-2 in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida. The Nuggets, routed 120-97 in game one of the Western Conference series on Thursday, turned the tables with a blistering first half in which they led by as many as 23 points. "Game one, we were tired. I hate to admit it, but we were tired," said guard Jamal Murray, who led Denver with 27 points. "We came out sloppy, came out exhausted, fatigued. We didn't make any shots, we didn't get back on defense." — *AFP*

Heavyweights off to winning starts

Paris: European heavyweights England, France, holders Portugal and Belgium all enjoyed winning starts to their Uefa Nations League campaigns on Saturday even if there were signs of international rust after the coronavirus shutdown. England needed a stoppage-time penalty to beat Iceland 1-0 while world champions France saw off Sweden by the same scoreline. Portugal shrugged off the absence of Cristiano Ronaldo to thrash Croatia 4-1 with top-ranked Belgium coming away from Denmark with a 2-0 win. In Reykjavik, Raheem Sterling's last minute penalty salvaged England from another embarrassing result against Iceland. Gareth Southgate's men also survived going down to 10 men and seeing Birkir Bjarnason miss a late spot-kick for the hosts. — *AFP*

Live on TV

US OPEN TENNIS

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

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

Bosnia-Herzegovina vs Poland from 12.15 am (Tuesday) on Sony Six, HD; Netherlands vs Italy from 12.15 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

WWE RAW

Bouts from 5.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

ROYAL OPENING

IPL schedule out, MI to face CSK in first match

Dubai, Sept. 6: Ending days of anxious wait, the BCCI on Sunday released the schedule for the upcoming IPL, and in keeping with tradition, defending champions Mumbai Indians will take on runners-up Chennai Super Kings in the opener in Abu Dhabi on September 19.

Moved out of India due to a surge in Covid-19 cases, the upcoming edition of the world's biggest T20 league will be held in the three venues of Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah in the UAE.

After the tournament-opener in the capital city, Dubai will host its first game the next day when Delhi Capitals take on Kings XI Punjab followed by the third match on Monday between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bangalore.

The action will then shift to Sharjah on September 22 when Rajasthan Royals will host Chennai Super Kings.

There will be 10 double headers, with the first match starting at 3:30pm IST and the second 7:30pm, according to a BCCI release.

In all, 24 matches will be held in Dubai, 20 in Abu Dhabi and 12 in Sharjah.

Venues for the playoffs and the IPL 2020 final will be announced later. The final is slated for November 10.

The upcoming 53-day edition is by far the longest in the history of the league.

The schedule was expected to be out in the last week of August but the announcement was delayed after 13 personnel of the Chennai Super Kings camp tested positive for the dreaded virus.

Also, due to different quarantine rules in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, IPL's operations team took time to finalise the schedule. As per IPL rules, the defending champions and the last year's runner-up face off in the tournament opener. The same is going to happen this year after concerns over Chennai Super Kings' readiness were erased with their first practice session in Dubai on Friday.

This year's IPL was originally scheduled to be held from March 29 to May 24 but was postponed barely two weeks before the start of the tournament due to the virus outbreak.

— *PTI*



Mumbai Indians players Rohit Sharma (left) and Japrit Bumrah at a practice session in Abu Dhabi on Sunday.

Chahar 'touch and go' for opener

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, SEPT. 6

They may have suffered a series of blows, with a dozen Covid-19 positive cases and player pull-outs, but Chennai Super Kings are not worried about the preparation time, or lack of it. As expected, M.S. Dhoni's team will take on Mumbai Indians in the opening match of IPL-13 to be held in Abu Dhabi on September 19.

Having started their training a week late due to extended quarantine period, Super Kings have the least preparation time going into the high-profile showdown against their arch-rivals.

CSK CEO K.S. Viswanathan, however, said Super Kings are rar-

ing to go. "A great leader on and off the field, Dhoni has navigated the team through a difficult phase. All members are in good shape and in a positive frame of mind. We have had three training sessions so far (including Sunday) and our preparation is on track. We have no worries in playing the opener," said Viswanathan.

Along with a couple of net bowlers, the team's throwdown specialist and analyst are also in quarantine. Viswanathan said the support staff, headed by Stephen Fleming, has ensured that players get adequate training in the run-up to the tournament. "We have enough bench strength. We have another throwdown specialist who is available

● **Viswanathan said the support staff, headed by Stephen Fleming, has ensured that CSK players get adequate training in the run-up to the tournament.**

and part of the nets."

Deepak Chahar, who is Dhoni's No.1 choice in the fast bowling department, and Ruturaj Gaikwad, considered Raina's replacement, will complete their 14-day quarantine on September 11. They will undergo two Covid-19 PCR tests, 24 hours apart. Their return to the bubble is subject to those test results. They must also undergo a car-

diac screening before resuming training.

"We can't predict (when they will return) at this point of time. They have to complete their quarantine period and then undergo a series of tests. It will be touch-and-go," said Viswanathan.

Viswanathan also said the team management hasn't decided on replacements for Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh.

CPL PLAYERS TO LAND ON SEPTEMBER 12

Players who are currently part of the Caribbean Premier League are expected to land in the UAE on September 12. The CPL final is scheduled to be held on September 10. They have to undergo a six-day quarantine upon arrival.

THE RESULTS

Men's singles third round: Matteo Berrettini (ITA x6) bt Casper Ruud (NOR x30) 6-4, 6-4, 6-2; Andrey Rublev (RUS x10) bt Salvatore Caruso (ITA) 6-0, 6-4, 6-0; Frances Tiafoe (USA) bt Marton Fucsovics (HUN) 6-2, 6-3, 6-2; Daniil Medvedev (RUS x3) bt Jeffrey Wolf (USA) 6-3, 6-5, 6-2; Vasek Pospisil (CAN) bt Roberto Bautista (ESP x8) 7-5, 2-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2; Alex De Minaur (AUS x21) bt Karen Khachanov (RUS x11) 6-4, 0-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1; Felix Auger-Aliassime (CAN x15) bt Corentin Moutet (FRA) 6-1, 6-0, 6-4; Dominic Thiem (AUT x2) bt Marin Cilic (CRO x31) 6-2, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Women's singles third round: Alize Cornet (FRA) bt Madison Keys (USA x7) 7-6 (7/4), 3-2 retired; Tsvetana Pironkova (BUL) bt Donna Vekic (CRO x18) 6-4, 6-1; Maria Sakkar (GRE x15) bt Amanda Anisimova (USA x22) 6-3, 6-1; Serena Williams (USA x3) bt Sloane Stephens (USA x26) 2-6, 6-2, 6-2; Victoria Azarenka (BLR) bt Iga Swiatek (POL) 6-4, 6-2; Karolina Muchova (CZE x20) bt Sorana Cirstea (ROU) 6-3, 2-6, 7-6 (9/7); Elise Mertens (BEL x16) bt Caty McNally (USA) 7-5, 6-1.

Serena survives Sloane scare

New York, Sept. 6: Serena Williams battled into the US Open last 16 Saturday.

Williams, chasing a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title, came from a set down to oust 2017 champion Sloane Stephens 2-6, 6-2, 6-2, in what she called an "intense" encounter on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"In that first set I don't think she made any errors, honestly. She was just playing so clean and I just said, 'I don't want to lose in straight sets'," said Williams, who will play 15th seed Maria Sakkari for a place in the quarter-finals.

The Greek player, who stunned Williams at the Western & Southern Open last month, progressed with a 6-3, 6-1 dismantling of America's 22nd seed Amanda Anisimova.

Back on the court on Saturday, Russian third seed Daniil Medvedev, Italy's sixth seed Matteo Berrettini and Andrey Rublev, all entered the last 16 with easy three-set wins.

Second seed Dominic Thiem also progressed to round four, overcoming 2014 champion Marin Cilic 6-2, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

And Canada's 94th-ranked Vasek Pospisil shocked eighth-seeded Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut and Australia's 21st seed

ROHAN IN DOUBLES QUARTERS

New York, Sept. 6: India veteran Rohan Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov stunned sixth seeds Kevin Krawietz and Andreas Mies in a hard-fought three-setter to advance to the quarterfinals of the US Open men's doubles event here. The unseeded Indo-Canadian pair on Saturday overcame a set deficit to beat the German duo 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in a second round encounter that lasted one hour and 47 minutes.

Bopanna and Shapovalov will take on Dutch-Romanian combination of Jeal-Julien Rojer and Horia Tecau in the quarterfinals. — *PTI*

Alex de Minaur upset 11th-seeded Russian Karen Khachanov. In the women's draw, unranked Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova, playing her first tournament in three years, knocked out 18th seed Donna Vekic.

Second seed Sofia Kenin defeated Tunisia's Ons Jabeur 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. — *AFP*



Sofia Kenin of the United States returns to Tunisia's Ons Jabeur in their US Open third round match in New York on Saturday. Kenin won 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. — *AFP*

Fresh controversy hits US Open

New York, Sept. 6: The US Open was plunged into controversy on Saturday after New York health officials ordered the women's top doubles pairing be withdrawn from the tournament due to possible exposure to coronavirus.

Number one seeds Kristina Mladenovic and Timea Babos were yanked from the competition after Mladenovic was instructed to quarantine for coming in contact with Benoit Paire, who tested positive for

Covid-19 last weekend.

"All persons who were identified as having prolonged close contact with the infected player will quarantine in their rooms for the remainder of their quarantine period," the United States Tennis Association said.

"Kristina Mladenovic is one of these individuals, and as the women's doubles competition has begun, the women's doubles team of Mladenovic and Babos has been withdrawn from the

US Open," it added.

The USTA said that local public health issues had issued the quarantine notices, which prevented the players commuting from their hotel to the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center.

The shock intervention came a day after health officials tried to prevent Adrian Mannarino, who had also been in contact with Paire, from playing his last-32 match. — *AFP*

IPL FIXTURES

M	Date	Time	Teams	Venue
1	19-Sept	7.30 pm	MI vs CSK	Abu Dhabi
2	20-Sept	7.30 pm	DC vs KXIP	Dubai
3	21-Sept	7.30 pm	SRH vs RCB	Dubai
4	22-Sept	7.30 pm	RR vs CSK	Sharjah
5	23-Sept	7.30 pm	KKR vs MI	Abu Dhabi
6	24-Sept	7.30 pm	KXIP vs RCB	Dubai
7	25-Sept	7.30 pm	CSK vs DC	Dubai
8	26-Sept	7.30 pm	KKR vs SRH	Abu Dhabi
9	27-Sept	7.30 pm	RR vs KXIP	Sharjah
10	28-Sept	7.30 pm	RCB vs MI	Dubai
11	29-Sept	7.30 pm	DC vs SRH	Abu Dhabi
12	30-Sept	7.30 pm	RR vs KKR	Dubai
13	1-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs MI	Abu Dhabi
14	2-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs SRH	Dubai
15	3-Oct	3.30 pm	RCB vs RR	Abu Dhabi
16	3-Oct	7.30 pm	DC vs KKR	Sharjah
17	4-Oct	3.30 pm	MI vs SRH	Sharjah
18	4-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs CSK	Dubai
19	5-Oct	7.30 pm	RCB vs DC	Dubai
20	6-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs RR	Abu Dhabi
21	7-Oct	7.30 pm	KKR vs CSK	Abu Dhabi
22	8-Oct	7.30 pm	SRH vs KXIP	Dubai
23	9-Oct	7.30 pm	RR vs DC	Sharjah
24	10-Oct	3.30 pm	KXIP vs KKR	Abu Dhabi
25	10-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs RCB	Dubai
26	11-Oct	3.30 pm	SRH vs RR	Dubai
27	11-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs DC	Abu Dhabi
28	12-Oct	7.30 pm	RCB vs KKR	Sharjah
29	13-Oct	7.30 pm	SRH vs CSK	Dubai
30	14-Oct	7.30 pm	DC vs RR	Dubai
31	15-Oct	7.30 pm	RCB vs KXIP	Sharjah
32	16-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs KKR	Abu Dhabi
33	17-Oct	3.30 pm	RR vs RCB	Dubai
34	17-Oct	7.30 pm	DC vs CSK	Sharjah
35	18-Oct	3.30 pm	SRH vs KKR	Abu Dhabi
36	18-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs KXIP	Dubai
37	19-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs RR	Abu Dhabi
38	20-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs DC	Dubai
39	21-Oct	7.30 pm	KKR vs RCB	Abu Dhabi
40	22-Oct	7.30 pm	RR vs SRH	Dubai
41	23-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs MI	Sharjah
42	24-Oct	3.30 pm	KKR vs DC	Abu Dhabi
43	24-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs SRH	Dubai
44	25-Oct	3.30 pm	RCB vs CSK	Dubai
45	25-Oct	7.30 pm	RR vs MI	Abu Dhabi
46	26-Oct	7.30 pm	KKR vs KXIP	Sharjah
47	27-Oct	7.30 pm	SRH vs DC	Dubai
48	28-Oct	7.30 pm	MI vs RCB	Abu Dhabi
49	29-Oct	7.30 pm	CSK vs KKR	Dubai
50	30-Oct	7.30 pm	KXIP vs RR	Abu Dhabi
51	31-Oct	3.30 pm	DC vs MI	Dubai
52	31-Oct	7.30 pm	RCB vs SRH	Sharjah
53	1-Nov	3.30 pm	CSK vs KXIP	Abu Dhabi
54	1-Nov	7.30 pm	KKR vs RR	Dubai
55	2-Nov	7.30 pm	DC vs RCB	Abu Dhabi
56	3-Nov	7.30 pm	SRH vs MI	Sharjah

RCB coach all praise for Kohli

New Delhi, Sept. 6 Basu Shanker, the man responsible for the fitness transformation of the national team, feels India and RCB skipper Virat Kohli has returned from the long break an even fitter athlete after working on "specific physical pointers" that needed attention.

Kohli was stuck in Mumbai for five months due to the coronavirus-enforced lockdown and had his first proper hit in the nets only after his arrival in the UAE for the Indian Premier League, beginning September 19.

However, he ensured during the break that his supreme fitness level was not impacted and, in fact, it helped him skill-wise on his return to action even though he was "scared" to hit the nets.

"He (Kohli) has come back in much better shape. He is at his best weight at the moment and his movement patterns are pretty much in sync with his best

self in the past," former India trainer Basu, who is now the strength and conditioning coach of Royal Challengers Bangalore, said from Dubai.

"He has taken this break as an opportunity to work on all the pointers which needed attention from a physical point. I guess his motto to life is 'Bear the cross and wear the crown'," he added.

He has worked extensively with Kohli, both at RCB and during his time with the Indian team.

Basu said Kohli was able to work on things which an international cricketer finds it difficult to do in a packed calendar.

"He had the time to be very specific with his meal plans and running intervals at home. He did not have much of a choice during the lockdown and he invested on a treadmill and worked on his endurance which is otherwise not possible during a packed calendar," Basu added. — *PTI*

BUTTLER SHINES AS ENG SEAL T20 SERIES

Southampton (United Kingdom), Sept. 6: Jos Buttler made a dashing 77 not out as England beat Australia by six wickets in a series-clinching win in the second Twenty20 international at Southampton on Sunday.

Victory saw England go an unbeatable 2-0 up in a three-match contest.

England, set 158 to win, finished on 158-4 with seven balls to spare. They needed 18 off the last two overs, with Australia having failed to score 19 off two overs in a dramatic two-run defeat in the first game. — *AFP*

Brief scores: Australia 157/7 in 20 overs (A. Finch 40, M. Stoinis 35) lost to England 158/4 in 18.5 overs (J. Buttler 77 n.o., D. Malan 42; Agar 2/27).

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