


# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
KARIMNAGAR | THURSDAY | 10 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 34°C

Min: 24°C

RH: 58%

Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.

Rain likely. Max/Min temp. 34/24 °C

COVID-19

COUNT

CASES

(+99,122)

44,62,965

DEATHS

(+1,167)

75,091

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,479)

(+10)

TS: 1,47,642

916

(+10,418)

(+74)

AP: 5,27,512

4,634

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,78,98,860

DEATHS

9,04,710

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/

coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Bhadrapada Bahula Ashtami till 3.33 am (Friday)

Star: Rohini till 1.34 pm

Varjyam: 4.47 am to 6.32 am and 7.35 pm to 9.18 pm

Durmuhurtam: 10.11 am to 11 am; 3.04 pm to 3.53 pm

Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Muharram 21, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.03 am

Zohar: 12.23 pm

Asar: 4.34 pm

Maghrib: 6.28 pm

Isha: 7.37 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.22 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.03 AM

MOONSET TODAY 12.28 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 11.53 PM

COUNTER POINT

IN BRIEF

France calls India strategic partner

New Delhi: France on Wednesday described India as its “foremost” Asian strategic partner and said the upcoming visit of its defence minister Florence Parly to the country is aimed at further strengthening the “forward-looking” defence cooperation with New Delhi. Parly will visit India on Thursday to attend a ceremony in Ambala to induct the first batch of five Rafale jets into the Indian Air Force (IAF). The French minister will hold talks with her Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh. Parly will be given a ceremonial Guard of Honour on her arrival in Delhi.

54 Coal India projects delayed

New Delhi: State-owned Coal India's 54 mining projects are running behind schedule mainly on account of delays in obtaining green nod and issues related to rehabilitation and resettlement. In its recent report, CIL said that “123 coal projects costing ₹20 crore and above are in different stages of implementation out of which 69 projects are on schedule and 54 projects are delayed.” Major reasons for the delay in implementation of these projects are delay in obtaining forest clearance (FC) and possession of land and issues related to rehabilitation and resettlement.



**WORLD | 5**  
**UK PM bans large gatherings as Covid cases rise**



**BUSINESS | 7**  
**India set to exceed borrowing target**



**SPORTS | 8**  
**Ronaldo second to score 100 intl goals**

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## Landmark Bills aim to digitalise revenue dept

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

The state government on Wednesday introduced four bills in the Assembly, paving way for digitisation of revenue records and land transactions to simplify the registration process.

While introducing the Telangana Rights in Land and Pattadar Passbooks Bill, 2020, and the Telangana Abolition of the Posts of Village Revenue Officers Bill, 2020, Chief Minister K. Chandrabab Nair said citizens in the state can soon transfer both agricultural and non-agricultural properties at click of a button through the upcoming Dharani portal, rather than running from one government office to another.

Municipal administration minister K. T. Rama Rao introduced the Telangana Municipal Laws Amendment Bill, 2020 and panchayat raj minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao introduced the Telangana Panchayat Raj Amendment Bill, 2020.

All four bills are aimed at ushering revolutionary reforms in the land administration in the state.

■ **Page 3: CM says land will be surveyed again**

## Task force to probe hefty hospital bills

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

Chief Minister K. Chandrabab Nair on Wednesday announced the setting up of a task force headed by an IAS officer to monitor the treatment and the fees collected by corporate hospitals in the state.

He also assured the House that the government will examine the possibility of including Covid-19 in the Aarogya scheme to help the poor.

While replying the short discussion on the impact of Coronavirus and measures being taken, Rao said the task force will be formed under an IAS officer and will release weekly reports which will also be sent to the leaders of main opposition parties in the state to help them create social awareness about their ‘cruel’ ways of extorting money from the victims of the pandemic.

■ **Page 3: KCR lashes out at private hospitals**

## BHATTI HITS OUT AT TRS MIS-STEPS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

The state government has failed on every front with respect to controlling and combating Covid-19, the Congress said.

Congress leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said that continued missteps by the government, including the opening of liquor shops, allowing Covid-19 positive individ-

uals to stay at home instead of placing them in institutional quarantine, allowed the disease to spread among the rest of family and the public.

The government's reluctance to take suggestions from opposition parties and experts have led to the current Covid-19 situation in the state.

■ **Page 2: Doctors shortage in districts, says Bhatti**



Actress Kangana Ranaut arrives at Mohali International Airport before she left for Mumbai, in Chandigarh on Wednesday.

- PTI

## India's new case tally nears 1 lakh

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 9

India on Wednesday recorded nearly one lakh new Coronavirus cases, pushing the country's overall tally to 44.62 lakh. In one day, the country recorded 1,167 deaths, taking overall fatalities due to the virus to 75,091.

The new case count soared because of the record number 23,577 cases posted by Maharashtra.

Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and

Tamil Nadu continued to top the list of Covid-19 cases. The national capital Delhi, where cases had come down substantially last month, has now started witnessing a fresh wave of infections. Delhi on Wednesday recorded 4,039 fresh cases, which was the highest single-day spike in the city so far taking its overall tally over 2 lakh and death count 4,638.

Union health ministry officials said India has progressively maintained a low case fatality rate which was 1.7 per cent on

Wednesday, compared to the global average of 3.28 per cent. “The aim is to achieve a national CFR of less than one per cent. There are 17 states/UTs that are even today reporting mortality figures lower than one per cent,” officials said.

The health ministry said that in the last 24 hours, India has scaled a new high of recoveries as the total number of recovered patients in a single day surged to a record 74,894. With this, the total number of recoveries has

touched almost 34 lakh taking the Recovery Rate to 77.77 per cent.

Meanwhile, amid reports that the Oxford vaccine has been paused after one of the volunteers fell ill, the Serum Institute of India (SII), which is conducting the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine trials in India, clarified that the trials will continue in the country. “We cannot comment much about the UK trials but we have not faced any issue in India and the trials are continuing,” the company said.

## Indians take over new peaks, situation tense

Chinese lose tactical advantage at north bank of Pangong also

PAWAN BALI | DC  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 9

In the latest move, the Indian Army reportedly occupied heights on the north bank of Pangong Tso which overlook Chinese positions on the ridgelines in the Finger 4 area. This means that the Indian Army now has tactical advantage on both, north and south banks of the Pangong Tso.

Mountain warfare is all about dominating the heights, and since they have come under the Indian Army's control, there are reports that China has started building up its forces on the north bank of Pangong Tso and is trying to come closer to the Indian position at Finger 4.

The whole Pangong Tso area in the Ladakh sector is on edge with expectation of some kind of action from the Chinese Army to regain lost ground on the south of the lake where India had in a pre-emptive move occupied two dozen strategic heights.

What has added to the tension is the fact that now all the action in the Pangong Tso area is being

## Indians deeply entrenched on strategic heights

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC  
HYDERABAD SEPT. 9

Positioned at a vantage point, well-equipped soldiers of the Indian Army are operating from trenches with overhead protection at heights they took control of more than 10 days ago, with ample time for them to consolidate their positions.

The options before the People's Liberation Army to regain control of those heights are limited — either an air strike or send their infantry up which could come with huge costs. To take on one platoon of the Indian Army sitting pretty on those heights, they would need 10 of their platoons.

■ **Full report on Page 4**

controlled directly by the commanders in Beijing and it's no longer in the hands of local PLA officers.

To put pressure on India, China had also brought forward its 15-20 tanks near Spanggur Gap, a mountain pass on the LAC, between China and

## Jaishankar to tell China good ties are key for peace

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 9

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is expected to tell his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the sidelines of SCO foreign ministers meeting that peace on the borders is closely linked to the development of bilateral ties between the two Asian giants and that China must de-escalate by disengage its troops to restore the April status quo in the Ladakh sector. Reports from Beijing cited the Chinese foreign ministry as saying there would be a Russia-India-China trilateral foreign ministers' luncheon meeting in Moscow on Thursday.

■ **Full report on Page 4**

## India holds talks with Oz, Japan

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 9

In a major strategic move, India on Wednesday held its first trilateral dialogue with France and Australia at a top officials' level in which “the focus of the dialogue was on enhancing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region” and tackling “economic and geostrategic challenges” as well.

The three countries decided to “synergise their respective strengths to ensure a peaceful, secure, prosperous and rules-based Indo-Pacific Region.” and also “agreed to hold the dialogue on an annual basis”.

The move is significant, given the Chinese military assertiveness in the maritime region.

India already partners with Australia in the four-nation Quadri-lateral arrangement along with the United States and Japan which focuses on maintenance of a rules-based order in the region. France, which has island territories as its part in the maritime region, is also a close strategic partner of India.

In a statement, the Mini-

■ **THE OUTCOME**  
oriented meeting was held with the objective of building on the strong bilateral relations that the three countries share with each other and synergising their respective strengths to ensure a peaceful, secure, prosperous and rules-based Indo-Pacific Region. The three sides agreed to hold the dialogue on an annual basis

MEA STATEMENT

stry of External Affairs said, “The first India-France-Australia Trilateral Dialogue was held virtually on September 9. The meeting was co-chaired by Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary of India, François Delattre, Secretary-General, French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and Frances Adamson, Secretary, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The focus of the dialogue was on enhancing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region.”

## CBI books Delhi DCP for fake docs

New Delhi, Sept. 9: The CBI has booked Delhi Police Additional DCP Sanjay Kumar Sehrawat for allegedly submitting forged credentials and documents for selection in the Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands Police Service (DANIPS), officials said Wednesday.

The agency's teams carried out searches at Sehrawat's room in DCP East office and residential premises in Pitampura on Wednesday after registering the case, they said.

Acting on a complaint against Sehrawat, a 2011-batch DANIPS official, the CBI alleged that he used

credentials of another person having similar name to get selected in the service, they said.

He is posted as Additional DCP 2 in East Delhi. When contacted, Sehrawat said the vigilance department of Delhi Police had done an inquiry on the basis of a complaint from his ex-father-in-law.

There was a matrimonial dispute between him and his ex-wife, he said. In the meantime, a court passed two orders whereby it directed Delhi Police to not conduct any enquiry and submit all relevant enquiry report in sealed cover to the court. — PTI



## IN BRIEF

## Orthodox church leader no more

**Hyderabad:** Rev. K.I. Philip Ramban, 86, passed away on September 7 at Puthupady in Kozhikode district of Kerala. He was the founder director of St Gregorios Balagram at Yacharam, and has served as director of several institutions of the Orthodox Church at Itarsi, Orissa, Uttarkashi, Kayamkulam, and Pune. The Orthodox church leader was endowed with the title of Ramban (monk). Rev Philip Ramban who devoted his entire life for the uplift of the poor, had a deep connection with united AP. He entered the state to take up cyclone relief work in the 1970s and 1980s. From then on, AP was an important place from where his social activities for the uplift of the poor started. During the relief work he was struck by the helpless situation of children, especially children of leprosy patients. In 1985, determined to do something about it, a young Rev Fr Philip, set out to work at Yacharam, a hamlet about 50 km from Hyderabad. He told the leprosy affected parents about his plan and they agreed to let the children have a better life. Thus was born the Yacharam Balabhavan and today, children from the Balagram have become engineers, and a few are studying abroad. A recipient of several awards from the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Rev Philip Ramban was honoured by the Indian Orthodox Church with the title of 'Malankara Missionary Jyothis' for his work in transforming many lives.

## TS Lawcet, PGLCET application date

**Hyderabad:** The last date for registration and submission of online applications of TS LAW CET and PGLCET 2020 were extended with a late fee of ₹4,000 upto September 20. The convener said that the decision was taken after requests from many candidates to enable registration of application forms by those candidates who already made payment of fees and also to give a last chance to the candidates to apply for the exams.

## HC: No industries in residential zone

**Hyderabad:** The Telangana High Court on Wednesday directed the GHMC not to allow industries in the Residential Zone and not to allow construction of houses in industrial areas. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and B. Vijayen Reddy was dealing with a batch of PILs and petitions regarding pollution in the Shastripuram area of Ranga Reddy district. GHMC commissioner Lokesh Kumar appeared before the court through a video conference and explained that the civic body had pressed vigilance teams into the areas to find out if any pollution-generating industries were put up in the Shastripuram area.

## New morning routine



Women cycle across the Durgam Cheruvu Cable bridge which is all set to be opened for the public on September 15. People are using the bridge in the meantime to refresh themselves by jogging, cycling and skateboarding in the mornings. — R. PAVAN

## Accept mental health problem: Experts

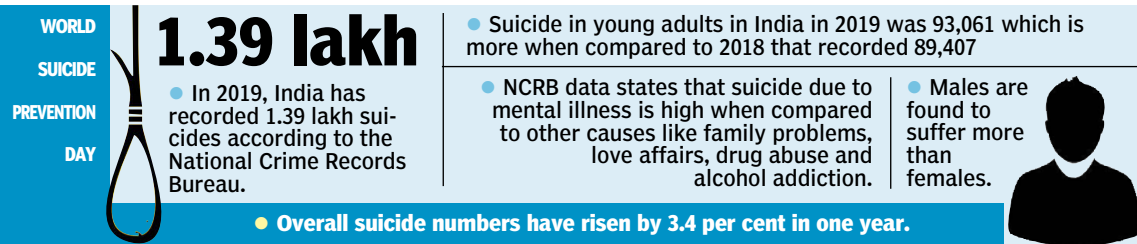
KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

On World Suicide Prevention Day, observed on September 10, mental health specialists state that identifying and accepting mental health problems are important and will help to deal with the stigma and reach out for help.

In India, patients who come with panic attacks, anxiety, sadness and other symptoms often report to their physicians with pain in the chest and stomach, acidity, migraine and other physical problems. While physical problems are ruled out in diagnostic reports, doctors often find that their problems are of the mind rather than the body.

To ease them, many of them are given mild antidepressants. Dr Preeti Swaroop, president of the Hyderabad psychiatric society says, "This practice is because the patient is not willing to go to a mental health specialist as they cannot accept it. Many of them do not go to their treating doctor and switch when they are told that they have a problem which will require psychiatric intervention. In mild cases, these drugs bring relief and millions of such patients benefit. Due to this reason, there has not been a hue and cry raised.

But in moderate and severe cases, proper evaluation is required before giving these medicines. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors are given after counselling the patient and family members. They are told that these drugs take four to six weeks to work on the patient and during that time someone has to be with them always. Apart



## 3 short films throw light on suicide prevention

BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

Three short films focusing on mental health issues and suicide prevention, made by Anita Peter, the initiator of 'I-Pledge Awareness for Change' facilitating changes with social relevance, are set to be released on Thursday, coinciding with the World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10.

According to Anita, there were several taboos surrounding the issue of mental health. The films, to be released on YouTube on Thursday, are based on her book '*To win your battles STAY ALIVE*', she said, adding that she had in the past

from that, they must never be left alone in a place where there are objects which are dangerous." The controversy over SSRI drugs in India has created confusion and also led to further taboo for those who suffer from depression. The drugs are meant to cure but are to be taken under proper guidance and with full knowledge of the family.



Anita Peter

suffered from depression but managed to overcome it. The question that needs to be addressed is what needs to be done for a person who is undergoing depression and creating an awareness on the subject and educating people that seeking medical help under such conditions is not a taboo.

At the same time, the stressors which can further aggravate the behaviour of the person must not be around.

With many cases of depression leading to suicide, the treatment of depression is very important. Ushasree Tipirneni, director of Roshni Trust, a non-government organisation with a helpline for those suffering mental health problems explains,

The films, she said, throw light on the need for mental health awareness and the urgency for everyone to come together to eradicate the social stigma and taboos that surround mental health issues.

People who suffer from such conditions, should not be typecast and the focus should be on how to make such persons feel better, on getting a second chance. Society, she said at times engages in character assassination of either the victims or those associated with them, adding to the fear and social stigma. There is an urgent need to eradicate typecasting based on criteria's like age, gender, profession and social strata.

"Depression is an invisible enemy. It is a complex problem and does not have a single line of treatment."

There are multiple options where for mild treatment, therapy works, mild going to moderate requires medicines and severe requires high end drugs and also institutionalisation. These make many people uncomfortable. A large

## FLO LAUNCHES 'SAY NO TO SUICIDE' VIDEO CHALLENGE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9.

The FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) and Roshni, and NGO on Wednesday announced the launch of a 'Say NO to Suicide' video challenge urging people to post their videos on social media platforms with the message Reach out...There's always somebody!

The campaign, launched to coincide with the World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, will be a year-long effort and is aimed at everyone working together towards preventing suicides, the two organisations said in a press release. They said that every 40 seconds, someone, somewhere, takes their own life which is precious and irreplaceable.

number of people are not willing to accept mental health problems. With the affluent class suffering from a 'group of stressors,' mental health now being talked about openly but it is still only the tip of the iceberg state experts.

## OGH docs go on strike for bigger space

## Surgeons unhappy sharing space in post-operative ward

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

With a major space crunch in Osmania General Hospital (OGH) due to the closure of the heritage building, postgraduates of general medicine do not have space for operations and post-operative wards.

They were offered space in the cardio-thoracic and plastic surgery wards but they are not happy. There are 120 postgraduate doctors who have struck work and are unhappy that there is no space for them in the other buildings of Osmania General Hospital.

OGH senior resident doctor, Naresh Rena, explained, "The doctors are upset as there is no proper place for them. They are not able to perform their duties properly."

The demand is for a bigger post-operative ward as the present one is too small for them and they have to share

● **AT PRESENT**, elective surgeries are carried out in the department but the patients are in different wards which is making post-operative care difficult

● **THERE ARE 120** post-graduate doctors who have struck work and are unhappy that there is no space for them in other buildings of Osmania General Hospital

it with other surgical departments.

Dr B. Nagendra, superintendent of OGH, says, "I am talking to them and their head of the department explaining that as and when space is available, the issues will be sorted out. We are looking into it and we will resolve it soon."

Presently, elective surgeries are carried out in the department but the patients are in different wards which is making post-operative care difficult.

## Wakf board CEO Khasim Covid +ve

ATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

Chief Executive Officer Wakf Board Moha-mmed Khasim has tested positive for Covid-19.

He has gone into home isolation and is undergoing treatment there.

According to sources, in view of the Assembly Session, Covid test has been made compulsory for those attending the Assembly Session.

The presence of the CEO is essential to brief the gov-

● **THE PRESENCE** of CEO is essential to brief the government about matters related to wakf during the session to provide instant information.

ernment about matters related to wakf during the session to provide instant information.

For that purpose, when Mr Khasim underwent the test he was found to be Covid positive and asymptomatic.

He will be home quarantined for two weeks and work from home.

## HC seeks clarity on masjid

VUJJINI  
VAMSHIDHARA | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

Telangana High Court on Wednesday sought explanation from the State government whether the proposed new construction of masjid in the Secretariat will be at the same place or it was planned at a different location in the premises.

The court also wanted to know if it was in any other location and whether the government was following provisions of Wakf Act, which stipulated certain land acquisition procedures while taking masjid or Wakf property.

The division bench, comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijayen Reddy, was hearing three separate pleas by M. Zakeer Hussain Javid, Md. Afzal Uddin Dakhani, and Khaja Aizazuddin, all advocates with a common plea-directing the Telangana government to construct the two mosques in the Secretariat premises. Syed Yasar Mamoon, counsel for a petitioner, contended that the mosque was demolished intentionally.

"Though, the Chief Minister announced that a moderate and spacious mosque will be built in the Secretariat premises, there is no clarity as to whether the mosque will be constructed on the same place where it had stood. The earlier one was spread over 647 Sq. Yds whereas the government undertaking before the Court says that it would be constructed on a 1,500 Sq. feet land and Sec. 51 of Wakf

Act, 1995 clearly says that Wakf property cannot be transferred and accordingly, the mosque cannot be built at any other place", he added.

The counsel further made redundant certain arguments before the Court saying that the rights of minorities are being deprived and they were targeted by the government and further said that if the court will not interfere in this issue, the faith on judiciary would be lost.

Responding to the contentions of the counsel, Chief Justice Chauhan asked "Whether there is any prerequisite in Islam, that mosque should be at a particular place or it should be at the same place, if there was a need to remove it. If we have full faith in God, He accepts our prayers even if it is an open space or a desert."

The CJ said "However, apart from submitting an undertaking before the Court by the government, the Chief Minister has been assuring to build a more spacious mosque. Why don't you trust the government?"

The Court directed the Advocate General BS Prasad to file a detailed counter affidavit, replying to all the contentions raised by the counsel and observed "as per the Islamic customs, if the land was dedicated to Allah or God, the land should not be used for any other purpose and if the government wants that particular land, suitable land should be allocated for a new one and you cannot deviate from the procedure established".

## CRIMINAL CASE ON EIGERBUCK CEO FOR CHEATING PNB

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

A criminal case has been registered against the CEO of a company for submitting tampered property documents to a bank and obtaining a loan of ₹5.90 crore. The fraud came to

light when the CEO failed to repay the loan. The Central Crime Station, Hyderabad, arrested the accused, 37-year-old Gunti Suman, CEO and director of Eigerbuck Pvt. Ltd. and booked him under multiple counts for cheating the Punjab National Bank.

## DESPERATE | MOVE

## Docs say officers not appreciating their work, blaming them for rise in cases

## Govt Covid hosps lose chiefs due to huge workload

NARENDER  
PULLOOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD/KAMAREDDY,  
SEPT. 9

Unable to bear tremendous work pressure due to rising Covid-19 cases, the heads of medical and health institutions decided to quit their official posts. Government General Hospital (GGH), Nizamabad superintendent Dr M. Nageshwar Rao had already resigned from his post. Similarly, district medical and health officers (DM&HO) of Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts also offered to quit their posts.

There are 8,265 Covid-19 cases in Nizamabad district and 7,000 cases in Kamareddy district have been reported so far. For the last one month, Coronavirus positive cases are rapidly increasing in both the districts. On Tuesday alone, there were 433 positive cases in

COVID-19 CASES FOR LAST WEEK		
	NIZAMABAD DISTRICT	KAMAREDDY DISTRICT
02.09.2020	97	62
03.09.2020	85	85
04.09.2020	93	60
05.09.2020	95	86
06.09.2020	94	46
07.09.2020	102	76
08.09.2020	101	94

Kamareddy district and 101 cases in Nizamabad district. Around 125 persons in Nizamabad district and 52 persons in Kamareddy district succumbed.

In this context, the doctors, especially those who are in administrative posts are facing pressure from higher-ups and others.

Reportedly, higher-ups blamed the district officials for the spike in Covid-19 cases and mishandling of

the situation. "We are not expecting appreciation from higher officials, at least they should understand the ground realities during the Coronavirus pandemic," a doctor said.

Kamareddy DM&HO Dr P. Chandrasekhar urged director health and family welfare to relieve him from the post citing health problems. Dr Chandrasekhar joined duties after a week-long leave.

## TS records 2,479 cases, 10 more die

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

Telangana recorded another 2,479 new Covid-19 cases even as 10 more people lost their lives from the disease in the state, according to the State Health Department. It said with these latest numbers, the total Covid-19 cases so far reached 1,47, 642 while the number of deaths from the disease rose to 916, as on Tuesday evening.

As per the Covid-19 bulletin released on Wednesday morning for the 24-hour period between Monday and Tuesday evenings, Telangana had 31,654 active cases of

Covid-19. The number of people to have recovered from the disease so far was at 1,15,072.

As has been the case from the beginning of the outbreak of Covid-19 in the state, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area continued to have the most cases with 322 new Coronavirus infections being reported. The neighbouring Ranga Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri districts too registered cases nearing 200 each, at 188 and 183 respectively. While Warangal Urban district recorded 124 cases, Karimnagar recorded 120 cases, Nalgonda 108, Nizamabad 101.

## CM'S CHILDHOOD FRIEND DIES DUE TO CORONAVIRUS

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, SEPT 9

Kaleshwara Muktheshwara Swamy Devasthanam chairman Bommera Venkatesham (66) died due to Covid-19 on Wednesday. A two-time chairman of the temple located in Mahadevpur mandal of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, Venkatesham, was undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at a private hospital in Hyderabad since a week. He breathed his last during the wee hours of Wednesday. Venkatesham was a childhood friend of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.



## IN BRIEF

## Notices issues to 14 medical shops

**Nizamabad:** Drug control administration officials issued notices to 14 medical shops in Nizamabad and Armoor towns on Wednesday for violating the norms. The officials found that the owners of these medical shops sold medicines without prescription from the doctors. Also, no pharmacists were available in these medical shops. DCA assistant director Dr G. Rajyalaxmi, Nizamabad Urban and Nizamabad Rural drug inspectors B. Praveen, M. Hemalatha inspected medical shops at Khaleelwadi, Dwarakanagar, Saraswathinagar, Bodhan road, Manikbhandar in Nizamabad and Armoor towns. They verified medicine stocks and methods of preserving. Ms Rajyalaxmi directed medical shop owners not to sell scheduled drugs, high value antibiotics without prescriptions. Notices were issued to the medical shop owners under Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. The violators should give a written explanation to the DCA authorities on violations. Further action will be initiated based on the facts. The AD said that private medical practitioners should not possess the medicines and they will face criminal action for violation. She said that people can complain against medical shops on mobile numbers 8333-925-841 for Nizamabad urban and 8333-925-846 for Nizamabad rural areas. "Covid-19 medicines should be sold at MRP only and violators will face the stringent action," she warned.

## Two burglars arrested

**Khammam:** Police arrested two burglars on Wednesday who steal everything from liquor to valuable things like silver. The duo do not leave even places of worship and pan shops. They lift valuables from these places too. The two burglars were identified as Tummisetti Narasimha Rao, a resident of Thanikella under Konigerla mandal and Penugonda Naveen, of Ananthasagar under Chintakani mandal. Another two juveniles also assisted them in burglaries and robberies. The duo were arrested at Sri Sri Circle in Khammam. Suspecting four persons travelling on two motorcycles, the police stopped them. On interrogation, they confessed to committing 12 crimes at various places in Khammam district. They told the police that they take the help of two juveniles too in committing the offences. They stole 3kg silver from a shop in Wyra, gas pipes in Suraksha gas godown in Tallada and liquor bottles from liquor shop in Khammam. They also burgled pan shops and lifted cigarette packets.



CM Chandrashekar Rao honouring Prof. Rama Chandramouli

## TS KALOJI AWARD FOR PROF RAMA CHANDRAMOULI

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, SEPT 9

The Telangana government has chosen noted Telugu writer, poet and academician, Prof. Rama Chandramouli, for the Kaloji Puraskaram. The 73-year-old writer has made tremendous contributions to various genres of modern Telugu literature earning the respect of readers and critics alike. He is a multi-faceted creative genius who has to his credit about 30 novels, more than 350 short stories, 14 collections of poetry, four plays, a few critical works, a personality development book, some volumes of essays and 64 books in all.

Scholars have frequently noted that whatever he has created a literary work, it bore the stamp of his exceptional style and contained his own voice. Many of his writings have been rendered into English by well-known translators and launched on international forums. His writings have also been extensively translated into other Indian languages and they have enthralled lovers of literature at many national literary forums.

In recognition for his contribution to literature he has been conferred the 'Telugu University Poetry Award - 2007', 'Swarna Nandi Award - 2011,' and most recently, on June 10, 2019, he was selected by an international jury for the famous International Life-time Achievement Award 'Najinaam Literary Prize - 2019' as one of the four Indians among 60 winners spread across the world.

## Hail KCR



TRS leaders in Kallur pour milk on the portrait of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao hailing him for introducing the New Revenue Act-2020 in the Assembly on Wednesday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

## TRS cadre become mere puppets in leaders' hands

Without knowledge of New Revenue Act, they hail KCR

A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KHAMMAM, SEPT. 8

The TRS leaders and activists have turned to be mere puppets in the hands of the party leadership what with a majority of them simply queuing up to only praise their president and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao whenever a new scheme or reform was brought without any idea of the pros and cons of the new programme or new law.

The TRS party cadre performed Palabhishekam to KCR's portrait hailing him for introducing the new Revenue Act in the Telangana legislative Assembly on Wednesday.

Surprisingly, some of them did the ritual even before KCR had introduced the Telangana New Revenue Act-2020. Such scenes were witnessed in different villages in Madhira and Errupalem mandals.

The leaders, who organised the programme, did not much about the new Act but raised slogans in favour of the CM and poured milk on the portrait of the CM.

■ Unaware of the real facts and effects the reforms would bring about, the TRS cadre were found to be simply praising their leader and appreciating him

■ In some villages, the TRS cadre performed the palabhishekam even before KCR introduced the new Act in the Assembly

Palabhishekam was performed to KCR in every mandal in Khammam district.

CPI worker E. Venkateswarlu said, "The tahsildars were given registration powers of farmlands and this gives no scope for checking corruption. Earlier, the VROs played a key role in mutation of farmlands. The registration office used to take some money from the buyers and register the farmlands. Now, all the powers have been transferred to the hands of tahsildars. The tahsildars can collect more than the VROs and registrar office staff for registration of farmlands. There is no safety net in the New Revenue Act to check such type of corruption".

Without having any knowledge of the reality and the effects the reforms would bring about, the TRS cadre were found to be simply praising their leader. It is just that the TRS leaders follow whatever their leader says like "our boss ordered and we will follow."

TRS MLAs of Sattupalli, Wyra, Yellandu, Kothagudem and Pinapaka called their party cadre and marked the occasion of introduction of the New Revenue Act by performing some programme. Palabhishekam was performed to KCR's portraits in Kallur, Sattupalli, Kamepalli, Paloncha and Wyra mandal headquarters.

By transferring the mutation power to the MRO, it is more like giving the authority to such men who know better ways to collect money in the illegal way. This change will not help in checking corruption.

A. Rambabu, a resident of Chintakani said, "By making available all the information about agricultural and non-agricultural lands in Dharani portal, there is chance for reducing litigations with regard to land registrations."

## PALABHISHEKAM PERFORMED TO KCR'S PORTRAIT

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, SEPT. 9

The TRS leaders took out rallies and performed 'palabhishekam' to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's portraits for abolishing the VRO system, at various places in the erstwhile Adilabad district on Wednesday.

In Khanapur, the TRS activists and leaders took out a rally and raised slogans in favour of TRS and KCR. They said that the decision to abolish the VRO system was a good one and they said it would help in reducing complications in land registrations in the future.

The VROs remained silent spectators without voicing their views in the public.

The VROs had been helpful in checking the ground situation during digitisation of the land records taken up in the state in the past.

## No health bulletins despite surge in cases

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, SEPT. 9

As expected, the district medical and health officer stopped issuing Covid-19 bulletin after the number of positive cases rose up to 500 every day.

The medical authorities issued bulletin till September 3.

Probably, the higher officials of the state government felt embarrassed not taking up adequate measures to check the increasing number of Covid-19 cases and stopped issuing the health bulletin in Khammam district.

District Medical and Health Officer Malathi remained silent when the mediapersons raised a question about the same.

After intervention of the Telangana High Court, the government increased the number of tests per million population daily in all districts, including Khammam and Bhadradi.

With the number of tests being increased, the number of Covid-19 positive

■ From September 3, the health officials stopped issuing the Covid bulletin after the number of cases witnessed a surge following a rise in the number of tests performed on Covid suspects

cases also saw a surge.

A total of 551 Covid-19 positive cases were registered on August 25 against 2,513 tests conducted, 532 on August 26, 480 on August 27 and 512 on August 28.

On August 29, 532 Covid-19 positive cases were recorded against 2,377 tests, on August 30, 326 cases were registered and on August 31, 5,368 cases were recorded.

Meanwhile, on September 1, 443 cases were recorded, on September 2, 589 and on September 3, the number of cases recorded were 511. Since then, no bulletins were released by the officials concerned, even when hundreds of cases were being reported from the villages.

All PHCs and CHCs are

also witnessing a surge in the number of Covid-19 positive cases in Khammam and Bhadradi districts. About 5-12 cases were being reported from each PHC in the two districts.

Twelve Covid-19 cases were reported in Tekulapalli PHC and seven in Narasapuram PHC in Bhadradi district.

The officials in PHCs in Khammam district are not issuing any figures regarding the tests and cases.

Sources said that the number of Covid positive cases has crossed 600 in Khammam district.

CPM district secretary N. Nageswara Rao said, "The government is not being transparent with respect to number of cases or the treatment being provided. It has been the same since the beginning. Adequate testing, tracing and treatment will help in checking the spread of the virus but the government is not focussing on it."

## Bhatti: Doctors shortage in districts

From Page 1

Taking part in a discussion on Covid-19 situation in the state in the legislative assembly on Wednesday, Vikramarka also accused the state government and the Chief Minister, K. Chandrashekar Rao, of practically shutting down the opposition, including the Congress from contributing to the cause of fighting Covid-19 in the state.

"As the CLP, we six Congress members sought an official appointment with the Chief Minister to present our views and suggestions. Instead of meeting with us, the government placed all of us under house arrest," he said.

From the day one, the Congress made it clear that it will stand with the

government on any effort to contain and combat the disease, said Vikramarka. "We supported the government on all its decisions, including joining in clapping of our hands to drive corona away. When asked to switch off the lights at home and light lamps, we did," he said.

The Congress' only aim was to join forces with the government in combating the disease and assist the government in any way possible.

Holding the government's feet to the fire over the inadequate measures put in place to fight the disease, Vikramarka, based on his extensive tour of the districts, said that many posts of doctors and paramedical staff in government hospitals were vacant.

"Former MLA Sunnam Rajaiah died from Covid-

19 because there was no one to care for him at the hospital in Khammam," Vikramarka said. In 23 districts of the state, against the sanctioned strength of 8,771 doctors and paramedical staff, there are 4,210 vacancies, Vikramarka pointed out, urging the government to fill these positions.

He also said the government must release ₹100 crore for each district, so local administrations can equip themselves and effectively combat the spread of Covid-19.

Asking the government to incorporate Covid-19 treatment in the AarogyaSri and to set up a panel headed by a senior IAS officer to implement strict billing controls on private hospitals, Vikramarka's suggestions were taken well by Rao.

## Celebrate Liberation Day officially, demands BJP

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC JODEGHAT (KUMARAMBHEEM ASIFABAD), SEPT. 9

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay on Wednesday demanded the state government to celebrate September 17 as Telangana Liberation Day officially and alleged that the TRS government was not celebrating September 17 under the influence of AIMIM in the state.

He said that the central government was ready to sanction houses to the Telangana martyrs if the state government provided the list of martyrs. He predicted that the BJP will come to power in 2023 in Telangana.

Addressing a public meeting after paying tributes to tribal legend Komaram Bheem at Jodeghat in Kerameri in Kumaram Bheem Asifabad district this morning, he said that the Chief Minister doesn't want to celebrate the Telangana Formation Day as he wants to dilute the spirit of Telangana movement.

He said that the BJP will

■ Bandi Sanjay alleged that the TRS was not showing interest in celebrating the Telangana Liberation Day officially under the influence of the AIMIM with which the party has good understanding

celebrate the Telangana Formation Day officially after it would come to power in 2023.

Sanjay said the state government was using central government funds for the publicity of the state schemes without give due share in publicity.

He said the people of Telangana would teach a befitting lesson to KCR and his family members in the coming days who rose to power in the name of separate Telangana.

Adilabad MP Bapurao demanded KCR to issue pattas to the lands being cultivated by the Adivasis since long time, as was promised by him in the Assembly in the past.

He called upon the Adivasis to fight for their rights enshrined in the Constitution.

He said that they should

fight against KCR like Komaram Bheem fought against the Nizams in the past for Jal, Jangal and Jameen. (water, jungle and land).

BJP senior leader and former Peddapalli MP Gaddam Vivek criticised KCR for pushing Telangana into debts by making false promises to the people and diverting the funds given for the central government schemes for other purposes.

He alleged that the TRS was encouraging consumption of liquor by allowing belt shops to thrive as it would fill the government coffers. On the other hand, he is giving only a paltry ₹2,000 as pension to the people.

Bandi Sanjay also paid tributes to Adivasi leader who fought against the British in Nirmal and visited 'Veyyi Udala Marri' where the British hanged 1,000 Adivasis.

BJP leader Pradeep Kumar, Kumaram Bheem's grandson Kumaram Sonerao and BJP leaders Payal Shankar and Podval and others were present.

## No regard for Covid protocol at test centres

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

Like the JEE (mains), social distancing and other safety norms were thrown out of the window yet again on the first day of the TS-EAMCET 2020 for engineering candidates on Wednesday.

Outside the iON Digital Zone, Old Alwal, scenes were miserable as parents who accompanied their children to write the exam crowded outside the exam centre even as temperatures rose. The safety arrangements were such that students were forced to enter

and exit the exam centre through the entrance of the adjoining eatery.

Inside the exam centre, students who wished to remain anonymous told *Deccan Chronicle* that no seat gap between students was maintained and no measures were taken after the exam for students to exit the exam centre while maintaining physical distance.

Several students also complained that no masks or gloves were provided outside the centre and some candidates didn't even wear masks because they thought they would be provided one.

## CM warned of stern action against those charging more KCR lashes out at pvt hospitals for fleecing

From page 1

He appreciated Congress leader Malla Bhatti Vikramarka for suggesting the setting up the task force headed by senior IAS officers to monitor the charges collected by the private hospitals from Covid-19 patients.

"Sensing the danger from corporate hospitals exploiting Covid-19 patients, we tried our best not to allow them to offer Covid-19 treatment. But we have no other option than allowing them to admit Covid-19 patients

after the court ordered it," said Rao.

Stating that they are extorting money in the name of treatment in this troubled time, Rao said that the government will now initiate stern action against them. "Is this the time for hospitals to make money out of the misery of the people?" he asked.

Accepting some of the suggestions made by AIMIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi and Congress leader Vikramarka, the Chief Minister said the government will examine the possibility of

including Covid-19 in the AarogyaSri list to help the poor.

"We will also see if we can release money towards paying bills of white card holders who avail medical treatment for Covid-19 in private hospitals," said Rao.

Covid-19 teaches lessons to state governments and the Central government about the poor medical infrastructure in the country.

While suggesting that the Centre increase the budget for medical infrastructure, Rao told the

House that the state government is also mulling over increasing the medical and health budget considerably to be ready to tackle any medical emergency like Covid-19 in the future.

Participating in the short discussion, BJP MLA T. Raja Singh demanded the construction of Osmania hospital and the MIM floor leader requested the CM not to demolish the Osmania hospital building. He said "We have a responsibility to protect our heritage and OGH is a prestigious heritage institution established by the Nizam."

Reacting to the request of members, Rao said that a decision on that will be taken after the High Court delivers its verdict.

Replying to the query raised by Akbaruddin on the Centre's assistance to the state government to fight the pandemic, Rao pointed out that the Union government which should have come to the rescue of the state in these times, has in fact released only ₹256 crore under the national health mission and offered 647 ventilators.





## SHORT TAKES

BANDED KRAIT  
SNAKE RESCUED  
IN ODISHAAKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BARIAPADA, SEPT. 9

A huge banded krait (Rana) snake was rescued from a villager's garden in Mayurbhanj district on Wednesday. The snake was more than eight-foot long and estimated to be more than 15 years old. Initially, one Purna Chandra Mohapatra of Badakaranjia village of Mayurbhanj district spotted the banded krait on the wood barricade of his garden.

He informed the forest personnel immediately about the snake.

Later, snake catcher Krushna Chandra Gochhayat reached Purna Chandra's house. He rescued the snake from the garden barricade and released it into Similipal forest.

RHEA MOVES  
COURT TO SEEK  
BAIL FOR 2ND TIMESHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 9

Actress Rhea Chakraborty, arrested by the NCB in a drugs case linked to her boyfriend and actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, on Wednesday moved a bail plea before a special NDPS court in Mumbai. This is her second attempt to seek release after a magistrate court on Tuesday refused to grant her bail.

The actress has filed this plea through her lawyer Satish Maneshinde in which she claimed to be "innocent".

It is also claimed that during her custody, she was coerced into making a self-incriminating confession, which she retracted later on September 8.

According to her bail plea, she is entitled for bail because "no drugs or psychotropic substance has been seized from the present applicant and the allegations, if any, would pertain to small quantities" and hence section 27A is not applicable. Therefore, there would be no bar on granting her bail. As a result, the offence, if any, is bailable in nature and "the applicant ought to be enlarged on bail forthwith," read her bail plea.

It also said that perusal of remand applications of all the accused, who have been arrested, makes it evident that there is nothing on record that suggests involvement of the present applicant in any way.

2 STUDENTS  
CHARGED WITH  
UAPA GET BAILGILVESTER ASSARY | DC  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
SEPT. 9

Two students who were arrested for their alleged links with Maoists and charged with Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), were granted conditional bail by a NIA special court in Kochi after 10 months in custody.

Alan Shuhaib and Thaha Fasal are students of journalism and law respectively and former members of CPM's local branch committee. They were arrested from Kozhikode on November 2, for alleged links with Maoists.

The bail has been granted on the personal surety bond of ₹1 lakh each filed by Alan and Thaha's parents. In their bail plea, the duo had contended that no evidence has been produced by investigating agencies yet to prove their connection with Maoists and they have been lodged in the jail for more than 10 months now.

Alan and Taha were arrested for allegedly possessing and distributing brochures favouring Maoists. The two students were expelled from the CPI(M) earlier this year.

The LDF government in Kerala had drawn flak for slapping UAPA against the students. The UAPA sections were charged at a time when the CPM at the Centre had opposed the draconian law within and outside Parliament.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's statement describing the students as Maoists had sparked off a controversy in the state. The use of UAPA had surprised many in the Left circles.

After the LDF came to power in 2016, there was a big debate on UAPA cases registered during the previous Congress led UDF government's tenure. The CPI(M) had made its opinion clear that UAPA should be used only to curb terror activities.

Indian troops leave limited options for  
PLA looking for Galwan-type clashes

The PLA is said to have sent in their martial arts specialists to carry out a mass attack

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC  
HYDERABAD SEPT. 9

Positioned at a vantage point, armed and well-equipped soldiers of the Indian Army are operating from trenches with overhead protection at heights they took control of more than 10 days ago, with ample time for the soldiers to consolidate their positions.

The options before the People's Liberation Army to regain control of those heights are limited — either an air strike or send their infantry up which could come with huge costs.

To take on one platoon of the Indian Army sitting pretty on those heights which gives them a natural advantage over the enemy, they would need 10 of their platoons.

Limited options before a frustrated PLA to regain control of the strategic heights on the northern and southern banks of Pangong Tso is what led them to line up their soldiers to attempt and carry out another Galwan valley-type clash at Mukhpari, one of the highest peaks in Chushul on Tuesday.

The PLA is said to have sent in their martial arts specialists carrying Guandao (a nearly six-foot long wooden or metal pole atop which a sharp blade is mounted) and other blunt weapons to carry out a mass attack. But with the Indian Army threatening to open fire, the Chinese troops were forced to retreat.

"The group of about 50 PLA soldiers had come with an intention to scare the Indian army and inflict casualties by using blunt weapons, similar to Galwan valley clashes. We captured the heights more than 10 days ago and we used this time to consolidate our positions at the heights. We do not intend to be drawn into close quarter combat with PLA anymore. We are positioned to open fire straightway, firing warning shots first. A clear message was sent to them yesterday though they were looking for trouble," highly placed sources told *Deccan Chronicle*.

The PLA has limited options before them. One option is pounding the Indian positions, flattening the defence and regaining control of the heights. With a prepared



An IAF fighter jet flies in the Ladakh region amid the prolonged India-China stand off, in Leh on Wednesday.

— PTI

## INDIA, RUSSIA DISCUSS BORDER STAND-OFF

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had a bilateral meeting and "excellent talks" with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on Wednesday evening in which the "international situation" was discussed including possibly the current Sino-Indian military tensions in the

Ladakh sector.

The meeting was held ahead of the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) foreign ministers' meeting and also significantly ahead of EAM Jaishankar's bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on Thursday.

The Russian, Indian and Chinese foreign ministers are also expected to have a luncheon meeting together on Thursday.

Russia is India's time-tested friend and also has close ties with China due to which it has emerged as a key player to nudge both Asian giants towards a solution.

Indian army, that seems unlikely. The other option is to send their infantry who will have to climb up the mountains and launch an attack. But given the huge force required to take

on Indian troops positioned on mountain tops, that seems equally unlikely. Sources said that the Indian troops do not need to engage in close quarter combat.

● **ANOTHER ATTACK** and counter-attack between Indian and Chinese troops appears imminent.

● **LIMITED OPTIONS** before PLA to regain heights as it is exposed and unstable.

● **INDIAN TROOPS** have a natural advantage.

● **PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY** wanted Galwan valley like clashes at Mukhpari, had sent martial art experts.

RIC foreign ministers  
meeting likely todaySRIDHAR  
KUMARASWAMI | DC  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 9

At a bilateral meeting on Thursday on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) foreign ministers meeting in Moscow, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is expected to clearly tell his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi that peace on the borders is closely linked to development of bilateral ties between the two Asian giants and that China must de-escalate by disengaging its troops to restore the April status quo in the Ladakh sector.

This comes even as news agency reports from Beijing cited the Chinese Foreign Ministry as saying there would be a Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral foreign ministers' luncheon meeting in the Russian capital on Thursday which is being seen by observers as an effort by a worried Russia to encourage and persuade both Asian neighbours to reach a compromise and avoid a devastating war in the Ladakh sector.

The RIC is an already-existing trilateral format and the luncheon meeting will obviously be hosted by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov which will give the Indian and Chinese foreign ministers another opportunity to interact apart from their own bilateral meeting.

Jaishankar had made it clear last week that "what happens at the border will impact the (Sino-Indian) relationship".

Blaming China for the situation of the last four months in the Ladakh sector that was a "direct result" of the Chinese side trying to unilaterally change the status quo at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), India had also last week clearly said the "way

● **EAM S. JAISHANKAR** had made it clear last week that 'what happens at the border will impact the (Sino-Indian) relationship'.

ahead" was "negotiations" through both military and diplomatic channels. New Delhi added it is "firmly committed" to "peaceful dialogue" and called on China to "sincerely engage" India in order to restore peace and tranquillity at the LAC.

New Delhi also made it clear that Beijing "should not take any provocative action or escalate matters", which comes after the latest round of Chinese military provocations at Pangong Tso lake in Ladakh both on the night of August 29 and on August 31.

The EAM, meanwhile, began his bilateral meetings on Wednesday in the Russian Capital by holding talks with his Kyrgyz and later Tajik counterparts.

The SCO is an eight-member predominantly Central Asian Grouping that comprises China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.

Both India and Pakistan became SCO members in 2017.

Jaishankar tweeted, "A fruitful meeting with FM Chingiz Aidiarbekov of Kyrgyz Republic on SCO sidelines. Thanked him for the support in facilitating return of Indian nationals. Discussed issues of bilateral and regional interest. Agreed to further enhance our Strategic Partnership in all spheres."

He added, "A warm meeting with Tajik FM Sirojiddin Muhriddin. Pleased with our growing bilateral and regional cooperation. Highly value this strategic partnership."



Omar Abdullah

ABDULLAH TO  
VACATE GOVT  
BUNGALOWYUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 9

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah has gone on house hunting after he decided to voluntarily vacate the government accommodation provided to him about 18 years ago. This comes against the backdrop of the change in rules of entitlement in the Union Territory.

Sources close to Abdullah said that he is looking for an abode which will suit his budget and, more importantly, is located in an area in Srinagar where his security and privacy concerns are satisfied.

Abdullah, 50, who is vice president of National Conference (NC), J&K's main opposition party, on Wednesday released a letter on his Twitter handle that he had written on July 31 to the administrative secretary of J&K's estates department saying that he would be vacating his government accommodation in Srinagar in eight to ten weeks time.

"The point to note is that contrary to stories planted in the media last year, I received no notice to vacate and have chosen to do so of my own accord," Abdullah said in a tweet.

He said that he would be vacating his government accommodation in Srinagar before the end of October.

The letter says that after the renovation of an adjacent house, the premises in entirety were used by Abdullah as chief minister's official residence from October 2010 onwards but he continued to stay there even after demitting the office of chief minister in January 2015 "as the rules allowed me to retain an accommodation in Srinagar or Jammu (twin capitals of J&K) and I chose to retain an accommodation in Srinagar."

The letter further says that there has been a change in the entitlement of former chief ministers of J&K some months ago, "I now find myself in unauthorised occupation of this accommodation, as no attempt has been made to regularise the allotment to me on security or other grounds."

Abdullah says that this was a situation which was unacceptable to him as "I have never held on to any government property I was not entitled to and I have no intention to start now."

He informed the officer that he has begun the search for a "suitable alternate accommodation" but the process is taking longer because of the "constraints caused by Covid-19."

● **ABDULLAH RELEASED** a letter on his Twitter handle that he had written on July 31 to the administrative secretary of J&K's estates department saying that he would vacate his government accommodation in Srinagar in 8-10 weeks time.

Drug addicts kill  
14-yr-old for ₹100AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 9

Drug addicts in Odisha capital Bhubaneswar allegedly killed a 14-year-old boy for meagre ₹100 that he was carrying to buy grocery and vegetables.

The boy was attacked by the accused on September 2 evening after refused to give them the money. He succumbed to his injuries on Tuesday night.

The deceased was identified as Ashwini Padhi, a native of Bharatpur under Khandagiri police limits. The Khandagiri police took four of the attackers into custody on Wednesday after the locals took to streets protesting against the ghastly incident.

According to the par-

ents of the deceased, who eke out their living by selling *gupchups* in the local market, they had sent the boy to a nearby grocery shop to buy some essential items.

However, the accused forcibly took away the boy from the shop to a desolate place and asked him to give them the money. As the boy did not concede to their demand, they attacked him with an axe, causing serious bleeding.

"Having been informed about the incident, we went to the spot and rescued him in a critical condition. He had sustained grievous injuries all over his body. He died last night. We demand strong action against the accused," said the wailing parents of the deceased.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 9

The arrest of a local editor by Leh police over a third party Facebook comment against a BJP leader has caused outrage among journalists and civil society activists in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Tsewang Rigzin, the editor of *State Times* newspaper was arrested by the police on a complaint lodged with it by local BJP MP Tsering Namgyal last week. The police complaint was lodged following an unidentified member of a Facebook page called Ladakh in Media run by Rigzin posted a comment against BJP leader Vikram Singh Randhawa on September 3. The police arrested Rigzin on September 5, as he was the administrator

of the group, but he was immediately granted bail, a report from Leh said.

However, many journalists in J&K and beyond took to social media platforms soon to condemn Rigzin's arrest. Some political parties also criticised the Ladakh police and the BJP MP for allegedly trying to muzzle the freedom of expression.

In Delhi, the Indian Journalists Union in a statement while condemning the arrest of Rigzin said that it was a "blatant attack on freedom of expression".

Rigzin is the general secretary of the Ladakh Journalists Union, an

● **POLICE COMPLAINT** was lodged following an unidentified member of a Facebook page called Ladakh in Media run by Rigzin posted a comment against BJP leader Vikram Singh Randhawa on September 3.

affiliate of the Indian Journalists Union.

In May last year, the Leh's Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) had while acting on an application filed by the Press Club Leh permitted the police to investigate the complaint filed against Randhawa and BJP's J&K unit chief Ravinder Raina after they allegedly tried to bribe local reporters for favourable coverage during the Lok Sabha elections.

Separately, Congress candidate for Ladakh Lok Sabha seat Rigzin Spalbar had also moved the court with a complaint that the BJP has violated the Model Code of

Conduct (MCC).

Subsequently, the police registered an FIR at the police station concerned and took up investigation into the matter.

According to the complaint that was lodged with the police by the Press Club Leh, the BJP leaders including its J&K state president Ravinder Raina and its in-charge for Ladakh constituency Randhawa, "tried to bribe media persons" on May 2 after a press conference held in Ladakh's main town "to use their platform to influence the outcome of the election".

The BJP had denied the charge and threatened to sue the journalists for defamation. It had claimed that the envelopes contained the invitations to media persons to cover the party rally.

HAPPY | MOMENT

RABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, SEPT. 9

A street vendor from Madhya Pradesh, who is a beneficiary of welfare scheme launched by the Centre, was thrilled to get the an opportunity to speak to Prime Minister Narendra Modi 'directly' on Wednesday.

Chaganlal Verma, who

MP street vendor interacted with the PM on the sidelines of launch of PM Svanidhi Yojana  
Welfare scheme beneficiary talks to PM online, feels thrilled

eked out a living by selling broomsticks on the streets in Sambre of Indore district, interacted with the Prime Minister online on the sidelines of the launch of "PM Svanidhi Yojana".

"I can't describe my feelings in words. I had never imagined even in my wildest dream that I will speak to the PM directly one day. I was quite nervous initially. But, I felt

comfortable talking to the PM as our interaction progressed", 56-year-old Verma said while narrating his experience.

Verma was one of many street vendors of MP who had interacted with the PM on the occasion of the launch of the programme, aimed at reviving the economy of street vendors whose business suffered due to the Coronavirus

outbreak in March this year, with provision of loans of ₹10,000 to each.

According to him, government officers had been in touch with him since the last five days to prepare him for the programme.

"I was amazed to see so many government officers moving around me. I had never interacted with a government officer till

then in my life", he recounted.

Verma said he was pleased to get a tip from the PM on how to increase income by recycling used goods.

"PM suggested to me to collect the pipes used as handles of the brooms, once they were discarded by consumers, to use them in new brooms to bring down the cost of produc-

tion", Verma recounted.

He said the pandemic has shattered his economy and the money given under the scheme was very helpful in putting his business back on track.

Madhya Pradesh has identified more than 4.5 lakh beneficiaries under the scheme and completed the process to give loans to over one lakh street vendors in the last two

months.

Meanwhile, Congress veteran and former chief minister Kamal Nath smelt politics at the launch of the welfare scheme at a time when crucial by-elections to 27 Assembly constituencies in the state are round the corner. He accused the centre of trying to influence the voters by launching the scheme.



## IN BRIEF

## Another Belarus activist detained

**Kyiv:** Belarusian authorities on Wednesday detained one of the last leading members of an opposition council who remained free, moving methodically to end a month of protests against authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko. Lawyer Maxim Znak, a member of the Coordination Council created by the opposition to facilitate talks with the country's leader of 26 years on a transition of power, was taken out of the council's office by unidentified people in ski masks, his associate Gleb German said. He said Znak only had time to text message "masks" before they took the phone away from him.

## Israel, UAE to ink deal next week

**Washington:** Israel and the United Arab Emirates will sign their historic deal normalising relations at a White House ceremony on Sept. 15, officials said. Senior delegations from the two countries will be led by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the brother of Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince. US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the ceremony would either be on the South Lawn, the Rose Garden or inside depending on weather. Late Tuesday, Netanyahu tweeted he "was proud to leave for Washington next week at the invitation of President Trump and to participate in the historic ceremony at the to sign the deal with the UAE."

## Pak mine collapse toll rises to 22

**Peshawar:** At least 22 people have been killed and dozens were battling for their lives after six units of the famed marble mines in Pakistan's Ziarat Ghar mountain collapsed, causing large boulders to fall on them. The mines collapsed on Monday night, instantly killing 12 miners, the *Geo News* reported. The death toll rose after 10 more succumbed to injuries at the District Mohmand Hospital. Majority of the deceased include labourers and few others who had gathered at the foothill in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Saffi town near the Afghanistan border, about 85 km from provincial capital Peshawar. Mohmand District Police Officer Mohmand Tariq Habib told *Geo News* that people are still buried under the rubble.

## NAWAZ IS PO, ZARDARI INDICTED

**SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 9**

Former Pakistan president Asif Ali Zardari was indicted in the Toshakhana reference on Wednesday, while former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was declared a proclaimed offender. An Islamabad accountability court heard the Toshakhana reference on Wednesday. Former Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani was also indicted. Mr Zardari and Mr Gilani have denied the charges. The judge, Asghar Ali of court number three, ordered a copy of the indictment to be given to the suspects. Taking to the rostrum, Mr Gilani said these kinds of matters should go to the Public Accounts Committee, not the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The cabinet division had sent the summary to give the cars from the Toshakhana, he argued. "The summary landed on my desk after a whole process but the bureaucrats who sent it to me haven't been declared suspects."

## Kabul bomb targets VP, kills 10 civilians

10 shops were smoldering after the explosion, windows of dozens of homes shattered

**Kabul, Sept. 9:** A bombing in the Afghan capital on Wednesday targeted the convoy of the country's first vice president, killing 10 people and wounding at least 31, including several of the vice president's bodyguards, injured

31 wounded were taken to different hospitals for treatment. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack and the Taliban quickly denied they were behind the bombing. First Vice President Amrullah Saleh suffered minor burns in the blast.

The bomb was hidden in a cart by the roadside and detonated as his convoy passed by. Saleh, who is also Afghanistan's former intelligence chief, said in his first television appearance immediately after the attack that he was fine and had sustained only slight burns. He appeared in the TV footage with bandages on one hand.

"Me and my younger son who was also with me are fine," Saleh said. "I have slight burns on my face and hand from the wave of the blast. I don't have exact details right now, but I apologise to those who suffered casualties and those who lost their property in the attack."

His spokesman, Razwan Murad, called the attack a "vicious terrorist attempt" on Saleh's life. The roads in the vicinity of the bombing were closed off. The blast ignited a fire that set ablaze a number of the shops. The explosion left behind a scene of destruction — at least 10 shops were smoldering in the aftermath of the explosion that had also shattered windows of dozens of nearby homes, some with doors hanging off their hinges. —AP

10 people killed and at least 31, including several of the vice president's bodyguards, injured

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The bomb was hidden in a cart by the roadside and detonated as convoy of First Vice President Amrullah Saleh passed by



Afghan security personnel and municipality workers clean the site of an explosion in Kabul, on Wednesday. Spokesman for Afghanistan's Interior Ministry said the bombing that targeted the convoy of the country's first vice president on Wednesday morning killed several people and wounded more than a dozen others, including several of the vice president's bodyguards.

— AP

## MAN CHARGED WITH MURDER OVER STABBINGS

**London, Sept. 9:** A 27-year-old man appeared in a UK court via video-link on Wednesday charged with murder in connection with stabbings that took place in Birmingham city centre in the early hours of Sunday. Zephaniah McLeod has been charged with the murder of Jacob Billington, who was one of eight people stabbed. McLeod is also accused of the attempted murder of the seven other victims of the knife attacks and was remanded in custody by Birmingham Magistrates' Court to appear at Birmingham Crown Court on Thursday, again via video-link.

He spoke only to confirm his personal details during an appearance before two magistrates and was not asked for any pleas. There was no application for bail, West Midlands Police said. The victims of the attempted murder charges were Dimitar Bachvarov, Migle Dolobauskaite, Thomas Glassey, Michael Callaghan, Shane Rowley, Rhys Cummings and Ryan Bowers, the court was told.

Billington, 23, died after being attacked in Irving Street while enjoying a night out with school friends from Liverpool visiting one of their group who is studying in Birmingham. A post-mortem concluded he died as a result of a stab wound to the neck. A 23-year-old man, who was injured, remains in hospital. — PTI

## 10 dead in Chicago weekend gunfire

**Chicago (US), Sept. 9:** An eight-year-old girl shot in the back was among 10 people killed in gunfire over the Labour Day weekend in Chicago, police said on Tuesday, marking the latest deadly holiday weekend in the nation's third-largest city.

More than 50 people were shot from Friday until just before Tuesday midnight during a year where violent crime has soared in Chicago and other big US cities. But the holiday weekend's shooting death and injury counts weren't as high as recent holiday weekends and police noted a preceding two-month decline. "We're going to continue, obviously, looking at addressing violence crime," Police Superintendent David Brown told reporters. "We are seeing... ten-

uous progress. It's fragile, obviously. But we're seeing tenuous progress."

From July to August, murders dropped 45 per cent while shooting incidents dropped 15 per cent in the same time frame, police said. The department attributed the drop to tactics started in July, namely adding more officers to higher crime areas. The department has previ-

ously made similar deployments to crime hotspots, which experts say can temporarily lower crime but can be too aggressive.

Brown has said this time officers are also involved more in community-relations events such as food drives, an effort he hopes can work long term. The July Fourth weekend was particularly bloody with 17 people killed and at last

70 wounded in gun violence. A seven-year-old girl and 14-year-old boy were among those fatally shot.

Killed over the Labour Day weekend was an eight-year-old girl identified by the Cook County medical examiner's office as Dajore Wilson. The child was in the car with two adults on the city's South Side when they stopped at a red light. — AP

## UK PM plans law banning large gatherings

**London, Sept. 9:** UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is planning tougher new restrictions on social gatherings of more than six people in England starting next Monday, following a significant rise in the coronavirus cases.

A law change to be introduced will ban larger groups of friends and family meeting anywhere socially indoors or outdoors, to be enforced through a £100 fine if people fail to comply and doubling on each offence up to a maximum of £3,200.

The rule will not apply to schools, workplaces or Covid-secure weddings, funerals and organised team sports, Downing Street said on Wednesday. "We need to act now to stop the virus spreading. So we are simplifying and strengthening the rules on

## Las Vegas Covid +ve children contract inflammatory disease

**Las Vegas (US), Sept. 9:** Health officials said Tuesday that eight Las Vegas-area children under age 14 who tested positive for Covid-19 since March were also diagnosed with a rare inflammatory condition linked with the coronavirus.

The Southern Nevada Health District said all the children were hospitalised and released, and the district has begun adding

daily tallies of confirmed cases of the illness to its daily online Coronavirus response report.

Not all children exhibit the same symptoms, and the district said that while there isn't a known cause, many children with the illness had Covid-19 or had close contact with someone who did. Researchers say the illness can cause inflammation of the multiple internal organs.

The Health District reported 61,543 cases of Covid-19 in and around Las Vegas, an increase of 67 cases since Monday, and a total of 1,206 deaths since March.

Officials say new case rates have decreased in the past two weeks. State health officials reported no new deaths and 137 new confirmed cases of Covid-19 statewide on Tuesday. — AP

social contact — making them easier to understand and for the police to enforce," said Johnson. "It is absolutely critical that

people now abide by these rules and remember the basics — washing your hands, covering your face, keeping space from others,

and getting a test if you have symptoms," he said. Previously, guidance in England allowed gatherings of up to six people

from different households outdoors — or two households of any size, indoors or outdoors. But until now the police have had no powers to stop them unless gatherings exceeded 30 people.

Under the new law, any group of seven or more people gathering anywhere risks being dispersed by police or fined for non-compliance.

The change applies to people in England of all ages, and to gatherings indoors and outdoors, in private homes, public outdoor spaces, and venues such as pubs and restaurants. The devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland set their own Coronavirus restrictions but largely follow similar patterns as set out for England. — PTI

## Trump nominated for Peace Nobel

**Copenhagen, Sept. 9:** A far-right Norwegian lawmaker said Wednesday that he has nominated US President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in the Middle East. Christian Tybring-Gjedde, a member of the Norwegian Parliament for the far-right Progress Party, said Trump should be considered because of his work "for a peace agreement between the United Arab Emirates and Israel which opens up for possible peace in the Middle East."

"No matter how Trump acts at home and what he

says at press conferences, he has absolutely a chance at getting the Nobel Peace Prize," Tybring-Gjedde, told *The Associated Press*. He said he nominated Trump on Wednesday, adding that "Donald Trump meets the criteria" for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Tybring-Gjedde was also one of two Norwegian lawmakers who nominated Trump for the peace prize in 2018 for his efforts to bring reconciliation between North and South Korea. Any national lawmaker can nominate someone. — AP

## US reporter not detained: China

**Beijing, Sept. 9:** Local authorities in China's Inner Mongolia region have denied they used force or detained an American reporter when she was questioned at a police station last week.

The *Los Angeles Times* said Thursday that one of its reporters was grabbed by the throat and pushed into a cell and held for more than four hours before being forced to leave the area in northern China. "There's no instance of the police using both hands to pinch the neck or being detained in a police cell, nor was there any instance of being detained or expelled," the press office for Hohhot, the provincial capital, said in a written response to questions from *The Associated Press*. The statement, dated Tuesday, said the reporter was interviewing a pedestrian and accused her of filming or photographing the person without the interviewee's permission.

It said the reporter chose to go back to Beijing voluntarily. The newspaper's Beijing bureau chief, Alice Su, who is the journalist in question, declined to comment. She was covering protests and class boycotts that had broken out in Inner Mongolia over a move to increase the use of Chinese in schools where

## HOMES OF CHINESE REPORTERS RAIDED BY OZ: BEIJING

**Beijing, Sept. 9:** Australian agents in June raided the homes of four journalists working for Chinese state media and seized their electronics, citing possible violations of Australia's anti-foreign interference law, China's foreign ministry said Wednesday.

There have been no previous reports about the alleged Australian actions. The accusation by ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian came one day after the last two Australian journalists left China for fear of detention and the Chinese foreign ministry announced Australian citizen Cheng Lei, a Chinese state media journalist, had been detained. — AP

## In 3 big states, Biden looks to rebuild Dems' Blue Wall

**Lansing (US), Sept. 9:** In 2016, Donald Trump tore down Democrats' "blue wall," winning the White House with surprise victories in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. This year, Joe Biden is trying to rebuild. The Democratic presidential nominee's first pandemic-era campaign trips beyond his home in Delaware are taking him to all three states, an indication of how closely Biden's electoral prospects are tied to his ability to flip those political battlegrounds. Last week, Biden trav-

eled to Wisconsin and was followed quickly by running mate Kamala Harris, who held her own events there on Labour Day. On Wednesday, Biden heads to Michigan to tout a plan for boosting US manufacturing. He also has two stops scheduled this week in Pennsylvania. Though the Biden campaign often emphasises that it sees multiple ways to secure the 270 Electoral College votes they need to win in November, the quickest path runs through Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

## JUNE PRIMARY ELECTION: GEORGIA INVESTIGATING 1,000 CASES OF 'POTENTIAL DOUBLE VOTING'

**Atlanta (US), Sept. 9:** Georgia's top elections official said Tuesday that his office has identified about 1,000 cases of "potential double voting" in the June primary election — a felony he's determined to see prosecuted.

These voters submitted absentee ballots but also voted in person, a

problem that happened across 100 Georgia counties, and election officials didn't catch them in time to keep the second votes from being tallied, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said.

"No one gets to vote twice. Everyone gets one vote," Raffensperger said. It wasn't immediately clear whether the outcome of any races may have been affected. It follows a suggestion last week by President Donald Trump that people who vote early by mail should show up at their local polling places on Election Day and vote again if their ballots haven't been counted. — AP

ly any two, with some of the other states that are in play — it's pretty impossible for Trump

to win the Electoral College," said veteran Democratic strategist Joe Trippi.

"It makes tremendous sense to make those three states the base foundation of any strategy to win. If Biden wins all three, it's over." Biden's aides believe his focus on the economy and Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic will resonate among key voters nationwide but particularly in states like Michigan, which took one of the sharpest hits nationally from the pandemic. The unemployment

rate in the state spiked at 24 per cent in April, according to the Bureau of Labour Statistics. The statewide rate has since recovered to 8.7 per cent, but Michigan has nearly 414,500 fewer jobs than it did when Trump was inaugurated. Trump supporters say that he has fulfilled his promise of creating jobs and was temporarily sidetracked by the pandemic. But the jobs numbers show that hiring at factories across the Midwest began to stall and then decline in the summer of 2019. — AP





# DECCAN Chronicle

10 SEPTEMBER 2020

## India, China leaders must defuse Ladakh row swiftly

The escalation of the already tense stand-off at the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh by Chinese troops earlier this week, with the People's Liberation Army trying hard, unsuccessfully, to dislodge Indian soldiers from the commanding heights at Mukhpari (at over 18,000 ft), on the ridgeline north of Rezang La, led to the first shots fired at the LAC in 45 years. While there are claims and counter-claims on who fired the first shot, it seems clear that Chinese forces — armed with machetes, spears, clubs and automatic weapons — tried to intimidate the Indians into retreating with a show of force and firing in the air, but backed off when the Indian Army didn't budge, using loudspeakers and floodlights and firing in the air to stop the Chinese advancing. No clash took place, and there were no casualties, but if more such encounters occur, the two sides may end up shooting at each other, and from that it's just one step to a full-fledged war. While senior officers of the two armies are talking to each other, the two governments must actively step in now. External affairs minister Subrahmanyan Jaishankar is in Moscow to attend a foreign ministers' meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and he will meet China's foreign minister Wang Yi in a face-to-face encounter, the first between since the stand-off began in early May. Mr Wang Yi is not only foreign minister, but also a state councillor (which ranks higher in Beijing's hierarchy) and special representative on the boundary issue and is well versed in its nuts and bolts. He is also due to talk to India's special representative, NSA Ajit Doval, in the coming days.

There is a long history, over decades, of the Chinese side intruding across the LAC, but after a brief period the PLA troops usually withdraw. The current stand-off is unusual, even in contrast to Doklam in 2017, in its duration (now in its fifth month) and because the Chinese are showing no sign of withdrawing from the areas they occupied, such as from Finger 4 to Finger 8 and in Chusul (where Monday night's firing took place) and go back to their pre-April 2020 positions. This is what India has been consistently demanding. The Indian Army's pre-emptive move to occupy two dozen strategic heights on Pangong Tso's southern banks late last month — giving Indian soldiers the tactical advantage as they can keep a close watch on PLA movements — is said to have rattled the Chinese, and some of their renewed aggressiveness is attributed to this. With winter just two months away, India could use its control of these heights to negotiate with China from a position of strength and push for a swift return to the status quo.

While the Ladakh situation is critical, it's not the only place China is intruding into Indian territory. Transgressions by the PLA are reported across the 4,056-km LAC, in Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, which the Chinese call "Southern Tibet". China's aim is clearly to keep the Indian Army on edge across the long frontier.

Unless there is a swift breakthrough at Mr Jaishankar's Moscow talks, it may be time to involve the top leadership. China has consistently held, as has India, that bilateral negotiations are the only way forward. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping should start talking before it is too late.

## A bizarre potboiler

The bizarre events that followed the tragic death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput have reached a curious point with the arrest of his friend Rhea Chakraborty by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on charges of "procuring drugs for him and for managing finance for drug procurement with him". The charge is based on the discovery of 59 grams of curated marijuana from the possession of two drug peddlers whom the agency alleges have links to Sushant Singh. It has admitted it found no "drug" on Rhea. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), as ordered by the Supreme Court, has started investigation into the death, which the victim's father himself had said was a suicide. The agency has in the past proved deaths, marked as suicides, to be murders after investigation, but this would perhaps be the first case in which it would be investigating a suicide. One cannot lose sight of the incredible amount of energy being spent on and the hard politicking being involved in the case. Three Central government agencies — the CBI, the Enforcement Directorate and the NCB — have their attention focused on the case. Remember, the Bihar government had lost no time demanding a CBI investigation saying the actor hailed from Bihar. Now the state, which goes to polls in a couple of months, reverberates with the slogan "Justice for Sushant" as if it has no other issues to grapple with.

All this happens at a time when the world has started taking a liberal view of drugs such as marijuana; some countries have either legalised or been contemplating legalising its use and instead chase more harmful synthetic drugs that permanently damage lives. One may only hope that the central agencies have set professional targets in this case and are not playing a role in a drama to divert public attention from real problems the country is faced with and to which the government seems to have no solution.

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ADITYA SINHA  
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR  
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

**Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256  
**Vijayawada:** No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234  
**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285  
**Rajahmundry:** Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208  
**Anantapur:** Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904  
**Karimnagar:** Survey No.1341, Vavilalpally Colony, Jagitiyala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433  
**Nellore:** Survey No.527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580  
**Chennai:** SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325  
**Bengaluru:** 5th Floor, BMTCC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552  
**Coinbatore:** 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coinbatore - 641 009, Ph : 0422 2231255  
**Kochi:** No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Emakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408  
**Thiruvananthapuram:** St Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thycad (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014  
**Kozhikode:** Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax : 0495 4019 018  
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Sanju Verma



## Worst over, healthy auto sales signal bounceback

India's GDP decline of 23.9 per cent for the June 2020 quarter has generated heated debate. A stringent lockdown necessitated by the worst global pandemic in 102 years was enforced with the idea of saving lives. Thanks to the lockdown, India's track record turned out superior to other nations', with a fatality rate below two per cent. In fact, every major global economy contracted sharply in the June quarter.

While the United States reported a staggering 32.9 per cent annualised crash in GDP growth, the comparable fall was 42.9 per cent for Singapore, a decline of 38.7 per cent for Canada, a 12.1 per cent fall for Eurozone, a 10.1 per cent drop for Germany, a steep contraction of 20.4 per cent for the United Kingdom and a massive plunge of 27.8 per cent in the case of Japan. In India's case, we had a bright spot, with the agriculture sector growing by a healthy 3.4 per cent in that quarter.

Another fact that deserves attention is the GDP data pertaining to the March 2020 quarter. Much before the global pandemic struck, while India's GDP grew at only 3.1 per cent, we were the only large economy to report posi-

tive growth in the March quarter, with agriculture growing by a solid 5.9 per cent. Other economies like the US contracted by 4.8 per cent, Germany by 2.2 per cent, Eurozone by 3.8 per cent and China actually saw a steep GDP fall of 6.8 per cent in March quarter. Global rating giant S&P says India will have a V-shaped recovery, with a projected GDP growth of 8.5 per cent for 2021-22, far higher than its international peers.

Thanks to stellar reforms in the last six years by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India became the fifth largest economy in the world, after surpassing the United Kingdom in February 2020, after becoming the sixth largest overtaking France in 2019. The media has been screaming itself hoarse about India's biggest GDP drop in 40 years but it failed to inform its audience that, on the positive side, India's policy repo rate at four per cent is the lowest in 58 years. The coal sector was denationalised and coal mining was privatised for the first time in 2019-2020 after 47 years. Banking consolidation by merging 10 public sector banks into four, starting April 2020, has happened for the first time in 51 years.

The country's foreign exchange

reserves swelled to a record high of \$538.191 billion. The best part is short-term trade credit at just 18.2 per cent of overall external debt. Again, over 66 per cent of the aforesaid accretion in forex reserves in the past one year is accounted for by stable and high quality FDI and not fickle FII flows.

Is the worst over? The answer is a decisive "yes". Take the GST revenues for August, for instance, which stood at ₹86,449 crore. Despite the lockdown, this was 88 per cent of the GST collected in the same month last year. Overall, 48.3 million e-way bills were generated in July, almost back to pre-Covid levels of 55.3 million bills, in January 2020.

Again, Indian Railways' Freight loading for August 2020, at 94.33 million tonnes, was 3.31 million tonnes higher compared to August 2019. CBDT has, so far, issued refunds of over ₹88,652 crore to more than 24.64 lakh taxpayers from April 1, 2020, onwards. The Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 52 in August, up from 46 in July. Amounts sanctioned under the emergency credit line guarantee scheme (ECLGS) by public sector banks increased to ₹76,044.44 crores, as of August 18, 2020. Similarly, private

banks sanctioned loans to the tune of ₹74,715.02 crores, under ECLGS, pointing at a swift uptick in the economy.

More importantly, let Modi naysayers not forget that 20 billion dollars is what India attracted in investments and pledges from 15 companies in just three months from April to July 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. This US \$20bn is a massive vote of confidence for Modinomics, by some of the world's largest and richest corporations like Google, Facebook, Walmart, Samsung, Apple, Saudi Arabia's PIF, SGS, Axtria, and so on. Taiwanese company, Pegatron, is the fourth Apple supplier to decide to set up a base in India, after Foxconn, Wistron and Compal Electronics, have pledged billions.

Suffice to say that India is not alone in this misfortune. Every global behemoth has been adversely impacted by Covid. But unlike others, India has a vibrant rural economy, accounting for over 50 per cent of our workforce. News has it that Australia is facing its worst recession in 30 years. China's food shops are running out of supplies and the US might end the year with a 4.2 per cent drop in consumption. In sharp contrast, India is doing a far better job

in dealing with the Wuhan virus.

At his US-India Strategic Partnership Forum address, Mr Modi said, "We are future-proofing India in every way, enabling New India to take off." Well, Mr Modi's words have found resonance, India's Hero Motocorp, the world's largest two-wheeler company that derives over 65 per cent sales from rural areas, for example, reported a healthy 7.6 per cent year on year growth in overall sales, selling 5.8 lakh units in August 2020. Ditto for M&M that derives over 50 per cent sales from rural India. It saw a robust 28 per cent YoY rise in overall tractor sales in July 2020. Maruti Suzuki saw a 21.3 per cent growth in car sales in August, while Tata Motors saw a splendid 154 per cent growth in auto sales. Indeed, since auto sales are a lead indicator, India's September quarter GDP should see a sharp bounceback, aided by government spending, which is moving ahead in full throttle, undeterred by the pandemic.

*The writer is an economist, chief spokesperson for BJP Mumbai and bestselling author of Truth & Dare — The Modi Dynamic*



Subhani

## NEP: Ambitious targets set for education sector



Amitabha Bhattacharya

The National Education Policy 2020 in 65 pages, distilled from its 500-page draft version and modified via extensive feedback and comments from all stakeholders, including schools, colleges, universities, state governments and the public, has aroused a great deal of interest. While a few commentators criticised it for inadequacies and some politicians went vocal over the language issues, the document has broadly been accepted as timely and progressive. It is a continuation of earlier policies, especially NEP (1986/1992), but also marks some significant departures from the past.

To appreciate NEP 2020's defining characteristics, one must remember it primarily reflects the nation's intent to shape the contours of this sector in the medium-to-long term, the implementation of which, based on carefully designed action plans, will depend upon mobilisation of the needed resources and the political will at all levels. Besides, this extremely condensed document that combines modern thinking with the views of visionaries like John Henry Newman, John Dewey, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi in some form or another will be better understood if the more elaborate 2019 draft NEP is referred to. The draft, put together by sharp minds like K. Kasturirangan, Manjul Bhargava and others, provided the detailed logical underpinnings behind most of the crystallised ideas found in the final document.

A document like this should be valued for the way continuation of validated ideas is seamlessly integrated with bold new ones. While earlier policies and recommendations of various commissions had indeed stressed upon inclusion and equitable access to education, need for flexibility in devising the cur-

riculum, reduction of academic load for schoolchildren, moving away from rote learning, putting teachers at the heart of the education system, universalisation of basic education, integration of vocational education, enhancement of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at every level, increasing public expenditure on education to six per cent of our GDP and the like, NEP 2020 should be characterised by the following factors.

First, it stresses on numeracy as much on literacy, urging the attainment of universal foundational literacy and numeracy of all children on a mission mode. In today's world, mathematical skills are as important as linguistic and other skills. Despite many attempts made so far, why a substantial number of our children have still been performing poorly, as measured by their learning outcome, remains a moot question. This and the remedial measures needed are addressed squarely in this document.

Second, based on the evidence of neuroscience that 85 per cent of a child's cumulative brain development occurs before the age of six years, pre-school education or school-preparedness for three years under Early Childhood Care and Education, facilitated by "play and discovery-based learning", has been proposed. In addition to the current coverage of 6-14 years under the existing law, three years of pre-school and four years of secondary education, making integrated schooling from 3-18 years, will be the new norm. Achieving a GER of 100 per cent for this entire spectrum by 2030, and a GER of 50 per cent for higher (including vocational) education by 2035, has been targeted. Ambitious, but not unachievable.

Thirdly, NEP seeks to restore the importance of the arts, humanities and social sciences in our edu-

cation system. In our engagement with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), as these areas offer higher employment opportunities, we have accorded lesser value and importance to non-STEM disciplines. Institutions focusing only on engineering, medicine or legal studies have inherent limitations, and this model often militates against the idea of a university. Introducing flexibility in course design, allowing much greater choice to students for selecting subjects as per their aptitude and preferences, offering different entry and exit options, and stressing on the crucial need for multi-disciplinary in education are among the measures suggested.

Fourth, the quality of research in most of our universities, especially in science, has been declining. NEP addresses this question and suggests how conditions conducive to high quality research in universities and colleges can be created. The idea to set up a National Research Foundation with adequate resources is a major step in this direction.

Fifth, recognising the power of the languages, a major emphasis has been laid on language learning. Children between 2-8 years are known to pick up languages swiftly, and the advantage of multi-lingualism in their cognitive development cannot be exaggerated. Equally important is the need to ensure that children are encouraged, in the initial years, to learn subjects through their mother tongue. To see this move as anti-English or pro-Hindi shows a clear bias and shows an inadequate understanding of the purport of the new policy.

Finally, a slew of structural changes has been suggested without which the envisaged reforms can-

not be carried out. Establishing four verticals for standard setting, accreditation, funding, and framing "graduate attributes", under the umbrella Higher Education Commission of India, would form the basic architecture. Education being a concurrent subject, evidently a great deal of coordination between various departments and also between states and the Centre will be imperative. If members are chosen carefully and transparently, HECI and the four bodies under it will facilitate this participative process.

Many important issues like expanding the role of the private sector in this area, granting of autonomy to unwilling or unprepared public institutions, recognising the role of parents in the education of children, imposing conditions for inviting reputed foreign universities "on our own terms", and substantially raising public expenditure on education must be grappled with. However, though the NEP promotes the idea of "credit transfer" in higher education institutions, it does not specifically address the problems of school students migrating from one state to another. NEP 2020 has broadly articulated all the problems that were plaguing the educational sphere as a whole, and based on the collective experience so far, sought to suggest ways for a bright new future. As we know, policies rarely fail, it's the more complex process of implementation that often does.

The first priority now will be to set up the bodies and set in motion the missions proposed in the next three months. The key to success lies in taking along the states, which must bear most of the extra expenditure involved. As such, this NEP will make a difference if only the Prime Minister leads the process. How seriously the Union government wants this transformative policy to revolutionise India's education sector will be evident in the next few years.

*The writer is a retired IAS officer from the Andhra Pradesh cadre, who has also worked with UNDP and with the private sector*

### LETTERS

#### BHARAT RATNA TO PV

Abstaining from the resolution to confer Bharat Ratna on PV speaks about Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi's vengeance and anger towards the governments at the state and the Centre (*Shabbir makes fun of MIM, DC, Sept. 9*). It hardly makes any difference if he is absent. The government can move on with its routine business.

**Raju V.L.**  
Hyderabad

#### RHEA ARRESTED

Narcotic Control Bureau's performance was flawless. Still further efforts must be put in to get at the truth.

**Chandra Kantha Awasthi**  
Hyderabad

#### SUPERB CARTOON

Hats off to cartoonist Subhani for the Counterpoint cartoon (DC, Sept. 9). The politician suggesting that his photo be replaced with Sushant Singh Rajput in the campaign posters was simply superb

**Khaizar Hussain**  
Hyderabad

#### EDUCATION BACK SEAT

The government at the Centre and state are least bothered about education and troubles of private college/school teachers. The unpaid arrears getting accumulated and suicide bid by young faculty of ARR Mahavir College, etc., stand testimony to the fact. The UGC and AICTE never contemplated to improve matters.

**Sundarganesh**  
Hyderabad

Email your letters to [info@deccanmail.com](mailto:info@deccanmail.com), [editor@deccanmail.com](mailto:editor@deccanmail.com). You can also send to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

#### 52 Indians aboard hijacked plane

BOMBAY, Sept. 9 Fifty two Indians were among the 101 passengers on board the London-bound BOAC VC-10 jet airliner when it left here this morning and hijacked while on

flight from Bahrain to Beirut.

According to Santa Cruz air-

port sources, 50 of the passengers were bound for Dubai, 26 for Bahrain — the two scheduled stops made by the airliner 11 for Beirut and the remaining 14 for London. There was also a Bombay-based Indian stewardess among the crew of 10, commanded by Captain Cyril Goulborn, of Worcester, Surrey.



## quick BITES

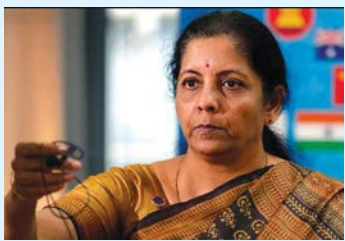
INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,193.92	-0.45
Nifty 50	11,278.00	-0.35
S&P 500*	3,412.69	2.03
Dollar (₹)	73.54	0.48
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.28	1.35
Euro (₹)	86.61	0.41
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,149.251	0.48
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	41.10	1.32
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.989	-0.067
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.693	0.009

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

## I-T Dept issues refunds worth ₹1.01 L cr in FY21

The Income Tax Department said it has issued refunds of over Rs 1.01 lakh crore to 27.55 lakh taxpayers between April 1 and September 8. This includes personal income tax (PIT) refunds amounting to Rs 30,768 crore issued to 25.83 lakh taxpayers and corporate tax refunds amounting to Rs 70,540 crore issued to over 1.71 lakh taxpayers during this period. The government has also been emphasising on refunds.

## Banks catalysts of economic revival: FM



Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said banks are going to be the catalysts for economic revival. "At this stage, the catalysts for economic revival, the catalysts who have the pulse of every one of our customers, are banks," the FM said. The minister said banks have to introspect on their core business and also focus on welfare. She also said all bank staffers should know the details of government schemes.

## State Bank raises ₹4,000 cr in AT1 bonds

State Bank of India said it has raised Rs 4,000 crore through the issuance of Basel III compliant debt instruments. The Committee of Directors for Capital Raising at its meeting accorded approval to allot 40,000 Basel III compliant additional tier-bonds (AT1) aggregating to Rs 4,000 crore to bond subscribers on Sept. 9, SBI said in a filing. The bonds bear a coupon rate of 7.74 per cent, the lowest ever, it said.

## Investigation into import of PVC resin from Japan

India has initiated a probe into an alleged increase in imports of a certain type of PVC resin, used in various sectors including construction and medical devices, from Japan following complaints by domestic firms. A notification from the Directorate General of Trade Remedies said an application was filed by DCW, DCM Shri-ram and Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls for initiation of a probe into imports of 'PVC suspension grade resin' from Japan.



## Policy-makers to meet after Sept. 15 Govt set to exceed borrowing target

SIDDHARTHA SINGH  
SEPT. 9

India is set to exceed its annual borrowing target after the world's biggest lockdown decimated the government's revenue collection goals, people with knowledge of the matter said.

Officials from the finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India will meet later this month to decide on the amount of borrowings needed beyond the targeted Rs 12 lakh crore (\$163 billion) in the year ending March 31, the people said, asking not to be identified as the discussions were private. Policy makers will also deliberate on options to raise funds, including selling debt directly to the central bank, the people said.

The meeting will be scheduled after September 15 because the government will have a clearer visibility of its financial position after advance taxes start flowing in, they added. All these proposals are being discussed and no final decision has been taken. A finance ministry spokesman was not immediately available for a comment.

The government isn't keen on slashing spending at a time when the country's economic outlook is grim. The economy contracted 23.9 per cent in the quarter ended June, the worst on record, after an extended lockdown to control the spread of the virus wiped out activity



## STATES HAVE TO CUT CAPEX BY ₹3.4 L CR

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 9

Despite the two options for additional borrowing put forth by the Centre, states will have to curtail FY21 capital spending by Rs 1 lakh crore to Rs 3.4 lakh crore, taking into account shortfalls in GST compensation and central tax devolution (CTD), finds Icra.

While offering two borrowing options, the Centre had pegged the GST compensation requirement of states at Rs 3 lakh crore for FY21 and the expected GST cess collections at Rs 65,000 crore, implying a gap of Rs 2.35 lakh crore. However, Icra has projected this gap to be Rs 2.9 lakh crore.

It estimates that in the current fiscal year, state governments would see fiscal deficit of a mini-

mum 4.25 per cent and maximum 5.52 per cent of GSDP.

Further, central tax devolution to the states will be Rs 5 lakh crore, Rs 2.8 lakh crore lower than the Rs 7.8 lakh crore budgeted by the Centre for FY21, partly on account of the adverse impact of the pandemic on consumption and the tax revenues of the Centre and the adjustment for excess devolution made in FY20.

Hence, there will be a shortfall of Rs 3.4 lakh crore. The additional maximum borrowing of 2.52 per cent of GSDP under Option I, if the states meet all the prescribed reforms within the set timeline, would be inadequate to cover the shortfalls in GST compensation of Rs 2.9 lakh crore and in CTD of Rs 2.8 lakh crore by Rs 1 lakh crore.

and dried up tax collections.

The government also wants to accelerate investments in port, roads and other infrastructure to

stimulate the world's fifth largest economy in the remaining part of the financial year, the people said.

—Bloomberg

## Happiest Minds IPO subscribed 151 times



RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 9

In a major boost to the primary equity market, public issues of Happiest Minds Technologies and Route Mobile received huge interest from all categories of investors. Both public issues have been fully subscribed.

Happiest Minds' Rs 702 crore initial public offering has been subscribed 150.98 times on the closing day, as per updated stock exchange.

Leading brokerages had given a subscribe, and subscribe for long term, call on Happiest Minds offer, leading to a huge rush from the retail investors category.

As per the latest data provided by the managers of the issue, Happiest Minds received over 22 lakh applications. Retail individual category portion was subscribed 70.94 times while high networth investors category was subscribed 351.46 times and institutional category was subscribed 77.43 times.

Route Mobile's Rs 600-crore IPO has been fully subscribed on the very first day of the bids opening, as per the subscription data updated by the stock exchanges.

## PF board okays 8.5% rate

EPFO to credit 8.15% interest now and 0.35% after December

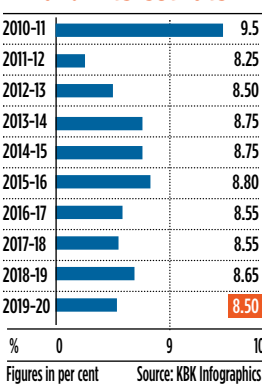
New Delhi, Sept. 9: Retirement fund body EPFO on Wednesday decided to provide 8.5 per cent rate of interest on employees' provident fund (EPF) for 2019-20 as committed earlier.

In March this year, Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's apex decision making body Central Board of Trustees headed by labour minister Santosh Gangwar had approved 8.5 per cent interest rate on EPF for last fiscal.

In a virtual CBT meeting on Wednesday, the EPFO has decided to provide 8.5 per cent rate of interest, a labour ministry statement said.

"In view of exceptional circumstances arising out of Covid-19, the agenda regarding interest rate was reviewed by the

### Employees' Provident Fund interest rate



Central Board and it recommended the same rate of 8.50 per cent to the Central Government.

"It (8.5 per cent interest) would comprise 8.15 per cent from debt income and balance 0.35 per cent

(capital gain) from the sale of ETFs (exchange traded funds) subject to their redemption by 31st December, 2020," the statement said.

The board has recommended accounting such capital gains (from sale of ETFs) in the income of the financial year 2019-20 as being an exceptional case.

According to a source, the EPFO will provide 8.15 per cent interest on EPF soon and the remaining 0.35 per cent rate would be credited into the subscribers' account by December 31, after liquidation of ETFs.

The CBT also decided to hike the maximum sum assured payable under Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme 1976 to Rs 7 lakh from existing Rs 6 lakh.

—PTI

## Biden for tax penalties on offshore profits

JENNIFER EPSTEIN  
SEPT. 9

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden is proposing a 10 per cent tax penalty on companies that move operations overseas and a 10 per cent tax credit for companies that create jobs in the US in a policy rollout Wednesday.

Biden, who is launching a renewed focus on economic issues with a speech in Michigan, also will promise to reverse Trump administration policies that his campaign said amount to "loopholes" that allow offshoring to take place. The former vice president will also pledge

to take executive action during his first week in office to direct the federal government to buy American goods and support American supply chains in their procurement processes, his campaign said.

Biden's proposals echo President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign push to focus on reviving manufacturing in the US and creating more US jobs.

Biden will also say that Trump has broken his promises to bring jobs and profits back to the US.

"Offshoring, outsourcing, Buy American. These are areas where Donald Trump's record has not

been remotely matched by the reality," senior policy adviser Jake Sullivan said.

Biden will propose a 28 per cent corporate tax rate plus a 10 per cent penalty surtax on the profits from any production by a US company overseas for sale on American soil, making the overall tax rate on those profits 30.8 per cent. The penalty will also apply to call centres and services that a US company locates overseas but serve the US.

He also plans to implement what his campaign described as "strong anti-inversion regulations and penalties," though it did not detail those plans.

—Bloomberg

## AstraZeneca vaccine trial paused over adverse effect

ADITI KHANNA  
LONDON, SEPT. 9

The human trials of one of the most promising Covid-19 vaccine candidates, being developed by the University of Oxford and simultaneously undergoing trial in India, has been put on hold after a UK participant had an adverse reaction to it.

AstraZeneca, the biopharmaceutical giant in tie-up with the university to produce the vaccine, described the pause as a "routine" one following what was an unexplained illness.

The trials had moved into phase III after successful phase I and II testing had raised worldwide hopes of it being ready by early next year as results showed that it produced a positive immune response.

The vaccine moved to phase III testing in recent weeks, involving around 30,000 participants in the US as well as in the UK, Brazil and South Africa.

As part of the ongoing randomised, controlled global trials of the Oxford coronavirus vaccine, our



### BUT SERUM INST. SAYS INDIA TRIALS CONTINUING

Sept. 9: Serum Institute of India said on Wednesday that trials of AstraZeneca Plc's Covid-19 vaccine candidate in the country is ongoing and has not faced any issues. "We can't comment much on the UK trials," Serum Institute said in a statement, adding "as far as Indian trials are concerned, it is continuing and we have faced no issues at all."

—Reuters

standard review process was triggered and we vol-

untarily paused vaccination to allow a review of safety data by an independent committee, said a spokesperson for AstraZeneca on Tuesday evening.

This is a routine action which has to happen whenever there is a potentially unexplained illness in one of the trials, while it is investigated, ensuring we maintain the integrity of the trials. In large trials illnesses will happen by chance but must be independently reviewed to check this carefully, the spokesperson said.

Stressing that the adverse reaction involved only a single patient, the spokesperson added that the team is working to expedite the review of the single event to minimise any potential impact on the trial timeline.

We are committed to the safety of our participants and the highest standards of conduct in our trials, the spokesperson said.

Phase III trials in vaccines often involve thousands of participants and can last several years.

—PTI

## Reliance Retail gets ₹7,500 crore

New Delhi, Sept. 9: US private equity firm Silver Lake Partners will buy 1.75 per cent stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's retail arm for Rs 7,500 crore.

Silver Lake will invest Rs 7,500 crore in Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd, a subsidiary of RIL, for a 1.75 per cent stake, the Indian firm said in a statement.

"This investment values RRVL at a pre-money equity value of Rs 4.21

lakh crore," it said.

This marks the second billion-dollar investment by Silver Lake in a RIL subsidiary after the \$1.35 billion investment in Jio Platforms announced earlier this year.

The world's largest tech investor picking up a stake in Reliance Retail cements belief that the firm is set to lead a disruptive, technology-led transformation of the Indian retail sector partic-

ularly relevant in post-pandemic India.

Reliance Retail Limited, a subsidiary of RRVL, operates India's largest, fastest-growing and most profitable retail business spanning supermarkets, consumer electronics chain stores, cash and carry wholesale business, fast-fashion outlets, and online grocery store JioMart. It operates almost 12,000 stores in nearly 7,000 towns. —PTI

## Equity MFs see ₹4,000 cr outflow

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 9

The majority of equity and hybrid mutual fund schemes witnessed outflows in August, a trend which started in July. Retail investors booked profit after a sharp recovery in the equity market has led to many funds showing good gains in their net asset value post the March-April fall.

The August month data released by Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed out flows of



Rs 4,000 crore (Rs 2,480 crore outflow in July 2020) from the equity funds category and Rs 4,819 crore (Rs 7,301 crore outflow in July 2020) from the hybrid schemes.

In the fixed income cate-

gory, liquid funds witnessed outflow of Rs 15,814.01 while overnight fund saw outflow of Rs 10,298.03 crore while healthy inflows were recorded in money market funds (Rs 7,911.53 crore), ultrashort duration funds (Rs 5,428 crore) and low duration funds (Rs 5,368 crore). Overall, the fixed income category witnessed outflows of Rs 3,907.53 crore.

The MF industry's total asset under management in August stood slightly up at Rs 27.49 lakh crore.

## Bela Bajarria is Netflix's global television head

LUCAS SHAW  
SEPT. 9

Netflix Inc named Bela Bajarria as the head of a new global television division, giving one-executive oversight over all shows at the world's largest TV network.

Bajarria, the former local-language series chief who joined Netflix in 2016, was promoted over veteran Cindy Holland, who will be leaving next month. Bajarria will now be in charge of English and local-language original series, both scripted and unscripted. Scott Stuber has a similar job overseeing movies all over the world.

Co-CEO Ted Sarandos is reconfiguring leadership at the company's enter-



Bela Bajarria

tainment operations following his own promotion in July to sharing the top spot with co-CEO Reed Hastings. As the company looks beyond the US for most of its new customers, Sarandos elevated Bajarria to the new spot instead of long-time Holland, who was more focused on the US.

"Since becoming co-CEO, I've wanted to simplify the way our content teams operate—with one global film team led by Scott Stuber and one for TV, which will now be led by Bela Bajarria," Sarandos said.

Holland played a critical role in the firm's transition from licensing other companies' shows to making its own, including House of Cards, Orange Is the New Black, Stranger Things and many more.

Bajarria, 49, who was crowned Miss India USA in 1991, moved to the US from London with her family when she was 8. She lives in Los Angeles with her writer husband Doug Prochilo and their three children.

—Bloomberg/Agencies

## Collections rising for NBFCs in key retail verticals



SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 9

NBFCs have witnessed 15 to 20 per cent improvement in their collections across different segments of retail lending in the last two months.

Increased optimism has led to overall collection efficiency in segments like micro loans, vehicle finance, affordable housing, according to Motilal Oswal Research.

Micro-finance collections have improved to 70-75 per cent by the end of the second phase of moratorium, though disbursements are still muted. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka have posted strong collection performances, while Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha and Maharashtra have witnessed lower collections due to either prolonged lockdowns or political interference.

Sa-Dhan too had observed that overall collection rate has been improving from 35-40 per cent in April, to 45-50 per cent in May, 65-70 per cent in July. Sa-Dhan has been anticipating collection rates to move up to 80-85 per cent by September.

Vehicle finance has seen collections improving to 80-90 per cent, according to Motilal. Vehicle financiers operating in rural and semi-urban locations have seen a faster-than-expected recovery. This is attributable to the focus on partial collections, even from customers under moratorium. Two-wheelers and tractors are the key products to have shown strong traction, with collection efficiency reaching almost pre-Covid levels. Small Commercial Vehicles have also shown improvement.



## SHORT TAKES

## Tokyo governor firm on Games

**Tokyo:** The postponed Olympics must be held next year "by all means", Tokyo's governor said on Wednesday, becoming the latest official to insist the event is feasible despite the coronavirus pandemic.

Yuriko Koike's remarks, at an event hosted by Kyodo news agency, come after International Olympic Committee vice-president John Coates told AFP that the Games would go ahead in 2021 "with or without Covid".

"Athletes are going through much hardship due to the one-year delay given that their physical condition and motivation were targeted at this summer," Koike said, according to an English translation of her remarks published by Kyodo.

"We have to go forward with the Games next summer by all means," she added, at the corporate event for the news agency's subscribers.

The city will "implement every possible measure" to ensure the safety of the event, Koike said.

— AFP

## Roy makes it to One-Day squad

**Manchester:** Jason Roy was added to England's squad on Wednesday for the upcoming One-Day International series against Australia after recovering from a side strain.

The explosive opener missed the recent T20 series against Pakistan and Australia with the injury he sustained in training. Dawid Malan was promoted to the reserve list on the day he rose to No.1 on the Twenty20 player international rankings after scoring 66, 44 and 21 against Australia in the series. England won 2-1. That took his career average to 48.71 and his overall strike-rate to 146.66.

The ODI series against Australia starts Friday in Manchester. They are the first ODI matches between the countries since England won the Cricket World Cup on home soil last year. — AP

## De Bruyne is Eng footballer of year

**London:** Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne was voted English football's player of the year, denying Liverpool a third straight winner of the prestigious award.

De Bruyne became the first City player to capture the Professional Footballers' Association award after scoring 13 goals and making a record-tying 20 assists last season. The Belgian credited manager Pep Guardiola for giving him the freedom to be creative.

"Most of the time he just lets me be me," De Bruyne said of Guardiola.

"We speak often about the team but in a lot of senses he knows when he gives the orders of what the team has to do that I will listen. But then on the other side, he gives me a lot of freedom; I don't know why, that's just the way it goes between us. He knows in one way I will always put the team first and then obviously if I can help myself I'm going to do that," he said. — AP

## Vikas gets the nod to train in US

**New Delhi:** Olympic-bound boxer Vikas Krishan has got the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) approval to train in the USA, where he also plans to resume his career in the professional circuit.

SAI has approved his training in the US till November 30 and also sanctioned ₹17.5 lakh for the stint. Vikas, who competes in 69kg category currently, is an Asian and Commonwealth Games gold-medallist.

He will be travelling to the US along with his American coach Ron Simms Jr and they will train at the Alexandria Boxing Club in Virginia till November 30. — PTI

## Live on TV

## CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

**Final:** Trinbago Knight Riders vs St Lucia Zouks from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

## US OPEN TENNIS

Matches from 9.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 2, HD

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## Cristiano's century

## Ronaldo second player to score 100 international goals

**Stockholm, Sept. 9:** Add 100 international goals to the extraordinary list of milestones achieved by soccer superstar Cristiano Ronaldo.

Ronaldo became just the second male player to reach a century of goals for a national team when he curled a free kick into the top corner from 25 metres for the first of his two strikes in Portugal's 2-0 away win against Sweden in the Nations League on Tuesday.

Scoring one of the best goals of his international career was a fitting way to enter the "100 Club," where he joins former Iran striker Ali Daei, and he wheeled away in delight in an empty Friends Arena in Stockholm before performing his trademark celebration the mid-air pirouette.

Ronaldo, who was playing in his 165th game for Portugal, then added a second goal another curler into the top corner and needs nine more to surpass the international record of 109 scored by Daei from 1993-2006.

Ronaldo already holds the record for goals in the Champions League with 131, 16 more than nearest rival Lionel Messi.

Portugal has won its two opening group games after beating Croatia 4-1 on Saturday, when Ronaldo was absent because of a toe infection. Belgium and France also have maximum points. The top-ranked Belgians beat Iceland 5-1 and France defeated Croatia 4-2 the same scoreline as the 2018 World Cup final.

England drew 0-0 at Denmark in Copenhagen.

## GIROUD NEARS RECORD

Oliver Giroud moved to within one goal of Michel Platini's national record for France by converting a penalty to complete the victory over Croatia at the Stade de France.

The striker was handed the opportunity to move onto 40 international goals by Antoine Griezmann, who gave away penalty duties having missed his last three for France. Giroud made no mistake in the 77th minute.

A well-taken individual goal by center back Dejan Lovren put Croatia ahead, but Anthony Martial set up Griezmann for the equalizer before sliding in for a shot that hit the post, struck goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic on the back of the head, and rebounded into the net.

— AP

## GANGULY IN DUBAI TO TAKE STOCK OF IPL

**New Delhi, Sept. 9:** BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday left for Dubai to oversee preparations for a bio-secure IPL beginning on September 19.

Defending champions Mumbai Indians will face Chennai Super Kings in the opening match of the T20 event, which has been moved to the UAE due to the rising Covid-19 cases in India.

"My first flight in 6 months to Dubai for IPL... crazy life changes," Ganguly posted on his Instagram handle with a picture in which he is wearing a mask and face shield, part of the Standard Operating Procedure while flying amid the pandemic.

The BCCI was able to create a window for the IPL following the postponement of the T20 World Cup in Australia, scheduled for October-November.

The Board would have faced a revenue loss of ₹4000 crore if the tournament, which usually takes place in April-May, had not got the go ahead.

IPL chairman Brijesh Patel is among the other key officials who are already in Dubai.

The tournament, despite its strict health safety measures, has already endured instances of contingent members testing positive for Covid-19. — PTI



Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates scoring the opening goal, his 100th goal for Portugal, during the UEFA Nations League football match against Sweden in Solna, Sweden, on Tuesday. Portugal won 2-0.

— AFP

## Covid +ve Mbappe ruled out

## MESSI BACK TO TRAINING WITH BARCELONA SQUAD

**Barcelona, Sept. 9:** Lionel Messi rejoined the rest of his Barcelona teammates at practice on Wednesday. Messi had been practicing separately from the group since returning to the club on Monday. He had not been with the squad since announcing he wanted to leave and then deciding to stay to avoid a legal dispute with Barcelona.

He needed to pass two Coronavirus tests before he could practice with the rest of the squad under incoming coach Ronald Koeman.

Also back with the group was Philippe Coutinho, who also had been practicing separately. Players who had been with their national teams for Nations League matches also returned, including Frenkie de Jong, Ansu Fati and Sergio Busquets.

Barcelona said that defender Samuel Umtiti has been cleared by doctors after recovering from Covid-19. Luis Suarez and Arturo Vidal, who like Umtiti are not in Koeman's plans for the season, also have been practicing normally.

The club has scheduled a friendly against third-division club Nastic for Saturday.

## CANADA QUINN COMES OUT AS TRANSGENDER

**Los Angeles, Sept. 9:** Canada and OL Reign midfielder Rebecca Quinn came out publicly as transgender in an Instagram post on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old player, who won Olympic bronze with the Canadian women's team in 2016 and played for Canada at the 2019 Women's World Cup, said the post was aimed at helping "queer folk" feel safe on social media.

"As I've lived as an openly trans person with the people I love most for many years, I did always wonder when I'd come out publicly," Quinn wrote in an Instagram post.

Quinn is one of the most prominent North American team sports athletes to come out as transgender.

— AFP

ons in a 1-0 victory over Sweden in their opening Nations League encounter. However, he was expected to be rested for the game at the Stade de France against Croatia, with PSG's opening match of the French league season scheduled for Thursday away to Lens.

Mbappe is the fourth player to be withdrawn from the France squad following a positive Covid-19 test.

— AFP

## KNIGHT RIDERS TO MEET ZOUKS IN CPL FINAL

**Tarouba (Trinidad and Tobago), Sept. 9:** Trinbago Knight Riders and St. Lucia Zouks registered dominant wins in their respective semifinals to qualify for the Hero Caribbean Premier League final here.

The Knight Riders are now in a position to complete the first perfect season in CPL history, as they have won all 10 league matches plus the semifinal.

The Trinbago Knight Riders restricted Jamaica Tallawahs to 107 for seven and then chased down the target with nine wickets and five overs to spare to give them a chance to win a fourth CPL title.

In the other semifinal, St. Lucia Zouks were even more ruthless as they bowled out Guyana Amazon Warriors for 55 in 13.4 overs and got to the target in 4.3 overs without losing a wicket.

Sent in to bat, the Tallawahs struggled as each of the first three overs yielded a wicket.

Akeal Hosein accounted for Jermaine Blackwood and Mujeeb Ur Rehman, while Khary Pierre sent back Glen Phillips as Tallawahs were reeling at 10 for three in 2.4 overs.

The Powerplay period ended with Tallawahs at 28 for four and it included a Pierre over with five wickets.

— PTI

## Awesome Osaka cruises into semis

**New York, Sept. 9:** Japan's Naomi Osaka sailed into the semifinals of the US Open on Tuesday as Alexander Zverev of Germany booked his spot in the last four of the men's draw.

Osaka, the tournament's fourth seed, swept aside unseeded Shelby Rogers in straight sets to set up a match with Jennifer Brady for a place in Saturday's final.

The 22-year-old Osaka required just 1hr 20 min inside an empty Arthur Ashe Stadium to defeat the 27-year-old Rogers 6-3, 6-4.

Osaka, the world number 9, said her victory was pay-back for three previous defeats to the 93rd-ranked Rogers.

They included a 2017 loss on clay in Charleston that Osaka said had left "a really bad aftertaste in my mouth."

"Honestly, I just felt like she had the upper hand because I've never beaten her," Osaka said.

Osaka's dominant service game contributed to a comfortable runout for the 2018 US Open champion.

She won 83 per cent of points on her first serve and 70 per cent on her second.

In contrast, Rogers managed only 66 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. Rogers hit 29 unforced errors compared to just eight committed by Osaka.

Brady conquered some

serious nerves to defeat Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva and reach the semifinals of a Grand Slam for the first time.

The American 28th seed needed just 1hr 9 min to blow away her 23rd-seeded opponent 6-3, 6-2.

Brady is yet to drop a set and has lost only 24 games during her march to the semis, the fewest of anyone left in the draw.

Osaka said Brady would be a formidable opponent.

## ZVEREV EASES PAST CORIC, IN SEMIS

Zverev bounced back from a shocking start to oust 27th-seeded Croatian Borna Coric in four sets.

The 23-year-old German prevailed 1-6, 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/1), 6-3 in 3hr 25min.

He began playing more aggressively after finding himself a set down, and 4-2 behind in the second set.

The German will play Spain's 20th seed Pablo Carreno Busta for a place in Sunday's final.

The Spaniard defeated 12th-seeded Canadian Denis Shapovalov 3-6, 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/4), 0-6, 6-3 in an epic five-setter that ended in the early hours of Wednesday.

On Wednesday, second seed Dominic Thiem faces Australian Alex de Minaur and third seed Daniil Medvedev plays compatriot Andrey Rublev for the other semifinal spot.

— AFP



Jennifer Brady of the United States reacts after defeating Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan during the quarterfinals of the US Open tennis championships in New York on Tuesday. Brady won 6-3, 6-2.

— AP

## YUVRAJ UP FOR COMEBACK

**New Delhi, Sept. 9:** World Cup-winning former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh has decided to come out of retirement, giving in to a request from the Punjab Cricket Association more than a year after he called it quits.

The Player of the Tournament at the 2011 World Cup, Yuvraj had announced his retirement from all forms of cricket last June. PCA secretary Puneet Bali was the first person to approach the Yuvraj with an offer to come out of retirement for the benefit of Punjab cricket. He has agreed to resume for the state at least in the T20 format.

"Initially, I wasn't sure that I wanted to take up the offer. I was done with domestic cricket, though I did want to continue to play in other domestic franchise-based leagues worldwide if I got permission from the BCCI," Yuvraj was quoted as saying by Cricbuzz. — PTI

## Butler shines as Miami pip Bucks

**Miami, Sept. 9:** The Miami Heat punched their ticket to the NBA Eastern Conference finals Tuesday, beating top-seeded Milwaukee 103-94 as injured Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo watched from the bench.

Jimmy Butler and Goran Dragic finished with 17 points apiece as six Heat players scored in double figures and Miami completed a 4-1 series victory in a bruising encounter against the league's top defensive team.

Chris Middleton led the Bucks with 23 points.

Antetokounmpo — tipped to scoop a second straight NBA Most Valuable Player award this season — aggra-

vated his sprained right ankle in the first half of the Bucks' game-four overtime victory over the Heat.

The Bucks declared him inactive less than an hour before tipoff on Tuesday.

The loss of Antetokounmpo, who averaged career highs of 29.5 points and 13.6 rebounds per game this season, was a huge blow for the Bucks, as they tried to do what no NBA team has done before: come back from an 0-3 deficit to win a seven-game playoff series.

It's the second straight campaign that the Bucks built the best regular-season record only to come up short in the playoffs.

— AFP