


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VISAKHAPATNAM | SUNDAY | 13 SEPTEMBER 2020




WEATHER

 **Max:** 34.8°C
Min: 26.2°C
RH: 84%
Rainfall: 001.0
Forecast: Mist.
Max/Min temp.
34/26°C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+98,333)	(+1,152)
47,51,788	78,614
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+2,278)	(+10)
TS: 1,54,880	950
(+9,901)	(+67)
AP: 5,57,587	4,846

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

 2,88,52,013
DEATHS
 9,22,630
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
 213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Bahula Ekadasi till 3.13 am (Monday)
Star: Punarvasu till 4.26 pm
Varjyam: 12.12 am to 1.46 am (Monday)
Durmuhurtam: 4.39 pm to 5.27 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Muharram 24, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.50 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.45 pm
Maghrib: 6.15 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.01 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.44 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 01.19 AM
MOONSET TODAY 02.53 PM

COUNTER POINT



They don't let any chance slip by for publicity!

IN BRIEF

DGCA warns over in-flight photos

New Delhi: The Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Saturday warned all domestic airlines that their scheduled flights will be suspended for at least two weeks if anyone is found taking photographs or doing videography inside the plane. According to the DGCA order, as per Rule 13 of the Aircraft Rules 1937, no person is allowed to take any photos inside a flight except when permission is granted. This permission is, however, not applicable when the aircraft is landing, taking off or on ground on a defence aerodrome.

China releases 5 Arunachal youths

Guwahati: Five men who had strayed across the international border in Arunachal Pradesh about 10 days back have been handed over to India by China's People's Liberation Army on Saturday. Disclosing this, defence PRO Lt. Col. Harsh Wardhan Pande said: "The Indian Army took over all five individuals at Kibithu on September 12, 2020 after completing all the necessary formalities." The Army said in a statement that all these five "individuals will now be quarantined for 14 days as per Covid-19 protocols and will then handed over to their family". The five men who had been missing since September 1 were hunters.

NATION | 4

Rahul slams Centre's planned Covid recovery



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WORLD | 7

Russian police seek to question Navalny

SPORTS | 8

Thiem, Zverev in US Open final



Indian Army trucks move towards the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh amid the prolonged India-China stand-off, in Leh on Saturday. — PTI

Home ministry set for long winter haul at China border

Rushes bulk supplies of special tents, heaters, warm clothes

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 12

The Union home ministry has started preparing well in advance for any potential threat from the Chinese forces in the coming winter season. It has started rushing bulk supplies of essential commodities, like special winter tents and heaters, warm clothes, sunglasses and packaged food.

The MHA is trying to ensure that adequate stocks for over six months are available at all high-altitude border locations

● **THE MHA** is trying to ensure that adequate stocks for over six months are available at all high-altitude border locations along the India-China border in the next 10 days.

● **LARGE CONSIGNMENT** of "good quality essential supplies" were being transported to all remote locations in the region.

along the India-China border in the next 10 days. Sources claimed a large consignment of "good quality essential supplies"

were being transported to all remote locations in the high-altitude region. In view of the increased tensions with China in Ladakh, the Indian forces are making unprecedented arrangements to ensure China doesn't attempt any border incursions during winter.

It has also been decided all security forces will remain at their respective locations all through the winter to deal with any Chinese threat. Earlier, during the harsh winter months, both Indian and Chinese forces used to

withdraw from their patrolling locations, but this time the Indian forces will remain at their positions.

The MHA has already asked all border guarding forces to send in their specific requirements for winter deployment along the sensitive China border. It also directed these forces, particularly on the China and Nepal borders, to finalise their "winter deployment schedule" by this month and start deployment from next month to deter any Chinese mischief.

VAT ON NATURAL GAS UP, DOMESTIC GAS NOT AFFECTED

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

The state government on Saturday increased the Value Added Tax (VAT) on natural gas, from the present 14.5 per cent to 24.5 per cent, with immediate effect.

Rajat Bhargava, special chief secretary, revenue (commercial taxes) department, issued the orders, making amendment to the existing VAT slab.

He explained that due to Covid-19, there was a drastic fall in the revenue on one hand and the increased welfare schemes posed additional burden on public exchequer on the other. Hence, the 10 per cent increase became inevitable.

■ **Page 2:** VAT hike to bring ₹300 crore

Doctors unpaid for Covid care

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

The newly appointed doctors and health workers recruited on a temporary basis for Covid-19 duties in government hospitals of AP have not got their salaries since the past two months. This is causing them severe hardships, as they are unable to support themselves and their families.

The state government had issued a G.O. to recruit 1,170 specialist doctors, 1,170 general duty medical officers, 2,000 staff nurses, 306 anaesthesia technicians, 300 FNOs, 300 MNOs and 300 sweepers on contract for a year to take care of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Following this, doctors and health care personnel joined duties and started

attending to Covid-19 work. Many young girls aged around 20 years joined as staff nurses in government hospitals hoping to get good money. They hired rooms on a rent and cooked their own meals before going for work. In the process, whatever money they brought from home got exhausted. In the absence of salaries, they are struggling to pay rent and buy food.

When contacted, East Godavari district medical and health officer Dr. B. Subramanyeswari said, "Once we get attendance of health personnel for Covid-19 from their concerned heads, we will get approval from the collector and remit wages into their bank accounts".

■ **Page 3:** 1,700 health workers not paid

ENEMY | LINES

Old-timers in Indian Army reveal PLA very touchy about yaks, won't hesitate to go to war over them

On LAC, PLA preys on yaks, we pray to them

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC
HYDERABAD SEPTEMBER 12

They chop it well from the head to tail, dump the large portions of flesh into a container and store it a few feet below the earth for several days. Worms to feed on the flesh and multiply. Weeks later, the container is pulled up and it is feast time.

This is how the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army of China deployed along the line of actual control (LAC) in Tibet

autonomous region eat the yak, with the worms, which makes them stronger and hardier. A few kilometres on the Indian side, the yak, dwindling in numbers, is worshipped.

The yak is a special animal to the PLA. Recently, the eastern command of the Indian army handed over 13 yaks and four calves that strayed across the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh, to China, in what was called a humane gesture.

Sources acquainted with

the functioning and habits of the PLA soldiers told *Deccan Chronicle* that the Chinese army has been heavily dependent on yaks even prior to the 1962 war. In fact, the PLA has a dedicated yak unit which takes men and material through impenetrable mountain passes along the LAC.

"Although the PLA soldiers kill and eat yaks, they do so mostly when the animal dies accidentally or is old and of no more use for them, though there have been instances where in



Some yaks near the Ladakh border

they have snatched yaks from locals in Tibet and consumed them. They use yaks for patrolling. Their soldiers have survived on

the mountains not due to their technological advancements but due to the yaks which even provide warmth to the soldiers who sleep beside them during harsh winters," the sources said.

The PLA consider the yak to be a symbol of good luck, success and strength. According to feng shui, a traditional practice which originated in ancient China, yak heads and tails both symbolise good luck. The head symbolises strength.

Just like the Indian Army has been dependent on mules and ponies in mountain warfare, Chinese troops cannot do without yaks and keep 'recruiting' the best breeds. Of them, Tibetan yaks are the most popular and useful. "PLA soldiers also drink yak milk and eat yak butter, both considered highly nutritious and cures to various ailments. Yak blood is high in protein and raw yak meat is highly nutritious," the sources said. What makes it the best

suited animal in mountains is its massive respiratory system and outer coat and the fact that its blood takes in more oxygen than other bovines making it survive easily in the harshest of the climates. Yaks hardly sweat.

Old timers who served in the Indian Army say that the PLA is so touchy about yaks that it will not hesitate to go to war over them.

■ **Page 5:** Missing yaks led to tension in 1965

India to have most cases, least virulent

Affordable drugs help Covid patients recover

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 12

The gap between the US and India in new cases is 50,000 on September 12 and, at this rate, experts predict that in 38 days (by October 18) India will be number one in Covid-19 cases in the world. The good news is that the strain is not as virulent and will not be fatal.

The total difference on September 12 was 1,978,868 cases. The US recorded a total of 6,636,247 cases while India recorded 4,657,379 cases on September 12.

The increasing number of cases in India is a fact but 90 per cent of them are mild cases due to the less virulent strain of SARS-Cov 2 virus. The virus is moving very fast from one person to another and the strain is not as strong as it was noted in the months from May to July 2020.

The present strain in India is less virulent due to which mild and atypical illness is noted in 82 per cent of the population, severe to moderate illness in 19 per cent and critical cases are only five per cent.

Recovery rate is 77 per cent according to the Union health ministry and that is one of the reasons that the demand for high-end antiviral drugs for patients has reduced. Patients are recovering with HCQs and mid-level antiviral drugs which are affordable for many.

Recovery has boosted confidence but it must not lower the guard as the infectious nature of the virus has not reduced.

Dr K.K. Aggarwal, president of the confederation of medical associations of Asia and Oceania, explained, "Human to human transmission is through large and small droplets. Surface to human transmission

STATE IMPROVES TESTING, CASES GOING DOWN

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

Andhra Pradesh has registered 9,901 new Covid-19 cases taking its tally to 5,57,587 and 67 deaths taking the death toll to 4,846 in the last 24 hours.

The state's Covid-19 bulletin reported that of the 75,465 samples tested, 9,901 individuals were infected. Out of 45,27,593 samples tested for Covid-19 so far in the state, 4,57,008 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 95,733 patients are still active with the virus and are undergoing treatment at various hospitals.

Among new infections, East Godavari tops the state with 1,398, followed by 1,146 in Prakasam, 1,069 in West Godavari, 932 in Chittoor, 792 in Kadapa, 711 in Nellore, 680 in Anantapur, 584 in Visakhapatnam, 583 in Vizianagaram, 555 in Srikakulam, 505 in Kurnool, 479 in Guntur and 467 in Krishna.

■ **Page 3:** Kadapa registers highest deaths

shows that it can be on up to three days. It can enter through the eyes, nose or mouth and enters heart muscles, the central nervous system, kidneys, blood vessels and the liver. Once in the body, it turns the cell into a factory making millions and millions of copies which are then coughed and also breathed out to infect others. For this reason, masks and social distancing are very important and will have to continue

High alert at all temples after intelligence warning

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 12

Following the Antarvedi Chariot incident in East Godavari district, the Endowments department has sounded high alert at all the main temples in the state and has mandated deployment of 24/7 security and CCTVs at all vulnerable areas in and around temples.

In fact, the state government has already directed all 6-A temples to install CC cameras in the vicinity of temples way back in 2009. Although sufficient funds are available for the

purpose, most temples have not installed enough CC cameras. And those that have faced problems like poor maintenance, non-functional cameras or data not being registered in hard disks.

The government seems to have woken up to after the Antarvedi incident as it has cautioned major temples against such incidents. State intelligence has alerted the government about vested interests attempting to create communal disharmony.

■ **Page 2:** Govt serious on security at temples

EFFORTS ON TO BUILD CHARIOT AT ANTARVEDI TEMPLE

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, SEPT. 12

Efforts are on to build a new chariot for Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple at Antarvedi in Sakshinetipalli mandal of East Godavari district in place of one that got burnt recently.

■ **Full report on Page 2**

SHORT TAKES

STATE SANCTIONS
₹2,154CR TO SET UP
4 MED COLLEGESDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

The state government has given administrative sanction for ₹2,154.17 crore for setting up four medical colleges and also for land acquisition.

As per orders issued here on Saturday, ₹500 crore each has been allocated for medical colleges at Paderu in Visakhapatnam district, Pulivendula in YSR Kadapa district and Piduguralla in Guntur district. Each of these colleges will have an intake of 100 MBBS seats. For the proposed college at Machilipatnam in Krishna district, with an intake of 150 seats, ₹550 crore has been sanctioned.

The government also gave an administrative sanction for acquiring land for six medical colleges at Amalapuram, Eluru, Piduguralla, Madanapalli, Adoni and Pulivendula at a cost of ₹104.17 crore.

CONGRESS
DEMANDS SPECIAL
CATEGORY STATUSDC CORRESPONDENT
RAJAHMUNDRY, SEPT. 13

The Congress party demanded the Rajahmundry MP M. Bharat fight for achieving Special Category Status (SCS) for Andhra Pradesh in the coming parliament sessions.

The BJP-led NDA government had promised the status to Andhra Pradesh for a ten-year period during the 2014 elections, which has not been implemented so far.

A call was given by the Pradesh Congress Committee president S. Sailaja Nath for submitting memorandums to all MPs of their respective areas.

Rajahmundry City Congress president N.V. Srinivas along with NSU and Youth Congress leaders met Mr Bharat on Saturday and submitted a memorandum to him, stating that SCS is very important for providing employment to youth, and many of the industries could come into the state.

SRI CITY MD
CHOSEN MEMBER
ADVISORY PANELDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 12

Ravindra Sannareddy, founder managing director, Sri City, thanked AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and the Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy for appointing him as a member of the high-level Advisory Committee on Skill Development.

Mr Ravindra Sannareddy is one among the 4 members appointed by the government to the high-level committee on September 10, 2020.

The committee is headed by B.V.R. Mohan Reddy, Executive Chairman, Cyient. The other members are RCM Reddy, IAS (Retd.), MD, IL&FS (Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Service) Education, Dr Arja Srikanth IRTS, MD&CEO, APSSDC (AP State Skill Development Corporation) (Member-Convener) and DN Rao, Vice President, Centurion University.

CBI TEAM
REACHES
PULIVENDULADC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, SEPT. 12

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team came to Kadapa after 40 days to probe the murder case of former minister Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy. The team members reached Pulivendula roads and buildings guesthouse on Saturday evening. They will start the second session of inquiry from Monday onwards. Former minister, AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's paternal uncle Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy was brutally murdered on March 15, 2019 night in his house at Pulivendula.

As per the directions of the AP High Court, the CBI has started its probe on Viveka murder. The team members came to Kadapa last month and they took all the records from the Special investigation team, which was inquiring this case.

In the first session of their inquiry, they have questioned some of the suspects in the case and reconstructed the crime scene in his house at Pulivendula.

The CBI team has completed their first session of investigation for two weeks and went to Delhi on July 31. After 40 days they came here for the second session of their probe.

TD changing its secular ideology to Hindutva

TD planning to restrain BJP from strengthening its base in AP by hijacking Hindutva ideology of saffron party: Analysts

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

The Telugu Desam is changing its colours from yellow to orange.

The party which followed a pro-Telugu ideology for the past 38 years with a secular stand as a party that belongs to all communities with a pro-business/development attitude is turning a saviour of the Hindu religion, strongly protesting attacks on Hindu religious places for the past few days in AP.

Calling upon the Hindu community to perform a week-long devotional protest from September 13 against the Antarvedi incident, the TD is seeking protection of the Hindu religion donning the role of Hindu protector and saviour.

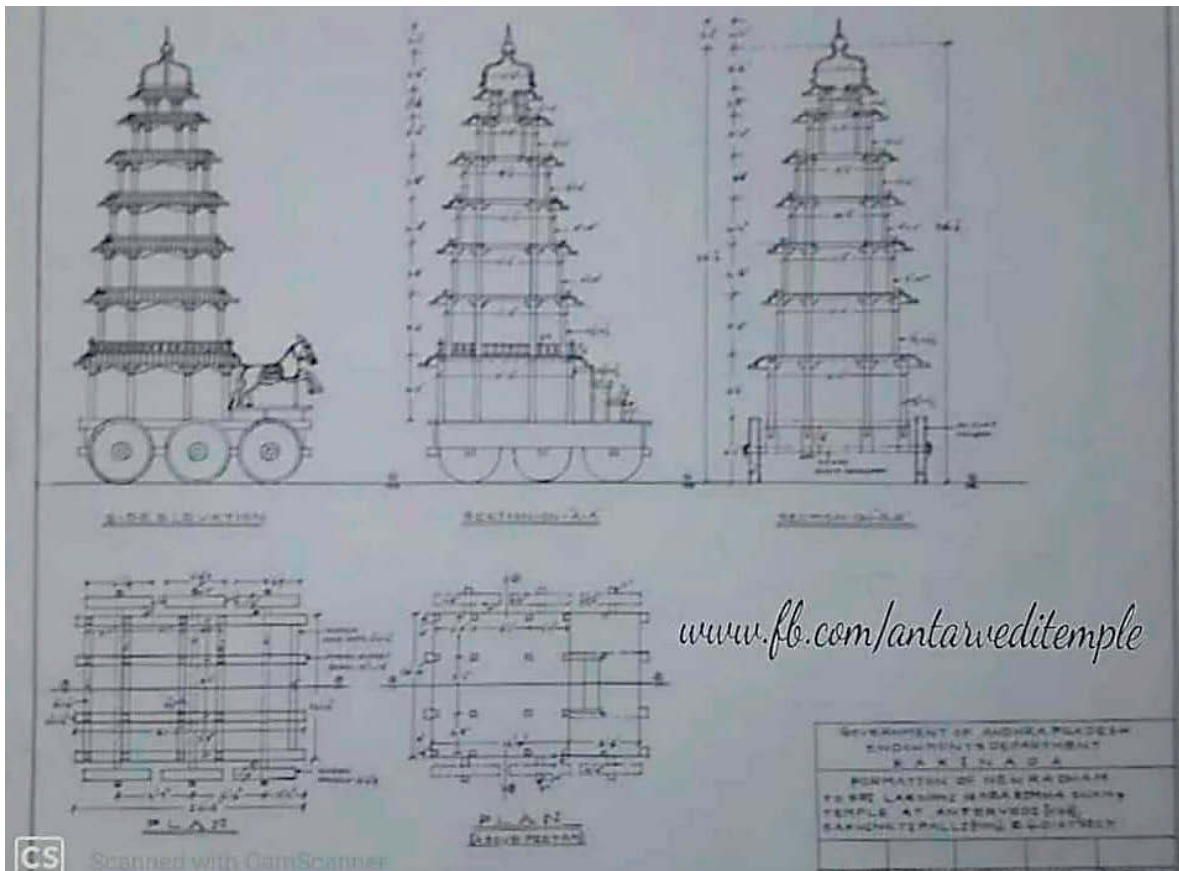
Senior political analysts maintain that the TD is planning to restrain the BJP from strengthening its base in AP by hijacking the Hindutva ideology of saffron party. They recall that TD launched a massive campaign on Antarvedi by sending party leaders and cadres to the spot, appointed a fact-finding committee and further put the demand of CBI inquiry before the BJP started any agitation.

Analysts point out that Naidu, Lokesh and most party leaders have now called for week-long pujas to gather the support of the conventional Hindu community. They recalled that earlier there was no chance for the BJP to strengthen its base in AP due to its alliance with TD and further due to the secret cooperation of saffron leaders and the yellow party.

After Somu Veerajulu assumed charge, the BJP has started to grab the main opposition party position from TD, analysts feel that Naidu, with 40 years of experience, has started a counter-strategy by hijacking the Hindutva ideology of BJP claiming himself as the protector of the Hindu religion and damaging the saffron party by attracting Hindutva supporters.

TD politburo member, Varla Ramaiah, called Hindus to conduct pujas from Sunday to Saturday against attacks on Hindu temples and sought protection for Hindus. He lamented that 100 above incidents damaging Hindu sentiments have unfolded in the state after the YSRC assumed power.

Former TD MLA, Bonda Umamaheswara Rao, said that besides performing pujas, TD cadres will conduct protests in front of the surya devalayam (sun temple) on Sunday, Shiva temples on Monday, Anjaneyaswamy temples on Tuesday, Ayyappa temples on Wednesday, Sai



Master plan for new chariot of Antarvedi Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy.

Efforts are on to build new chariot

All religious places will
be geo-tagged, says DGPDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

Efforts are on to build a new chariot for Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple at Antarvedi in Sakshinetipalli mandal of East Godavari district in place of one that got burnt recently. Temple special officer K. Ramachandra Mohan and executive officer Bhadraraj have discussed designs of the new chariot with chariot manufacturer Ganapathi Acharyulu on Saturday.

"The new chariot will be similar to the old one – 20 feet in length, 16 feet width and 40 feet height. The chariot designs will be placed before district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy for finalisation," Ramachandra Mohan told Deccan Chronicle.

Meanwhile, BC welfare minister Ch. Srinivasa Venugopala Krishna,

Baba temples on Thursday, Ammavari devasthanams on Friday and Vishnu temples on Saturday. He demanded that the government explain why a series of attacks took place only after YSRC came to power. He further demanded that Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, should explain why there were no arrests being made in connection with the attacks on the temples, hinting at the allegation that the YSRC is a pro-Christian party as Jagan is Christian.

Kothapet MLA Chirla Jaggireddy and endowment officials have visited some saw mills at Ravulapalem for choosing suitable wood for construction of the new chariot.

The minister said the government wants to make the new chariot ready for the celestial wed-

ding of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in February, 2021. He said that wood for the chariot has been finalised. The saw mill owner has agreed to supply wood on a cost basis, as it is for God's work.

Venugopala Krishna said construction of the new chariot is being entrusted to Ganapathi Acharyulu, who is an expert in manufacturing temple chariots. He has already built around 80 chariots for various temples throughout the state.

He said in keeping with sentiments of the people, Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had decided to hand over the case related to burning of the chariot to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The minister took objection to certain elements trying to provoke communal feelings over the incident.

Ganesh idol desecrated in East Godavari village

DC CORRESPONDENT
RAJAHMUNDRY, SEPT. 12

Even as the controversy over the gutting of temple chariot at Antarvedi is rocking the state, another incident has been reported at the Lord Vinayaka temple, Pidimgoyy village in Rajahmundry Rural of East Godavari district.

According to sources, residents of Venkatagiri colony constructed a small temple of Lord Vinayaka ten years back and have been performing pujas every day.

Saturday morning, when some devotees came to the temple, they were shocked to find that the idol of Lord Vinayaka was desecrated and there was a bad smell all around.

Telugu Desam leader V.

Prasad Babu immediately informed Bommuru police station and lodged a complaint on the incident. Meanwhile, tension gripped the village with the locals demanding stringent punishment of the culprits.

Meanwhile, the police rushed to the spot along with dog squads and Clues teams. Rajahmundry Rural

MLA Gorantla Buchaiah Chowdary went to the spot and sought prompt action from the police, who spent considerable time watching the nearby CCTV footage.

The East Zone DSP of Rajahmundry Urban A.T.V. Ravikumar, Bommuru Circle Inspector Lakshmana Reddy visited the spot. Ravikumar told the

Minister questions
BJP, JS silence on '17
chariot burning caseDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

In a bid to turn the tables on the opposition Telugu Desam, BJP and Jana Sena, which have been accusing the government of failure to prevent attacks on temples, the YSRC has questioned their 'silence' on burning of a 70-year-old chariot at Gopala Swamy temple at K Pentapadu of West Godavari district during the previous Chandrababu Naidu government.

Minister for endowments Vellampalli Srinivas Rao, addressing a press conference here on Saturday, released the video footage of the burning chariot on October 19, 2017, and alleged that neither BJP nor Jana Sena spoke a word on the incident nor did the TD government ordered an inquiry. The villagers had pooled funds to have a new chariot made when

the TD government did not come forward to provide funds, the minister alleged.

Claiming that the CCTV cameras at the temple had not worked from 5.22 pm to 7.07 pm when the chariot was set on fire, the minister expressed the suspicion about the involvement of the then ruling TD in the incident.

He accused Mr Naidu of politicising the Antarvedi mishap.

Mr Srinivas Rao wanted to know if Mr Naidu and state BJP president Somu Veerajulu take the responsibility for the Pentapadu incident and resign from their respective positions.

Even though the government ordered a CBI inquiry into the Antarvedi incident, Mr Chandrababu Naidu, Mr Somu Veerajulu and Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan were politicising the issue and trying to create strife in the state.

Govt serious on
security at temples

FROM PAGE 1

Barring Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), most temples are not following security arrangements and the government is very serious on the issue.

For instance, though there are 56 CC cameras in Sri Varahalakshmi Narasimha Swamy Devasthanam, many of them are not working. Meanwhile, officials failed to deploy technically qualified persons at the control room while in many temples the control room is maintained by ill-qualified security guards.

"Moreover, CC cameras are not covering all vulnerable areas. We have identified the need for 180 more such cameras to ensure round-the-clock secu-

rity besides having qualified persons to man the control room. These will be achieved as soon as we get the consent of the endowments commissioner," said V. Trinatha Rao, executive officer of Sri Varahalakshmi Nrusimha Swami Devasthanam of Simhachalam.

He told *Deccan Chronicle* that the technical committee has estimated that installation of additional CC cameras would cost ₹52 lakh.

Meanwhile, a senior official from the endowments department from Amravati said that there was information about threat to peace and harmony reportedly because vested interests were keen on damaging Hindu religious assets.

reporters that the police are searching for the culprits and identified the suspected movements of six persons and had taken them into custody.

Meanwhile, BJP state executive member Duvvuri Subrahmanyam said that the ambit of CBI inquiry should be widened to include all such incidents and not only the Antarvedi incident.

FARMERS' LEADERS
OPPOSE GOVT MOVE
TO INSTALL METERSNAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA I DC
KADAPA, SEPT. 12

AP Farmers' Association district general secretary Gali Chandra cautioned the farmers not to trust the words of CM's principal advisor Ajay Kallam and APSPDCL chairman Haranatha Rao that installation of pump set meters would not affect free power supply.

Along with other leaders of the association, he visited Palampalle and spoke to the farmers. He questioned the government as to whether the meters were meant to reduce the subsidy given to the farmers or to completely abolish free electricity to protect the interests of power companies.

Rayalaseema region and Nellore and Prakasam districts account for the highest consumption of power by farmers, he said. The team asked the farmers to fight against the government policy till it was scrapped.

● Gali Chandra cautioned the farmers not to trust the words of CM's principal advisor Ajay Kallam.

YSRC GOVT HAS COMMITTED ANOTHER
CONTEMPT OF COURT, SAYS YANAMALADC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

Leader of opposition in the Legislative Council Yanamala Ramakrishnu

on Saturday accused the YSRC government of launching a misinformation campaign against the opposition leaders in order to divert the public attention from the ruling party leaders hand in massive corruption. He asserted that the Cabinet Sub-Committee and SIT probe was ordered into Amaravati lands with an ulterior motive to take revenge on former CM Chandrababu Naidu and TD leaders.

Mr Ramakrishnu took objection to the SIT 'leaking' its report on the Amaravati lands even though

the matter is pending before the court. He claimed by leaking SIT report, the YSRC government committed another contempt of court.

Mr Ramakrishnu said CM Jagan launched a political witch-hunt against TD for exposing scams, illegal activities and atrocities on Dalits.

Alleging that the Cabinet Sub-Committee consisted of only Jagan's followers, Mr Ramakrishnu questioned its propriety and legality. It was Jagan who got the alignment of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) in Hyderabad changed his father Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy's regime and bought 80 acres of lands in Survey Nos 148, 25, 171 and 194(3) in Kolluru.

ing money to the poor with one hand and taking it back with another hand. She alleged that the VAT

that Mr Naidu who banned CBI entry into the state should demand an

inquiry by the same agency into the chariot incident.

several people in a stampede during Godavari Pushkaralu. It's absurd

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was prompt in ordering a CBI inquiry into the chariot torching incident, unlike Mr Naidu, who did not do any such thing after the death of

Sudheer Kumar Reddy visited the village on Saturday morning and assured the people that the government would provide them all facilities as well as compensation very soon.

MLA Sudheer Reddy told the villagers that the MP and he did not visit the village on account of their ill health.

PROJECT-HIT VILLAGERS CONTINUE STIR

Kadapa: Talla Proddutur villagers continued their agitation against the government's move to evacuate them to the rehabilitation centre. The village faces inundation by backwaters of Gandikota reservoir.

To convince them and allay their fears, Kadapa MP Avinash Reddy and Jammalamadugu MLA

only 5 per cent. Further, it is clearly mentioned in today's GO that only five petroleum products are kept outside the GST. Natural gas is one of those five petroleum products.

The state government clarified that natural gas is used as input in certain industries and in power generation. It is also used as domestic fuel as "piped natural gas," in certain areas of metro cities but the rate of tax on "piped natural gas" for domestic purposes is only 5 per cent under VAT Act. The fresh notification does not change that rate. Piped natural gas for domestic use continues to be taxed at 5% only. The increased tax rate on natural gas is applicable only to the natural gas other than that used for domestic use.



SHORT TAKES

1,700 HEALTH WORKERS NOT PAID

FROM PAGE 1

Similar is the stand taken by higher officials in other districts with regard to payment of wages.

There are also nearly 1,700 health workers taken on outsourcing basis for six months in all 13 districts, who too have not got their wages for two months.

● Food is not being supplied at some community health centres in parts of Visakhapatnam due to undue delay in payment of money to contractors

INTUC SERIOUS ON POSCO JOINT VENTURE

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 12

The major trade union in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, INTUC, has also swung into action against POSCO agitation and intensified protests on the plant premises. While reminding about the Union Minister of Steel Dharmaendra Pradhan's assurance that there is no proposal of Joint Venture between RINL and POSCO, the INTUC, targeting the government started protests across the plant.

While speaking to the media, General Secretary, INTUC Mantri Rajasekhara said that during the latest visit of the steel minister, he said that there is no proposal of Joint Venture between RINL and POSCO.

However, according to the sources, the management is trying to handover a huge extent of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant lands to POSCO in the name of a joint venture. The Visakha Steel Employees Congress, affiliated to INTUC, is strongly opposing the venture and has informed the government that the union would not allow any such proposal, Mantri Rajasekhara said.

MAN KILLS HIS 80-YEAR-OLD MOTHER

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

In a heinous act, a son murdered his 80-year-old mother to get her property. The son, Kundeti Yedukondalu, was angry over refusal to give her farmlands to him and attacked Tirupatamma with an axe, in the early hours on Saturday at Annavaram village in Rompicherla Mandal of Guntur district.

The Rompicherla sub-inspector Venkata Rao said that Tirupatamma had 10 acres of land in Annavaram and distributed four acres each to her sons Anjaneyulu and Yedukondalu as per the decision of the elders of the village. However, she wished to give one acre of land to her elder son Anjaneyulu and the remaining acre of land to whoever would take care of her. Yedukondalu demanded the one acre land but Tirupatamma refused. Heated arguments between the mother and son led to Yedukondalu attacking her in an intoxicated condition. She died on the spot due to severe head injuries, and Yedukondalu managed to escape from the village. The police shifted the body to the area government hospital in Narasaraopet for an autopsy and started a search to nab the accused by registering a case.

EXCISE SI TRIES TO END LIFE OVER HARASSMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 12

The Pedakurapadu Prohibition and Excise sub-inspector Ch. Geetha tried to commit suicide by consuming sleeping pills alleging harassment by the excise superintendent N. Balakrishnan. The incident took place on Friday, and it came to light on Saturday.

The excise commissioner M.M. Naik appointed a committee with three officials Lavanya, Ramadevi and Vivek, who have started an inquiry in Guntur on Saturday into the harassment allegations. Ms Geetha submitted her complaint to the committee against the harassment by Balakrishnan.

Rare positioning of planets can be seen from today

Sunday's planet position brings bad omens for mankind: Astrologer

VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 12

A remarkable positioning of six planets in their own houses-the rarest of rare phenomena- will be witnessed for 51 hours, 48 minutes from 10.37 am of September 13 to 2.25 pm on Tuesday (September 15).

Such positioning of planets was not witnessed for centuries together. According to noted astrologer and Almanac writer P. Srinivasa Gargeya, he had verified 400-year-old positioning of planets, but he has never found

such a positioning. Planets like moon (Cancer), sun (Leo), mercury (Virgo), jupiter (Sagittarius), saturn (Capricorn) and mars (Aries) are in their own houses.

However, Gargeya said that such positioning will be witnessed again on July 2, 2022 (9.45 am) to July 3 (6.30 am) for 20 hours and 45 minutes. He said that the latter positioning will be better than the present positioning of the planets as the planets will be positioned like a string and that would be a good sign for the country.

Speaking about

Sunday's planet position, he said that it brings bad omens for mankind. It may result in outbreak of several viruses, imprisonment of prominent personalities, national calamities, among several such bad signs. However, he said that people should make a conscious effort to control their pride and egos and they should not take any hasty decisions during this period.

He said that people should cultivate a spirit of surrender and worship of the planets and then the beneficial impact of the moon on the

mind and the impact of mercury on the intellect in particular can be felt.

Drukh Siddantha Almanac Writers President H. Subrahmanya Sarma said that though the six planets are positioned in their houses and symbolise bad signs, people need not worry as the planets are in a weakened position. He said that due to last December's eclipse, many of the planets were positioned in one Rasi, but now they are dividing each other and positioning in their houses.

Bhuvaneswari Peetam chief and prominent

Almanac writer Chinta Gopi Sarma found fault with some of the suggestions about the stoppage of performing rituals to their ancestors. He said that the present days are considered as Mahalaya Pakshas' and this is auspicious for performing obeisance to manes for their ancestors. Former president of Drukh Siddantha Almanac writers G.M. Pattabhi Sastry said that the rare phenomena is not a good sign for the world as there will be an economic crisis and the problem of unemployment would worsen.

Fake certificate racket busted

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, SEPT. 12

In a prize catch, the Inkollu police, on Saturday, arrested a seven-member-gang involved in generating and selling 2,237 fake certificates to unsuspecting people in 11 districts of AP apart from nine states across the country.

According to Prakasam SP, Siddharth Kaushal, the kingpin of the gang Jampani Venkateswarlu, 49, from Chintapallipadu village in Yaddanapudi mandal of Prakasam district.

One among the gang members Silarapu Bala Srinivasa Rao, 53, and his wife Sujatha, 47, registered a non-profit organisation under the name of Jawaharlal Nehru Technical Centre (JNTC)

in Visakhapatnam in 2017.

Another accused Jampani Venkateswarlu, 49, joined the couple and opened a website under the name JNTC and projected it as an NGO recognised by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Labour Department.

Under the guise of a recognised government agency, the promoters started deceiving innocent students and the public by declaring that they were allowed to give certificates for service (social service).

A few more people joined the trio later. As part of the plan, they have also introduced 584 courses in 15 categories and established 115 branches in 11 districts of AP through franchisees after collecting deposits from them.



Tourists enjoy a speed water boat ride at the waters of Rushikonda Beach in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. — K. MURALIKRISHNA

Kadapa district registers highest Covid-19 deaths

FROM PAGE 1

In terms of cumulative cases, East Godavari has been affected badly with 75,394 cases, followed by 51,184 in Kurnool, 49,398 in West Godavari, 48,785 in Anantapur, 48,441 in Chittoor, 44,546 in Guntur, 43,433 in Visakhapatnam, 42,530 in Nellore, 35,654 in Prakasam, 35,580 in Kadapa, 31,497 in Srikakulam, 27,373 in Vizianagaram, 20,877 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery of Covid-19 infected patients has been good in East Godavari at 62,650, followed by 46,543 in Kurnool, 43,856 in Anantapur, 42,287 in West Godavari, 39,391 in Chittoor, 37,044 in Visakhapatnam, 36,909 in Nellore, 36,515 in Guntur, 28,341 in

Kadapa, 24,972 in Srikakulam, 20,436 in Prakasam, 17,702 in Vizianagaram, 17,467 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Kadapa has registered the highest number of deaths of Covid-19 infected patients in the state in the last 24 hours at nine, followed by eight each in Chittoor and Prakasam, seven in Nellore, six in Guntur, five each in Krishna, Kurnool and Visakhapatnam, four in West Godavari, three each in Anantapur and East Godavari, two each in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram.

Chittoor district has registered the highest number cumulative deaths of Covid-19 infected patients in the state at 520, followed by 459 in Guntur, 449 in East Godavari, 412 in

Kurnool, 400 in Anantapur, 385 in West Godavari, 384 in Nellore, 367 in Prakasam, 352 in Visakhapatnam, 342 in Krishna, 300 in Kadapa, 284 in Srikakulam and 192 in Vizianagaram.

The state health authorities have discharged 10,292 Covid-19 infected patients after recovery from various hospitals in the state in the last 24 hours.

Andhra Pradesh has carried out Covid-19 tests on 84,786 samples per one million population and has registered a Covid-19 positive rate at 12.32.

Maharashtra has tested 40,613 samples and has a positive rate at 20.02 and Telangana has tested 51,309 with positive rate at 7.57, reiterating AP's status as one of the most responsible and proactive states in facing the pandemic.

Police arrest nude thief

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 12

The city police arrested a rarely habituated burglar who committed various thefts in nude. The accused was identified as K. Mohan Rao, who committed the offences along with his friend V. Santhosh Babu.

According to DCP (Law and Order), Aishwarya Rastogi the accused Mohana Rao was responsible for committing several thefts in the city and also in the rural areas in a nude state.

Before committing the crimes, Rao selects the house by conducting reconnaissance and he removes his clothes near the house and enters into the house chosen to commit the crimes (decamp with cash and gold).

He wore only underwear before committing the crime and if anyone catches him, he would act as a mentally disordered person to escape from the spot, the DCP detailed.

After the investigation in the recent thefts, the police have identified the CCTV footages and

figured out his strategy.

The accused Mohana Rao is a native of the Ponnuru in Guntur district and has committed over 50 offences. He was arrested and convicted for a few crimes and he was released from the Kakinada jail recently. The accused developed friendship with second accused Santhosh Babu during his jail life in Kakinada, the DCP added.

The police recovered some stolen property from the two and further investigation is currently underway.

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SHORT TAKES

24 SCORE 100 PERCENTILE IN JEE-MAIN

New Delhi, Sept. 12: Five students from the national capital have scored 100 percentile in the JEE-Main exam, which was conducted earlier this month after being postponed twice in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. The result for the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Main was declared late night on Friday.

The top scorers from Delhi include Chirag Gaur, Gurkirat Singh, Laksh Gupta, Nishant Aggarwal and Tushar Sethi. They are among the 24 candidates who have scored 100 percentile in the crucial exam.

The exam for admission to engineering colleges was conducted from September 1 to 6, amid stringent precautions and social distancing measures due to Covid-19.

Staggered entry and exit for candidates, sanitisers at the gate, distribution of masks and maintaining distance as candidates queued up, were among the scenes witnessed at the exam centres across the country.

A total of 8.58 lakh candidates had registered for the JEE-Mains exam for admission to engineering courses in IITs, NITs and Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (CFTIs) while only 74 per cent of them had appeared for the exam.

Based on the results of the JEE-Mains Paper 1 and Paper 2, the top 2.45 lakh candidates will be eligible to appear for the JEE-Advanced exam, which is a one-stop exam to get admission into the 23 premier Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). JEE-Advanced is scheduled to take place on September 27.

RAHUL HITS OUT AT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 12

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday hit out at the Central government for the decline in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), job losses and the increasing number of Covid-19-related cases and deaths in the country.

The Congress has accused the Modi government of not handling the Covid-19 pandemic effectively.

Taking a jibe at the Modi government, he said its "well-planned fight against Covid-19 has put India in an abyss of 1.historic GDP reduction of 24%, 2. loss of 12 crore jobs, 3. Rs 15.5 lakh crore additional stressed loans, 4. highest daily Covid-19 cases and deaths globally. But for GOI and media 'sab chhanga si'."

Mr. Gandhi's reference to "well-planned fight" against Covid-19 is seen as a jibe at Home Minister Amit Shah.

Mr. Gandhi's tweet comes days after Union Home Minister Mr. Amit Shah said that India is putting up a "well-planned" fight against the pandemic under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

On Wednesday, Mr. Gandhi had criticised the Modi Government for its mismanagement of the Covid-19 crisis, saying that Mr. Modi promised to end the crisis in 21 days but instead finished off small businesses and the livelihood of crores of people.

ANURADHA PAUDWAL'S SON PASSES AWAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 12

Veteran playback singer Anuradha Paudwal's son Aditya Paudwal died on Saturday after suffering a kidney failure at a hospital. He was 35.

Aditya, who breathed his last early on Saturday morning, had been suffering from kidney ailments for "quite some time", an official from Cine Singers Association said. "I got a call from Aditya Paudwal's family and they said he died due to kidney failure at a hospital. We later informed all our members. He had been unwell since quite some time, he had kidney problems," said Himanshu Bhatt, General secretary of Cine Singer's Association.

Aditya was a music arranger and producer. He had arranged and produced a song for Nawazuddin Siddiqui-starrer *Thackeray*, which was released in 2019.

The news of Aditya's death was first shared by music composer Shankar Mahadevan, who took to Instagram to pay his tributes.

Language matters



People belonging to Sikh community during a signature campaign for inclusion of Punjabi language in the list of official languages, in Jammu district on Saturday. The Union Cabinet on September 2 approved a Bill under which Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi, apart from the existing Urdu and English, will be the official languages in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The Bill is likely to be tabled in Parliament during the Monsoon Session next week.

- PTI

Seats to Manjhi's HAM may be allotted from JD(U)'s quota

Nadda meets Nitish to discuss seat-sharing, rift among NDA allies

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, SEPT. 12

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday held an hour-long meeting with Bihar CM Nitish Kumar to discuss the prevailing political scenario in view of the Assembly elections due later this year.

The meeting assumes significance as it was held amid an ongoing rift between the NDA partners – Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) led by Chirag Paswan and the JD(U).

Both JD(U) and LJP have been sparring over the past few months on issues including the Bihar government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic,

guest workers crisis and flood scenario in the state.

Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who has been made in-charge for the Assembly elections, and BJP national general secretary Bhupendra Yadav along with Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi was among those present at the meeting with Nitish Kumar at his official residence 1, Anne Marg in Patna.

One of the key issues discussed during the meeting was seat-sharing among alliance partners of the NDA. Sources aware of the development said that Nitish Kumar wants the BJP to settle the issue

before election dates are announced.

Political analysts keeping tab of the developments in Bihar believe that amid ongoing rift with LJP, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is likely to persuade Mr. Nadda to first settle the seat adjustment issue with JD(U) and then allocate seats to the LJP from BJP's quota.

Sources said, "seats to Jitan Ram Manjhi's HAM will be allotted from the JD(U)'s quota". After returning to NDA camp earlier this month Jitan Ram Manjhi had said that his party was in NDA to support Nitish Kumar who has been working for the development of the

state.

BJP insiders, however, said that the party's leadership would soon meet Chirag Paswan in Delhi to resolve the differences between the LJP and JD(U). Later while inaugurating "Aatma Nirbhar Bihar" and party's campaign song for Bihar polls at BJP office in Patna Mr. Nadda said that, "Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leadership of Nitish Kumar, the NDA comprising BJP, JD(U) and LJP will contest Bihar polls and win".

"Since people want NDA to return, it is our responsibility to make Bihar self-reliant so that it gets

includes in the list of other developed states. People are not going to get trapped by the conspiracy being hatched by opposition parties", BJP national president JP Nadda said during his speech during the event.

Union Minister of State, Home affairs Nityanand Rai had said that the NDA under Nitish Kumar will retain power in Bihar by winning 220 seats. "NDA will form government in Bihar under the leadership of Nitish Kumar by winning 220 seats", Nityanand Rai told reporters after attending the meeting of the BJP's election chaired by J.P. Nadda.

2 Cong MLAs join JD(U) in Bihar

Patna Sept. 11: The JD(U) made fresh inroads into the Grand Alliance as two Congress MLAs, a former RJD minister and several other leaders including an RLSP spokesman joined the ruling party ahead of the Bihar Assembly polls due in October-November.

The opposition Grand Alliance comprises four parties – the RJD, Congress, RLSP and the Vikassheel Insaan Party.

Congress legislators Sudarshan Kumar and Purnima Yadav, senior RJD leader and former state minister Bhola Rai, Rashtriya Lok Samata Party's (RLSP) Bihar unit spokesman Abhishek Jha are among those who

switched sides on Friday.

These leaders took the membership of the JD(U) state headquarters here in the presence of senior leaders such as Ashok Kumar and Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh.

A total of seven RJD MLAs have so far quit the party to join the Janata Dal (United) in the past one month while five RJD MLAs joined the ruling party in June.

Those who joined the party on Friday reposed their faith in the leadership of Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar, saying that they want to work with him for states all round development.

-PTI

PEOPLE SUCCEED IN B'WOOD DUE TO TALENT, NOT RELIGION: SENA

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 12

In a veiled attack on actress Kangana Ranaut, Shiv Sena on Saturday said that Bollywood legends have never betrayed Mumbai. In a strong-worded editorial in *Saamana*, Shiv Sena mentioned several names in Bollywood stalwarts saying many of them came to Mumbai and made their names, but they were never dishonest to their *karmabhooni*.

The Sena said that the foundation of the Indian film industry was laid by Dadasaheb Phalke, a Maharashtrian, and artists have achieved success in the industry due to talent and not religion. People from all over came to try their fate in Mumbai's cine-world, first lived in hovels or on

pavements, but after luck smiled on them, went onto build palatial homes in Juhu, Pali Hill or Malabar Hill. But they were never ungrateful to Mumbai-Maharashtra, it said.

"Several veteran Muslim artistes like Madhubala, Dilip Kumar, Meena Kumari or Sanjay Khan took Hindu names as the industry was 'secular' in that era. Even when Marathi and Punjabi dynasties ruled the roost like the Kapoors, Roshans, Duttos or Shantarams, as many families do today. There were several others with no 'gharana' behind them like Rajesh Khanna, Dharmendra or Jeetendra who came up with hard work, and launched their own 'gharana' for their children," the editorial said.

LJP calls meeting of party MPs on Sept. 16

New Delhi, Sept. 12: Lok Janshakti Party president Chirag Paswan has called a meeting of all party MPs on September 16 as the party continues to deliberate whether to fight against the Janata Dal(U) in the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls.

LJP sources said the meeting will also consider the proposal by the party's Bihar unit that it should contest 143 seats in the elections to the 243-member state Assembly.

The LJP has six members in the Lok Sabha from the state and one Rajya Sabha member is its founder and Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan.

The party also hopes that there will be clarity

● **THE LJP** has six members in the Lok Sabha from the state and one Rajya Sabha member is its founder and Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan.

● **LJP SOURCES** said the meeting will also consider the proposal by the party's Bihar unit that it should contest 143 seats in the elections.

by the time of the meeting about the seat-sharing arrangement between the two principal National Democratic Alliance parties, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-headed JD(U) and the BJP.

LJP sources said any

attempt to undermine the party's position in the state will prompt it to go all out against the JD(U).

They said the JD(U) has been working to undercut the LJP. They cited the ruling party's decision to join hands with Dalit leader Jitan Ram Manjhi, who has a history of targeting the LJP, a party whose base is primarily among Dalits, as another attempt in this regard.

Nitish Kumar on Saturday held a crucial meeting with BJP president Jagat Prakash Nadda on seat-sharing among the NDA alliance partners for the assembly elections due in October-November.

-PTI

India records over 97,000 Corona cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 12

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has ordered the Serum Institute of India (SII) to suspend any new recruitment in Phase 2 & 3 clinical trials for Covid-19 vaccine candidate ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 till patient safety issues are resolved even as India recorded 97,570 new cases.

The DCGI also asked SII to increase safety monitors of vaccine trials. SII told the DCGI the trials will restart only after a review by the UK's Drug and Safety Monitoring Board.

Bharat Biotech, which is making the indigenous Covaxin, announced the successful completion of its trials on monkeys. "The vaccine candidate was found to generate robust immune responses... preventing infection and disease in primates upon high amounts of exposure to live Sars-CoV-2 virus," the study said.

India on Saturday had two records in a day.

On one hand it recorded the highest numbers of fresh coronavirus cases,

with 97,570 new infections, but also had the highest number of recoveries in a single day after 81,533 patients were discharged, taking the recovery rate to 77.77 per cent.

The Union health ministry said 60 per cent of total recoveries had taken place in five states: Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

Maharashtra alone contributed more than 14,000 and Karnataka saw over 12,000 in new single day recoveries. The total number of recoveries has crossed 36 lakhs in India, and active cases are 9.58 lakhs. The overall Covid-19 cases detected so far is 46.60 lakhs, while 77,472 persons died due to the virus, of which 1,201 fatalities were in the last 24 hours.

Kerala recorded 2,885 cases even as 1,944 people got cured from the infection. Of the new cases, 2,640 persons contracted the disease through contact, source of infection among 287 persons was not yet known, 42 came from abroad, 137 from other states and 55 health workers also got infected.

Infighting in Cong to fore as first list for bypolls is out

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, SEPT. 12

Infighting in Congress here on Saturday came to the fore with a senior party leader virtually questioning the first list of candidates released by the AICC for the upcoming by-elections to 27 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh, saying the Pradesh Congress Committee was not aware of it.

Former minister and Congress spokesman here P.C. Sharma, considered to be a staunch loyalist of party veteran Digvijay Singh, took Congressmen here by surprise when he said that the PCC was unaware of any such list.

"PCC is not aware if any candidates' list has been released by the AICC", Mr Sharma told reporters here. He, however, refused to speak on the issue further.

The surprising remark by him comes in the wake of reports that the candidates' list released by the AICC on Friday has caused consternation in a powerful faction of the party in the state. Sources said the powerful faction led by Mr Singh felt ignored in finalization of the first list of 15 candidates released by the AICC on Friday.

The list was released a day after MP PCC president Kamal Nath met Congress high command at Delhi on Thursday.

● **CONGRESS SPOKESMAN** Sharma took Congressmen by surprise when he said that the PCC was unaware of any such list.

● **AT LEAST** four candidates figured in the first list of candidates have joined Congress in the last couple of weeks from other parties such as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

At least four candidates figured in the first list of candidates have joined Congress in the last couple of weeks from other parties such as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

Incidentally, former BJP leader Satish Sikarwar who has quit BJP and joined Congress a couple of weeks ago with the hope of getting ticket for the by-elections to Ambah (SC) Assembly constituency has been left in lurch with the party deciding to field Satyaprakash Sikarwar in the seat.

This has dismayed the party faction that backed his candidature.

Meanwhile, Mr Nath on Saturday launched the campaign for the party for the by-elections to 27 Assembly seats in the state at Agar Malwa by leading a 'padyatra' or foot march of party workers and leaders there.

ALLY | SPEAKS UP

Nirupam slams Shiv Sena for attack on a retired officer

6 Sainiks held for assault on retd Navy officer

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 12

Six suspected Shiv Sena workers were granted bail on Saturday in a case of assaulting a retired Navy officer resident of Malad for allegedly forwarding a cartoon of the party president and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on social media, evoking allegations of political pressure from the BJP.

Denying any political interference, Joint commissioner of police (law and order) Vishwas Nangre Patil said the bail was granted to the accused in view of the Covid-19 situation.

The six persons were arrested after local BJP MLA Atul Bhatkalkar posted a video of Friday's assault on the retired offi-

cer, Madan Sharma (62), on Twitter.

A complaint was filed against Sena workers at Kandivali police station.

Leader of opposition in the state Legislative council Pravin Darekar, Bhatkalkar and the victim's family members staged an agitation outside the ACP's office in Kandivali.

They demanded that the accused be booked under sections 326 (causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons and means), and 452 and 450 (house-trespassing) of the Indian Penal Code, which are non-bailable.

Nangre Patil, who visited the site of the protest, told the protesters the accused were booked under section 325 of the IPC for causing grievous

hurt and rioting sections, which was a bailable offence.

"Six persons arrested under section 325 of the IPC. They were granted bail in view of the Covid-19 situation. There is no political pressure. I don't think section 326 can be invoked since that amounts to the use of sharp weapons. We will see the legal scrutiny of slapping trespassing clauses against them," the police officer said.

The Shiv Sena heads the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) dispensation, also comprising the NCP and Congress.

Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam slammed Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena over the attack on a retired Navy officer by the Shiv Sainiks for

allegedly forwarding a cartoon of Mr Thackeray on social media.

Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray was himself a cartoonist and had regards for the force, the Congress leader said.

The 65-year-old officer has been discharged from Shatabdi Hospital in Kandivali.

Meanwhile, the BJP staged a protest against the attack near the additional police commissioner's office.

Mr Nirupam, who was a former Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha member, said, "Shiv Sena has not changed. It is still a party of goons. The government sponsored *gundagardi* (hooliganism)". He said that the attack is a gross abuse of power. The state government and police are

shielding the Shiv Sainiks. The Shiv Sena is showing off nationalism.

Balasaheb ji himself used to make cartoons and make political and social comments through the cartoons, Mr Nirupam said.

When asked why are you not speaking the language of BJP, Mr Nirupam said that he would say it is the other way round, the BJP is speaking the language of Sanjay Nirupam. He has been speaking against the Sena since he was a spokesperson. He had been raising the issues against the Sena since he was Mumbai Congress chief. When the MVA government was formed, he was against the coalition government in Maharashtra with the Shiv Sena.



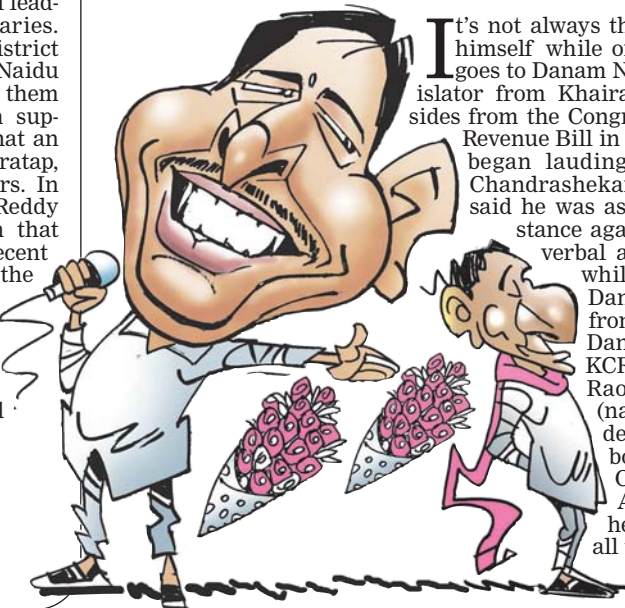
Vijaysai Reddy back to controversy

After a lull, apparently caused by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's snub, V. Vijaysai Reddy, YSR Congress general secretary, is back to his favourite activity of making controversial statements and landing his party in a tight spot. Recently, DGP Goutham Sawang wrote a letter to Opposition leader N. Chandrababu Naidu to furnish evidence to support his allegations that the government had been tapping the phones of political leaders and legal luminaries. Separately, the Chittoor district police issued notices to Naidu and his son Lokesh, asking them to furnish information in support of their allegations that an autorickshaw driver, Om Pratap, was killed by YSRC leaders. In the midst of this, Sai Reddy made the wild accusation that Naidu had a role in the recent gutting of the chariot at the Narasimha Swamy temple in Antarvedi, East Godavari district, inviting criticism as well as a demand from several quarters that he also be issued notices by the police seeking evidence to back his allegations, as had been done in the case of the Naidus. Watch this space for the next gaffe.

KCR: Salao for Telangana people's health

At the start of the classic novella, *The Old Man and The Sea*, which finally won Ernest Hemingway the Nobel Prize for literature, an entire village wishes to boycott Santiago, the old fisherman, because they fear he has gone 'salao' and can no longer catch any fish. Parents don't wish to let their children fish with him. Derived from the Spanish word *salado*, salao means extremely irredeemably unlucky. In Telangana state, ruling party circles are speaking in hushed tones whether an irreversible whisper campaign is sweeping across the population, especially the rural masses, that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is 'salao'. If what common people are talking is an indication, yes, KCR is a great leader but ever since he was elected for a second term, health pandemics are raging the state. Such talk began last year, when malaria, dengue, chikungunya and typhoid spread during the rainy season. With Covid, the ill-reputation is firming up. As a villager from KCR's constituency summed it up, "whatever he gives us or not, like it would not rain when Chandrababu Naidu was CM, if KCR is in power we will fall ill. His reign means a divine curse of disease." TRS leaders are hoping their supreme leader can defy the superstition like the old man in Hemingway's epic.

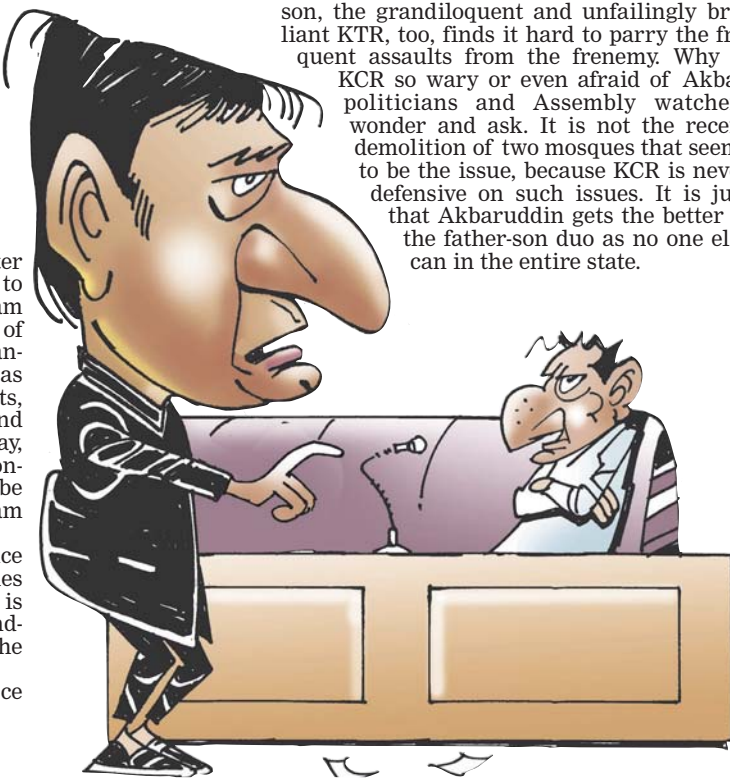
Danam ashamed of flaying KCR, KTR while in Cong



It's not always that a politician faults himself while on record. That credit goes to Danam Nagender, the TRS legislator from Khairatabad who switched sides from the Congress. Speaking on the Revenue Bill in the Assembly, Danam began lauding Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao. Suddenly, he said he was ashamed of his earlier stance against the TRS and his verbal attacks on its leaders while in the Congress — Danam was a minister from 2009 to 2014. It was Danam who had called KCR and his K.T. Rama Rao "galeeru gallu" (nasty persons). His sudden confession took both the TRS and the Congress by surprise. An MLA was later heard saying that is all the magic of power.

Jagan gets 'rid' of Dr Ramesh, Kallam is back in action

The curtain has lifted on the mystery, though after some time. The real intention behind the drama to strip the powers off AP CM adviser Ajay Kallam and CM's additional CS Dr P.V. Ramesh was to get rid of the latter. The CMO took away all subjects being handled by the two, besides a junior officer, J. Murali. It was projected that the advisers, who are retired bureaucrats, shouldn't handle files and hence the action. Kallam and Dr Ramesh met the Chief Minister who, sources say, behaved like nothing had happened and remained non-committal to Dr Ramesh. Everyone thought it would be the same for Kallam. But, a few days later, Kallam returned to the thick of action. He began attending crucial meetings of the CM, coming to office regularly and addressing the media on critical issues like fixing meters to agri pumpsets. Dr Ramesh is nowhere to be seen these days. He has not been attending office as there is nothing to do, though on paper he is still working with the CM. What made Jagan get rid of Dr Ramesh, to whom he gave much importance initially, is the million-dollar question.



Akbar scores over Kalvakuntlas in Assembly

Talking of literary epics, K. Chandrashekar Rao undergoes quite a bit of metamorphosis not too dissimilar to Franz Kafka's protagonist Gregor Samsa when it comes to facing MIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi. It is quite an unimpeachable dictum that KCR is Telangana state's greatest orator, a speaker with wit without peers, a man whose rhetoric ranges from scathing rebuffs to chilling rebukes. His whiplashing one-liners, smart quips and snide retorts can destroy the courage of his opponents. Yet, the mighty KCR who waxes eloquent against most opposition leaders and gives an earful to journalists at press conferences, transforms *a la* Samsa into a reserved, timid and soft-spoken man on the back foot whenever he gets to face a barrage of questions or angry criticism of Akbar. Barely does KCR start giving a reply when Akbar, with his perpetually angry and vituperative harangue, interrupts. Getting on KCR's nerves with ease, Akbar succeeds in pushing Rao on the defensive — his legerity seems to vanish, he clambers for an answer and speaks in a soft diphthong of a tune, plating the angry young legislator from Chandrayangutta. Not just KCR, but even his son, the grandiloquent and unfailingly brilliant KTR, too, finds it hard to parry the frequent assaults from the frenemy. Why is KCR so wary or even afraid of Akbar, politicians and Assembly watchers wonder and ask. It is not the recent demolition of two mosques that seems to be the issue, because KCR is never defensive on such issues. It is just that Akbaruddin gets the better of the father-son duo as no one else can in the entire state.

Uttam demands laptops for poor across Telangana

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 12

TPCC President N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Saturday demanded that the Union and state governments must provide free laptops to all poor students belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families across Telangana State.

He was addressing District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee meetings in Suryapet and Nalgonda districts, held to review all government-funded schemes in these two districts under Nalgonda Parliamentary constituency. He said that the Covid-19 pandemic has badly hit the education system across the world and it was difficult to impart education through conventional means. In view of the pandemic, and also to meet future exigencies, he



TPCC chief N. Uttam Reddy addressing the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee meetings in Suryapet on Saturday.

demanded that the two governments should work out a strategy so that they could equip poor students with a free laptop, along with free internet connectivity, considering that online classes seem to be the only way out in the prevailing circumstances.

He said, "They must focus on creating appropriate infrastructure for poor stu-

dents to make a success of online education."

He reiterated that the state government must utilise the entire Mineral Funds to upgrade government hospitals in the state. He said there was a lack of coordination between the Centre and the state government, which has resulted in farmers not getting insurance facilities for their crops.

MISSING YAKS LED TO TENSION IN 1965

From Page 1

"A missing flock of 59 yaks and about 800 sheep had triggered tensions between the two countries in 1965. It led to a border conflict between the two armies in Sikkim in 1967. There were heated exchanges between the two countries over the yaks and sheep after the PLA accused Indian forces of stealing the animals from Tibetan herds-men on the Sikkim border," a former army officer who worked along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) recalled.

Though there have often been suspicions that the PLA sends yaks and sheep into Indian territory fitted with spying tools, the Indian army, wary of PLA's designs, has not found any concrete evidence of that.

● There have often been suspicions that the PLA sends yaks and sheep into Indian territory fitted with spying tools.

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DECCAN Chronicle

13 SEPTEMBER 2020



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

JFK, yoga, and intermittent fasting

In every home that my wife and I have occupied since our marriage, and in all the homes my parents made while I grew up, there was a piece of furniture that held a group of airtight plastic or steel containers, placed fairly high up, outside the reach of a child. If you opened any one of those containers, you'd find a bunch of opened plastic bags containing biscuits or deep fried bits of joy, or junk food.

I call this bit of furniture, which you will find in practically every middle-class home, the JFK, for Junk Food Kuponboard. It has one branch in the fridge, in a box that contains pieces of cake, chocolate, and other sweets, and a second in the freezer, the home of ice-cream. The shop that supplies most of its contents, incidentally, is the JFP, or Junk Food Paradise, which we will visit shortly.

Yoga, I believe, is one of the forms of discipline that most people give up regularly. I believe this for two reasons. First, it was Google that told me, so it must be true, like everything else Google tells us. Second, I know how tough it is, for I very nearly gave it up some years ago. I managed to hang on to it despite the creaking of aged limbs and so on, so I even got a bit smug about continuing my practice in the face of all these difficulties. My weight stayed more or less the same for a decade or so.

The lockdown changed all that. Week after week of staying put, with large and regular meals and plenty of snacks in between, turned my waistline into a sort of coastline. By the middle of May, I had developed an equatorial bulge, and the effort of getting into my clothes left me breathless. Worst of all, the roundness was spreading. I upped my yoga practice, but to no avail, for it only made me hungrier and fatter.

At the end of May, when I discovered I could no longer shoehorn myself into my loosest pair of jeans, I decided to go on a diet. Wondering what kind of diet to go on, I turned once again to reliable old Google, which came up with something — after searching through a gazillion sites in a micro-second — that sounded about right.

Intermittent fasting. You restrict your eating to a six-hour period every day, during which you eat whatever you like. During the remaining 18 hours, you fast, your only intake being plain water or tea without sugar or milk.

I've been doing this for some weeks now: I eat only between eight in the morning and two in the afternoon. So let share with you what my day looks like.

I come awake, without an alarm of any kind, by half-past-five. Under the new scheme of time, this is 150 minutes AM (Ante Mealtime), with each minute feeling like an hour. I finish my ablutions, feed the pets, two dogs and a cat, and take the dogs for a walk. Back home, I prepare the next meal for the dogs. The clock now stands at 105 AM, and the minutes are getting longer.

I bring out the yoga mat and start on my regular practice, which used to take about 45 minutes before I started fasting. When I roll up the yoga mat afterwards, I discover that it's 75 AM, so I've finished my practice in 30 minutes. Amazing how supple fasting makes you!

Casting about for ways to fill in the remaining minutes, I clean out my desk, reply to emails and WhatsApp messages, and remove all the junk files from my laptop and phone. I go through the news channels, Indian and foreign, and am disappointed to find that none mentions my fast. It's now 45 AM. Amazing how efficient fasting makes you!

The remaining minutes pass like blocks of concrete. 1 AM finds me at the kitchen door, watch in hand, and when that last dreadful minute is past, I charge for the JFK, there being no time to cook a proper breakfast. Eleven minutes later, the JFK is sadly depleted, and needs replenishment.

After a short nap, still pleasantly full, I replenish the JFK. I hop onto the bike with an empty backpack and ride out to the JFP, a couple of kilometres away. The owner greets me with delight, tells me that he will give me a 10 per cent discount on all my purchases, and shows me three different kinds of savouries I haven't tried before. I take a packet of each, besides the regular stack. I buy another couple of packets of fried nuts. For unexpected visitors, you see. The backpack feels very heavy when I pick up. Great exercise for my shoulders, so it's all good.

Back home, I restock the JFK, and, needing refreshment, try one of the new savouries. Excellent! I return to my study and sit down to work, but spend most of the time wondering about lunch. Fasting certainly gives you an appetite!

After a long and pleasant lunch that would feed an Ethiopian family for a week, I return to the fridge. A couple of minutes before the end of my eating window, 2PM under the old scheme of time, there is still a cup of vanilla ice-cream in the freezer, and I manage to finish it just in time. Since I believe always in looking to the future, the time is now 1080 AM, of which I will spend 480 minutes sleeping, and dreaming of food.

After three weeks of this, when I still can't get into my jeans, I visit the weighing machine, and discover that I've put on four kilos! So now I'm wondering why they call it intermittent fasting and not intermittent feasting...

Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.

Subhani



De-escalation in Ladakh: Mixed signals after talks



K.C. Singh

The Ladakh imbroglio has been a complex interplay between military jostling at the Line of Actual Control and talks at the official, military and political levels. The Galwan setback was followed by a military-to-military understanding on the PLA's pullback. Video conferences followed between external affairs minister S. Jaishankar and national security adviser Ajit Doval with Wang Yi, who doubles up as China's foreign minister and state councillor. However, till August's end, the Chinese were unwilling to fully restore the status quo. In fact, they consolidated their hold on the northern bank of Pangong Tso and other areas like Depsang Plains, threatening India's access to Daulat Beg Oldie and the Karakoram Pass.

Surprised by China's lightning deployment of heavily armed troops at multiple points on the LAC, India also needed time to mirror deployments, with troops needing acclimatisation for high-altitude duty. Even the threat of economic decoupling, with over 200 Chinese apps barred, left China's military posture unaffected. On August 28-29, the Indian Army dramatically seized the highest Kailash range mountaintops, overlooking Spanggur Tso and the Chinese military garrison at Moldo. Below them lies Spanggur Gap, between two lakes, through which Chinese troops attacked in 1962. India's positions were then overrun as they were at lower heights. Mukphari, now held, and to its northwest Black Top, perhaps contested, dominate the entire region from south of Pangong Tso to Spanggur Tso lake and beyond, overlooking Chin-

ese roads and military installations.

This just preceded the meeting of the Indian and Chinese defence ministers on the sidelines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting. China's rhetoric changed instantly, with allegations of India breaching agreements and the LAC, aping Indian allegations earlier. India was clear its forward push was pre-emptive and only up to Indian claim lines and understanding of the LAC. India was merely following the playbook the Chinese used since April. After the Galwan betrayal, the rules of engagement were changed with local commanders empowered to use all means at their disposal to protect their troops and defend Indian posts and territory. With three of five agreements — signed in 1993, 1996 and 2013 — breached by China, India also set them aside. India's countermove levelled China's first-mover advantage somewhat, giving India's diplomats vital negotiating chips.

It was against this background that Mr Jaishankar arrived in Moscow for an on-the-sidelines meeting with his Chinese counterpart. Most analysts were sceptical about a positive outcome as there was no consensus about Chinese motives. Was Chinese ire persisting over the constitutional and territorial changes made by the Indian government in Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019? Or was China paranoid over the India-US strategic convergence, symbolised by excessive bonhomie between Narendra Modi and Donald Trump at the "Howdy Modi" and "Namaste Trump" extravaganzas? Finally, was it India's rejection of China's Belt and Road Initiative or the perceived Indian sabotage

of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership? Alternatively, was the provocation more local over India's upgraded infrastructure, or misreading of jingoism of Union ministers threatening to seize Pakistan- and China-occupied Kashmir, or perceived threat to Chinese investments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor? However, there is no doubt over one overweening purpose, rekindled by President Xi, to create a China-dominated, Sino-centric Asian regional order. Cutting India, its only possible strategic rival, down to size has been a Chinese preoccupation since 1962.

China has chosen the moment well, with the world distracted by the Covid-19 pandemic, the US presidential election and a global economic slowdown. Chinese assertiveness over territorial claims and international affairs manifested after the 2008 financial crisis. It was sharpened as Xi took the presidency in 2013. Instead of moderating its behaviour and recognising its constructive liability for the pandemic, China has shamelessly and aggressively pursued narrow national interests. But globally China is facing headwinds as even Europe is beginning to see demerits of engaging China blindly. Whoever wins in America or succeeds Japanese PM Shinzo Abe, the decoupling from China will continue. Xi faces a major Communist Party plenary in October, where he wants his choice of the next PM endorsed. China's economy may have revived fast, but the developed world and larger markets are circling their wagons. Australia, India and Japan are discussing a "supply chain resilience initiative", while Japan is

subsidising Japanese companies wishing to shift businesses out of China.

Mr Jaishankar and Mr Wang produced a five-point joint statement which recalled the "consensus" reached by Mr Modi and Mr Xi, reiterated the need to reduce tensions and abide by agreements and suggested the resumption of dialogue at civil, military and political levels. The only new element was a recognition that after the situation eases, new confidence-building measures are needed, allowing both sides to address strategic and local concerns. But the relief was shortlived as the individual statements by both sides seemed to undercut the feelgood joint statement. China asserted its "stern" position, said India must stop "provocations" like firing and recall all personnel and equipment that had trespassed to enable an enhanced dialogue. It claimed Mr Jaishankar accepted Chinese policy towards India had not changed and bilateral relations did not depend on "settlement of the boundary question". India contested China's claims, insisting that Mr Jaishankar had forcefully sought restoration of the status quo. What does this dissonance between an agreed statement and separate claims mean? Both sides may be posturing for home audiences, while agreeing in private to slowly restore normality. It could also mean Chinese unwillingness to exchange its cross-LAC territorial gains for India's vacating the heights south of Pangong Tso.

The next few weeks will show whether de-escalation will start or jostling for tactical gains and capture of vantage points, in a barren terrain littered with ridges, continue. If the latter, the possibility lingers of armed local action spiralling into the use of heavy arms or even air power.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

BORDER CONFLICT

It is good that India and China agreed on a five-point course of action to disengage and reduce tensions along the LAC.

Indian diplomacy has made rapid strides to make it happen (DC, Sept. 12). Now, it needs to strive hard to translate this consensus into de-escalation on the ground as the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

HEALTH CARDS

Although the government has brought regular staff of AP model schools under the employee health scheme, health cards are still not available. In May, government issued a directive regarding the government's order to bring all types of managements under the Employee Health Scheme (EHS). A letter was sent to the education department for generating health cards by the Arogyasri Health Care Trust. Still, health cards are pending at department level.

B. Suresh
Srikulam

AP POLICE

The AP police force deserves a big pat for maintaining its standards and topping the forensics in India once again. It is a pride for all the people in the state. The utilisation of technical aids for solving tricky cases has become a part of police investigation these days. However, there is a gap in resolving several cases. The glaring example being that of Dr P. Ramesh Babu who remained underground without a trace for several weeks following the Swarna Palace fire mishap.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

JUSTICE FOR VIEWERS

Since two months we have been hearing the Rhea Chakraborty guilty verdict on a daily basis. It is a nightmare for viewers after 9 pm with channels reviewing the day's findings with a magnifying glass. It is a drama in real life with angry men and women who abuse each other with no rhyme or reason.

Parthasarathy Mandadi
Tirupati

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

Hijacked women, children freed

AMMAM, Sept. 12 About 90 women and children were freed from the hijacked airliners in the Jordanian desert today and driven to a luxury hotel in Ammam by guerrillas singing gay Palestinian songs.

Jordanian troops escorted the convoy of 10 minibuses which carried the hostages 72 kms to the capital

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

from the capital air strip where some of them had been prisoners for six nights and days.

Most looked remarkably fresh and cheerful, considering the ordeal they had been through, and in a series of brief interviews told reporters their guerrilla captors had treated them well.

Swami who fought against BJP's Hindutva denied in death

Threat to Tomar

Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar is a worried man these days. On his home turf of Gwalior-Chambal, crucial Assembly bypolls are set to take place, which may establish the supremacy of Jyotiraditya Scindia as BJP's iconic figure on Mr Tomar's turf. Mr Tomar, who holds the additional charge of panchayati raj and rural development, was embarrassed when a well-known party spokesman fumbled and failed to name him as the country's agriculture minister. The spokesperson, having roots in the BJP's economic cell, reportedly took Radha Mohan Singh's name, who was agriculture minister in the previous Narendra Modi ministry. Sources close to Mr Tomar feel their leader needs more visibility if he has to counter Mr Scindia within the BJP.

Dissidents' new dilemma

Congress chief Sonia Gandhi turned out to be smarter than her detractors. The 23 Congress dissenters who wrote a letter seeking inner party democracy are now perplexed by Sonia's move to appoint the Congress

Working Committee nominating some prominent dissidents who were asking for CWC polls. Would Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and Mukul Wasnik muster the courage to turn down a CWC nomination? As per the party constitution, 12 members are required to be elected while an equal number can be nominated. Last time when CWC polls were held, the party was led by Sitaram Kesri in 1997. Sonia is travelling abroad for her medical check-up and likely to skip the monsoon session of Parliament. In her absence, a six-member panel [without Rahul or Priyanka Gandhi] would officiate.

How to protest

The monsoon session of Parliament is starting amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Ironically, when the House had met in March 2020, the chair had reprimanded members for wearing masks. Six months later, wearing masks has been made mandatory. The seating arrangement is also bothering the Opposition as members are spread to galleries in order to enforce social distancing. How would they protest if access to the well of the House is denied?



By WAQYANAWIS

AAP in hills?

Though the Uttarakhand state Assembly poll is scheduled for early 2022, the BJP has begun preparation. Politically, the Trivender Singh Rawat government does not seem strong enough to return to power. So BJP strategists are looking for a "third front" to prevent the Harish Rawat-led Congress

from edging the party out of power. The buzz is that Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party is set to contest the hill state poll in a big way. The presence of a third contender will be bad news for the Congress. The BJP is also reportedly promoting the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, otherwise considered a defunct outfit. The calculations are that if AAP and/or Uttarakhand Kranti Dal get a few seats through cutting into Congress votes and anti-BJP votes, then a Haryana-like situation can bring the BJP back to power.

Bhai closes Darbar

Jafferbhai Mansuri of Delhi Darbar fame is no more. Covid-19 took another toll. Jafferbhai was a legend in Mumbai as his biryani of the Delhi Darbar chain of restaurants was worth every paisa.

In 1973, Jafferbhai had founded his Delhi Darbar restaurant at Bombay's Grant Road, and by 2006 he became the Biryani King, having a chain of restaurants called "Jaffer Bhai's Delhi Darbar" from Grant Road to Jogheshwari. The chain also owns several restaurants in the UAE.

Jafferbhai's biryani was much sought after

in wedding receptions. An unassuming and affectionate person, Jafferbhai used to keep a keen eye on his friends and acquaintances who were often given a packet of biryani and kebabs to relish at home.

Silence, they said

Swami Agnivesh will be greatly missed. The social crusader in saffron was a spare time politician who did not get his due even in death, as most English-language newspapers did not carry his obituary. Surprisingly, most Urdu dailies had news of his death on the front page with some editorials and lengthy obits. Perhaps it was due to Agnivesh's consistent opposition to BJP's brand of Hindutva. A Brahmin from Andhra, Agnivesh was a vocal Arya Samaji whose influence spread from Punjab-Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan to other parts of the Hindi heartland. Agnivesh had given up a career as a professor in Calcutta to be a full-time social activist. His mission was to resist the RSS at all levels.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power

IN BRIEF

China satellite can't reach orbit

Beijing: China's optical remote-sensing satellite Jilin-1 Gao-fen O2C failed to enter the pre-set orbit on Saturday, official media reported here. The satellite was launched aboard the Kuaizhou-1A carrier rocket from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center at 1:02 pm (local time). The launch centre said the mission failed because of abnormal performance, state-run *Global Times* reported. Specific reasons for the failure are under investigation, it said.

250 guns seized in Germany

Berlin: German police said Saturday they have seized about 250 firearms and a few thousand rounds of ammunition from a man who is believed to be a far-right sympathiser. Police in the northwestern state of Lower Saxony said the weapons were found in the Seevetal area, just south of Hamburg, during a search on Friday evening. A police statement said investigators think the man has right-wing sympathies "because of the overall circumstances." The statement didn't elaborate or say why the man might have had the firearms, citing the ongoing investigation into a suspected violation of weapons laws.

50 die in Congo mine collapse

Kinshasa: More than 50 people are dead after landslides collapsed three artisanal gold mining wells near the city of Kamituga in eastern Congo's South Kivu province on Friday, officials said. Heavy rains for days led to the disaster. "The diggers and the transporters of the stones were swallowed up by the waters," said the Kamituga mayor, Alexandre Bundya. "A team of rescuers with motor pumps came to recover the bodies of the victims." Diwa Honoré, who survived the tragedy, said more than 50 people had been in the three wells, which are about 50 metres deep.

Assange court case to resume

London: The London court hearing on WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's extradition from Britain to the United States is set to resume after a Covid-19 test on one of the participating lawyers came back negative, WikiLeaks said Friday, District Judge Vanessa Baraitser ordered the proceedings adjourned Thursday while a lawyer representing the US government was tested for the Coronavirus. WikiLeaks said the case is now set to continue on Monday. Assange is fighting American prosecutors' attempt to get the British government to send him to the US to stand trial on spying charges. The extradition hearing at London's Old Bailey criminal court is scheduled to last until early October. US prosecutors have indicated the 49-year-old Australian on 18 espionage and computer misuse charges over WikiLeaks' publication of secret

TANKER FIRE WARNING NEGLECTED

Colombo, Sept. 12: The authorities of the oil tanker that went up in flames off Sri Lanka's eastern waters seemed to have neglected warnings from the crew on possible fire on board, a Sri Lankan court has heard. The Panama registered MT (Motor Tanker) New Diamond, a Greek-owned vessel and under charter by the Indian Oil Corporation, was carrying nearly two million barrels of crude oil from Mina Al Ahmadi port in Kuwait to the Indian port of Paradip when it caught fire off the coast of Sangamankanda in Ampara district on Thursday last.

A Filipino crew member died and another was injured in the mishap. The fire was doused in a joint operation of the Indian and Sri Lankan forces on Sunday last. But a new fire broke out within hours due to extreme heat and strong winds. After the second fire was brought under control on Wednesday, the tanker was towed away from the site.

A narrow diesel patch was noticed and an Indian Coast Guard aircraft sprayed dispersants to minimise potential damage to the marine environment. The state authorities sought court's permission to obtain oil samples on board the vessel to carry out tests to verify that the oil leaks visible in the surrounding sea area were those from the tanker.

Covid vaccine trials resume

Recommended after a pause following an adverse reaction in one of the participants

London, Sept. 12: Biopharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford on Saturday said that clinical trials for their Coronavirus vaccine have resumed in the UK after the Medicines Health Regulatory Authority's (MHRA) confirmed that the trials were safe.

The human trials resumed days after a pause had been announced in the trials after an adverse reaction in one of the participants. AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford, as the trial sponsor, said that they cannot disclose further medical information but confirmed that independent investigations concluded that the trials were safe to restart. "Clinical trials for the AstraZeneca Oxford coronavirus vaccine, AZD1222, have resumed in the UK following confirmation by the MHRA that it was safe to do so," AstraZeneca said in a statement. "AstraZeneca is committed to the safety of trial participants and the highest standards of conduct in clinical trials."

"The company will continue to work with health authorities across the world and be guided as to when other clinical trials can resume to provide the

JOIN IN VIRUS FIGHT: INDIA

United Nations, Sept. 12: India, along with 168 nations, voted in favour of a Covid-19 resolution in the UN General Assembly that reaffirms international cooperation to respond to "one of the greatest global challenges" and acknowledges the World Health Organisation's "key leadership role" in responding to the outbreak, a reference the US objected to as it opposed the resolution. — *PTI*

vaccine broadly, equitably and at no profit during this pandemic," the company said.

On September 6, the standard review process triggered a voluntary pause to vaccination across all global trials to allow the review of safety data by independent committees, and international regulators.

The UK committee concluded its investigations and recommended to the MHRA that trials in the UK are safe to restart. All trial investigators and participants will be updated with the relevant information and this will be

disclosed on global clinical registries, according to the clinical trial and regulatory standards, AstraZeneca said.

AZD1222 was co-invented by the University of Oxford and its spin-out company, Vaccitech. It uses a replication-deficient chimpanzee viral vector based on a weakened version of a common cold virus (adenovirus) that causes infections in chimpanzees and contains the genetic material of the SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19 virus spike protein).

After vaccination, the surface spike protein is produced, priming the immune system to attack the SARS-CoV-2 virus if it later infects the body. AstraZeneca, the biopharmaceutical giant in tie-up with the university to produce the vaccine, had described the pause as a "routine" one following what was "an unexplained illness". The Oxford University's Jenner Institute team started working to develop a vaccine against the SARS-CoV-2, or the virus which causes Covid-19 in January this year and says it has been working with "unprecedented urgency" in a race against the Coronavirus. — *PTI*

PoC beaten to death in Italy

Rome, Sept. 12: Hundreds of people in Italy walked in a funeral procession on Saturday for a young PoC whose brutal beating death has shaken up the country and drawn condemnation from the highest levels of government. Premier Giuseppe Conte and Italy's interior minister attended the funeral of 21-year-old Willy Monteiro Duarte, who was killed during a fight in Colleferro, a city on the outskirts of Rome, in the early hours of September 6. Four Italians have been arrested, including a pair of brothers with police records, but to date prosecutors haven't indicated if the slaying was racially motivated.

Italian news reports have quoted witnesses as saying Monteiro Duarte, who was born in Rome and whose family is from the African island nation of Cape Verde, intervened while seeing a friend get beaten up in the fight and was then fatally beaten

himself. The funeral procession featured hundreds of people, most wearing white shirts and masks, walking toward the sporting stadium where Monteiro Duarte was honoured and then clapping in respect as his casket was carried out.

It was a strong show of solidarity for the young man, who was described as hard-working and upstanding by those who knew him. Italy's premier has displayed dismay over Monteiro Duarte's death. He called the family to express his condolences. In a statement, Conte demanded justice and asked rhetorically what it means that someone could be killed in Italy for having tried to help a friend.

"Will we tell our children to turn their heads away? Not to intervene to quell disputes or to try to protect weaker friends or friends in obvious difficulty," Conte said. — *AP*

Belarus president to visit Russia on Monday: Kremlin

Moscow, Sept. 12: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday will hold talks with Belarus strongman Alexander Lukashenko, who faces the biggest protest of his nearly three-decade rule, the Kremlin said.

Lukashenko's visit will be the first to Soviet-era master Russia by the Belarusian leader since protests broke out over his disputed election win last

month. Putin has been keen to unify Russia and Belarus, and Moscow has accompanied its recent offers of military aid with calls for tighter integration. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday however there was no plan for the leaders to hold a news conference or sign any documents. The location of the "working visit" in Russia was yet to be announced, he said.

Lukashenko said last week that during his talks with Putin, he planned to "dot all the i's on issues that are very sensitive and delicate for the two states". Lukashenko, who has been in power for 26 years, has vowed that he will not give up power to the opposition, which claims its candidate Svetlana Tikhanovskaya was the rightful winner of the August 9 polls. — *AFP*

FILM | FEST

Under the Open Sky showcases small joys, big disappointments and generosity of strangers

The female gaze: Lighting up and lightening the *yakuza*

SUPARNA SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 12

I have attended the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) twice in person, and am now, in these surreal Covid-times, participating in the festival digitally.

Today is Day 3 of the 11-day festival. And usually, for those who fly into Toronto from the sub-continent, this is when jet-lag really hits. There is no jet-lag this year, but there is Net-lag. For two days I have struggled with a crappy WiFi that keeps disappearing, only to make sudden, brief, special appearances. I am pleased that despite

my annoying WiFi stretching the 126-minute Japanese film, *Under the Open Sky*, to almost four hours, I stayed with it.

I had to. It's that rarest of rare films — a *yakuza* (Japanese crime syndicate/gangster) movie directed by a woman.

Yakuza is, perhaps, one of Japan's most loved gifts to the world after sushi. It's a film genre that has not just inspired great directors across the world, but has also helped sustain many grindhouse talents and enterprises. But, *yakuza* movies have always been men's domain. Films about alpha men made by alpha

male directors.

Director Miwa Nishikawa, who has also written *Under The Open Sky*'s screenplay, has not made a typical *yakuza* film as they have come to be defined by its master-directors, though she uses many of the tropes of the post-retirement funk that ex-*yakuza* characters often struggle with, especially in Takeshi Kitano's stunning *Sonatime* (1993) and Yasuo Furuhata's *Demon* (1985).

Her film follows Mikami (Koji Yakusho), an ex-*yakuza*, as he returns to the world after serving a 13-year jail sentence for murder. But the world has mo-

Protest in Paris



A protester kicks back a tear gas canister as around 1,000 people gathered in two "yellow vest" protests against President Emmanuel Macron's perceived prioritisation of business and the rich over struggling ordinary families, in the Paris on Saturday. "Yellow vest" marches had been announced for other major cities in France including Marseille, Toulouse, Lyon and Lille. — *AFP*

Republishing Mohammed cartoons: Al-Qaeda threatens *Charlie Hebdo*

Paris, Sept. 12: Al-Qaeda has threatened French satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo* with a repeat of a 2015 massacre of its staff, after it republished controversial cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, the SITE observatory said on Friday. Al-Qaeda in its publication *One Ummah* had warned that Charlie Hebdo would be mistaken if it believed the 2015 attack was a "one off", after the magazine printed the "contemptible caricatures" in a defiant issue that marked the start of the trial in Paris of suspected accomplices in the attack.

The comments came in an English edition of the Al-Qaeda publication that

purported to mark the anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States carried out by the terror network.

It said it had the "same message" for the France of President Emmanuel Macron as it did for his predecessor Francois Hollande who was president at the time of the 2015 attacks.

It said France under Macron "gave a green light" to the republication of the cartoons. Twelve people, including some of France's most celebrated cartoonists, were killed on January 7, 2015, when brothers Said and Cherif Kouachi went on a gun rampage at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, whose no-taboo st-

yle, including publishing cartoons of the prophet, had divided the country.

The trial, which began on September 2 and is expected to continue until November; sees 14 suspected accomplices face justice even though all the perpetrators were killed in the wake of the attacks.

It had reopened one of the most painful chapters in France's modern history which heralded a spate of jihadist attacks on its territory that have claimed more than 250 lives.

Charlie Hebdo's director Laurent Sourisseau, known as "Riss" and who was himself badly wounded in the shoulder in the attack, told the court this

week that there was nothing to regret in publishing the cartoons. "What I regret is to see how little people fight to defend freedom. If we don't fight for our freedom, we live like a slave and we promote a deadly ideology," he said.

Charlie Hebdo's republication of the cartoons drew new condemnation from states, including Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

But Sourisseau, who now lives under round the clock protection, said it had to republish them.

"If we had given up the right to publish these cartoons, that would mean that we were wrong to do so" in the first place, he said. — *AFP*

RUSSIAN COPS SEEK TO GRILL NAVALNY

Moscow, Sept. 12: Russian police said Friday they were seeking to question opposition leader Alexei Navalny in Berlin after Moscow rubbished Germany's declaration that he was poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent.

The 44-year-old Kremlin critic and anti-corruption campaigner fell ill after boarding a plane in Siberia and was hospitalised there before being flown to Berlin.

Germany said there was "unequivocal evidence" that he was poisoned with the nerve agent but Russia says its doctors found no trace of poison. The Siberian transport police, who have been retracing Navalny's movements, said in a statement Russia would be preparing a request for its officers and an "expert" to shadow German investigators.

Navalny is now out of a medically induced coma and reacting to speech. Russia said it wanted its officers to be present as "German colleagues carry out investigative activities with Navalny". — *AFP*

Afghans meet for peace after decades of war

No military solution to Afghanistan: Pak

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 12

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi Saturday said that Pakistan has been holding the stance that Afghan issue could not be resolved through use of force and it is welcoming that the world is now accepting Pakistan's stance.

He was speaking through video link in the opening ceremony of Intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha. Qureshi said that holding of these negotiations is an important milestone in establishing peace in Afghanistan.

The FM called the negotiations a golden opportunity for the Afghan leader-

● **PAKISTAN FM** called the negotiations a golden opportunity for the Afghan leadership to pave the way for durable peace in Afghanistan.

ship to pave the way for durable peace in Afghanistan. Qureshi reiterated that Pakistan sincerely played its reconciliatory role in Afghan peace process as a shared responsibility, and it will continue doing so.

He also urged international community to play its due role to take the peace process to its logical conclusion. He said the mistakes of the past should not be repeated.

Arab Emirates earlier this month. The Afghan sides are also expected to discuss constitutional changes, and power sharing.

Even seemingly mundane issues like the flag and the name of the country could find their way on to the negotiation table. — *AP*

tiff

ved on, and it didn't leave a place at the table for him. A proud man with few usable skills and an expired driving licence, Mikami has to now live off state welfare. That's almost physically painful for the man who once thought nothing of venting his anger with his sword or fist at even a hint of an insult.

Though Mikami some-

times finds himself reacting in his old ways, there is no brooding, sulking, or bloody outrage in Nishikawa's film.

There is a very obvious touch of a woman in the film's rhythmic, everyday pace as Mikami experiences small joys, big disappointments, and the touching generosity of strangers.

Under the Open Sky is more than a genre curiosity. It's as if Nishikawa switched on a bright white light in what was till now a smoke-filled grimy world with an old, dim, yellow light bulb. And then she opened the windows and let some fresh air in.

The film has some lovely moments, but it's not a great film. Its plot meanders, and Nishikawa, at times, labours her point, even pausing the story to deliver flat, dreary speeches. And sometimes, when it's on Mikami's job search, it feels as if we are watching like a government-sponsored video on the reformation, rehabilitation and assimilation of ex-gangsters.

Yet I could not walk away from *Under The Open Sky* because of Koji Yakusho. He doesn't inhabit the character of Mikami. He creates it with a mix of humanity, a yearning for a mundane life even as he struggles

with some remains of the raging gangster he once was. These emotions reside in his dialogue and expressions, of course, but also in the smallest of gestures.

Yakusho brings to the character of Mikami a complex mix of quiet humility, dignity and simple-minded naivety. It's a moving, measured performance but with the fluidity of an actor who creates an interiority and brings feeling and meaning to even stock scenes, like where he is just sitting and staring out of a window.

It's more than a stirring performance. It's an honourable one.

SHORT TAKES



Anil Mittal

Cricket coach Anil Mittal no more

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 12

Former Hyderabad cricketer and dedicated coach Anil Mittal passed away in the City on Saturday following a heart ailment. He was 62 and is survived by his wife and two sons. His last rites were performed on Saturday evening.

An effective mediumpacer with a natural inswing, Anil represented Hyderabad in all age groups. The tall, well-built cricketer also played for State Bank of India in the Hyderabad Cricket Association's top division league. Later, Anil took up coaching and was involved with the St John's Sports Coaching Foundation since its inception in 1986-87, mentoring several State level players along the way.

He was also a long-standing coach of the St Andrews School team, instrumental in pushing the side into the top bracket alongside Noel Carr, his fast friend and opening bowling partner at the East Marredpally Cricket Club (EMCC) in the 1970s. Anil and Noel also played together on Hyderabad's State teams and coached at St John's as well as Wesley College.

"I am still in shock. Anil was a dear and close friend of mine for 40 years. We shared some fantastic and wonderful memories. My heartfelt sympathies and condolences to his Wife, Mum, sons and rest of his family members. You will be sadly missed Anil Pal," Noel, who now lives in Australia, wrote on his Facebook page.

Hami takes pole as Merc dominate

Mugello, Italy: Lewis Hamilton claimed a record-increasing 95th pole position on Saturday when he outpaced Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas to seize the prime grid position in qualifying for Sunday's inaugural Tuscan Grand Prix. It was the series leader and six-time champion's seventh pole in eight races this year as Mercedes continued their dominant run to nine poles out of nine this season with an eighth consecutive front row lockout. Bottas had been fastest in all three practice sessions, but he was unable to maintain his superiority over the Briton in the decisive hour albeit that his second run was affected by yellow flags after Esteban Ocon spun in his Renault. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

England vs Australia: 2nd ODI from 5.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

FORMULA ONE

Italian Grand Prix: Main Race from 6.35 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: West Bromwich Albion vs Leicester City from 6.30 pm; Tottenham Hotspur vs Everton from 9 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Spanish League: Deportivo Alaves vs Real Betis from 5.30 pm; Real Valladolid vs Real Sociedad from 7.30 pm; Villareal vs Huesca from 10 pm; Valencia vs Levante from 12.30 am (Monday). All matches on LaLiga page on Facebook

TENNIS

US Open: Men's singles final from 1.30 am (Monday), on Star Sports Select 1, 2, HD

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Gunners on fire

Rampant Arsenal crush Fulham as Premier League returns

London, Sept. 12: Arsenal made a flying start to the new Premier League season as Gabriel Magalhaes grabbed a debut goal and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored a stunner in Saturday's 3-0 win at Fulham.

Just 48 days after last season's delayed conclusion, the Premier League is back and Arsenal hit the ground running with the kind of confident display that has become their hallmark since Mikel Arteta took charge.

Arsenal's free-flowing attack was too incisive for promoted Fulham and Alexandre Lacazette gave the visitors an early lead at Craven Cottage.

Brazilian defender Gabriel scored Arsenal's second after the break in his first appearance since his close-season move from Lille.

Aubameyang added the final flourish with a typically eye-catching strike that emphasised why Arsenal are so desperate for the Gabon forward to sign an extension to the contract which expires at the end of the season.

Arteta has said that fans concerned Aubameyang will leave can "relax" because he is "very optimistic" his captain will agree a new deal soon.

With former Chelsea winger Willian providing a pair of assists on his debut, it was the ideal way for Arsenal to start a season that appears full of promise after last season's FA Cup triumph.

Although their eighth-placed finish in the Premier League ranked as Arsenal's lowest final position since 1995, Arteta had little to do with that after taking charge in December following the dismal reign of Unai Emery.

The former Manchester City as-



Arsenal's Gabriel (second from left) is cheered by teammates after scoring against Fulham in their English Premier League match in London on Saturday. Arsenal won 3-0.

tant coach has been a much-needed breath of fresh air for Arsenal and pushing for a place in the top four should not be beyond his revitalised team this term.

While the continued absence of fans due to the coronavirus and shorter than usual break has taken a little anticipation away from the new campaign, Arsenal were keener than most to get back in action after beating Chelsea in the FA Cup final.

NEYMAR BACK IN SQUAD AFTER QUARANTINE

Paris, Sept. 12: Brazilian star Neymar is back in the Paris Saint-Germain squad for Sunday's Ligue 1 match against Marseille after serving a Covid-19 quarantine, PSG coach Thomas Tuchel has confirmed.

Neymar tested positive for coronavirus on September 2, having contracted the virus holidaying in Ibiza following the 1-0 loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League final in Lisbon last month.

The Brazilian, along with the likes of Kylian Mbappe, Angel Di Maria and Leandro Paredes, were all quarantined, with Neymar making his return to training on Friday.

LYON HELD AT BORDEAUX

Champions League semifinalist Lyon were held at Bordeaux to 0-0 in a tepid French league encounter.

In a game of rare chances on Friday, Lyon almost

stole a win 10 minutes from the end when highly rated midfielder Houssem Aouar hit the post after skipping past center half Laurent Koscielny.

Bordeaux remained in second place with five points from three games, while Lyon was third with four points having played one game less. Lyon lost to eventual winner Bayern Munich 3-0 in the Champions League semis last month. — *Agencies*

Thiem, Zverev in new-look Slam final

New York, Sept. 12: Dominic Thiem of Austria will play Germany's Alexander Zverev in the US Open final for their first Grand Slam titles after they won their last-four matches in contrasting styles on Friday.

Second seed Thiem ousted third-seeded Russian and last year's runner-up Daniil Medvedev in a closely fought three-setter that was packed with powerful baseline rallies and impressive serving.

The 27-year-old Thiem won 6-2, 7-6 (9/7) 7-6 (7/5) in 2hr 56 min inside Arthur Ashe Stadium to reach his fourth Grand Slam final.

Earlier, Zverev came from two sets down to complete a remarkable comeback against 20th-seeded Spaniard Pablo Carreno Busta and reach his first tennis major final.



Germany's Alexander Zverev reacts after defeating Pablo Carreno Busta of Spain 3-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 during their US Open semifinal in New York on Friday.

The 23-year-old German won an error-strewn, scrappy encounter 3-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 in 3hr 23min.

It marked the first time

in Zverev's career that he came from two sets behind to win.

"I actually looked at the scoreboard when I was

down two sets to love," Zverev said.

"I was like, 'I can't believe it. I'm playing in a semi-final, I'm supposed

to be the favourite and I have no chance, I'm playing that bad."

Zverev made 36 unforced errors in the first two sets compared to just 12 for Carreno Busta as the nerves of the occasion seemed to get the better of him.

FIRST-TIME DUO TAKE DOUBLES CROWN

First-time doubles duo Laura Siegemund and Vera Zvonareva won the women's doubles title, defeating China's Xu Yifan and Nicole Melichar of the United States in straight sets in the final.

Germany's Siegemund and Russian partner Zvonareva had never played doubles together before this year's US Open.

However, the unseeded pairing romped past the third-seeded Xu and Melichar 6-4, 6-4 to cap a fairytale victory. — *AFP*

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

RCB are in great shape, says Kohli

Dubai, Sept. 12: Back into the thick of things after five months of coronavirus-forced break, Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli is happy with the fitness level of his team members, saying "everyone is looking in great shape" ahead of the IPL beginning on September 19.

Kohli, a fitness freak, also said that he himself felt good from the first training session after landing in the UAE.

"From fitness point of view everyone is looking great, everyone is in good shape. It's a matter of feeling good and I think I felt good from the first session onwards," Kohli said in a video posted on RCB's twitter handle.

"Obviously, there are few things that you try and rectify along the way and once you reach your optimum mind set and you enter competition you just want to stay in that as much as possible."

The India captain said the team management's focus during the two-week training period in the UAE was a balanced approach to avoid injuries to players.

"We don't want to push anyone into a niggly or an injury because we understand it's been a while away from the game. So I think we moved ahead in a

● **The India captain said the the team management's focus during the two-week training period in the UAE was a balanced approach to avoid injuries to players.**

balanced manner.

"We don't want to be a maniac like doing 6 sessions in six days. We gave ample off time to the boys which will continue to do along the course of the these next few training sessions also," Kohli said.

Kohli said after the long break, the need of the hour was to start slowly and increase the intensity of training sessions gradually, which the RCB has now managed to attain.

"First few days we are just getting our eye in, getting back in thick of things after 5 months, it's a bit different, try and get into the frame of mind which you usually want to be. It takes a bit of time, in these session now we are mostly batting in the middle, trying to figure out hitting angles, understanding the pace of wicket and all these."

"I am very very happy with how the team is shaping up," said the talismanic batsman. — *PTI*

Khan to be first American in IPL

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 12: The IPL is set to see participation of a player from the USA for the first time with Kolkata Knight Riders roping in fast bowler Ali Khan for the upcoming 13th edition of the league.

The two-time winners will pick the 29-year-old fast bowler — pending IPL approval — as a replacement for the English seamer Harry Gurney, according to an *ESPNcricinfo.com* report.

Gurney is scheduled to have surgery related to a shoulder injury, and has pulled out of both the IPL and England's Vitality Blast last month.

Khan's signing will make him the first USA player to feature in the IPL.

Khan was part of the Trinbago Knight Riders' squad which remained unbeaten on the way to their CPL title win on Thursday. He picked up

eight wickets from as many matches with an economy rate of 7.43.

He was on KKR's radar last season as well but no deal could be worked out.

The pacer burst out to the limelight during the 2018 Global T20 Canada, where he was spotted by star West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo, who brought him to the CPL. Khan returned a haul of 16 wickets from 12 matches for Guyana Amazon Warriors that year, the second-most by a fast bowler in the season.

Bravo, in one of his Instagram stories, posted a video with Khan, Brendon McCullum and a few more inside a plane with the caption 'Next stop Dubai'.

Former Rajasthan Royals bowler Rusty Theron, who now plays for USA, was part of the now defunct Deccan Chargers team in 2011 and Kings XI Punjab in 2010. — *PTI*

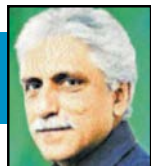
AUSSIES OPEN ODI SERIES WITH WIN AGAINST HOSTS

Manchester, Sept. 12: Australia beat England by 19 runs to win the first one-day international at Old Trafford on Friday. World champions England, set 295 for victory, finished on 275-9 as Australia defeated their arch-rivals for just the third time in 14 ODIs.

Fast bowler Josh Hazlewood reduced the hosts to 22-2 on his way to 3-26 before leg-spinner Adam Zampa (4-55) struck twice in two overs to leave England in dire straits at 57-4. But Sam Billings hit 118 — a maiden ODI hundred — after his fifth-wicket partnership of 113 with opener Jonny Bairstow (84) gave the hosts hope of an unlikely victory. — *AFP*

Brief scores: Australia 294/9 in 50 overs (G. Maxwell 77, M. Marsh 73; M. Wood 3/54, J. Archer 3/57) bt England 275/9 in 50 overs (S. Billings 118, J. Bairstow 84; A. Zampa 4/55, J. Hazlewood 3/26).

Djoker's US Open ouster shows rules are paramount

Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

It's turning out to be an eminently forgettable year for Novak Djokovic. He suffered a major setback when the Adria Tour he had organized mid-year had was called off for violating the protocol to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Four players tested positive including Djokovic himself, and the tour was kaput.

The world no.1 tennis player's attempt to form a parallel tennis players body, while it has made some progress, has invited deep controversy too.

However, the worst blow was his ouster from the US Open last week, which wrecked his chances of winning an 18th Grand Slam title.

Djokovic was 'defaulted' from the tournament for breaking the rules. The incident happened in the 11th game of the first set of the fourth-round match against Pablo Carreno Busta when he was broken. Busta now led 6-5 and would have served for the set.

Before play could resume, however, Djokovic hit the ball in frustration,

which struck the line judge behind him. She collapsed, and with this, also went Djokovic's hopes of winning another Slam and edge closer to Rafael Nadal (who has 19 titles) and Roger Federer (20).

With Nadal (because of Covid fear) and Federer (recovering from surgery) both skipping the US Open, Djokovic was odds-on favourite to win. He had looked in impressive form too, dropping just a single set in three matches before the unhappy incident in the fourth match.

Sport can be gloriously or cruelly uncertain, of course, so one can only speculate how the tournament would have panned out. But with his major rivals missing, Djokovic's path to the title seemed relatively easy. A momentary

lapse of reason, one impetuous action, and his hopes came crashing down.

Sensing immediately that what he had done was wrong, Djokovic, to his credit, immediately apologised to the line judge and inquired of her well-being. But the damage had been done. Within minutes, the decision had been taken. Djokovic would have to forfeit the match.

US Open Tournament Referee Soeren Friemel explained later why the harsh punishment: "Based on the facts that the ball was hit angrily, recklessly; that it went straight at the line umpire's throat; that the line umpire was clearly hurt and in pain, the decision was made that Novak [Djokovic] had to be defaulted."

Was such a punitive action against him justified, more so when Djokovic did not intend to hit the line judge? The tennis world has been in turmoil since the incident. Djokovic's supporters have been livid, claiming he was being victimized. An equal, if not more, number of aficionados think the punishment fair.

I believe the action against him was not only justified, but necessary. It also sends out a strong message of how rules must be held paramount in sport, which is particularly relevant in our part of the world where prima donnas can get away with anything.

For this, the ATP and the US Open tournament officials deserve credit. Think of it. In a year where sport

is so badly hit by Covid, and in a tournament already missing the two biggest drawcards in tennis — Federer and Nadal — it wouldn't have been easy to banish the third member of the game's superstar troika.

Throwing Djokovic out would affect audience participation in the US Open, even if it was being played only for TV audiences. The ramifications of this could be wider: it could affect monetization prospects, and certainly cause internal dissent within the tennis universe.

I can think of several instances in India — and elsewhere in the sub-continent — where a similar breach by a topnotch sportsperson — especially a cricketer — would have been glossed over, or

brushed under the carpet, and things allowed to continue as if nothing had happened.

That is great disservice to sport. Being lenient with superstars because of the many benefits they otherwise undoubtedly bring is not being pragmatic, as some argue, but in fact diminishes the sport. Being lenient in such situations is bad example, especially for youngsters for whom these stars are role models.

Ultimately, every sport has to be bound by rules for it to be fair and successful. These rules are the same for everybody and must apply equally to all, particularly the most famous and powerful. Any exemption makes the edifice fragile, and more likely to crumble.