


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | 5 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 33.0°C

Min: 25°C

RH: 32%

Rainfall: 3mm

Forecast: Cloudy.

Max/Min temp.

33/25 °C

COVID-19 C O U N T

CASES

(+87,953)

40,14,744

DEATHS

(+1,055)

69,614

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,478)

(+10)

TS: 1,35,884

866

(+10,776)

(+76)

AP: 4,76,506

4,276

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,66,43,888

DEATHS

8,76,000

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Bhadrapada Bahula Tadiya till 4.40 pm

Star: Revati till 2.21 am (Sunday)

Varjyam: 12.54 pm to 2.42 pm

Durmuhurtam: 6.06 am to 7.44 am

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am

HJRI CALENDAR

Muharram 16, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.25 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 5.00 pm

Maghrib: 6.35 pm

Isha: 8.15 pm


SUNSET TODAY 6.17 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.54 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 8.27 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 9.00 AM

COUNTER POINT



No classes today, dad... our school website has been hacked by someone!

IN BRIEF

SC to hear case on drug shortage

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday sought responses from the Centre, states and Union Territory (UTs) on a plea alleging non-availability of essential medicines for treatment of mental illness in government run or funded health care centres. A Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde agreed to hear the plea which has sought direction to the authorities to forthwith notify the essential drugs list in their states and Union Territories and provide medicines free of cost to persons suffering from mental illness. "Issue notice," said the bench, also comprising Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian. — PTI

Finmin wants expenses cut

New Delhi: The government on Friday asked all ministries/departments to review appointments of consultants, curtail functions and ban use of imported paper for printing as part of measures to rationalise non-priority expenditure. The finance ministry has issued the instructions on expenditure management with a view to improving the quality of public expenditure, containing non-developmental spending and ensuring availability of adequate resources for critical priority schemes, the department of expenditure said. — PTI

NATION | 5
Sena slams Kangana for her 'PoK' remark

WORLD | 6
Imran's close aide quits on graft charges

SPORTS | 6
Messi decides to stay at Barcelona

UK's deal with 'dubious' AMTZ raises eyebrows

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 4

The United Kingdom government entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the "dubious" Andhra Pradesh Medtech Zone for a manufacturing support programme to fight the Covid-19 pandemic raised many an eyebrow.

A recent British Deputy High Commission press release said the UK government had joined forces with AMTZ to plug the gap between demand and supply of ventilators and other medical equipment. But, it failed to answer queries raised by *Deccan Chronicle* on why the UK government had picked AMTZ as partner when the latter's ventilators had failed clinical trials due to sub-standard quality.

The Centre, after giving an advance of ₹14.5 crore, did not include AMTZ in the list of recommended suppliers post clinical evaluation. The AMTZ also failed to fulfil its commitment to supply 30,000 ventilators to Andhra Pradesh.

What is more intriguing is that the manufacturing support programme, which British Deputy High Commissioner Andrew Fleming described as "exciting", is worth just ₹56 lakh.

"More than the money,

- THE CENTRE, after giving an advance of ₹14.5 crore, did not include AMTZ in the list of recommended suppliers post clinical evaluation.
- THE AMTZ also failed to fulfil its commitment to supply 30,000 ventilators to Andhra Pradesh.
- THE BRITISH high commission evaded questions on why the UK had picked up AMTZ as partner

the tag of the UK government is what AMTZ managing director Dr Jitendar Sharma desires to have," sources pointed out.

Earlier, Dr Sharma sought to involve Niti Ayog CEO Amitabh Kant and K. Vijay Raghavan, principal scientific adviser to the Prime Minister, to project his clout whenever financial frauds or failures were exposed; the latest addition to the list is the British Deputy High Commission.

The High Commission also evaded questions on how the MoU was entered into with Dr Sharma, who has been facing serious allegations of misappropriation of funds allotted to AMTZ and was stripped off the powers to deal with financial matters by the AP government.

■ Page 2: AP established fraud against Dr Sharma

Guard reinfected with Coronavirus

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, SEPT. 4

In a shocking development, a case of recurrence of Covid-19 in a patient, who had recovered has been reported from Piler town in Chittoor district.

According to health officials, a 53-year-old man from Piler, who is said to be a security person in TTD, tested positive for Covid-19 for the second

time in two months. This would probably be a rare case from across the country.

It may be noted that though this is not an isolated case.

It goes against the popular belief that one cannot contract the Covid-19 once antibodies have developed.

■ Page 3: Studies point to reinfection after recovery

BIGG BOSS STAR ARRESTED FOR TONSURING DALIT

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 4

The police arrested Telugu Bigg Boss star N. Nutan Naidu in connection with the tonsuring of a 20-year-old Dalit youth, Parri Srikanth, and allegedly impersonating P.V. Ramesh, retired additional chief secretary to the AP government, to protect his wife N. Priya Madhuri, the prime accused in the case. On August 29, the city police had arrested seven persons, including Madhuri, on charges of assaulting and tonsuring Srikanth the previous day in Naidu's house.

Vizag city police chief Manish Kumar Sinha said that their investigation revealed Naidu made video calls to Madhuri twice from Hyderabad and also threatened and abused Srikanth in casteist terms.

On August 29, a person posing as retired IAS officer P.V. Ramesh called medical officers and asked them to give a medical certificate to six of the seven arrested in the tonsure case.

■ Page 3: Imposter tricked True Caller too

CM for action on hospitals denying Arogyasri services

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, issued instructions to take strict action against hospitals that refuse to implement the Arogyasri scheme.

Conducting a review meeting on the Covid-19 situation in the state on Tuesday, Jagan asked for helpdesks to be set up in Arogyasri network hospitals and ordered immediate

action on mistakes. He directed officials to conduct a campaign on the importance of tests, diagnosis and treatment for Covid with contact phone numbers of officials.

Directing officials to set up helpdesks with 'Arogya mitras' at every Arogyasri network hospital, Jagan said helpdesks should be available at every empanelled hospital. He said, "Implementation of Arogyasri

scheme in network hospitals should be regularly monitored and severe action taken against any hospital flouting the norms. Arogya mitras should have a clear understanding on protocol and they should monitor whether the Arogya Asara (recuperation allowance) amount is being given to patients treated."

■ Page 3: AP to hire for medical posts in 10 days

TRANSPARENCY | REGIME

People seek accountability after row over protection of jewels, expenditure

Demand to get TTD under RTI gathers pace

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, SEPT. 4

The demand for the implementation of Right to Information (RTI) Act in TTD has picked up pace and has become a topic of discussion among various quarters, particularly after the temple trust board's recent decision — to place a request before the state government to entrust the audit of TTD accounts to

the CAG, came to light. The TTD, which is the official custodian of Lord Venkateswara temple at Tirumala, was established in 1932 and operated by a board of trustees. It has an annual budget of over ₹3,300 crore and a workforce of 23,000 permanent and outsourced staff, with 97 independent divisions.

The TTD is mainly dependent on the offerings made by devotees and the trust board is entrusted to spend

those funds for the sake of devotees, temple development, charitable activities and salaries, among other things. For the past few years, the TTD has been facing criticism regarding protection of temple jewels, archaeological matters and expenditure.

Dr Ramana Deekshitulu, who worked as the chief priest in Tirumala temple for quite some time before he was unceremoniously sacked in 2018, also

alleged that some precious jewels were missing and alleged financial irregularities in TTD.

Prior to this, one B.K.S.R. Ayyangar also filed an RTI application with the PMO in 2017, seeking information on ornaments donated by 16th century ruler Sri Krishnadevaraya. He then approached the Central Information Commission (CIC) in April 2017, as he was unsatisfied with the reply. Subsequently, an

interim order was issued by CIC, recommending TTD to provide information to RTI applicants.

The TTD, however, moved the High Court against the CIC orders and said that it does not come under RTI, since it is not a public organisation.

Meanwhile, the Hyderabad High Court in a 2018 order held that religious institutions that are not funded by the government do not fall within the

purview of the RTI Act.

"We welcome the decision taken by the present TTD trust board seeking audit of TTD accounts to CAG. In a similar way, TTD has a moral right to share information as the temple is receiving funds from only the public," said P. Naveen Kumar Reddy, senior Congress leader from Tirupati.

■ Page 2: RTI to bring transparency in TTD

Rajnath, China defmin meet

Discuss ways to resolve stand-off in Ladakh; Rajnath says trust is key for peace

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Friday met his Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe in Moscow in the first high-level political contact between the two countries who are involved in a tense military stand-off in the Ladakh sector for the last four months. The meeting lasted two hours and 20 minutes.

The two sides discussed ways to bring down tensions between the two nuclear-armed countries. The Chinese side requested for the meeting with Singh, who is in Moscow to attend the joint meeting of the defence ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The meeting started at 9.30 pm IST at Hotel Metropole in Moscow. Defence secretary Ajay Kumar and Indian ambassador to Russia D.B. Venkatesh Varma were part of the Indian delegation.

Speaking at the SCO meeting earlier, Singh said peace and security in the region demand a climate of trust, non-aggres-

Situation tense, deployed more troops: Army chief

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4

Army chief General M.M. Naravane said on Friday that the situation along the LAC with China is "slightly tense" and the Army has undertaken precautionary deployment in some areas along the LAC for "our own safety and security".

"The troops are prepared for all contingencies that may arise," asserted General Naravane, who was on a two-day visit to forward areas in Ladakh.

"We are sure that the

problem can be resolved fully through talks," the Army chief added.

He said that he spent time with the commanders and troops for a first-hand assessment of the situation along the border.

"It was very satisfying to see our soldiers and local commanders in high morale and good health. It gives me confidence that they are well-prepared to safeguard the territorial integrity of our nation. The Indian Army is known for its commitment and resolve. The nation can count on us," said

General Naravane.

The Army chief said that in the past three months, India and China have been engaged in resolving the situation. "Military and diplomatic channels are functioning. Indian side is firmly committed to resolve the current situation along the LAC through engagement," he said.

The Army chief visited forward areas for a first-hand assessment of the situation along the LAC. He urged all ranks to remain vigilant and maintain a high order of operational readiness.

sion, peaceful resolution of differences and respect for international rules.

Singh's comments are being seen as a veiled message to China ahead of his bilateral talks with Wei.

Rajnath Singh referred to the Second World War

and said its memories teach the globe the "foibles of aggression" of one state upon another that brings "destruction" to all.

"Peaceful stable and secure region of SCO member states, which is home to over 40 per cent of the

global population, demands a climate of trust and cooperation, non-aggression, respect for international rules and norms, sensitivity to each other's interest and peaceful resolution of differences," Singh said.

Fire control

The fire on the merchant navy vessel *MT New Diamond* is being doused after a mishap in the Bay of Bengal on Friday. The operation was coordinated by the Indian Navy ship *INS Sahyadri* along with Coast Guard vessels in close liaison with Sri Lankan authorities in the Bay of Bengal.

BRICS MEET TALKS ON GLOBAL ISSUES MINUS LADAKH

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4

The Foreign Ministers of the five BRICS countries, including external affairs minister S. Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, on Friday attended a virtual meeting, which discussed the global situation, including new threats and challenges, regional hot spots.

BRICS is an acronym for the name of its member countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

A BRICS joint media statement contained references to the situation in the Middle-East, Africa, Afghanistan and the Korean peninsula, it did not refer to the current Sino-Indian military tensions in the Ladakh sector involving two of the BRICS members that has surely become one of the major global hotspots.

SPURNED GIRL THROWS ACID ON EX-BOYFRIEND

D.S. REDDI | DC KURNOOL, SEPT. 4

A girl threw acid on her boyfriend on Friday, injuring him severely on the face, head and left hand.

The incident occurred at Peddakottala near Nandyal where both the attacker and the victim stay.

This was the second attack on the man, Nagendra, 24, by Supriya, 20.

Last week, Supriya had thrown acid at him and injured him on the hand.

Police said Supriya and Nagendra had been in a relationship for three years but he had married another woman.

■ Page 3: Boy's parents did not allow marriage

IN BRIEF

THREE OFFICIALS OF RAMESH HOSPITALS GRANTED BAIL

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

The AP High Court has granted bail to three officials from Ramesh Hospitals here on Friday.

They are: Dr Kodali Rajagopal Rao, chief operating officer, Dr Kurapati Sudarshan, general manager (administration), and Pallapothu Venkatesh, public relations officer.

The trio were arrested by the police on charges of their alleged involvement in Swarna Palace hotel fire mishap killing 10 patients on August 9 in a case filed against them under sections 304 and 308 read with 34 of IPC.

Earlier, they moved the fifth additional metropolitan sessions judge court for bail and when it was rejected, they moved the High Court for the same and it was granted.

A-G INFORMS HC ON RELEASE OF ADVERTISEMENTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

Advocate-General S. Sriram informed the High Court that files pertaining to giving advertisements to media agencies are cleared by the commissioner for information and public relations and not by the Chief Minister.

The A-G was responding during the virtual hearing in High Court on Friday on a PIL alleging that a company, owned by the CM's family, was being given unfairly high advertisements and also in party colours. He said that it was the commissioner and Information and Public Relations department who would decide on such files and not the CM.

He said that the petitioner was suppressing the facts of issuing advertisements to two select Telugu dailies between 2014-19 in a highly disproportionate manner favouring the two dailies and opined that the petitioner was perhaps the beneficiary of such exercise and informed the court that petitioner filed his petition to fight for a Telugu daily and for Telugu Desam.

The A-G informed the court that he would file preliminary objections on the maintainability of the PIL before filing the counter on merits. However, the court said that if there were any objections on the maintainability, it would decide and posted the next hearing in the case for two weeks and directed the A-G to file a counter affidavit.

● **THE A-G** was responding during the virtual hearing in HC on a PIL related to a company, owned by the CM's family, was being given unfairly high advertisements and also in party colours. He said that it was the commissioner and I and PR department who would decide on such files and not the CM.

LAND ON LONG LEASE OFFERED FOR MSMEs FROM TAMIL NADU

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 4

The Industries and IT minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy has offered land on a long lease basis to the Chennai-based MSMEs and assured water supply to the proposed industrial park in Kosalanagaram near Tiruttani in Chittoor district.

It may be recalled that several MSMEs located at Ambattur Industrial Estate in Chennai expressed interest in industrial land close to Chennai a couple of days back.

In this backdrop, the minister interacted with the representatives of Chennai entrepreneurs A.S. Hari Prasad and A. Ramesh during a video conference held on Friday.

The minister said that they are ready to provide land with infrastructure as required by them. The entrepreneurs from Chennai sought developed land with infrastructure at a reduced price for MSMEs while reacting to ₹65 lakh quoted per acre at the Special Economic Zone at Menakuru near Naidupeta.

At this juncture, Mr Goutham Reddy offered land on long lease while pointing to a provision in the new industrial policy.

Mr Reddy said that he asked the industries secretary Karikal Valavan to hold a meeting with the entrepreneurs of Chennai interested in the land in AP to set up MSMEs and explain to them about the new industrial policy which is giving several sops to MSMEs.

Farmers differ on meters

Many trust Jagan on continuing free power to farm sector in AP

DC CORRESPONDENTS
VIJAYAWADA/KAKINADA/
KURNOOL/NELLORE, SEPT. 4

As the state government promises to fix smart or infrared meters to agriculture pump sets from April 1, most farmers are not afraid that the 'free power for agriculture' may be scrapped, even as they raising apprehensions that a cap may be imposed on the number of units to be consumed in Andhra Pradesh, among other fears.

The farmers are of the opinion that as former chief minister late Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy had introduced free power to the farm sector, they believe that his son and the present Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, will continue the same without causing any trouble to them.

A good number of farmers are of the opinion that keeping count of the number of units of power consumed by a farmer is a good practice as it makes him realise how much power he is consuming every month and also how much money the state government is paying to the discoms for his power.

However, farmers have asked the state government to replace old transformers and power lines with the new ones so that they will get quality power and avoid frequent power disruptions due to transformers burning up, snapping of power lines and also burning of fuses. They have complained that as there is only one lineman for one or two villages, they are facing difficulties in availing his services in case of any power disruption to their connection as it is taking more time for him to visit his field and attend to the complaint to restore power supply.

K. Hanumantha Rao, a farmer from Eepareethalapadu in Krishna district, said, "Fixing of meters will help us estimate our power consumption every month and also know about how much the state government is spending for power on each farmer."

Another farmer, Mukkamala Seetha Ramaiah, from Chittela village in Krishna district, said, "We are facing issues of power disruptions due to old electrical equipment like transformers and power lines still being continued. Once they are replaced with new ones, it will help us get uninterrupted quality power."

A farmer from Vaddimukkala village in Guntur district, V. Prasada Rao, said, "The state government should promote solar power pump sets so that it helps save on power bills."

However, farmers raise a series of doubts on implementation of the new plan, asking whether a farmer with multiple power connections in his name, gets only one meter or multiple meters. Some ask about fate of tenant farmers as they get lands on a lease basis and cultivate crops and as power connections are registered in the name of land owners, the money will go to the owners and not to them.

A section of farmers in



A middle-aged man tastes water from an agriculture pump set in Undavalli village of Guntur district in this file photo.

Opposition parties oppose meter fixation, CTS ideas

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

The leaders of all opposition parties opposed meters on pump sets and cash transfer schemes (CTS) for the agriculture free power scheme proposed by the government.

The leaders alleged that former Chief Minister, Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, was against installing meters to pump sets but his son, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, was going against the decision of his father, which would harm farmers' interests.

TD leader, Ch. Ayyanna Patrudu, recalled that the YSR never tried to install meters to agri pump sets for the welfare of farmers and lamented that Jagan was doing it. He claimed that the government knows what the bills would be for 18 lakh agri pump sets in 13 districts of the state under the free power scheme, hence the government should directly pay the amount to the electricity department, shunning the meter installation decision.

AP state water users' association federation president, Alla Venkata Gopala Krishna Rao, said that there is no need to intro-

duce CTS for free power and installing meters.

When the government transfers cash into the accounts of the free power beneficiary farmers then bankers will deduct the amounts immediately for agriculture loans and old installments, Mr Rao said, adding that that there was no use in installing meters as this would create a lot of confusion among the farming community. He sought the annulment of the installation of meters decision.

CPM state secretary, P. Madhu, alleged that the BJP was trying to eliminate subsidies to the farmer community and, therefore, proposed the CTS and installing meters for the free power scheme. He said that the YSRC government should have opposed it in support of farmers but it blindly obeyed the proposals which is a betrayal. He sought continuation of present sys-

tem for free power and cancellation of installing meters and CTS.

AP urban citizen federation convener, Ch. Babu Rao, objected to the decision of meter installation and alleged that YSRC government was trying to cancel free power in a phase-wise manner, which is why it proposed meter installation and CTS. He demanded cancellation of the decisions and warned about starting protests with the support of farmers.

CPI state secretary, K. Ramakrishna, lamented that the YSRC government which claims to follow the principles of YSR is now reversing his decisions with the meter installation and CTS decisions. He said that the govern-

ment is paying the power bills of farmers under a free power scheme without meters and without any problems but now the YSRC government is conspiring to withdraw the free power scheme so it decided on meter installation and CTS.

He demanded that Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy cancel the decisions and warned about a befitting reply to his anti-farmer decision if her persisted.

Rebala Sivakota Reddy, a farmer from Buchireddypalem, advised the government to fix a meter to agriculture feeders if it wants to know the quantum of power consumption.

Another farmer, J. Chandrasekhara Reddy, from Duvvuri in Sangam, expressed suspicion that the government might be planning to divide small farmers and landlords to collect power charges from the latter in future.

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday accused Jagan Mohan Reddy government of failing to take action against culprits involved in the ongoing atrocities against Dalits in AP.

He alleged that in the latest incident, ruling YSRC leaders burnt down the house of Dalit girl Macha Dhanalakshmi at Mudinepalli in Kaikalur area of Krishna district. He charged that the girl was targeted just because she complained to police

against a local YSRC leader for misleading and betraying her.

Mr Naidu said police should have gone to the rescue of the Dalit girl, whom

he ruined and left behind huge debts and dues. Speaking to the media here on Friday, Venkateswara Rao said stated that the pilot project will begin in Srikakulam and will cover the entire state by March and the fruits can be reaped for a long time.

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State suffers crop damage in 30,503 hectares due to rains

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |
DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

Due to the excessive recent rainfall, agricultural crops like paddy, cotton, maize, groundnut and others have been damaged in about 30,503 hectares, mainly in seven districts in Andhra Pradesh.

Based on preliminary crop damage reports from agricultural authorities, in Visakhapatnam district, paddy in 74 hectares, being raised in four mandals covering 23 villages, has been damaged affecting 15 famers.

In Kurnool, cotton, groundnut, red gram, black gram, maize, castor, paddy, korra and bajra, being raised in 15,108 hectares, have been affected in 22 mandals, covering 158 villages in 22 mandals.

In East Godavari, paddy, cotton and maize being raised in 6,014 hectares, in 191 villages, in 21 mandals have been affected.

In West Godavari, paddy, maize, cotton and groundnut in 3,580 hectares have been affected in 76 villages, in 18 mandals.

In Krishna, black gram, cotton, green gram, groundnut, maize, chillies and paddy in 4,003 hectares have been hit in 40 villages,

and others have been damaged in about 30,503 hectares, mainly in seven districts in Andhra Pradesh.

Based on preliminary crop damage reports from agricultural authorities, in Visakhapatnam district, paddy in 74 hectares, being raised in four mandals covering 23 villages, has been damaged affecting 15 famers.

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● **AGRICULTURAL AUTHORITIES** are planning for provision of input subsidy on seeds to farmers who suffered crop loss, especially in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram and have also started distribution of fertilisers for farmers to take up 'top dressing' on slightly damaged crops to help them survive.

They are expecting yield loss in pulses like red gram, green gram and black gram as they are in harvesting stage at present and got submerged in flood water in the fields.

They say that in case the farmers lose paddy and other crops due to inundation of fields, they can rise pulses once the water recedes so that they will not suffer much.

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A senior official from the agriculture department said, "Based on preliminary assessment, we have suffered crop damage and loss in nearly 30,503 hectares in several districts and our personnel are taking up enumeration in fields to find out the extent of damage or loss of crops further, so that we can plan for providing input subsidy to the affected farmers in the state soon."

and others have been damaged in about 30,503 hectares, mainly in seven districts in Andhra Pradesh.

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AP SIGNS MOU WITH NETHERLANDS ON FOOD PRODUCTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEP. 4

The Andhra Pradesh government signed MoUs with the Netherlands government and seven major firms for food processing, technology transfer and marketing for agriculture and aquaculture products.

The MoUs were signed at the CM's Camp Office here on Friday in the presence of Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for food processing from agriculture and aquaculture products, including tomato, mango, chini, chilli vegetables and aqua products.

The national centre for banana (NRCB), Tamil Nadu, future tech foods, Pune, big basket online grocery store, ITC, Lawrencecadale agro processing India Pvt Ltd, (Leaf), IFB agro industries Ltd, Empire company and the Netherlands government have signed eight MoUs.

Earlier, Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy held a review meeting on food processing and said that the government is roping in major companies for tie up with in food processing, mainly to make use of the seven to eight crops that have been worrying the farmer in terms of storage, marketing and getting remunerative prices. He stated that the partnership will go a long way and will be helpful to the women entrepreneurs.

Netherlands ambassador, Marten van den Berg, spoke through video conference from New Delhi. The Netherlands government has signed the MoU for developing interior architecture, design, packaging, and containers of food processing.

NRCB will partner in developing new micro-food processing promotion and quality testing laboratories. NRCB representatives, Dr Siva and Dr Suresh Kumar, who signed the MoUs, showed the byproducts of dried bananas and discussed the technology involved in it.

Future tech foods CEO, Ajit Soman, big basket, zonal head, K. Ramachandra Kiran, ITC vice president, G. Krishna Kumar, Leaf representative, Vijay Raghavan, and representatives of IFB and Empire signed the concerned MoUs.

On behalf of the state government, AP food corporation CEO, Sridhar Reddy, fisheries department commissioner, K. Kanna Babu, signed the MoUs for their respective departments. Agriculture minister, K. Kanna Babu, agriculture mission vice chairman MVS Nagi Reddy, agriculture special chief secretary, Poonam Malkondiah were also present.

NAIDU HAS RUINED STATE ECONOMY, SAYS SAJJALA

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

Government advisor (public affairs), Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, on Friday lashed out at TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu, for crippling the state economy during TD's regime and leaving farmers to their fate. He alleged that Naidu crippled the state finances and left debts of about ₹2.58 lakh crore in addition to the

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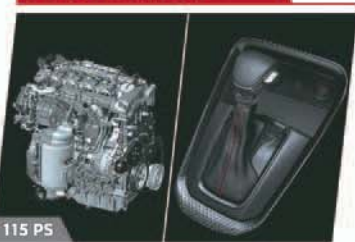


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The Power to Surprise

IN BRIEF AP RE-OPENS TOURISM, MUSEUMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEP. 4

Tourism activities are set to resume in Andhra Pradesh after a gap of five months as the state government on Friday permitted opening up of sites as per Unlock-4 guidelines.

Minister for tourism, Avanthi (Muttamsetti) Srinivas Rao, said all tourist destinations, ropeway operations, boating, adventure sports and tourism-related transport operations were being opened with immediate effect. He said that, similarly, all museums and archaeological sites, including forts and protected monuments, buildings and structures were also being opened to the public, Bhargava told *PTI*.

The government had issued necessary instructions to the AP tourism.

BOY'S PARENTS DID NOT ALLOW MARRIAGE

FROM PAGE 1

According to circle inspector Diwakar Reddy, Nagendra's parents had not allowed him to marry Supriya, a Dalit, over caste issues. Police said Nagendra informed Supriya and married another woman belonging to his caste on August 13 at the Mahanandi temple.

On Friday morning, Supriya went to Nagendra's house and argued with him. Later, when he was going on a motorbike in front of her house, Nagendra slowed at a speed-breaker when Supriya threw acid at him, said the circle inspector.

The victim is recovering at Nandyal Government Hospital. A case has been registered and investigations are on, CI Diwakar Reddy said.

IMPOSTER TRICKED TRUECALLER TOO

FROM PAGE 1

He also asked them to refer Madhuri to hospital, citing health issues.

Suspecting that the call was not from the retired IAS officer, Dr Sudhakar called Ramesh and came to know that someone had impersonated him. Dr Sudhakar informed Sinha about the phone call. Sinha said that the imposter set his name in True Caller as 'chief secretary, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's office'.

The police said that Naidu travelled to Bengaluru from Hyderabad and later went to Mangaluru.

He was taken into custody at Udupi railway station with the help of the Karnataka police. The police also recovered four mobile phones from Naidu.

Naidu tried to throw away the mobile phone he used to impersonate Ramesh during the arrest. The phone number matched with the seized mobile phones from Naidu. The police said that Naidu will be brought to the port city.

Sinha said that their preliminary investigation had revealed that Naidu, posing as Ramesh, cheated some people in the past.

STUDIES POINT TO REINFECTION AFTER RECOVERY

FROM PAGE 1

Several studies have found that people can be re-infected with the virus despite their full recovery from coronavirus.

DM & HO Dr M. Penchaliiah confirmed the development with *Deccan Chronicle*. He said that the recovered person from Piler has once again been infected with the virus. The case was reported earlier this week.

Officials informed that the security person had tested positive on June 27 and was admitted to the Covid hospital in Tirupati. After receiving treatment for two weeks, he tested negative and was discharged, subsequently.

The patient has now again approached the health authorities when he had a mild fever earlier this week and subsequently tested positive for the virus.

"Samples taken from the man came out positive and he was immediately shifted to Covid Care Centre in Tirupati. He is currently undergoing treatment and his health condition is stable. Doctors have been closely monitoring his health condition," the official said.



People at the queue lines at Kanakadurga temple for darshan of Goddess Kanakadurga atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Friday.

— DC

State registers 10,776 new Covid-19 cases, 76 deaths

1,02,067 patients are still undergoing treatment for the infection

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |
DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

Andhra Pradesh has registered 10,776 new Covid-19 cases, raising the overall tally to 4,76,506 cases, apart from 76 deaths, taking the death toll to 4,276 in the last 24 hours.

State health authorities have released their Covid-19 bulletin here on Friday reporting that out of 59,919 samples tested, 10,776 individuals have tested Covid-19 positive. Out of 39,65,694 samples tested so far in the state, 3,70,163 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 1,02,067 patients are still undergoing treatment for the infection in various hospitals of the state.

Among new confirmed

Coronavirus infections, East Godavari has registered 1,405 cases, followed by 1,270 in Nellore, 1,256 in Prakasam, 970 in Chittoor, 924 in West Godavari, 750 in Anantapur, 727 in Kadapa, 708 in Guntur, 702 in Kurnool, 588 in Vizianagaram, 560 in Visakhapatnam, 538 in Srikakulam and 378 in Krishna.

East Godavari has been the worst-affected district, registering the highest number of 64,305 total positive cases, followed by 47,573 in Kurnool, 43,998 in Anantapur, 40,699 in West Godavari, 40,696 in Chittoor, 39,449 in Visakhapatnam, 38,791 in Guntur, 34,933 in Nellore, 26,700 in Prakasam, 26,565 in Srikakulam, 22,676 in

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Vizianagaram, 17,688 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery among Coronavirus-infected patients has been good in East Godavari with 47,075 patients being discharged, followed by 40,392 in Kurnool, 37,472 in Anantapur, 37,405 in West Godavari, 32,425 in

AP EXEMPTS NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT ON BOATS PLYING IN RIVERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

The state government issued GO Ms No. 8 here on Friday, giving exemption for boats/vessels carrying more than 12 passengers from having navigational equipment under the norms of AP Inland Vessel Rules, 2017, mentioned that the navigational equipment like Navtex equipment will not function due to lack of area of coverage in river waters and also echo sounder will not function in the muddy river waters.

As insistence on car-

rying such equipment in boats plying in rivers, lakes, canals and reservoirs. Under Part-F (radio communication and safety of navigation) serves no useful purpose and cause hardship to the owners of the boats, the government has exempted certain boats and vessels from carrying such equipment.

Both private boat operators and APTDC have been requesting the state government to withdraw certain navigational equipment for boats carrying more than 12 passengers in water bodies for some time.

TWO LABOURERS CRUSHED TO DEATH AS ROCK BOULDERS FALL

Tirupati: Two labourers were killed after rock boulders fell on them at a stone quarry in Nandireddygaripalle under Kurabalakota mandal in Chittoor district on Friday. The deceased were identified as Kumar Chenthil, 24, hailing from Tamil Nadu and Chillu, 23, hailing from Odisha.

3 teachers of AP got the best teacher award

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

The world-renowned Euro Synchronisation Organization has announced the Applied Robot Control (ARC) Best Teacher Award 2020. Three teachers from Andhra Pradesh have been nominated for the prestigious award. The AP State Skill Development Corporation chairman Challa Madhusudhan Reddy and Electronic Skill Council of India CEO N.K. Mahapatra would present the Best Teacher awards on Teachers Day.

The representatives informed that Indo-Euro Synchronisation, headquartered in Germany, is a pioneer in the field of robotics and manufacturing and has already helped thousands of students with the help of the Government of India and Andhra Pradesh

GOVERNOR GREETES AP TEACHERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan greeted the teaching fraternity in the state on the occasion of Teacher's Day to be observed on September 5.

In a release on Friday, the Governor conveyed his best wishes to the teaching fraternity in Andhra Pradesh to mark Teacher's Day celebrations.

by forming the ARC Lab. Over the past year, in collaboration with the German and the state governments, ARC Labs has bought these highly qualified teachers and provided outstanding teaching

to thousands of students. The award is given to teachers who have shown an outstanding talent for these services. The jury and an advisory board of experts from IIT Delhi, IIM Ahmedabad, Aachen University, Cologne University, Steinbeis University, Foundation for Smart Manufacturing and IGUS Robotics are the best institutions in Germany and India to decide the winners of this award.

Teaching faculties K. Srikanth of Prakasam Engineering college, B. Bangaraju, Vishnu Institute of technology Bhimavaram and Ch. Ramesh Malineni of Perumallu Educational Society's Group of Institutions, Guntur, were selected for the Best Teacher Award 2020 from AP. The awards would be presented to them during a programme on Teachers Day.

HEALTH | MATTERS

State has 138 Covid-19 care hospitals with 37,441 beds

FROM PAGE 1

They should take regular feedback on the medical services being provided to Covid-19 patients and submit a report.

The AP government will complete recruitment of the remaining medical posts for Covid-19 within 10 days. Officials informed Jagan that the process for recruitment of 30,887 posts in the health department will be completed in 10 days. So far 21,673 posts were filled on a contract basis and of

the 9,971 regular posts, 4,676 were filled and recruitment is in progress for the remaining 5,295. Jagan directed officials to complete the recruitment process without delay to render services to coronavirus-infected patients.

The government has been spending ₹10.18 crore per day on Covid-19 care, said Jagan, of which ₹4.3 crore is for tests, ₹1.31 crore on food for patients and ₹4.57 crore on medicines. Officials said that the state has 138 Covid-19

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care hospitals with 37,441 beds, of which 2,462 general beds, 11,177 oxygen-supported beds and 2,651 ICU beds are still vacant and available as on Friday.

New medical colleges would strengthen the

health system in the state, said Jagan, directing officials to take immediate steps for the construction of medical colleges and also to focus on construction of urban health centres. He told the officials to rate hospitals based on feedback from patients on food, sanitation, infrastructure and services of the doctors. He directed officials that feedback, including on Aarogya Asara, should be taken from Aarogyasri network hospitals and any discrepancy should be rectified

immediately. Ordering officials to make mock calls to call centres every day to check their work and record responses, Jagan directed officials to intensify the campaign on what a person should do and whom should s/he call if s/he tests positive for Covid-19.

Deputy chief minister, Alla Nani, chief secretary, Nilam Sawhney and medical and health special chief secretary, Dr. K.S. Jawahar Reddy, were among those at the review meeting.

Recently wed couple ends life in Guntur

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 4

A couple who had met on TikTok and married on August 3 against the wishes of their families, ended their lives by suicide in Bellamkonda of Guntur district late on Thursday night.

Police identified the victims as P. Pavan Kumar, 19, of Mangalagiri of Guntur district, and Putala Sailaja, 17, of Kota Gudibanda of Kalakada mandal in Chittoor district.

They had eloped and married in Tirupati, and were living in a rented house at Machayapalem village for the past month.

Bellamkonda sub-inspector S. Rajesh said Sailaja had recently contacted her mother Hemalatha who is in Dubai over the phone and

● They had eloped and married in Tirupati, were living in a rented house

informed her about their marriage. Hemalatha opposed the marriage and reportedly threatened that she would return to India and take Sailaja back. Her relatives allegedly threatened to kill Pavan Kumar. In a note that the couple left behind, Sailaja claimed Hemalatha was trying to kill Pavan Kumar.

The police informed the parents and relatives of the couple of their deaths and the bodies were shifted to the government hospital of Sattenapalli for post-mortem.

The police registered the case and are conducting further investigations.

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SHORT TAKES

HARASSMENT PROBE AGAINST JUDGE STAYED

New Delhi, Sept. 4: The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the disciplinary inquiry against a district judge into the sexual harassment allegations levelled by a woman judicial officer and sought a response from the Registrar General of Madhya Pradesh High Court on his plea. This has become a "practice now" when someone comes under "zone of consideration" for elevation as a judge of superior courts, said a bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde.

The top court stayed the High Court's order that had given a go ahead to the sexual harassment inquiry against the judge, who was in the zone of consideration for elevation as a high court judge.

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on August 14 had dismissed the plea of the district judge and had given the go ahead to the Gender Sensitisation Internal Complaint Committee to proceed with the disciplinary enquiry against him.

A woman judicial officer of the Subordinate Judicial Service had filed a complaint on March 7, 2018 against the district judge alleging sexual harassment at work place.

SC REJECTS PLEA SEEKING REVIEW OF HOLDING NEET

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4

The Supreme Court on Friday rejected a plea by the ministers of six Opposition ruled states — West Bengal, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Punjab, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh — seeking reconsideration of its order allowing the holding of NEET-UG and JEE (Main) examinations for admission to under-graduate medical and engineering courses respectively.

Rejecting the petition seeking the review of its August 17 order, the top court refused to interfere with the conduct of NEET/JEE exams. A bench comprising Justice Ashok Bhushan, Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice Krishna Murari said, "We have carefully gone through the review petitions and the connected papers. We find no merit in the review petitions and the same are accordingly dismissed."

7 WOMEN DIE IN TN CRACKER FACTORY BLAST

A ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 4

In a ghastly incident, seven women have been charred to death and two others sustained serious burn injuries after an explosion gutted a firecracker unit in Kurugudi village near Kattumannarkoil in Cuddalore district on Friday.

According to sources, the unit was owned by Gandhimadhi, 57. The license of the unit had expired in March and they had applied for renewal.

On Friday morning, Gandhimadhi had brought in seven women workers to perform a small puja before commencing work for the Deepawali season.

A fire broke out in the premises. The concrete structure, including the roof and the walls, collapsed and everything was gutted. While five women died on the spot, two others succumbed to burns at the Kattumannarkoil Government Hospital.

MAN HELD FOR RAPING, KILLING 3-YR-OLD GIRL

Lakhimpur Kheri, Sept. 4: A man accused of raping and killing a three-year-old girl in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri was arrested after an encounter with police on Friday, officials said.

Main accused Lekhrum sustained a bullet injury in his leg during the gunfight near Bamhanpur village in Nighasan area. He was rushed to Nighasan health centre, where he is undergoing treatment.

Deputy SP Nighasan Pradeep Kumar Verma, who was in the native village of the girl, confirmed the arrest.

The girl's body, which bore injury marks on the head, was recovered from the vicinity of her village in Singahi area on Thursday after she went missing on Wednesday, police said.



Tibetan community people greet Indian Army soldiers on their arrival at Panthaghati Chowk en route to Line of Actual Control amid the India-China border tension, in Shimla on Friday. — PTI

Vantage points along LAC converted into 'kill zones'

For the PLA, dealing with kill zones readied by Indian forces will be a first

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 4

Several vantage points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh — particularly the ridge-lines, hilltops and other strategic heights towards the north and south of Pangong Tso, which are in complete control of the Indian Army — are being turned into 'kill zones' to kill or capture the enemy.

Sapper units of the Army are said to have been tasked with creating multiple obstacles for the adversaries, should they resort to any misadventure. Laying anti-personnel mines every few metres is one of the key obstacles.

For the Indian Army, which has been "playing with landmines" along the Line of Control with Pakistan since decades to deter infiltrators and enemy action, the move at the LAC was necessitated to tame the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China, which has turned a habitual offender when it comes to trans-

- THE INDIA-PAKISTAN border is one of the most mined zones in the world
- INDIAN ARMY considers the use of mines as essential
- INDIA AND CHINA are not signatories to Ottawa Convention which calls for complete ban on use of landmines
- MINE-LAYING OPERATIONS is a highly risky affair and has claimed hundreds of lives in the last few decades

gressing into Indian territory. For the PLA, though, dealing with kill zones being readied by Indian forces will be a first as, unlike Pakistan, they are not used to encountering deadly obstacles on the borders with India.

Well-informed sources told *Deccan Chronicle* that with the Army taking full control of many strategic heights around Pangong Tso from where they are keeping a close watch on the movements of the PLA, tactical measures are being taken to thwart the enemy designs. It is here that the vast experience the Indian Army gained over

the decades while dealing with Pakistan along the LoC came in handy. The LoC is one of the most heavily mined zones in the world.

As for the PLA, it has been found that they have planted landmines around their posts, a measure Indian troops were also taking, as a precautionary measure.

"Now with the LAC hotting up like never before, there is a need for creating multiple obstacles, should the need arise," sources said, adding that the only period when PLA soldiers have dealt with kill zones is during training, not on battlefield.

Sources said that non-metallic (NMM-14) plastic anti-personnel mines are most preferred by the Indian forces while plans are afoot for creating more obstacles using claymore mines and anti-tank mines among other explosives to lay traps. "The LAC will remain hot for a long time. Therefore, all preparations are being made to ensure that there are no more incursions," sources said.

The Indian Army had placed the single largest order for landmines last year.

The NMM-14 has a shelf life of 10 years and is difficult to locate as it is made of plastic and contains less than 30 grams of explosive, enough to blow both legs once any one steps on it.

At the moment, around 20 soldiers of Indian Army are manning each post, which has two to three bunkers where more number of soldiers, including the Special Frontier Force personnel have positioned themselves.

INDIA, RUSSIA BEGIN MARITIME EXERCISE

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4

Indian and Russian navies on Friday began their biennial maritime exercise Indra Navy 2020 in the Bay of Bengal.

Initiated in 2003, Indra Navy exercise reflects the long-term strategic relationship between the two navies.

The naval exercise between India and Russia is being conducted at a time when India is engaged in a tense military stand-off with China at Ladakh.

The Indian Navy is being represented by guided missile destroyer Ranvijay, and fleet tanker Shakti, along with their integral helicopters.

The Russian Federation Navy will be represented by destroyer Admiral Vinogradov.

Customs to probe links between Kerala gold scam, B'lore drug case

Kochi, Sept. 4: The Customs department has decided to investigate the alleged links between a key accused in the Kerala gold smuggling case and a prime accused in the Bengaluru drug trafficking, even as a political slugfest erupted between the Congress and CPI(M) over the issue.

Sources said one of the arrested people in the gold smuggling is suspected to have links with a prime accused in the Bengaluru drug trafficking case.

They said the Customs will move an application in Court seeking to further investigate the man, who is currently in judicial remand, in view of his alleged con-

tacts with the key drug trafficking case accused.

"We would like to know the nature of contacts between the arrested persons in the two separate cases," an official said.

Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala demanded an investigation into CPI(M) state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan's son's alleged link with a key accused in the Bengaluru drug trafficking.

Stepping up his attack against CPI(M) over the issue, Leader of Opposition in the Kerala Assembly, Chennithala, on Friday said it was reported that drug trafficking accused Mohammed

Anoop and gold smuggling accused Ramees had contacted over phone several times.

Addressing a press conference in Thiruvananthapuram, he claimed Kerala CPI (M) secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan's son Bineesh Kodiyeri has admitted that he had connection with Anoop.

"It is a serious issue. What is the link between the gold smuggling case and drug trafficking case and how is the drug trafficking case accused connected with Balakrishnan's son? All these things should be investigated," Chennithala said.

Reacting to Chennithala's allegations against his son,

Balakrishnan said efforts were on to create a smokescreen on the issue and it would not succeed.

He said Bineesh would not enjoy his protection, if he has any role in any crime.

"Let the central agencies probe everything related to the case. Chennithala should hand over to the investigating agencies if there is any evidence in his possession," Balakrishnan told reporters.

He said if Bineesh is found guilty of any crime, he should be punished. "He should be hanged, if he deserves to be hanged. Nobody is going to protect him if he has done anything unlawful," Balakrishnan said. — PTI

SSR case: NCB arrests Showik, Miranda

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 4

After the Bandra-based drug peddler's revelation of arranging drugs for Rhea Chakraborty's brother Showik, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) arrested him along with late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's house manager Samuel Miranda after grilling them throughout the day on Friday.

The arrests came close on heels with raids conducted at their residences earlier in the day by the NCB from where the officials seized electronic gadgets and scores of documents.

The officials had summoned Showik and Miranda for questioning after completing searches at their residences. The action came after peddler Abdul Basit Parihar revealed he supplied narcotics substances to Showik. Parihar was earlier arrested and produced before the Esplanade court and sent to NCB custody till September 9 for further investigation. The NCB first arrested Zaid Vilatra, who is also a Bandra-based peddler. Vilatra's links with Rhea and Showik are being probed.

The officials said that his questioning revealed Parihar, whose direct connection with Showik has now come to the fore.

"The data from seized gadgets will be retrieved to dig deeper into the suicide probe. The documents will be scanned to understand if any of them are related with the case," said an officer privy to the probe. Statement of Parihar and Vilatra has revealed some

CCB ARRESTS SANDALWOOD ACTRESS RAGINI

VINAY MADHAV | DC
BENGALURU, SEPT. 4

After grilling her for over six hours, the City Crime Branch (CCB) sleuths have arrested Sandalwood leading actress Ragini Dwivedi on Friday evening, in connection with the drug menace that has rocked the Kannada film industry.

The CCB also arrested Rahul, who is friend of another Sandalwood actress Sanjana Gulrani. Rahul was taken to the house of Sanjana for panchanama.

The day-long drama, after the CCB sleuths led by inspector Anjumala Naik had taken Ragini into their custody for questioning ended with her arrest. She is the third person being arrested in connection with Sandalwood drug links and the first Kannada actress to be arrested.

The two lawyers, who had come to her flat in Yalahanka and later to the CCB office had approached the court, seeking anticipatory bail for Ragini. However, by evening, the court dismissed the anticipatory bail. The CCB sleuths decided to arrest her and seek her police custody. Besides, there is no way Ragini can get bail till Monday.

more names and the agency is now probing the larger nexus involving the brother-sister and other celebrities.

Sena slams Kangana for her 'PoK' remark

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 4

A day after Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut compared Mumbai to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the war of words intensified between Shiva Sena leader Sanjay Raut and the actress on Friday. Mr Raut said that she should not come back to Mumbai if she is afraid of the city police.

"This is an insult of the real Rani of Jhansi, who was a brave daughter of Maharashtra," he said. "Can't I react to the comments criticising Mumbai police and the state of Maharash-

tra? What is PoK? Kangana should tour that place first and the situation prevailing there," Raut said.

In a tweet, Ranaut had recently asked "why is Mumbai feeling like Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir?" and tagged a report where Raut had purportedly said she should not come back to Mumbai if she was afraid of the city police.

"If people who have nothing to do with the city malign it and its police, the state government and the home minister should take action, or else the morale of the police will take a beating," Raut told reporters.

ASSAM GOVT LIFTS WEEKEND LOCKDOWN

Guwahati, Sept. 4: The Assam government has lifted weekend lockdown and night curfew though Coronavirus-related restrictions will remain in force in the containment zones till September 30, Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna said on Friday.

Night curfew and weekend lockdown have been operational across the state and inter-district movements were prohibited since June 28 following a spike in Covid-19 cases.

"Weekend lockdown and night curfew have been lifted. However, please adhere to all the Covid-19 protocols to keep yourself and others around you safe", the Chief Secretary said in a tweet.

— PTI

HC seeks NIA's reply on Navlakha's bail plea

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 4

The Bombay high court on Friday issued a notice to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), seeking its response to a bail plea filed by activist Gautam Navlakha, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-alleged Maoist links case. The HC directed the NIA to file its

reply by September 15. A bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and M.S. Karnik was hearing a plea filed by Navlakha, challenging a special court order of July 12 this year that rejected his plea for statutory bail.

Navlakha had sought statutory or default bail before the special court on the ground that he

had been in custody for over 90 days, but the prosecution had failed to file a chargesheet in the case within this period.

The NIA, however, had argued that his plea was not maintainable. It had also sought an extension for filing of chargesheet and the special court had at the time accepted the NIA's plea seeking extension of 90 to 180 days to

file the chargesheet against Navlakha and his co-accused, activist Dr Anand Teltumbde.

Navlakha, lodged in Navi Mumbai's Talaja jail, had surrendered before the NIA on April 14 this year. Between Aug. 29 and Oct. 1 in 2018, Navlakha had been kept under house arrest.

According to police,

the activists had made inflammatory speeches and provocative statements at the Elgar Parishad meet held in Pune on December 31, 2017, which it said triggered violence the next day at Koregaon Bhima in the district.

The police also alleged that they were active members of banned Maoist groups.

SHORT TAKES

RUSSIA VACCINE
'PASSES EARLY
TRIAL TEST'

London, Sept. 4: Patients involved in early tests of a Russian Coronavirus vaccine developed antibodies with "no serious adverse events", according to research published in The Lancet on Friday, but experts said the trials were too small to prove safety and effectiveness.

Russia announced last month that its vaccine, named "Sputnik V" after the Soviet-era satellite that was the first launched into space in 1957, had already received approval.

This raised concerns among Western scientists over a lack of safety data, with some warning that moving too quickly on a vaccine could be dangerous.

Russia denounced criticism as an attempt to undermine Moscow's research.

FALLEN U.S.
MARINES ARE
'LOSERS': TRUMP

Washington, Sept. 4: US President Donald Trump referred to US Marines buried in a WWI cemetery in France as "losers" and "suckers" for getting killed in action, according to a report Thursday in the Atlantic magazine.

The report, penned by the magazine's editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg, said Trump had refused to visit the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery near Paris in 2018 because "he feared his hair would become disheveled in the rain," although the official explanation offered by aides was that the helicopter due to take him there could not fly due to weather.

"In a conversation with senior staff members on the morning of the scheduled visit, Trump said, 'Why should I go to that cemetery? It's filled with losers,'" the article said.

"In a separate conversation on the same trip, Trump referred to the more than 1,800 marines who lost their lives at Belleau Wood as 'suckers' for getting killed," the Atlantic added.



Police officers detain a Black Lives Matter protester outside the Penumbra Kelly Building, in Portland, Oregon. On Saturday, protesters will mark their 100th consecutive day of demonstrations following the killing of George Floyd. —AP

Biden vows that US will
address racism, slaveryPortland protest suspect shot
dead by police during arrest

Kenosha (US), Sept. 4: Joe Biden told residents of Kenosha, Wisconsin, that recent turmoil following the police shooting of Jacob Blake, a person of colour, could help Americans confront centuries of systemic racism, drawing a sharp contrast with President Donald Trump amid a reckoning that has galvanised the nation.

"We're finally now getting to the point where we're going to be addressing the original sin of this country, 400 years old... slavery and all the vestiges of it," Biden said at Grace Lutheran Church, where he met with community leaders after a private session with Blake and his family.

The visit marked the former vice president's first trip to the battleground state of Wisconsin as the Democratic presidential nominee and was a vivid illustration of the contrast

he offers to Trump. While Biden spent more than an hour with the Blake family, Trump didn't mention Blake during his own trip to Kenosha on Tuesday. Where Biden traced problems in the criminal justice system

back to slavery, Trump refused to acknowledge systemic racism and offered his unvarnished support to law enforcement, blaming the recent violence on "domestic terror."

"I can't say if tomorrow

armed and officers fired several shots into the vehicle before the man fled, Brady added. Several more shots were then fired.

The presence of a weapon has not been confirmed, Brady said. The US Marshals Service confirmed officers fired at Reinhoehl, who was pronounced dead at the scene, according to the Washington Post.

—AP

God made me president, I can't guarantee you everything gets solved in four years," Biden said. But "it would be a whole better, we'd get a whole lot further down the road" if Trump isn't re-elected.

—PTI

IMRAN'S TOP
AIDE BAJWA
RESIGNS

Islamabad, Sept. 4: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's top aide Lt Gen (ret'd) Asim Saleem Bajwa resigned on Friday after allegations that he used his offices to help the family set up several off-shore businesses.

Former Pakistan Army spokesman Bajwa, who also served as Commander of the Southern Command, rejected the allegations against him and resigned as special assistant to the prime minister (SAPM) on information and broadcasting.

However, he would continue working as chairman of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority.

The development followed after a report on a website alleged that Bajwa had used his offices in setting up off-shore businesses of his wife, sons and brothers.

The report alleged that Bajwa's younger brothers opened their first Papa John's pizza restaurant in 2002, the year he started working as a Lieutenant Colonel on the General Pervaz Musharraf's staff.

It claimed that his brother Nadeem Bajwa, 53, who started as a delivery driver for the pizza restaurant franchise, another three brothers, his wife Farrukh Zeba and three sons now own a business empire which set up 99 companies in four countries, including a pizza franchise with 133 restaurants worth an estimated \$39.9 million.

—PTI

Ships, boats try to
douse tanker fire
off Lanka, 1 dead

Colombo, Sept. 4: A Panamanian-registered oil tanker burned out of control for a second day off Sri Lanka on Friday as authorities confirmed a Filipino crew member was killed in an explosion in the Indian Ocean.

Sri Lankan navy and Indian coastguard vessels fired water cannon at the blaze on the *New Diamond*, which issued a distress call on Thursday after its engine room exploded.

The fire had not spread to the 2,70,000 tonnes of crude and 1,700 tonnes of diesel the tanker is carrying, Sri Lanka's navy said.

"Preliminary information from the ship's crew confirmed that a Filipino seaman on board had died in a boiler explosion," the navy said in a statement. All but one of the 23-member crew — 18 Filipinos and five

Greek nationals — were rescued. The tanker was about 60 km from Sri Lanka's east coast when it sounded the alert and during the night drifted 10 km closer. Sri Lanka on Friday thanked India for its support. "We are receiving support from India and thankful to them," Sri Lanka's Army chief Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva told reporters.

Rear Admiral Nandana Jayaratne, the Director General, Operations, of Sri Lankan Navy, said there was no threat of an oil spill. "The Indian Coast Guard saw a crack right under the superstructure of the ship, but that does not mean the ship is falling apart and there will be an oil spill," Jayaratne said. "We will need international support in the event of a spill," Jayaratne said. —AFP PTI

NEW ZEALAND RECORDS FIRST COVID
DEATH IN OVER THREE MONTHS

Wellington, Sept. 4: New Zealand recorded its first Covid-19 death in more than three months on Friday when a man in his 50s succumbed to the virus.

Health officials said the man was part of a second-wave cluster of infections that emerged in Auckland last month, ending a spell of

102 days free of community transmission in the South Pacific nation.

The death at Auckland's Middlemore Hospital on Friday afternoon takes New Zealand's death toll from the virus to 23, with the most recent previous fatality on May 24.

—AFP

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Spain snatch a
last-minute draw

Stuttgart, Germany: Spain defender Gaya scored deep into stoppage time to salvage a 1-1 draw against Germany as the UEFA Nations League started without fans ending a 10-month international break.

The Valencia defender scored in the sixth minute of injury time to cancel out Timo Werner's opening goal on his return to his hometown Stuttgart.

With international football returning for the first time after the Covid-19 hiatus, all 54 games that are scheduled to take place across the continent over six days are taking place with strict hygiene measures. Players had to pass mandatory pregame tests for Covid-19.

It was Spain's first game with coach Luis Enrique back in charge following the death of his 9-year-old daughter Xana due to a type of bone cancer in August 2019. Also in the same League 'A' group, Ukraine beat Switzerland 2-1. Ireland captain Shane Duffy scored in injury time for a 1-1 draw at Bulgaria, while Wales beat Finland 1-0. —AP

Hami back on top
at Monza practice

Monza, Italy: Valtteri Bottas topped the times ahead of championship leader and teammate Lewis Hamilton as Mercedes dominated Friday's crash-hit opening Italian Grand Prix practice at Monza.

The Finn, determined to revive his fortunes and his title bid, clocked a best lap in one minute and 20.703 seconds to outpace the six-time champion by 0.245 seconds, a healthy margin on one of the fastest circuits on the Formula One calendar.

Alex Albon was third fastest, nearly eight-tenths off the leading pace, ahead of Alpha Tauri's Daniil Kvyat and his Red Bull team-mate Max Verstappen with Pierre Gasly sixth in the second Alpha Tauri. Sergio Perez was seventh for Racing Point ahead of Lando Norris in the leading McLaren, Daniel Ricciardo of Renault and Ferrari-bound Carlos Sainz in the second McLaren. —AFP

Felix mauls Murray

Nagal too bows out; Medvedev makes 3rd round

New York, Sept. 4: Andy Murray said he would keep trying to win Grand Slams after crashing out of the US Open second round in straight sets to 15th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime in the men's draw on Thursday.

The former world number one was demolished by the 20-year-old Canadian 6-2, 6-3, 6-4 inside Arthur Ashe Stadium in 2hr 8min.

The 15th seed Canadian smashed 24 aces and 52 winners in a one-sided affair that saw Murray muster just two and nine respectively.

In early men's matches, second seed Dominic Thiem celebrated his 27th birthday with an easy straight-sets win against India's Sumit Nagal.

The Austrian triumphed 6-3, 6-3, 6-2 against Nagal, who became the first Indian man since 2013 to reach the second round of a Grand Slam.

Thiem will play 2014 US Open champion Marin Cilic for a place in the fourth round after the Croatian advanced in four sets against Slovakia's Norbert Gombos.

Third seed and beaten finalist last year Daniil Medvedev made light work of Australia's 116th-ranked Christopher O'Connell, easing into round three 6-3, 6-2, 6-4.

Elsewhere, sixth seed Italian Matteo Berrettini brushed aside France's Ugo Humbert 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 (8-6) while Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut progressed against Serbian Miomir Kecmanovic.

Also, fourteenth seed Grigor Dimitrov tumbled out of the US Open at the second-round stage on Thursday. Fucsovics downed Dimitrov 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/4), 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 in 4hr 50min.

—AFP



Victoria Azarenka of Belarus returns a shot to Anastasiya Sevastova of Latvia during their third round of the US Open tennis championships in New York on Thursday. Azarenka won 6-1, 6-3. —AP

US Open is Mums' delight

New York, Sept. 4: Serena Williams, Victoria Azarenka and Tsvetana Pironkova made up a 'Band of Mothers' who marched into the third round of the US Open on Thursday.

Williams, Azarenka and Pironkova were part of a cluster of nine mums who started this week's women's singles tournament at Flushing Meadows.

Six of the nine — Kim Clijsters, Vera Zvonareva, Tatjana Maria, Katerina Bondarenko, Patricia Maria Tig and Olga Govortsova — have been

eliminated.

But unranked Bulgarian Pironkova — playing her first tournament in three years after a break to have her first child — prolonged her participation with a 7-5, 6-3 upset of Spanish 10th Garbine Muguruza.

Former world number one Williams also advanced later Thursday with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Russia's Margarita Gasparyan.

Williams and Pironkova were later joined by Azarenka, another former world number one who beat Belarussian compa-

triot and fifth seed Aryna Sabalenka 6-1, 6-3.

Pironkova, who gave birth to her son Alexander in April 2018, says motherhood has given her a new perspective on her tennis career.

Williams' American compatriot Sofia Kenin, the number two seed, continued her impressive form this year with a straightforward 6-4, 6-3 victory over Canadian Leylah Fernandez to progress into the third round.

The reigning Australian Open champion Kenin is yet to drop a set at

Flushing Meadows as she bids for her second Grand Slam title of the year, and of her career.

Only three women — Belgium's Clijsters and Australians Evonne Goolagong and Margaret Court — have won Grand Slam singles titles in the Open era after having children.

Azarenka, meanwhile, said she hoped she could help inspire working parents everywhere.

"Pretty incredible, right?" she said when asked to comment on the nine mothers who started the tournament. —AFP

Post the mess,
Lionel to stay

Madrid, Sept. 4: Lionel Messi said on Friday that he will stay at Barcelona, insisting he could never go to court against "the club of his life".

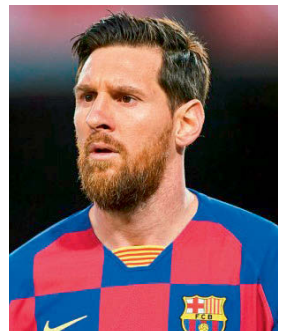
But he launched a stinging attack on Barca president Josep Maria Bartomeu, whom he accused of going back on an agreement to let him leave for free at the end of last season.

"The president always said that at the end of the season I could decide if I wanted to go or if I wanted to stay and in the end he didn't end up keeping his word," Messi said in an interview with *Goal*, released on Friday.

"I thought and we were sure that I was free. The president always said that at the end of the season I could decide if I stayed or not and now they hold on to the fact that I did not say it before June 10 when it turns out that on June 10 we were competing for the league in the middle of this shitty virus and this disease that altered all the dates.

Messi added: "And this is the reason why I am going to continue in the club... because the president told me that the only way to leave was to pay the 700-million-euro release clause.

"This is impossible, and



I would never go to court against Barca because it is the club that I love, that gave me everything since I arrived, it is the club of my life, I have made my life here.

— LIONEL MESSI
Barcelona
footballer

then the other way was to go to trial. I would never go to court against Barca because it is the club that I love, that gave me everything since I arrived, it is the club of my life, I have made my life here," the striker added.

Messi had said he wanted to leave the club he joined as a boy after Barcelona's humiliating 8-2 defeat to Bayern Munich in the Champions League quarterfinals in August.

—AFP

BHAJJI PULLED OUT DUE
TO PERSONAL REASONS

New Delhi, Sep. 4: Senior off-spinner Harbhajan Singh on Friday became the second high-profile name to pull out of this year's Indian Premier League (IPL) owing to "personal reasons", saying he has informed the Chennai Super Kings team management about his decision.

The 40-year-old, who has been a part of CSK during the past two seasons is currently in Jalandhar, Punjab with his family and requested privacy. The IPL starts on September 19 in the UAE after being moved out of India due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I have informed the CSK management about my decision to pull out of this year's IPL. I have decided to take a break due to personal reasons in these difficult times. I expect that everyone would respect my need for privacy," Harbhajan, who was bought by the franchise for ₹2 crore this season, said on Friday.

"When I told the CSK management about my decision, they were very supportive and I can't thank them enough for that," Harbhajan said.

—PTI

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