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COVID-19 C U N T

CASES	DEATHS
(+94,544)	(+1,120)
51,12,428	83,208
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+2,273)	(+12)
TS: 1,62,844	996
(+8,835)	(+64)
AP: 5,92,760	5,105

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,99,13,099
DEATHS
9,42,395
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
213
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Amavasya till 4.27 pm
Star: Purvaphalguni till 9.46 am
Variyam: 4.08 pm to 5.33 pm
Durmuhurtam: 10.10 am to 10.58 pm; 3 pm to 3.48 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm
HJIRI CALENDAR
Muharram 28, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.05 am
Zohar: 12.21 pm
Asar: 4.32 pm
Maghrib: 6.23 pm
Isha: 7.30 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.16 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.04 AM
MOONSET TODAY 6.29 PM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 5.44 AM

COUNTER POINT

Sorry, I don't need your services any more... I have hired this police officer!

IN BRIEF

RTC depot traders get HC breather

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Wednesday came to the relief of traders who did not pay money to TSRTC for running their activity at bus stands or depots. Justice Annireddy Abhishek Reddy directed the RTC authorities to not be hasty in terminating contracts in view of pandemic.

■ Full report on Page 5

Gadkari tests Covid positive

Mumbai: Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said he has tested positive for Covid-19 and requested people who came in his contact recently to follow protocol. His office said the minister is in Nagpur and has slight fever. "Yesterday, I was feeling weak and consulted my Doctor. During the course of my check up, I have been tested positive," he tweeted.

Swachh city can't take heavy rain

Vehicles stand partially submerged in rainwater at Toli Chowki on Wednesday after a sudden downpour swamped Hyderabad and its surrounding areas. Two persons have reportedly died when the wall of a house collapsed in Peerzadiguda area. The weather department forecast rainfall over the next four days in the state.

— R. PAVAN

TS Legislature adjourns after members test +ve

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

The Telangana Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council adjourned sine die on Wednesday owing to fear of the spread of Covid-19, following a few members and staff testing positive.

Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy and council chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy made an announcement in this regard in their Houses respectively. The Speaker said the House was able to pass 12 Bills and adopted resolutions seeking the Bharat Ratna for former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and another against the proposed Electricity Amendment Bill 2020.

Explaining the reasons for the decision to discontinue the present session, the Speaker said "As 1200 people including legislators, police, media and others were attending the monsoon session, there is general apprehension about the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Even though we have taken all precautions and adopted all the norms prescribed by the authorities, the mood of the house at large was that there is a possibility of spread of the pandemic."

The Speaker and Council Chairman announced that that they consulted the floor leaders of all political

Oppn takes govt to task on Covid plan

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

Opposition parties on Wednesday hit out at the Central government over its response to Covid-19 pandemic in a short duration discussion in the Rajya Sabha.

Taking on Union health minister Harsh Vardhan, Deputy Leader of Opposition Anand Sharma questioned the government's claims that the lockdown had prevented up to 29 lakh Covid-19 cases.

He said the people of the country should know if the lockdown really helped in containing the spread of the disease. "The minister said in a statement yesterday that it has been estimated that this decision prevented approximately 14-29 lakh cases and 37,000-78,000 deaths... how have you derived this figure? What

parties before taking the decision. The Speaker said that once the pandemic subsides the House will be able to meet again on some other day to continue discussions.

Legislative affairs minis-

ter the scientific basis, the House must be informed," Mr. Sharma said.

He further added that the day the lockdown was imposed the country had 600 cases which have now increased to 50 lakh cases.

The DMK's Tiruchi Siva alleged that a delayed action by the government in initiating steps to tackle Covid-19 has led to the present situation. "The first case was detected in January and the self-imposed curfew started from March 23," he said.

According to him, the lockdown was delayed for the "gala welcome" of the US President Donald Trump, who was here on a two-day visit on February 24 and 25 this year.

TMC member Derek O' Brian and TRS MP K. Keshava Rao raised the issue of better coordination between states and the Centre.

ter Vemula Prashanth Reddy said the session was cut short in view of the apprehensions about the spread of the virus, though the session was expected to continue till September 28.

DRL will make Russian Covid vaccine for India

Firm to conduct phase 3 trials and seek Indian approvals

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Sputnik V, the Russian vaccine for Covid-19, will be manufactured by Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd in Hyderabad after clearance from regulatory authorities.

If the regulatory authorities in India approve of the vaccine, it can be made available in India by the end of 2020. There will be 100 million doses of the vaccine supplied to India.

G.V. Prasad, co-chairman and managing director of Dr Reddy's Laboratories, said "The phase 1 and 2 results have shown promise and we will be conducting phase 3 trials in India to meet the requirements of Indian regulators."

Sputnik V is based on an adenoviral vector platform and the phase 3 human trials are to be carried out by the country that takes the vaccine from Russia. Different populations in the world react differently to the vaccine. Hence each country will have to take it and experiment on their own.

In phase 1 and 2 trials carried out on primates, Syrian hamsters and transgenic mice, it was found to be 100 per cent protective. The phase 3 trials in Russia were carried out on 76 participants. of which most were men.

In these trials, according to the science journal *Lancet* on September 4, it

Covid-19 fighters, high risk persons to get vaccine first

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT 16

Who will get the Covid-19 vaccine first? This is the question in medical circles as frontline workers insist that they must be the first ones to be provided the vaccine as they are in the highest risk zone.

With the vaccine development to be completed, and there being a possibility of availability soon, it is clear that priority must be given for those who are in high risk zones.

A scramble for the vaccine is anticipated and there will be influential people and also black marketers who will exploit the situation.

Like the injections of Remdesivir, there is also a possibility of the marketing of vaccines at exorbitant prices by private players. VVIPs or affluent people might be able to

has been stated that there is no adverse reaction and the immune response was strong. It was found that the immunoglobulin produced was higher than those who have recovered from Covid-19. Antibody production was high and it

The Centre must set up a Covid-19 vaccine distribution ethical committee, which should distribute the vaccine among the public through proper channels. It must be first given to frontline healthcare professionals.

— SANJAY REDDY
TS Pharmacy Council

procure the vaccine at the earliest which will create problems.

Experts urge that vaccines must be sold on a no-profit-no-loss basis as it is important that everyone must avail it.

According to sources, there is a lot of hope on indigenous vaccine development. There are nine vaccine candidates in late stages of trials according to the World Health Organisation and one candidate is going to be successful.

Sanjay Reddy, member

continued to be even after 14 days. The data states that it peaked in 28 days after the vaccine was given.

However, scientists have also pointed out errors in the data and state that it requires more accurate

of Telangana state pharmacy council and pharmacologist, said, "The Centre must set up a Covid-19 vaccine distribution ethical committee, which should distribute the vaccine among the public through proper channels. It must be first given to frontline healthcare professionals. The vaccine must also be prioritised for those rural and urban areas where the infection rate is high."

In the initial phases, there is bound to be scarcity of vaccines as access to crores of people is not possible. Dr Sudhir Kumar, senior consultant neurologist at institute of neurosciences, Apollo hospitals said, "We have to ensure that the most vulnerable and high risk groups get access to vaccines first. Frontline workers and immune compromised patients and the elderly must get it first."

assessment. The immune response is not directly proportional to the degree of protection. There is a need for more human trials on different populations before it is decided whether or not it will suit them.

JUDGMENT IN BABRI CASE ON SEPT. 30

Lucknow, Sept. 16: A special court here will deliver judgment on September 30 in the Babri Masjid demolition case, ruling whether BJP veterans like L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi were involved in razing the mosque in 1992.

Judge S.K. Yadav on Wednesday directed all 32 accused to remain present in the court on the day of the judgment. The accused include former deputy prime minister Advani, former Union ministers Joshi and Uma Bharti, former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh, Vinay Katiyar and Sadhvi Rithambhara.

The CBI court was working against the month-end deadline set by the Supreme Court for the verdict.

The final arguments by the defence and the prosecution were heard by September 1, and then the judge began writing the verdict. Some of the final submissions by the accused were made through video conferencing.

Issuing the order on Wednesday, the judge said the verdict will be pronounced on September 30 and asked all accused to be present in court.

The Central Bureau of Investigation, which investigated the case, has produced 351 witnesses and about 600 documents as evidence before the court. Charges were framed against 48 people, but 16 died during the course of the trial.

— PTI

POLLUTION | CHECK

Monitoring stations claim air quality has never been so clean in the city

Regular rains improve air quality in city

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

The recent spells of rains, some heavy, such as the one the city experienced on Wednesday evening well into the night, created many problems on the ground in terms of flooding in several parts of the city and chaos on city roads, but they also washed the city's air clean.

The air quality of the city which was earlier a blazing flash of red on the air quality index (AQI), has now become nothing more than a string of green

boxes, indicating that the quality of air in the city has improved immensely.

Whether on the national air quality monitoring stations or the state air quality monitoring stations, the city's air has never been better. This, experts say, is due to the bouts of rain that the city has been receiving.

On Wednesday evening, certain pockets of the city like Jubilee Hills, Rajendranagar and Falaknuma experienced the highest rainfall (till 7.30 pm), 109 mm, 104.3 mm, and 99.3 mm respectively.

RAIN FILTERS

● **AIR QUALITY** of the city, which used to worst earlier, has improved immensely. Experts give credit for rain that the city has been receiving.

As explained by environmental scientists from the Telangana State Pollution Control Board (TSPCB), whenever a raindrop falls through the atmosphere, it attracts tiny aerosol parti-

● **EXPERTS CLAIM** whenever a raindrop falls through the atmosphere, it attracts tiny aerosol particles to its surface before hitting the ground, in the process cleaning the air.

cles to its surface before hitting the ground. The process by which droplets and aerosols attract is coagulation, a natural phenomenon that can act to clear the air of pollutants

like sulphates, and organic particles, along with dust.

"The air-quality always improves during the monsoon season. During this time, the pollutants are attached to the raindrops," Prasad Dasari, senior scientist with the state pollution board told *Deccan Chronicle*.

"There are two types of precipitation — dry and wet. While in dry precipitation, the pollutants stick to buildings, trees or other such things, during wet precipitation, the pollutants stick to the water droplets. Since they cover a

larger area than buildings or trees, the quantum of pollutants is lower," he adds.

During the summer month of May this year, particulate matter 10 microns (PM10) was measured to 74 ug/m3 at the university of Hyderabad. Similarly, at the Nehru zoological park, Pashamylaram, Bolarum, and ICRISAT, the levels were 91, 87, 86, and 76 respectively.

However, in August the pollution levels had dropped to 31, 31, 26 28, and, 22 respectively.

SHORT TAKES

VISHWAKARMA
JAYANTI FETE TO
BE HELD TODAYDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Vishwakarma Jayanti will be celebrated on Thursday as a tribute to Lord Vishwakarma, the divine architect, according to Rithambra, a registered trust which said it was organising an online event as part of the celebrations.

The event, according to the organisation, “is a day to remember and cherish the professional arts, skills and its practitioners who design and shape our world”. This annual event introduces, acknowledges, marvels and felicitates great craftsmen and artists carrying this ancient Indian wisdom, according to the organisation.

The online event scheduled to begin at 9 am on Thursday, will include talks on temple restoration, Vishwakarma tradition, and interviews with sculptors. More information on the event can be found at <https://ritambhara.org.in/vis-hwakarma-jayanti/>.

BRAOU DEGREE
EXAMS FROM
ON OCTOBER 5DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Dr B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU) on Wednesday announced its schedule of examinations to be held in the months of October and November. The exams will start on October 5 with UG (CBCS) sixth semester examinations and go on till November 17.

According to a BRAOU communication, UG (CBCS) 6th semester examinations will be held from October 5 to October 10, 5th semester exams from October 11 to 16 and 1st semester exams from November 7 to 17. Degree 3rd year exams for old batches will be from October 18 to 23, 2nd year exams from October 27 to November 2, and 1st year exams from November 4 to 7.

Timings of these examinations will be from 2 pm to 5 pm. Students have been advised to visit the university portal www.braouonline.in for detailed time table. They can get further details from BRAOU study centres or call help desk numbers 7382929570/580/590/600.

ABVP WANTS
EXAMS UNDER
UGC GUIDELINESDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

The state unit of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) has submitted a memorandum to Telangana State Council of Higher Education chairman Prof. Papi Reddy demanding that all UGC guidelines be followed for conducting exams in the state. The memorandum comes in the wake of safety guidelines being allegedly violated recently while holding the exams.

The parishad pointed out that it will be impossible for 2,50,000 students hailing from rural areas to write their exams in the absence of proper transport and accommodation facilities.

PROPERTY TAX
PAYMENT LAST
DATE EXTENDEDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

The state government on Wednesday extended the last date for payment of reduced property tax dues, by 90 per cent, in the all urban local bodies' limits to October 31. The government had earlier announced that it would waive 90 per cent of property tax dues provided the property owner clears the principal amount of tax dues for the year 2019-20 along with 10 per cent of interest on the accumulated arrears at one go in all urban local bodies including the GHMC.

The decision to extend the deadline for the reduced tax payment scheme was taken following a request from Commissioner, GHMC who requested that the One Time Scheme be extended for another 45 days as it will benefit tax payers. The extension, according to the orders issued on Wednesday, will also provide time to the deputy and zonal commissioners to settle issues and improve revenues as well as streamline records of arrears.

Heavy rains claim 2 lives

10.9 cm rain inundates several parts of city, disrupts power supply

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

A sudden and ferocious downpour on Wednesday evening swamped Hyderabad city and its surrounding areas causing havoc and resulting in at least two deaths amidst reports of flooded roads, vehicles being carried away by rainfed, sudden floods that turned the city's roads into fast-moving rivers, and utter chaos on many of the main city road junctions with traffic either coming to a grinding halt or moving at a pace slower than that of a snail.

Two persons were killed when a wall of a house collapsed on them under the Medipally police station limits in Peerzadiguda municipality, just outside the Hyderabad city limits.

During the first three hours of Wednesday evening's downpour, several areas of the city received upwards of 10 cms of rain, officials at the Indian meteorological department (IMD) here said.

The weather on Wednesday witnessed thunder and lightning that accompanied the at times spells of very heavy rain, could be expected to continue over the next four days over much of the state, the IMD has warned.

“The city received an extremely intense spell of rainfall. This was due to an upper-air cyclonic circulation over the state. This is expected to bring rains for the next 48 hours, while the intensity might not be the same, we predict that there would rain,” K. Naga Ratna, director, IMD, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

As of 9 pm, the highest rainfall was recorded in Falaknuma at Chandulal Baradari, followed by Shaikpet, RDO Office Attapur and Film Nagar. These areas received 109.8 mm, 109.8 mm, 105 mm and, 97.5 mm of rainfall respectively. The highest rainfall in the state of 129 mm was registered at Satwar in Zaheerabad mandal.

The rains on Wednesday resulted in disruption of power supply in several areas and officials of the Telangana state southern power distribution company limited (TSSPDCL) said that they formed an



Motorists waded through flooded waters at VST crossroads on Wednesday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE



A man on a motorcycle rides through a flooded street at Bagh Lingampally on Wednesday.

— GANDHI

emergency team to tend to all issues pertaining to power supply.

“People should be vigilant about power poles, transformers and wires. If wires are cut on roads or buildings anywhere, the company should be notified immediately,”

said TSSPDCL chairman and managing director, G. Raghuma Reddy.

In case of voltage fluctuations or power outages, complaints can be made to the special control room on 7382072104, 7382072106,

7382072106, 7382071574 along with 1912, 100 or local fuse off call office, he said.

Similarly, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) received a total of 95 rain-related complaints, which

included water-logging, building or wall collapse, tree fall, potholes and dilapidated building collapses.

The highest number of complaints were those pertaining to waterlogging at 52.

Inter admissions
schedule outHARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) on Wednesday announced the schedule for admissions to academic year 2020-21. According to it, issue of application forms for first phase of admissions has started from Wednesday and will go on till September 30. The schedule for the second phase of admissions will be announced at a later date.

Admissions will be on the basis of Grade Point Average (GPA) and subject-wise grade point (GP). There will be no additional admission test. Candidates who want to seek admission on condonation of gap period have to obtain a local candidate / residential certificate

● **ADMISSIONS WILL be on the basis of Grade Point Average (GPA) and subject-wise grade point (GP).**

cate for the gap period from the local Tehsildar. TSBIE has informed students and parents that admissions must be taken only in affiliated colleges, whose list is available on the official website of the board.

The warning comes in view of complaints against several private junior colleges about violation of fire safety guidelines.

The board has suggested that even though there is uncertainty about operation of such colleges, there will not be a shortage of seats available during this year.

Govt unveils ₹140 crore
Ambedkar statue projectDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Nearly four-and-a-half years after the state government announced that it would install a 125-foot Dr B.R. Ambedkar statue in Hyderabad, the design of the statue and the associated Ambedkar memorial were unveiled here on Wednesday.

Images of the proposed statue project were released by ministers Etala Rajendar, Koppula Easwar, Satyavathi Rathod, government whip Guvvala Balaraju, Rega Kantha Rao, S. Ravishankar, at a press meet in the Legislative Assembly complex.

Easwar said the government has issued orders for the ₹140 crore statue project that will be spread over 11 acres next to



The Ambedkar statue and memorial will be spread over 11 acres next to Hussainsagar.

Hussainsagar. The Ambedkar Park, he said, will also have a museum and a library.

The statue that will stand 125-foot tall, will be 45.5-feet wide and will use

791 tonnes of steel and 96 tonnes of brass, he added.

Minister Rajendar released the mock ups of the Ambedkar Park and the designs for the statue.

Gudur: Book
TRS leader for
assaulting girlDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee treasurer Gudur Narayana Reddy demanded stern action against TRS corporator from Serilingampally, Ragam Nagender Yadav who allegedly assaulted a young girl in Lingampalli.

Narayana Reddy, in a statement on Wednesday, said that Nagender Yadav assaulted the girl, Ananya Kurikala, when she objected to the corporator parking his vehicle in an incorrect manner. “It is clearly evident from the video, which has gone viral on social media, that the TRS corporator used offensive language and threatened her using his official position. He even

● **THE SENIOR** Congress leader demanded that DGP P. Mahender Reddy take stern action against Nagender Yadav.

assaulted her in full public view. This is nothing but utter misuse of power and wrong display of arrogance. He openly intimidated a young girl of dire consequences with criminal intent just because she opposed a wrong-doing by the ruling party corporator,” Narayana Reddy said.

The Congress leader demanded that DGP P. Mahender Reddy take stern action against Nagender Yadav, and charged the local police with reportedly presuring the girl and her family to ‘compromise’ with the TRS corporator.

12 more Covid
deaths in stateBALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Covid-19 deaths in Telangana neared the 1,000 mark with the state government on Wednesday announcing that 12 more persons had succumbed to coronavirus taking the toll to 996. The 2,273 new positive cases that have been registered have taken the overall total to 1,62,844.

Meanwhile, the government, in its Wednesday morning's Covid-19 bulletin for the 24-hour period between Monday and Tuesday evenings, said it added 253 beds in its hospitals designated as Covid-19 treatment centres in the state. This takes the total beds available in 42 Covid-19 government hospitals to 8,345.

However, simultaneously, the government appeared to have approved 10 more private hospitals to provide treatment to Covid-19 patients. The number of such private hospitals now stands at 214 and the bed strength rose by 555 to touch 11,288.

The state has 30,401 active cases. A total of 55,636 samples were collected for testing during the same period and results were awaited for 883 samples. Men continue to vastly outnumber women with 1,00,686 or 61.83 per cent of cases while 62,158 women have tested positive till date.

Fresh cases in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area were 325, the highest for any geographical area in the state. Ranga Reddy district saw 185 new cases, followed by Nalgonda with 175, Medchal-Malkajigiri 164, Karimnagar 122, and Warangal Urban 144 fresh

COP TESTS +VE
AFTER B'DAY
BASH, SUSPENDEDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

The Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat on Wednesday suspended a police constable from the Keesara police station who organised his birthday party in violation of instructions, and was later found to have contracted Covid-19.

The constable, identified as Shiva Kumar, at his birthday party, invited his colleagues and friends at the event held at the guest of the Tourism Department at Keesaragutta on Tuesday. He and two others who attended the party later tested positive for Covid-19, according to the Rachakonda police chief.

A charge memo was also issued to other police officers from Keesara police station as well as the Keesara inspector of police J. Narendar Goud following the party.

● **THE STATE** has 30,401 active cases. A total of 55,636 samples were collected for testing during the same period and results were awaited for 883 samples. Men continue to vastly outnumber women with 1,00,686 or 61.83 per cent of cases while 62,158 women have tested positive till date.

Coronavirus infections. Khammam district recorded 97 new cases, while Nizamabad and Siddipet districts recorded 91 new cases each.

Sravani death case:
Ashok surrendersSANJAY SAMUEL PAUL
| DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

The absconding accused in the police case relating to television actress Sravani Kondapalli's death by suicide, film producer Ashok Reddy, on Wednesday gave himself up to the assistant commissioner of police, Panjagutta. And after a medical examination at Osmania General Hospital, Reddy was grilled by the police for hours.

There have also been several questions as to how the status of Ashok Reddy, first listed as A1, or Accused No. 1 in the case, was changed to A3 in the chargesheet.

It may be recalled that 26-year-old Kondapalli died by suicide on the night of September 8 at her residence. On a complaint lodged by her mother, the police launched an investigation, with suspicions on

the roles that three of her friends, Devraj Reddy, Sai Krishna Reddy and producer of the movie RX100, Ashok Reddy, were involved with her and had caused her to take her own life.

While Devaraj Reddy, and Sai Krishna Reddy were picked up by the police and taken into custody, Ashok Reddy was absconding and his mobile phone was switched off.

According to the police, Kondapalli came into contact with Ashok Reddy in 2017 and then went on to play a role in one of his films. Subsequently, they had developed a close relationship. The police also discovered during their investigations that Kondapalli had in the past used Ashok Reddy's credit card for shopping.

The police also said that each of the three men had at one point of time or other promised to marry her but reneged on their promises.

INFRA | WORKS Sewerage network in peripheral municipalities to be developed

Will expedite Old City growth: KTR

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Municipal administration and urban development minister K. T. Rama Rao on Wednesday assured in the Legislative Assembly that he will convene a meeting of MLAs from Hyderabad Parliamentary constituency in a couple of days to discuss and chalk out an action plan for expediting development works in the Old City.

He further assured AIMIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi that he would convene a meeting with L&T to devise a

strategy for extending Hyderabad Metro Rail to the Old City.

Replying to various issues raised by members during a short discussion on civic works and other infrastructure facilities in GHMC and other municipalities in the state, the minister said ₹2,020 crore is being spent for infrastructure development under the Strategic Road Development Project (SRDP) in Old City ₹4,030 crore expenditure is being incurred on storm water drainage construction and expansion.

Stating that 105 of 172

MGD of water being drawn from Krishna River is being supplied to the Old City, he announced that the government is considering another proposal to draw about 20 tmc from the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme via Sunkesula reservoir,

besides exploring plans to integrate Godavari and Krishna drinking water supply systems for providing drinking water to peripheral areas of the twin cities. The minister said tenders have been finalised and work will commence for construction of a multi-storeyed

parking lot at Khilwath at a cost of ₹50 crore.

Following a request from MIM MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi to develop Gandipet, he said Chief Minister

K. Chandrashekar Rao is keen on linking Gandipet with Musi and Himayatsagar to supply water from Kaleshwaram project and ensure adequate water for both drinking water and irrigation purposes.

He said the state government is planning to develop a sewerage network in peripheral municipalities on the lines of drinking

water network. The government has engaged Shah Consultants and they have already submitted a report in this regard. These works will be implemented in three phases with the project cost being estimated at ₹3,700 crore.

He said the state government is planning to increase the capacity of its Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) by about 1,200 MGD from current 800 MGD as part of Musi Riverfront Development Project for catering to the growing needs of peripheral areas of the twin cities.



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SHORT TAKES

BANDI SLAMS TRS FOR OPPOSING POWER REFORMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Wednesday slammed Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao for opposing Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's proposal on power reforms even before it was introduced in Parliament.

Addressing a press teleconference from New Delhi, Sanjay Kumar criticised Chandrashekar Rao for saying that state power distribution companies were facing severe financial crisis as the government did not pay the arrears which were pending since long.

He pointed out that the Centre has sanctioned ₹9,000 crore from which the state has paid arrears to Discoms to some extent. Without having proper knowledge of the Central power reforms, the Chief Minister was making false allegations against the Modi government, he added.

CLP FAULTS TRS OVER SHORT CUTTING SESSION

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Congress Legislature party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Congress MLAs on Wednesday charged the ruling TRS with running away by cutting short the ongoing monsoon session fearing the Opposition.

Vikramarka said that the TRS had convened the session only to pass the FRBM Bill which will facilitate the state government for more borrowings.

He questioned as to why the state government did not taken up the discussion on Krishna and Godavari water disputes between AP and Telangana, agriculture and crop losses and unemployment.

Former minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir also strongly condemned the abrupt end to monsoon session of the Legislative Assembly.

In a statement he said, "Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is ridiculing the democratic institutions like the Legislative Assembly by reducing its functioning to a formality. It seems that the state government had convened the session only to pass 12 Bills and facilitate Chandrashekar Rao make a bunch of new promises and unveil a bundle of lies."

VIDYARTHI JANA SAMITI STAGE PADAYATRA

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, SEPT. 16

Telangana Vidyarthi Jana Samithi, the students' wing of Telangana Jana Samithi Party, staged a padayatra - Brathuku Theruvu Sadhana Yatra - in Khammam town on Wednesday to highlight the rising unemployment in the state.

Accusing the KCR government of not filling vacant posts in government jobs, the activists protested by selling tea at stalls, pushing carts, selling fruits and dispensing fuel at petrol bunk.

"KCR himself is advocating that we graze sheep and cattle, and sell fish. He has made no effort to provide us jobs in the government though there are 2.86 lakh vacant posts at present," Vidyarthi Jana Samithi leader Ramesh said.

He pointed out that while finance minister T. Harish Rao has said that one lakh posts have been filled, TPPSC chairman Ghanta Chakrapani has put this figure at 37,000. "Whose figure is correct," Ramesh asked.

He pointed out that lakhs of youth have lost their jobs due to Covid-19 and lockdown. Hundreds of them have committed suicides.

AICC incharge: Cong aim is to defeat TRS

Tagore exhorts party men to focus on 2023 elections

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

New AICC in-charge of Telangana Manickam Tagore exhorted TPCC leaders and cadres that the sole aim of Congress party should be to defeat KCR regime and win assembly elections in 2023.

In his maiden interaction with party representatives through video conferencing on Wednesday, Manickam Tagore said it was unfortunate that Congress could not win in Telangana, for forming which Congress president Sonia Gandhi sacrificed another state (Andhra Pradesh). He pointed out that united AP had a major share in the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha.

The new AICC in-charge advised Congress leaders and work-



Manickam Tagore

ers to evolve a winning combination in Telangana politics. "We have Sachins and Dhonis in our team. But we need to act as a team with discipline and mutual understanding. Our only target should be 2023 assembly elections." Stating that Congress would focus on strengthening its organisational network in Telangana, he underlined that the party would be tough on ensuring discipline and having zero-tolerance

towards indiscipline.

Manickam Tagore made it clear: "We will win the next elections in a unified and disciplined manner." He said he would again visit Hyderabad in the first week of October after getting a brief from AICC president Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi once they return from their foreign visit.

TPCC president Uttam Kumar Reddy, welcoming the new AICC in-charge, assured him full support on behalf of the entire TPCC.

Introducing TPCC leaders to Manickam Tagore, he pointed out that the main focus of day's meeting was membership drive, Dubbaka by-poll, elections to Hyderabad, Warangal and Khammam municipal corporations and MLC election from Nalgonda, Warangal

and Khammam graduate constituency.

Senior leaders, including CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, MPs A. Revanth Reddy and Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy, MLAs Sridhar Babu, Jagga Reddy and Seethakka, MLC T. Jeevan Reddy and members of TPCC core committee participated in the meeting.

All TS leaders who participated in the meeting hoped Manickam Tagore would bring a lot of positive energy into the party's organisation, as he had the experience of working with NSUI and Youth Congress before getting elected as Member of Parliament.

The new AICC in-charge advised leaders to frequently meet among themselves to boost trust factor and inculcate team spirit.

Protest over pay



Private school teachers being taken away from the Assembly premises during the ongoing monsoon session on Wednesday in Hyderabad as they were not paid for six months. They demanded the state to take action against the management for not paying their salaries. Many were arrested.

— GANDHI

KTR announces LRS fee to be collected based on land value

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

IT and municipal administration minister K. T. Rama Rao has announced in Assembly that under Land Regularisation Scheme (LRS), state government will collect fee based on value of the land at the time it is registered by the applicant, rather than current registration price for regularisation of plots. Orders in this regard will be issued by Thursday.

The state government recently issued notification for implementing LRS as one last time measure in all urban and rural areas of the state so as to put an end to unauthorised layouts in the state. It said only layouts and plots with registered sale deed / title deed existing as on August 26 this year will be considered for regularisation on payment of prescribed charges.

Applicants were asked to pay a registration fee of ₹1,000 in case of individuals and ₹10,000 in case of layout developers.

According to LRS notification, applicants should pay basic regularisation charges at the rate of ₹200 per sq metre for plot less than 100 sq metres, ₹400 per sq

metre for plot area between 101-300 sq metres, ₹600 per sq metre for plot area from 301-500 sq metres, and ₹750 per sq metre for plots above 500 sq metres.

Individuals and layout developers have to also pay regularisation charges amounting to 25 per cent of market value of lands valued up to ₹3,000 per sq yard, 50 per cent of market value of lands valued from ₹3,001 to ₹5,000 per sq yard, 75 per cent of market value of lands valued from ₹5,001 to ₹10,000 per sq yard, and 100 per cent of market value of lands valued more than ₹10,000 per sq yard. After getting approval under LRS, applicants should pay all stipulated charges before January 31, 2021.

The issue of LRS charges was raised by MIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi, CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka and TRS whip D. Pranay Bhaskar during a short discussion on civic works and other infrastructure facilities in GHMC and its surrounding areas as well as other municipalities.

They told the state government that fixing a fee based on current registration value of the plot will cause a huge burden on people.

₹67,000 cr to boost Hyd infra

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister K. T. Rama Rao on Wednesday said that considering the growing importance of Hyderabad and its crucial role in the state's economy, the state government has initiated a number of schemes and capital projects for upkeep of existing infrastructure and also to create new infrastructure.

Making a statement during a short discussion on 'Civic works and other infrastructure facilities in GHMC, its surrounding areas and also other municipalities' in the Assembly, he said that the government spent ₹67,000 crore for infrastructure development in areas under Greater Hyderabad since the formation of Telangana.

Further, about ₹78 crore are being released for Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

(GHMC) every month and an equal amount for the rest of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the state, he said.

Rama Rao said "ever since the formation of the state in 2014, Telangana has been one of the fastest growing states in terms of urbanization in the country. At 42.6%, Telangana's urban population is well above the national average of 31.2%."

He explained that "in order to provide better citizen services to urban citizens, a number of legislative and administrative reforms have been undertaken by the government in the last six years. Because of growing urbanization and urban features, a total of 74 new municipalities and seven municipal corporations were formed in the last three years thus taking the total number of municipalities to 142. Additionally, 173 gram panchayats were merged with existing ULBs."

Uttam seeks direct railway line from Hyd-Vijayawada

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

TPCC president and Nalgonda MP N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Wednesday urged the Centre to build a direct railway line between Hyderabad and Vijayawada via Chityal, Narketpalli, Nakrekal, Suryapet and Kodad.

While making a written submission under Rule 377 in the Lok Sabha, the MP informed the Centre that the erstwhile State of Andhra Pradesh was divided into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in 2014.

He brought to the notice of the House that "Hyderabad and Vijayawada are the principal cities in these two states and they are connect-

● **TPCC PRESIDENT** Uttam pointed out that a superfast train like a Shatabdi or even a bullet train from Hyderabad to Vijayawada on a direct line would reduce the travel time to less than two hours.

ed, presently, by a circuitous railway line and the journey takes over six hours. If a straight railway line is laid between Hyderabad and Vijayawada, the journey time can be reduced to less than two hours. The economies of both states would receive a huge boost."

The Congress member said that NH-65 between

Hyderabad and Vijayawada has land adjacent to it, which was acquired earlier. This can be used to construct the new railway line from Hyderabad to Vijayawada. He said connecting Jaggaiahpet and Chityal will be adequate for the purpose of increasing connectivity between these cities.

He pointed out that a superfast train like a Shatabdi or even a bullet train from Hyderabad to Vijayawada on a direct line would reduce the travel time to less than two hours.

He told the House that this would definitely boost the economy and traffic between the states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and benefit the country's economy.

AKBAR DEMANDS ₹10,000 CRORE TO DEVELOP OLD CITY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

AIMIM floor leader in the state assembly, Akbaruddin Owaisi, demanded that the state government allocate ₹10,000 crore for the development of the old city on par with the new city.

While taking part in the short discussion 'Civic works and other infrastructure facilities in GHMC, its surrounding areas and also other municipalities,' he said no one was looking at the pain and agony of the 400-year-old city of Hyderabad as it is deprived of development on all fronts.

Stating that it was he who fought for the metro-rail project for Hyderabad, he said during the erstwhile AP government rule, he and former minister, late P. Janardhan Reddy, also fought on the issue of Krishna and Godavari river waters being brought to the residents of the city. Though Krishna and Godavari waters came to the city with his fight, the old city is reeling under acute drinking water problems, he added.

While raising the issue of drinking water, Owaisi reminded the house that he, once again along with P. Janardhan Reddy, also fought on the issue of Krishna and Godavari river waters being brought to the residents of the city. Though Krishna and Godavari waters came to the city with his fight, the old city is reeling under acute drinking water problems, he added.

2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY
I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die - John 11:25

Mrs. Sosamma Thankachan
(DOB : 28-11-1954 DOD : 17-09-2018)
You will remain in our hearts forever.
Inserted by - C. Thankachan (Husband) and Family Members

2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY
"Blessed Are the Dead who Die in the Lord From nowon" Rev 14:13

EDWARD EMANUEL SANGEETA EMANUEL
DOD: 17.09.2018 DOD: 28.07.2012
APSRCT

"There is only one happiness in this life, to love and be loved."
For you were an example of what True Love is! Hence we shall Love you forever
LOVE YOU
Ph.: 9985157090, 8886552917

OBITUARY

Smt. L.R. CHANDRAKALA
DOB: 12.10.1944 DOD: 09.09.2020
10th Day Ceremony will be performed on 18.09.2020
Deeply Mourned by
L.R. Bhaskar (Husband)
Sons & Daughter-in-Laws
9502268380, 9515272752

OBITUARY

Smt. T. RAMUNAJAMMAL
W/o Late G.S. Thambu Swamy
Expired on: 16th September 2020
Funeral on: 17th September 2020, Thursday
Address: 5-12-626, Indra Nagar Colony
Yapral, JJNC Post, Secunderabad.
Inserted by: Sons and Family:
Raman, Laxman, T. Suresh Kumar
Daughters and family - Kasturi Bai,
Dayanandini Devi
Ph: 78936 31218

SAD DEMISE

We are saddened to announce the passing away of
Shri BHAMARLAL HIRALAL OZA
Husband of Smt. Aruna Oza
Father of Kirri, Atul and Archana
Grand Father of Tanushree, Megha,
Nashi, Kanchi, Dhruv, Anirudha, Mehak
He left us for heavenly abode on 16-09-2020

OBITUARY

Shri YOGESH AGARWAL
You are always in our Hearts & Thoughts.
LOVE YOU
Team : PAIGAH BRIGADE

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Smt. B. KASTURI
(22.03.1947 - 17.09.2018)
You left us with loving memories which we cherish forever. You are always in our hearts and we love you so very much.
We miss you every day.
Deeply Loved & missed by
Family, Friends & Relatives
Ph: 9849110435, 7702858520
(B/2021/D00060)

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Meka Rama Koteswar Rao Garu
D.O.B.: 23.03.1929 D.O.D.: 28.10.2019
Your life was a blessing, your memories a treasure. You are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure.
Inserted by:
Son: Meka Sri Krishna, Cell: 9866007888
Daughter: Gavara Padmaja
Cell: 9866729793

SHRADDHANJALI

VUPPALA AMARNATH
Selfless Leader
Ex. Corporator Maharajgunj
DOD: 15th Sept. 2020
"May his soul merge in the Lotus Feet of Supreme God Krishna"
Grieving Brother-in-law
Molugu V. Sreenivasulu
(CA-3421)

Fond Remembrance 3rd Anniversary

Thakur Premraj Singh
3 years have gone by and we still miss you everyday
Wife, Sons and Family

IN LOVING MEMORY

Sri TOTTEMPUDI NAGESWARA RAO
BORN: 17-09-1942 DIED: 19-09-1989
From: Rohini, Srinjith, Salathil, Sujanthi, Padmalatha, Kavita, Soumya, Abhidya, Aihitya, Adhishthan, Hardik, Bhavethi
(A/2021/D00017)

3rd ANNIVERSARY
In Loving Memory of my FATHER

V. BHASKARAN NAIR
DOD: 17.09.2017
Inserted by:
Wife: M.V. Vijayamma
Daughter & SIL - Asha, Anil Kumar
Son & DIL - Anish Nair, Saranya
Grand Children - Bharadwaj, Teja & Sabarish - Near & Dear
(S/2021/D00587)

6th ANNIVERSARY

LATE SRI SHYAMRAO AMBATI
DOB: 24-12-1955 DOD: 17-09-2014
Some one special can never be forgotten
Inserted by:
MAK, MUKHEED AND E. RAMESH, ADVOCATES

74th BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

Ch. JOHN WESLEY
MRO, Machareddy
DOB: 17-09-1946 DOD: 23-01-1999
You are loved by all, We miss you Dad.
Inserted by - Wife - Urmila
David, Sheela, Franklin, Preethi, Solomon, Dolly
Grandsons: Nathan, Ian, Evan, Jayden
Ph: 8212787934

Bro. Bakht Singh
Founder & Mentor of Hicron Fellowship
Life | Legacy | Inspiration | Impact
Inserted by:
E. Prasada Rao & Family, BHEL

Bhatti asks TRS to name its contribution

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

The remarks of Congress legislature party leader, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, over the development of Greater Hyderabad created an uproar in the assembly on Wednesday.

While participating in a short discussion on 'Civic works and other infrastructure facilities in GHMC, its surrounding areas and also other municipalities,' Vikramarka alleged that the rul-

ing TRS has made huge statements and announcements on the development of Greater Hyderabad but nothing has been done so far in its six and a half years of rule.

Enlisting the various public sector undertakings and academic institutions in Hyderabad including BHEL, DRDL, ECIL, DRDO, IIT, IIT and NIFT, he said that all these premier institutions were established during the Congress regime. Questioning the ruling

TRS party members to name one such institution they have set up in their rule so far, Vikramarka said that only such institutions will give scope for job and employment opportunities to aspirants and with the institutions and industries established and the ancillaries that have come up, have given ample scope and opportunity to the people to look at Hyderabad.

Claiming that it is the Congress which had brought the Krishna,

Godavari and Manjeera waters to Hyderabad city and several housing colonies including KPHB, Bagh Lingampally, Vanasthalipuram have developed under Congress rule, Vikramarka added that Congress government also provided house sites to journalists in the city.

He also accused the ruling party of insulting Dr. B. R. Ambedkar by dumping the statue of Ambedkar in a garbage van.

Several unemployed peo-

ple are making a hue and cry for the notification to fill up Group I and Group II vacancies, said Vikramarka.

The ruling party members took strong exception to Vikramarka's remarks and shouted at him for making false claims. Refuting his remarks, municipal and urban development minister, K.T. Rama Rao, asked that if the TRS did nothing why the people of the state and the city gave consecutive victories to them in elections.

SHORT TAKES

TWO HELD FOR
DAMAGING
LEADER'S CARSANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Police on Wednesday arrested two persons for damaging an Innova car belonging to CPI state secretary Chada Venkat Reddy while it was parked on Sunday at Makdood Bhavan, the party's office in Himayathnagar.

The arrested are Praveen Prasad Shukla, 28, resident of Chatrinaka in old city, and a juvenile. An enraged Shukla, along with the juvenile, had reached Makdood Bhavan on Sunday to damage the car of his friend, who is the son of an office bearer of CPI party. Shukla had developed some differences with his friend.

Assuming that the Innova Car parked at the CPI office premises belonged to his friend, he damaged it and left. Following his arrest, Shukla confessed he is not associated with any political party and he had no malice against the CPI leader.

Narayanguda SHO P. Ramesh Kumar said Shukla had earlier been admitted to Ashaiyothi Hospital in Shamshabad for five months owing to mental instability.

CITY COPS
ARREST TWO
UNDER PD ACTDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

The city police on Wednesday arrested two persons, one, an 18-year-old, and another, a 28-year-old, both history-sheeters. Both have been detained under the PD Act, the police said.

In the first instance, the Chandrayanagutta police arrested 18-year-old Syed Abdullah, a resident of Phoolbagh area. A two-wheeler mechanic by profession, Abdullah was previously involved in two cases of attempt to murder, one case of extortion and one involving causing grievous injuries to another person, the police said.

The second arrest was that of Mohd Salman, for his involvement in bodily offences, crimes against women, and public servants as well as in some property offences, the police said.

A resident of Miralam Mandi area, Salman was invoked in 10 cases registered by the police, of which eight were in the Mirchowk police station limits.

The police said Salman was a habitual offender and used to carry with him arms and his actions were "beyond the control of ordinary law" and that it was "necessary to keep him under detention, preventing him from involving subversive activities affecting the community."

AP NEARING
6-LAKH MARK IN
CORONA CASESSAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 16

Andhra Pradesh will shortly touch the six-lakh mark of cumulative Covid-19 positive cases, which reached 5,92,760 with addition of 8,835 new cases during the last 24 hours.

The bulletin issued by state health authorities here on Wednesday reported that out of 75,013 samples tested, 8,835 individuals have tested Coronavirus positive.

In addition, 64 additional Covid-19 deaths have been reported during the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 5,105.

So far, 48,06,879 samples have been tested for Covid-19. Of them, 4,97,376 patients have been discharged after recovery while 90,279 patients are undergoing treatment in various designated Coronavirus hospitals across the state.

Shopkeepers on RTC
premises get HC relief

Don't be hasty in terminating licences, HC tells officials

VUJINI
VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

The Telangana High Court has come to the rescue of the hundreds of lessees and license holders being permitted to the run commercial trades in the premises of RTC bus stands and properties belonging to RTC who were about to be terminated for not paying the lease and license amounts for the lockdown and subsequent period.

Justice Annireddy Abhishek Reddy directed the RTC authorities to not be hasty in terminating the traders as the situation of businesses in the lockdown period was dire and even in the subse-

quent period, business has been dull as the fleets of RTC buses were not 100 per cent operational.

The judge also cautioned traders not to make things suit their convenience and evade the payment of rents claiming there was no business activity.

Justice Reddy was dealing with a batch of petitions of traders and license holders who alleged that the RTC authorities have been threatening to terminate their licenses for not paying the rents to the leased properties. The petitioners said that business was completely closed for nearly two months as the RTC was shutdown and, thereafter, their businesses were not up to the mark

as the footfall of passengers has drastically decreased. Even in the unprecedented situation of the pandemic, the RTC authorities were forcing them to pay rents and they were issued termination notices, the petitioners submitted.

The counsel for RTC said that traders were not paying the rents both prior to the lockdown and after it was lifted. They also submitted that the petitioners came to court, without giving any representation to them on their difficulties.

Trying to resolve the issue in an amicable way, justice Reddy passed interim orders, directing RTC authorities not to insist that traders to pay

the rent and lease amounts for the months of April, May and June, 2020. However, the lessees are directed to pay 50 per cent of the lease amounts and license fees for the months of July and August, 2020, within a period of three weeks.

Any amounts which were due prior to April 2020, shall also be paid within a period of three weeks. However, the court made clear that in case the traders do not pay the amounts as directed by the court, the interim direction granted shall automatically stand vacated and the officials are free to take necessary steps following the law. The case was adjourned to November 6.

Risky travel



People travel in goods trolley to go to other places as buses are not available, at Moosapet on Wednesday. The passengers are not following social distancing guidelines even as Covid-19 infections are rapidly rising in Telangana. — R. PAVAN

SWIGGY DELIVERY
STAFF APPROACH
KTR FOR HELPDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

Delivery executives working for Swiggy have approached IT and Industries Minister K.T. Rama Rao urging him to intervene and help them get a basic minimum pay of ₹35 for and up to four kilometers.

Almost 3,000 Swiggy executives continued their strike here for the second day. No major restaurants and hotels in the city received sufficient orders due to the strike.

Swiggy is giving a minimum of ₹15 for two kilometers and delivery executives state that they are earning ₹300 per day only if they work for 12 hours.

With the waiting time in the restaurants during lunch and dinner being high there are complaints that they are not reimbursed.

Petrol prices have increased in the last six months and that has hit them as ₹150 to ₹200 is spent on petrol each day.

Shaikh Salahuddin, national general secretary of Indian Federation of App-based Transport workers, says, "We want the company to give us what they are charging from the customer. We are not asking for more."

● **ALMOST 3,000** Swiggy executives continued their strike here for the second day.

Tirupati MP succumbs to Covid

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 16

YSR Congress Tirupati MP Balli Durga Prasad, 64, passed away while undergoing treatment for lung-related ailments at Apollo Hospital in Chennai on Wednesday.

According to family members, Durga Prasad tested positive for Coronavirus in the last week of August after returning from attending a meeting in Vijayawada. He got



Balli Durga Prasad

admitted in Apollo Hospital at Chennai as per the advice of SVIMS doctors. Though he tested negative after treatment, he was forced to remain

in the hospital for 15 days due to infection in the lungs. His condition deteriorated on Wednesday morning and passed away in the evening.

He is survived by his wife Saralamma, sons Kalyan, Karthik and daughter Haritha.

A native of Venkatagiri in SPSR Nellore district and a law graduate, Durga Prasad represented Gudur constituency four times in the Assembly.

In 1985, he bagged the

MLA seat with 55,135 vote majority on TD ticket. In 1994 and 1999 general elections, he was reelected and served as minister for primary education from 1996 to 1998 in the Chandrababu Naidu cabinet.

Durga Prasad joined YSR Congress just before the general elections in 2019 after TDP denied him Assembly ticket. YSRC nominated him for the Tirupati parliament seat which he won with a comfortable margin.

Three silver lion idols go missing
from Durga temple chariotMD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 16

Even as untoward incidents in temples are haunting YSR Congress government, a new incident has been reported. Three decorative silver lion idols have been found missing from the silver chariot in Kanaka Durga temple at Vijayawada. The four-lion idols-silver chariot is used during the Ugadi celestial ride of the Goddess. Three decorative lion idols worth of ₹15 lakh have been found removed from the chariot while the fourth is damaged during forcible removal.

The temple officials tried to hide the incident by covering the chariot with plastic tarpaulin cover but it came to light

when Endowments Minister Velampalli Srinivas and AP BJP president Somu Veerajulu visited the temple to view the chariot separately on Wednesday. Veerajulu gave an ultimatum to the government to take action on the missing of idols within two days.

The chariot was constructed using 70 kg of silver 20 years ago at a cost of ₹50 lakh and was parked near the temple's information center on the hilltop Indrakeeladri near the sanctum sanctorum of Durga.

Nearly eight kgs of silver was used for each lion and the three weighed 24 kgs. This year's Ugadi celestial ride was cancelled due to the Corona crisis.

SHIRDI SAIBABA IDOL NEAR
VIJAYAWADA DESECRATEDDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 16

In another incident of desecration of temples in the state, an idol of Sai Baba of Shirdi was damaged at Nidamanuru on the outskirts of Vijayawada on Wednesday.

According to the reports, the locals found the damaged head and the hand of the Sai Baba idol in front of Sri Shirdi Saibaba temple at Nidamanuru in the early hours of Wednesday.

They immediately alerted the temple com-

mittee members, who in turn informed the police. Some devotees who clean the temple premises every day saw the head of the idol lying on the road. The police said that a thorough investigation would be conducted and security enhanced at the temples.

● **THE LOCALS** found the damaged head and the hand of the Sai Baba idol in front of Sri Shirdi Saibaba temple at Nidamanuru in the early hours of Wednesday.

The police said that a thorough investigation would be conducted and security enhanced at the temples.

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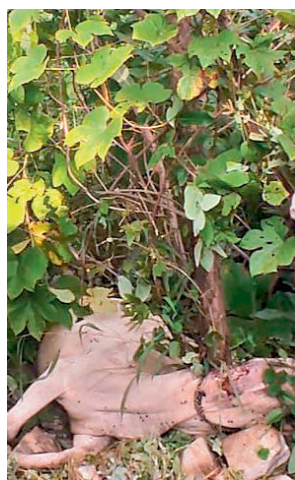
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Tiger attacks cow
on state borders
near AdilabadDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, SEPT. 16

A tiger moving in the forests near Hattighat in Bheempur mandal, Adilabad, on the state borders killed a cow and the incident came to light on Wednesday morning. The forest staff, led by the Deputy FRO of Tamsi, A. Geeraiah, visited the spot and found that it was a tiger kill. The cow belonged to farmer Dasari Ramesh of Pippalkoti.

Geeraiah said a tiger migrated from the Thippeshwar tiger reserve of Maharashtra and is moving in the area for some time. The incident marked the second tiger kill in the last 22 days. He said the tiger is frequently coming to Bheempur forest area after crossing the river Penganga.

Geeraiah said nearly 15 forest staff are camped at Tamsi (K) forest area to see that there would be any untoward incident and put up camera traps to track the tiger's movement in the area. Beat officer, Keshav, animal trackers Dayakar



Forest staff found a cow killed new Hattighat forest in Bheempur mandal in the Adilabad district on Wednesday.

and Kirshna and Sonerao, Laxmikanth, Prabhakar are monitoring the movements of the tiger.

Forest officials said they will pay the compensation to the farmer for the cow and appealed to the people not to cause any harm to the tiger moving in the area.

MAN GETS 2-YR
RI FOR STALKING
MINOR GIRLDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 16

A 20-year-old youth was on Wednesday sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment for stalking and harassing a minor girl in the name of love. The IX ADJ Court at L.B. Nagar also fined the youth, M. Shiva, ₹1,500.

Saroornagar police had received a complaint on October 3, 2015 from a 14-year-old resident of Saroornagar that the accused M. Shiva and his friend (a 17-year-old juvenile) had been following her while she went and returned from her school. Shiva was harassing her in the name of love and also making phone calls abusing her in filthy language and threatening her.

Basing on the complaint, a case was registered, investigated and Shiva arrested and remanded to judicial custody pending court proceedings and sentencing.

● **SHIVA WAS** harassing her in the name of love and also making phone calls abusing her in filthy language.

Career Chronicle



EXHIBITION SOCIETY

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Applications are invited from the eligible candidates for the following posts to work in the office of the Exhibition Society as per the qualifications and experience:

1. **Administrative Officer:** MBA Computer knowledge familiar with Accounting System
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5. **Assistant Accountants (2):** M.Com or B.Com with Computer knowledge (Tally Package)
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Sd/- Dr. B. Prabha Shankar,
Hon. Secretary

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A Fast growing Tier 1 Company to a large industrial conglomerate and professionally managed Company exporting to various countries situated at Patancheru / Pashamylaram requires

Operations Manager: Should possess B.Tech in Mechanical/Electrical Engineering and should have 10-12 Year of relevant experience and be capable of Managing the entire Operations with specified targets.

Shift Supervisors: The candidate should have Degree/Diploma in Engineering with 3-5 years relevant experience in Engineering in handling workforce.

Boiler Operators : The candidate should Possess 2nd Class Boiler Operator Certificate from Government of Telangana with 3 to 5 years experience in Operating Briquette Fired Boilers

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Interested candidates may forward their Resume to jobmatehyd@gmail.com.

SHORT TAKES

PRICE OF ONIONS
SLASHED AFTER
EXPORT BANNEDSONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

A day after the Central government's ban on export of onions, the prices have been slashed by ₹800-900 per quintal at Lasalgaon Agricultural produce market committee (APMC) in Nashik district. The ban on export of onions has also affected their procurement in APMCs.

Amid this, former chief minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday requested the Union minister of commerce & industry Piyush Goyal to lift the ban as the decision has disappointed farmers.

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra Congress unit on Wednesday staged a statewide agitation against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a letter to Mr Goyal, the former chief minister said, "The ban on export of onions of Maharashtra should be lifted immediately as they have huge demand overseas. As a result, the state farmers get a good price for the same. The ban has affected the onion growing farmers. I hope that you will immediately take appropriate decisions."

State Congress president and revenue minister Balasaheb Thorat said that onion prices have collapsed due to the ban on export, and asserted that his party will fight against this "injustice" meted out to farmers.

BID TO BRIBE
DG OF ASSAM
RIFLESPAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

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

"On September 8th, there was an attempt made by a trader posing as an ex-CISF soldier to influence DG Assam Rifles for getting trucks through check posts in Mizoram. After interaction with the DG on video phone, the individual left behind a packet with gold jewellery which was promptly reported to law enforcement agencies," said sources.

An FIR was filed with the police and the issue was also brought into the notice of the Union home secretary and senior army officials.

According to the complaint filed with SP Shillong, on September 8th, one Jagdish Sharma approached the office of Director General of the Assam Rifles at Shillong, claiming that he had come from Delhi to meet the DG and was an ex-CISF personnel.

However, since he was not quarantined after reaching Guwahati he was asked to speak to the DG on phone.

ALL ODISHA MLAS
TO UNDERGO
RT-PCR TESTAKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 16

As Monsoon Session of Odisha Legislative Assembly set to begin on September 29, Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro on Wednesday said all legislators have to undergo RT-PCR test to attend the House.

Apart from the lawmakers, their personal security officers and drivers will also undergo the same test to be able to enter the Assembly premises.

"There will be an RT-PCR test exercise for all the members of the Odisha Legislative Assembly along with their PSOs and drivers from 7.30 am to 9.30 am on September 27 and 28 on the Assembly premises by a team of doctors. If any member feels uncomfortable during the session, they may go for antigen test by the doctors at the above said place," the Speaker said.

The state government also directed authorities concerned to ensure execution of all precautionary measures for containment of Covid-19 during the Assembly session. Additional chief secretary P. K. Mohapatra directed the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd and Capital Hospital Director to observe certain precautionary measures.

AT LEAST 11
DEAD AS BOAT
OVERTURNS

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

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

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

The accident took place 8.45 am near Gotra village under the Khatoli police station, about 110 kilometers from Kota district headquarters.

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

According to local residents, 35-50 people were on board with 14 to 15 motorbikes. — PTI



National Disaster Response Force personnel carry out search operations for missing people after a boat sank while crossing Chambal river in the Etawah region of Kota district on Wednesday.

KEY BILL FOR
AYURVEDA
BODIES PASSEDDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

Parliament on Wednesday passed the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill, 2020, which accords an institution of national importance status to a Jamnagar-based cluster of Ayurveda institutes.

The Bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha in March, was passed by the Rajya Sabha by voice vote.

Three Gujarat based institutes are - Institute of Post Graduate Teaching and Research in Ayurveda, Gulab-kunwerba Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya and Institute of Ayurveda Pharmaceutical Sciences, which will now be merged into an institution.

Union health minister Harsh Vardhan said selection of the Jamnagar institute was not arbitrary or biased, as alleged by some opposition parties members, but it was chosen in a most objective manner.

PLA's combat readiness
was at 2nd highest level

The alert was lowered after a meeting of foreign ministers last week

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

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

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

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

However, sources said that the first firing incident actually took place earlier, between August 29-31 when Indian Army in a pre-emptive move occupied strategic heights on the Kailash range which overlook entry points of the Spanggur gap in the Chushul sector.

The third and bigger firing incident happened on September 8-9 when Indian Army occupied higher positions overlooking Chinese posts on the ridgelines of finger 4. Chinese troops were also trying to come near Indian positions and both sides fired more than 100 rounds.

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

Indian Army changed the rule of engagement at the LAC after the Galwan Valley clash on June 15 where Chinese had used improvised

weapons including iron rods studded with nails to attack Indian soldiers breaching the agreements between the two countries. Now Indian Army's local commanders are free to use any weapons under their command when threatened by Chinese troops.

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

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Wednesday that it is imperative for India to immediately correct its wrong practices, disengage on the ground as soon as possible and take concrete actions to ease the tension along the China-India border.

He said that China is not responsible for the recent border situation between China and India, and it was India that first violated bilateral agreements, illegally crossing the border line for provocation, unilaterally changing the status quo of the border area, and firing gunshots to threaten the safety of the Chinese border troops, according to Chinese state run media Global Times.

Wang said China hopes that India will abide by the important consensus reached by leaders of the two countries, put the differences at the proper position in bilateral relations, prevent the differences from escalating into conflict and avoid actions that might escalate the situation.

China would like to maintain communication with India through diplomatic and military channels to jointly safeguard peace in the border area, Wang said.

According to a report published in *South China Morning Post* Chinese troops had raised their

combat readiness to the second-highest possible level last week after an exchange of gunfire with India, but the alert was lowered after a meeting of the foreign ministers.

India takes up snooping
issue with China's envoyDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

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

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

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

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

Chinese Foreign Ministry later in a statement denied reports of snooping saying the firm under scanner — Shenzhen Zhenhua — instead of collecting data "only mobilizes data which is open and available online."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said, "I

noticed the company's response that the report is seriously untrue. The company said clearly that it's a private company, and its clients are research institutions and business groups.

"I would like to stress that as a staunch defender of cyber security, China opposes and fights all cyber crimes. We would like to enhance dialogue and cooperation with other countries to jointly build a peaceful, secure, open and cooperative cyber space."

The spokesperson said that recently, in response to prominent data security risks, China proposed the Global Initiative on Data Security to uphold data and supply chain security and advance digital economy.

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

Chinese company Shenzhen Zhenhua has been accused of collecting open-source data and evaluating known figures in targeted fields worldwide. Persons and organizations under its surveillance include foreign politicians, their spouses and children, scholars, businesses and think-tanks.

Meanwhile, the Centre has denied any infiltration attempts by the Chinese along the Indo-China border in the last six months.

In a written reply in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, Minister of State for Home Nitayanand Rai said, "no infiltration has been reported along Indo-China border during last six months." Rai was responding to a written question by the BJP Rajya Sabha member Anil Agrawal, who wanted to know if there has been an increase in infiltration by the Pakistan and Chinese forces in the past six months.

Earlier on Tuesday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had in a statement in Parliament on Tuesday said that Chinese had made several attempts to transgress the LAC in other parts of the western sector in areas like Kongka La, Gogra and north bank of Pangong Lake.

There is considerable tension in the Ladakh sector between Indian and Chinese forces as the latter has made several attempts to infiltrate into the India territory and change the Line of Actual Control.

The increase to second level meant more weapons and troops were deployed to the frontline, and training exercises were ramped up for commanders, officers and soldiers, a military source

noted. The newspaper said that while the combat readiness level had been lowered, it could be reinstated by China if circumstances changed.

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Meanwhile, security has been beefed up at Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan's 'Jalsa' bungalow after her speech. Mumbai police has provided additional security calling it a precautionary measure.

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Army fully prepared
to fight full-fledged
war: Retd Brigadier

Jammu, Sept. 16: The Indian Army is fully prepared to fight a full-fledged war even in winters in eastern Ladakh and if China created conditions for war, they will face a better trained, better prepared, fully rested and psychologically hardened Indian troops, says Brig (retd) Hemant Mahajan.

The assessment of the retired army officer titled *Operational logistic readiness of the Indian Army* was contained in a statement circulated to the media by the Army's Northern Command PRO in Udhampur earlier in the day.

In email messages to the media in the evening, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) said the statement doesn't represent the views of either Northern Command or Indian Army and that it may be treated as cancelled.

In separate Whatsapp messages, the PRO further stated that the statement was the view of Brig (retd) Hemant Mahajan and it was "wrongly conveyed" as a statement of the Northern Command.

According to Mahajan, compared to the physically and psychologically battle-hardened Indian troops, Chinese troops mostly are from urban areas and not used to hardships or prolonged deployment under field conditions.

The comments by the retired officer came against the backdrop of a report by

China's official media outlet *Global Times* that India's operational logistics is not geared up adequately and it will not be able to fight through winters effectively.

This can best be attributed to ignorance. Indian Army is fully prepared and more than capable of fighting a full-fledged war even in winters in eastern Ladakh, Brig (retd) Mahajan said.

India is a peace-loving country and wishes to have good relations with its neighbours. India always prefers to resolve issues through dialogue. While talks are in progress to resolve the border issues with China in eastern Ladakh, at the military level it is well prepared for the prolonged stand-off, he said.

He said altitudes in Ladakh range from high to super-high altitude and there is a lot of snowfall up to 40 feet after November.

Coupled with this, the temperature dipping down to minus 30 to 40 degree Celsius is a usual phenomenon. Wind chill factor makes matters even worse for the troops. The roads also get closed due to the snow. But despite all this, the most encouraging part for India is that the Indian soldiers have a huge experience of winter warfare and are psychologically tuned to operate at short notice, he added.

While these facts are known to the world, he said, adding the operational logistics capabilities, however, are hardly known. — PTI

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation				
DIVISION-14, GHMC				
NIT No.	Name of Work	Estimate amount / ECV (Rs. in lakhs)	Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids	Name & Address Officer
NIT No. 27/E.E.14 /GHMC/2020-21 Dated: 15.09.2020	Various works under Division-14, Goshamahal, GHMC.	43.44	16.09.2020/11:00 AM 19.09.2020/03:00 PM	EXECUTIVE ENGINEER -14 GHMC 5th floor, Abide Parking Complex, Abide, Hyderabad 988920428
For further details can be seen at e-Procurement website www.tender.telanganagov.in RO No. 4997-PP/CL/Advt/122020-21				
			Sd/- Executive Engineer, DIVISION-14, GHMC	

TELANGANA STATE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD., "Tourism House" # 3-5-891, Himayathnagar, Hyderabad- 500029			
e-Procurement Tender Notice No.02/SE/SBT/STDC/2020-21, Dt.14.09.2020			
Sl.No.	Name of the Work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lakhs	Bid downloading start
1	Establishing Mini Shiparamam at Tank Bund area in Mafabunbnagar Municipality	800.00	21.09.2020
2	Construction of Budget Hotel at Siricilla, Rajanna Sircilla District	1140.00	18.09.2020
Bids are invited on e-procurement platform from eligible contractors. Further details can be seen @ e-procurement market place www.tender.telanganagov.in R.O. No. - 905-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/2020-21			
		Superintending Engineer, TSTDCL LTD, Hyderabad	

VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (VMC)		
'E' Procurement Notice No.25/VMC/AE/2020-21, Dt.16-09-2020		
Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimate Amount Rs. in Lakhs
1	Proposed Re-Development of Gandhi Hill, Development of Food Street from Red Circle to M.G.Road, Providing Chain link Mesh Fencing MS Anglars, improvements to Vinayaka Temple road to Flyover Providing BT Roads, Providing CC Roads Establishment of 500 KLD STPs in Governorpet and Punnami Ghat, O&M of 150 TPD Solid Waste Management, Re-development of Zymkhana Shopping Complex, Re-development of APSRMC School in Krishnalanka, Construction of RCC Retaining wall, Providing Piped Drains, Paver Blocks, UGD Lines, Foot Paths, Providing Street Name Boards and Road Name Boards in A and B Class Roads Procurement of 3 Nos BS-VI Model vehicle Mounting machines (All works are with Reverse Tendering Auction), Circle-1,2 & 3 areas in VMC (32 Works)	4661.89
Contact: Superintending Engineer (Works & Projects), VMC, Vijayawada-520 001 Further details can be seen @ 'e' procurement market place @ www.tender.aeprocurement.gov.in Download of bid documents starts from - 19-09-2020 @ 04.00 P.M. Last date / time for receipt of tenders from - 03-10-2020 up to 4.30 P.M. Reverse Tendering starts from - 05-10-2020 from 2.00 P.M. Sd/- For COMMISSIONER		

SHORT TAKES

1ST PHASE OF CENSUS POSTPONED

New Delhi, Sept. 16: The first phase of the Census operations, which was supposed to be held from April 1 to September 30, has been postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai also said a multiple-layered security approach has been adopted for the security and safety of the Census data.

The first phase of the Census operations (Census 2021) and other related field activities have been postponed due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, he said.

The minister said a multiple-layered security approach has been adopted for the security and safety of the Census data and the data collection will be done on registered devices of the enumerators appointed by the states and Union territories.

"Data is encrypted at the device, during the transmission and at servers/storage. The services of System Integrators have been hired for developing the Mobile Apps, management of Census portal and related activities," he said.

Rai said the publicity campaigns are part of the Census operations and all the enumerators are to be registered on the portal before undertaking the enumeration work.

14 RS MPs SEEK LEAVE FROM ONGOING SESSION

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

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

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

As the Upper House took up Zero Hour submissions, two members - Congress' Divijay Singh and BJP's Bhagwat Karad - raised the issue of scarcity and black marketing of oxygen cylinders which are used by Covid-19 patients when their oxygen level plummets.

Later, nominated member Swapan Das Gupta, while referring to recent violence at Vishva Bharti over building of a wall at the traditional Poush Mela site, demanded deployment of central paramilitary force at the university to ensure the safety of the heritage buildings and also urged that the Centre should take responsibility for the Mela.

13 BANGLADESHIS ARRESTED IN BENGAL

Kolkata, Sept. 16: Thirteen Bangladeshi nationals, including five women and three children, were apprehended from West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, while trying to cross over to the neighbouring country illegally, a BSF spokesperson said on Wednesday.

They were caught by a special patrolling team of the Panchberia outpost of the Border Security Force on Tuesday, he said.

During interrogation, five men of the 13 Bangladeshi nationals claimed that they had entered India several years back illegally, he said, adding that they were working as masons in Mumbai and living in the Nalasopara area there.

"The Bangladeshis claimed they were going back to Bangladesh to visit their native place and relatives. They were helped by a tout based in Kolkata," the spokesperson said.

The tout got them in touch with an agent in Bagdah area of North 24 Parganas district, who allegedly took Rs 1 lakh to help them cross the border, he said. "Over Rs 1.27 lakh cash, some gold and silver ornaments, an LCD screen and other items were seized from them. The Bangladeshis and recovered items were handed over to Bagdah police station for further legal action," the BSF official added.

Back to work



Guest workers from various states wait in queues to give their samples for Covid-19 test after they arrive at Thane Railway Station to reach their workplaces, amid the coronavirus pandemic in Thane on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Congress' Anand Sharma on Wednesday sought compensation for families of guest workers who died while walking thousands of kilometers to their native places after the lockdown was imposed. - PTI

J&K parties contradict MHA claim on house arrests

Kishan Reddy told House that 223 people in J&K are under detention

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16

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

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

"On that day, police vehicles were parked on both the gates of his house compound and since he is not being allowed to move out and even go to Jama Masjid (Grand Mosque) where he would deliver customary sermons on Fridays," the amalgam faction said.

Minister of State (Home) G. Kishan Reddy, in a written reply to a question raised by Trinamool Congress MP Saugata Ray said in Lok Sabha on Tuesday that no leader in J&K is currently under house arrest. He, however, admitted that 223 people in J&K are under detention.

He said, "As on the 11 September, 223 persons are under detention. No person is under house arrest in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir."

"The situation on the ground is contrary to what the Home Ministry has claimed. After the authorities revoked my detention under the Public Safety Act (PSA) in the third week of June, I was

placed under house arrest. I'm not being allowed to go out," said Mr. Akhtar.

Soon after ending his ten and half month long detention under the PSA, he was asked to vacate his government accommodation or face forcible eviction.

He said, "I've just travelled one distance from that house to this new rented one and that too under police escort. However, I was allowed some days ago to go out to get an ultrasonography test done on the advice of my doctor and again policemen accompanied me." Mr. Akhtar said that the policemen continued to be deployed at the gate of his house who did not allow him even to attend a PDP leaders' meeting called by its general secretary Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura at the party headquarters here on September 3.

"We have to see it in the larger construct of the situation in Kashmir. This is part of the entire new system which has been introduced here that the politicians should be at the mercy of the security establishment. They have to apply for and inform them (police) of their every activity," Mr. Akhtar who also served as the chief spokesman of the PDP-BJP coalition government in the erstwhile state told this newspaper.

He said that earlier the J&K politicians categorized as "protected persons" and provided security cover would only inform the concerned authorities before visiting places and not seeking permission for it as such. "But now you have to apply for even holding indoor party meetings three days in advance. The overall atmosphere is full of fear. They have unleashed all the agencies

Anger as youth dies in police custody

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16

Jammu and Kashmir's northwestern town Sopore and its neighbourhood are tense in the aftermath of alleged extrajudicial killing of a local youth.

Internet services were early Wednesday withdrawn from the area and police and paramilitary reinforcements fanned out "as a precautionary measure".

The police, however, claimed the youth Ifran Ahmed Dar was an 'Over Ground Worker' (OGW) of a separatist militant outfit who tried to escape from their custody and that later his corpse was found in a neighbouring village.

They, however, didn't say on Kashmir. Everybody is directly under the scanner and people are scared. That's where we have reached".

He added, "There's no account of the people they (police) claim everyday in the official bulletins having been arrested - some in the name of being OGWs (Over Ground Workers) and some militants. There's no account ultimately where they go and if you relate it with unending protests by mothers and other relatives of the missing persons you can join the dots".

Mr. Hanjura termed Mr. Reddy's claim on the floor of Parliament as a "blatant lie".

He said, "I could go out of my house for the first time

● The police, however, have claimed that the youth, Ifran Ahmed Dar, was an 'Over Ground Worker' of a separatist militant outfit.

how he was killed.

The family of the youth termed it as 'cock and bull story' and also denied Dar was involved in any unlawful activity.

"The police are lying. My brother was killed in cold-blood. He would work with me at our family shop from 7 am to 9 pm. He had nothing to do with militancy or militants," said his elder brother Javaid Ahmed.

A statement by the J&K police here said that 23-year-old Dar was found dead after he escaped from police custody.

in past 13 months today (Wednesday) to address a meeting of the youth wing of the PDP at the party headquarters, the first such engagement since August 5, 2019. Some others also joined me but our 20 party leaders continue to be under house arrest whereas the party president Mehbooba Mufti remains in detention under the notorious PSA," he said.

PDP youth president Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra said that he too was, for the first time on Wednesday, allowed to walk out of his home and attend the meeting at which threadbare deliberations were held on the prevailing political, social and economic situation in J&K.

PDP ACCUSES CENTRE OF 'BRAZEN DUPLICITY'

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16

People's Democratic Party (PDP) on Wednesday accused the Central government of 'brazen duplicity' over Jammu and Kashmir and said that such behaviour will not be tolerated. It also said that its "fight" against "bulldozing J&K's identity and rights will continue uncompromisingly".

A statement issued after a meeting of the party's youth wing, the first since August 5 last year, the PDP said, "On one hand, BJP government is participating in dialogue with Taliban, talking reconciliation with PLA who have invaded Ladakh and discussing with Nagaland insurgents desperate constitution and Flag, but at the same time, it is using anything but dialogue to deal with the mess created by them after illegal scrapping of special status if J&K. This is unacceptable."

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

"In the first ever meeting of its youth wing after August 5, 2019, the party emphasized that the constitutional fraud perpetrated on the people of J&K and the subsequent bulldozing of constitutional rights will always remain unacceptable."

Sangma bats for Gorkhaland in North Bengal

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, SEPT. 16

In what is said to be an attempt to spread the reach of National Peoples' Party to West Bengal, its president and Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K. Sangma has advocated the formation of Gorkhaland in North Bengal.

Reminding the Centre that the Gorkhas too are rightful Indian citizens who deserve to have their own identity and Bas Bhoomi (homeland) Mr Sangma, in a letter written to union home minister Amit Shah on September 4, said, "Sir, you are aware of the long pending constitutional demand of the Gorkhas for a separate state of Gorkhaland."

Flagging and justifying the demand of separate state, Mr Sangma said, "The Gorkhas have made India their home for a very long period. The contribution of Gorkhas towards India and their motherland has been immeasurable and they have made supreme sacrifices in protecting this beloved country."

He also highlighted the contributions of Gorkha freedom fighter Durga Malla, members of constituent assembly Damber Singh and Ari Bahadur Gurung and Captain Ram Singh Thakuria, a prominent Gorkha freedom fighter and musician who composed the music of the inspiring National Anthem.

Pleading the Centre to

offer an honourable and lasting political solution to the Gorkhas, the chief minister said, "As stated the Gorkhas have contributed immensely to the fabric of Indian society and as with other citizens of India, the Gorkhas too are rightful Indian citizens who deserve to have their own identity and Bas Bhoomi (homeland)."

He said, "The NDA government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has passed several landmark decisions in the interest of people of this country. I urge your good office to kindly give a patient hearing to the legitimate demand of Gorkhas of North Bengal and offer an honourable and lasting political solution at the earliest."

The letter was made public when the monsoon session of Parliament was in progress and there were growing demands by NDA allies in Darjeeling for finding a permanent political solution.

Meanwhile, Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League (Pratap Khati camp) has thanked Mr Sangma for extending his support to their long pending demands. Mr Sangma is the second chief minister to lend support to the Gorkhaland demand. When Mr Pawan Chamling was the Sikkim chief minister, he got a resolution adopted in the state Assembly on March 29, 2011, terming Gorkhaland as a genuine and legitimate demand of the people of the hills.

President to visit Srinagar on Sunday

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16

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

It would be his first visit to Jammu and Kashmir after the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two union territories on August 5, 2019.

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

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

The NEP-2020 was approved by the Union cabinet on July 29, and, as per the government, it is meant to provide an overarching vision and comprehensive framework for higher education across the country.

● IT WOULD BE his first visit to Jammu and Kashmir after the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two union territories on August 5, 2019.

The statement said that President and Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, have suggested that the universities and higher education ministries across the country shall hold brainstorming sessions involving all the stakeholders for deliberating upon the strategies regarding the smooth implementation of the NEP-2020 in the country. "It is in this context, that the University of Kashmir is organizing a brainstorming session on Sunday here which shall be addressed to by the President and also J&K Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Kumar Sinha," the statement said.

The session will have three technical sitting with presentations scheduled on various themes of the national education policy by K. K. Sharma, advisor to J&K Lt. Governor of JK UT, Prof. Ved Prakash, former UGC-Chairman, all the five vice-chancellors of the universities in the Kashmir Valley, Director, NIT, Srinagar and a few college principals.

VITAL | SUPPORT

The ruling CPM has stood solidly behind Jaleel even as Oppn is seeking his resignation

Jaleel: From a firebrand leader of SIMI to poster boy of CPM

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT. 16

Even in the face of state wide protests by opposition parties seeking Kerala higher education minister K.T. Jaleel's resignation, the ruling CPM has stood solidly behind him. The protests which turned violent in many parts of the state have not been able to force the government or the ruling party to change its position.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and CPM state secretary Kodyeri Balakrishnan have repeatedly defended Jaleel terming Opposition charges as

"totally baseless."

"Quit Jaleel" demand had gained momentum after the Enforcement Directorate questioned him five days ago on the allegations of violating Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (accepting foreign aid without Centre's permission) and accepting consignments of Holy Quran brought from UAE through diplomatic channels.

To understand Jaleel's importance in Kerala politics, one has to trace his journey thus far. From a firebrand leader of SIMI to a poster boy of ruling CPM, the 53-year-old's political journey has been remarkable in many ways.

After his sting with SIMI, Jaleel joined the Muslim League and went on to become the state president of Muslim Youth League in 2004. But he was thrown out of the League in 2005 for questioning leadership on misuse of Tsunami funds. The CPM which was waiting for a popular face in Malappuram district to take on the League, seized the opportunity and fielded Jaleel as LDF backed independent in 2006 Assembly polls. As they say the rest is history.

Riding on the popularity of his anti-corruption crusade, Jaleel trounced Muslim League general secretary P.K. Kunhalikutty scripting one of

the stunning victories in state's electoral history.

The LDF too gained winning five of the 12 seats marking its strong presence in the Muslim heartland.

Jaleel who has a PhD on the topic related to 1921 Malabar rebellion and is known for his fiery speeches and clean image, has remained loyal to LDF since then. He won back to back elections in 2011 and 2016.

Though his induction as a minister in Pinarayi Cabinet in 2016 came as a surprise for many, the ruling LDF had its plans in place. He was given local bodies ministry, a portfolio usually reserved for top

CPM leaders, along with welfare of minorities, wakf and Hajj.

Later the local bodies portfolio was taken away from him and given to CPM's A.C. Moideen. However, Jaleel was given the high-profile higher education portfolio.

While most part of Jaleel's 14 years in parliamentary politics has remained free of controversies, the minister faced a series of charges in the last two years.

Responding to the allegations, the minister said in a recent Facebook post: "Only truth will prevail. Nothing, but the truth, Even if the whole world goes against you, nothing



Police personnel detain Kerala Students Union activists during a protest, demanding the resignation of Kerala Minister K.T. Jaleel. - PTI

else would prevail." With the allegations still pend-

ing probe by central agencies, the jury is still out.

IN BRIEF

**Wartime killings:
7 held in Bosnia**

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

**Philippine copter
crash kills four**

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

**Quake shakes
Kathmandu**

Kathmandu: A strong earthquake of 6 magnitude shook Nepal's capital Kathmandu and surrounding areas on Wednesday, forcing people to rush out of their houses. According to the National Seismological Center, the 6 magnitude quake occurred in the country's Sindhupalchowk district near Tibet border at 5.19 am. The epicentre of the earthquake was Ramche village in the district, 120 km east of Kathmandu. A mild tremor of 3.8 magnitude was also felt at the same place at 6.10 am, it said.

**Greek camp fire:
13 detained**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

In the Panhandle's

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

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

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

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

Sally was a rare storm that could make history, said Ed Rappaport, deputy director of the hurricane center. "Sally has a characteristic that isn't often seen and that's a slow forward speed and that's going to exacerbate the flooding," Rappaport said.

He likened the storm's slow progression to that of Hurricane Harvey, which swamped Houston in 2017. Up to rears) of rain could fall in some spots, and "that would be record-setting in some locations," Rappaport said in an interview Tuesday night. — AP

**EU: UK cannot change
withdrawal agreement**

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

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

even further.

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

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

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

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

— AP

FILM | FEST

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

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

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

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

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

come for physiotherapy for her frozen shoulder.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— AFP

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

"They want to take pe-

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

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

— AP

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

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

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

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



Yoshihide Suga

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



quick BITES

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

* As of 9:30 PM IST

BHEL ties up with SwissRapide for Maglev trains

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

DP World, Israeli company to bid for Haifa port



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

Krishnakumar, family sell 42 L Mindtree shares

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

Marico enters ayurveda space with Saffola

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

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

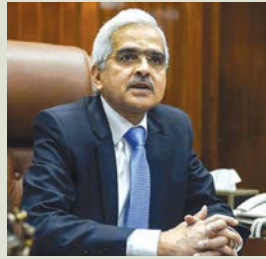
FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

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

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

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

RIISING INFECTIONS POSE A CHALLENGE



► Recovery is not yet fully entrenched and in some sectors, upticks in June and July appear to be levelling off
► Immediate policy response to Covid has been to prioritise stabilisation of the economy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Frustrated ONGC exits Sudan over pending dues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prepaid meters must for new power connections: Draft rules

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 16



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

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

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

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

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

limit prescribed by the commission.

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

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

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

ICICI launches home loan for informal workers

FC BANKING BUREAU MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16



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

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

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

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

Rejecting the government's contention that

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

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

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

Referring to the govern-

TITAN, STATE BANK JOIN HANDS FOR CONTACTLESS PAYMENT WATCHES

FC BANKING BUREAU MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

Titan Company in collaboration with State Bank of India (SBI) on Wednesday launched India's first contactless payment watches "Titan Pay" powered by Yono SBI.

With this launch, SBI account-holders can tap their Titan Pay watch on contactless payment POS machine without the need of swiping or inserting their SBI bank card.

Payments of up to Rs 2,000 can be made without entering a PIN. A secure certified near-field communication (NFC) chip embedded in the watch strap by Tappy Technologies enables all the functionalities of a standard contactless SBI debit card.

The payment feature on these watches will be accessible on over 2 million contactless Master-card-enabled point-of-sale (POS) machines. This collection of Titan watches include three styles for men and two for women priced between Rs 2,995 and Rs 5,995.

Apple debuts discount watch

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

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

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

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



year, but production problems caused by the pandemic have delayed their release until at least October.

CEO Tim Cook didn't mention iPhones during Tuesday's one-hour presentation recorded at the company's massive, but now mostly empty, headquarters in Cupertino, California.

The Apple Watch has never come close to rivaling the iPhone's popularity, but it does dominate the market for smartwatches.

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

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

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

SHORT TAKES

Sports School in Centre scheme

New Delhi: The Sports Ministry is set to upgrade eight Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISCE) at an estimated cost of ₹95.19 crore with an aim to identify and groom future Olympic champions. The eight states that have been approved for setting up of KISCEs in the first leg are Telangana, Odisha, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. In Telangana, the Sports School in Hakimpet on the outskirts of Hyderabad has been selected for upgradation.

SATS CHAIRMAN THANKS SPORTS MINISTER RIJJU

Sports Authority of Telangana State chairman Allipuram Venkateshwar Reddy is understandably elated about the announcement. "It's a huge plus for the State that the Centre has decided to invest in sports infrastructure at the cost of ₹13 crore for archery, rowing and weightlifting," he said. "While thanking Sports Minister Kiren Rijju I request him to extend the aid for athletics, football, swimming and gymnastics too in the near future since about 200 acres of land is available at the Sports School," he added. The support will be in the form of infrastructure upgradation, setting up of sports science centre and also soft component in the form of quality coaches, physiotherapists, strength and conditioning expert.

Hari in joint lead after three rounds

Chennai: Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna claimed a share of the top position with Armenian GM Levon Aronian after posting two wins and a draw in three rounds of rapid competition in the St Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament. The India No.2 started with a win over US Grandmaster Leinier Dominguez, before settling for a draw with Iranian prodigy Alireza Firouzja in games played late on Tuesday. In the third round, Harikrishna pulled off a victory over experienced Russian Alexander Grischuk in 41 moves. World champion Magnus Carlsen was fifth with three points. After a win over Hikaru Nakamura in his opener, the Norwegian went down to Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi in the second round. — PTI

Bernal bows out of Tour de France

Grenoble, France: Last year's winner Egan Bernal withdrew from the Tour de France on Wednesday with the defence of his title already in tatters. The 23-year-old Colombian's team Ineos announced he was dropping out ahead of the key 17th stage. Bernal came into the Tour with a back injury and missing key allies and two of his team then suffered injuries before Bernal himself suffered a meltdown on a tough ascent on Sunday that effectively ended his 2020 campaign as he fell eight minutes behind the pace. "This is obviously not how I wanted my Tour de France to end," Bernal said in a statement. — AFP

Djoker behaves better, wins match

Rome: Novak Djokovic behaved better on Wednesday in his first match since being defaulted from the US Open. The top-ranked Serb was mostly courteous with the chair umpire and had no interaction with the line judges during a 6-3, 6-2 win over local wild-card entry Salvatore Caruso in his opening match at the Italian Open. The performance came in sharp contrast to the scene in New York 10 days ago, when Djokovic was disqualified for unintentionally hitting a line judge in the throat with a ball. Djokovic said earlier this week that the incident taught him "a big lesson." "I was actually looking forward to (playing again) as soon as possible after what happened in New York," Djokovic said. "Because I feel like the sentiment on the court needs to be positive, and I need to kind of remove anything that can possibly cause any kind of issues to me — if there is something." After winning, Djokovic laughed to himself as he performed his usual on-court celebration, waving his arms toward all four sides of the Campo Centrale stands. — AP

Live on TV

TENNIS

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

BEAT THE HEAT

Adapting to UAE climate biggest challenge, says ABD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Waiting for Dhoni delight: Viru

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

BOOM BEST T20 BOWLER, SAYS AUSSIE PACER

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

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

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

— PTI

BALE MAY MAKE SPURS RETURN

London, Sept. 16: Gareth Bale is "close" to a sealing a sensational move back to Tottenham but the deal is "complicated", Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett said.

The Wales international has been frozen out by Real manager Zinedine Zidane and he said earlier this month he was open to returning to the Premier League.

When asked about Tottenham's move for Bale, Barnett said: "It's close but not done. It's a complicated deal." — AFP

BCCI tightens grip on fraudsters

New Delhi, Sept. 16: The BCCI has tied up with UK-based company Sportradar, which will offer its "integrity services" to prevent betting and other corrupt practices during the upcoming IPL through its Fraud Detection Services (FDS).

With the 13th Indian Premier League being held behind closed doors, the challenge for the

Board's Ajit Singh-led Anti-Corruption Unit is very different as there has been a surge in betting-related frauds and it's expected to increase manifold during the lucrative event.

"Yes, BCCI has inked a deal with Sportradar for this year's IPL. They will be working closely with the ACU and offer their integrity services," an

IPL source confirmed.

The BCCI ACU, in recent times, tracked unusual betting patterns during the state T20 leagues, including the Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL).

According to Sportradar, Fraud Detection System (FDS) "is a unique service that identifies betting-related manipulation in sport. This is possible due to the FDS's sophisticated

algorithms and constantly maintained database of odds which are leveraged for the purpose of detecting match-fixing."

It is believed that the company tracks the odds and movements of at least 600 independent bookmakers to detect anomalies in betting patterns. It processes around 5 million data sets per day.

— PTI



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

Palace lose kickathon

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

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

Eventually David Brooks scored his second penalty for Bournemouth

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

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

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

The match looked to be heading for a penalty

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

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

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

Ex-athletics head gets 2-yr jail term

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

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

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

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

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

— AP

FIRST VACCINE TO OLY BOUND ATHLETES: AFI

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

NBA | PLAY-OFFS

Murray puts LA through wringer

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

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

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

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

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

the biggest upsets of the 2020 postseason so far.

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

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

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

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

— AFP

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