

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2020



Djokovic gets obscenity warning for his unruly behaviour on court

'Don't want to curb freedom of speech': SC mulls nature of order in Sudarshan TV row

SSR death: NCB likely to summon Sara and Shraddha in drug probe



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MOONSET TODAY 10.07 AM

Four Republicans could halt a quick confirmation and the President criticised Republican Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska for opposing a vote before elections, warning that they would be "very badly hurt" by voters. — *AP*

IN BRIEF

Civic bodies gear up for desealing

New Delhi: North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash on Monday said the process to desal properties in residential areas sealed on the directions of the monitoring committee is likely begin this week and officials have been directed to expedite the process. The desealing process is being initiated in pursuance of a directive by the Supreme Court, he said. On August 14, the apex court had said that encroachment is a matter of concern but the monitoring committee, set up in 2006 to identify unauthorised structures and check misuse of residential properties in Delhi, "cannot exceed its power" and take any action beyond its authorisation. Prakash said about 3,000 properties were sealed on the directions of the committee in areas falling under the North Delhi Municipal Corporation. The South Corporation and North Corporation have made similar arrangement. East Delhi Mayor Nirmal Jain said he has urged EDMC councillors to help people in the desealing process.

Man, woman found dead with gunshots

Noida: The bodies of a 21-year-old man and a 20-year-old woman riddled with bullets were found inside a house in Uttar Pradesh's Noida on Monday, police said. The police said the married woman and the unmarried man were in a relationship for the past six months but it was unclear whether they both killed themselves or were shot by one of them. Both the deceased worked as daily wage earners, a senior officer said. The incident took place around 3 pm at a house in Ambedkar Colony in Sector 123, under Phase 3 police station limits, deputy commissioner of police, Central Noida, Harish Chander said. "They both lived in neighbouring houses and have been in an affair. However, the woman was married and that is why they could not get together. This apparently led to the incident. The firearm has been recovered from the spot," Chander said. The bodies have been sent for a post-mortem after which it would be confirmed if it is a case of double suicide, the police said, adding no complaint has been made by anyone in the matter so far.

4 die as car rams into truck Ghaziabad

Four youths died after the car in which they were travelling rammed into a tractor-trailer on an expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad district, police said on Monday. The four were en route to Baghpur via the Eastern Peripheral Expressway after appearing in an exam in Moradabad when the accident occurred around 10 pm on Sunday, Superintendent of Police (Rural) Neeraj Kumar Jadaun told PTI. Taiyyab and Ishaad (26) died on the spot, while Ammu (15) and Harkesh (23) were rushed to a nearby hospital in Muradnagar town, where they succumbed to their injuries on Monday morning, the SP said. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem. The truck has been impounded, but the driver fled away from the spot, the officer added.

5 bikers arrested for performing stunts

New Delhi: Five people were arrested after a video of a group of bikers performing stunts on a busy road in east Delhi's Vikas Marg surfaced on social media, police said on Sunday. The arrested have been identified as Sonu Kashyap, Kamal, Pawan, Sachin and Vipul Sharma, they said. The 30-second video was posted by a passerby on social media tagging the Delhi Police. In the video, some bikers are seen standing on moving bikes while others perform various stunts. None of them was wearing any helmet or protective gear but seen wearing face masks. Taking notice of it, deputy commissioner of police (East) Jasmeet Singh, tweeted: "The bikers have been identified. Legal action is being taken by the Shakurpur police station." By the evening, five men were arrested in connection with the incident for rash driving and under provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act, he said.

30% Covid patients in city hospitals from outside: Jain

City records 2,548 new Covid cases, Death toll crosses 5,000

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on Monday said 30 per cent of the Covid patients admitted to city hospitals are from other states and most of them have been occupying ICU beds at private facilities.

Delhi recorded 2,548 fresh coronavirus cases. Of the total 2,49,259 patients, 30,941 are active and 2,13,304 patients were recovered. With 32 deaths in the last 24 hours, total death counts rose to 5,014. Positivity rate stands at 7.55 per cent and fatality rate is 2.01 per cent. Total 33,733 tests conducted in the last 24 hours. 3,672 patients had recovered during the same period.

Amid a rise in the number of non-resident patients, the Delhi government has decided to collect data of their deaths separately, he said, adding that the national capital has the lowest death rate in the country. Based on data of the last 10 days, the death rate in Delhi stands at 0.77 per cent.

"Around 30 per cent Covid patients admitted to Delhi hospitals are from outside the city," he told reporters.

"People coming in from outside prefer private hospitals. They make up their mind in advance and directly go to these four-five hospitals they have heard of... Such as Max, Apollo and Fortis. That's why ICU beds are full there," he said.

"Most of them have occupied ICU beds in private hospitals. There are 1,500 such patients admitted to Delhi hospitals," he said. The minister, however, said there are around 1,000 ICU beds available in Delhi at present. Around 1,500 non-ICU beds and more than 500 ICU beds have been added over the last few days, he said.

"The number of vacant

37-yr-old held for collecting nude photos of aspiring models

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21

The Delhi police has arrested a 37-year-old man who allegedly targeted upcoming models on social media by deceiving them on the pretext of giving lead role in upcoming web series and collecting their objectionable photographs, which the models had sent for the purpose of audition.

The accused has been identified as Mam Chand, a resident of Delhi's Sultanpuri area.

The police said that the accused used to contact victims from different fake profiles on social media and pressurised them into talking to him, threatening them of making the objectionable photographs viral on social media.

According to DCP (North district) Anto Alphonse, a complaint was received in which the complainant alleged that she was contacted on Instagram by one woman, Rashi Goel, who claimed to be looking for new models for an upcoming web series.

"The user then asked the girl for casual and nude photographs for auditions. Following this false inducement, the complainant sent her nude photographs to Rashi Goel on Instagram. Rashi Goel kept on asking for more photographs of the complainant, which she refused and subsequently blocked the former on Instagram," said the deputy commissioner of police.

"The complainant was then contacted by two different people on Instagram, who forwarded the nude photos that she had sent to Rashi Goel. The obscene photographs of the complainant were also sent to two of her friends," said the deputy commissioner of police



Covid patients perform Yoga asanas at Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre and Hospital, in New Delhi on Monday.

beds is available on Delhi Corona app... Nothing is being concealed," he said.

Mr Jain said data related to deaths of non-resident patients is being collected separately. Earlier, it was not so.

The minister also said there is no shortage of plasma. Those in need can get it from the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences. Asked about allegations of irregularities in testing by laboratories in other states, he said there were no such complaints in Delhi.

"I cannot comment on what is happening in other states."

On Sunday, Delhi's cumulative Covid-19 case count rose to 2,46,711 with 3,812 more people contracting the viral disease, while 37 fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 4,982.

As many as 52,405 tests were conducted to detect Covid infection on Saturday, of which 11,322 were RT-PCR/CBNAAT/TrueN at tests and 41,083 were rapid antigen tests.

77 new cases push Noida tally to 11,419

Noida, Sept. 21: Seventy-seven new instances of Covid infection pushed the tally of cases in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar district to 11,419 on Monday, official data showed.

The number of active cases came down to 1,578 from 1,678 on Sunday, according to the data released by the state health department for a 24-hour period.

On the brighter side, 177 patients got discharged during the period and the total number of recoveries in the district reached 9,792, the data showed.

The district, adjoining Delhi, has so far recorded 49 coronavirus-linked deaths and has a mortality rate of 0.42 per cent which is one of the lowest in the state.

Meanwhile, the recovery rate of patients reached 85.75 per cent from 84.77

per cent on Sunday. It was 80.38 per cent last Monday, according to the statistics. Gautam Buddha Nagar now ranks ninth among the 75 districts in the state in terms of active cases, seventh in recoveries and 31st in death toll, according to the official figures.

There were 64,164 active cases across Uttar Pradesh on Monday. So far, 2,89,594 patients have recovered across the state, while the death toll linked to coronavirus climbed to 5,135, the data showed.

The state's average recovery rate stood at 80.69 per cent, according to government officials.

Court extends Rajeev's custody in espionage case by 7 days

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21

A Delhi court Monday extended by seven days the custodial interrogation of freelance journalist Rajeev Sharma, arrested in an espionage case under the Official Secrets Act. He was produced before Metropolitan Magistrate Pawan Singh Rajawat and the investigators said his further custodial interrogation was necessary since he has to be confronted with two of his associates—a Chinese woman and a Nepalese man—whose police custody was also extended till September 28. Further, the Special Cell of the Delhi Police told the court that it needed to conduct its investigation in relation to the defence ministry as Sharma was "found to be in possession of some



Rajeev Sharma

defence-related classified documents".

While allowing interrogation of the three accused in police custody, the court directed the cops to hand over a copy of the FIR to Sharma's counsel Adish Aggarwala.

The hearing was conducted virtually and press was allowed to attend the proceedings.

Sharma was arrested on September 14 and was remanded to police custody for a week.

According to the police,

the Chinese woman and her Nepalese associate were also arrested for paying him large amounts of money routed through shell companies.

Meanwhile, Lawyer of the arrested freelance journalist Rajeev Sharma said that the Official Secrets Act is "false" and the "evidence was planted" by the Delhi police.

The Delhi Police on Saturday said Sharma, a resident of Pitampura, was allegedly passing sensitive information about India's border strategy, Army's deployment and procurement, and foreign policy to Chinese intelligence agencies.

He was arrested by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police in connection with a case under the Official Secrets Act as he was allegedly found in possession of defence-related classified documents.

No social, cultural & political gathering in Delhi till Sept. 30

New Delhi, Sept. 21: The DDMA on Monday clarified that all social, cultural and political functions along with large gatherings and congregations in Delhi are prohibited till September 30.

In view of several protests against farm bills in the city, the Delhi Police also said demonstrations cannot be allowed till September 30, citing an earlier order of DDMA which prohibits such activities.

In a communication to Delhi government's Deputy home secretary, DDMA additional CEO Rajesh Goyal on Monday said the order of the Authority, dated June 6, will continue till September 30.

As per the DDMA order on June 6, all social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious, political functions as well as other gatherings and congregations were prohibited throughout NCT of Delhi. Also, the order restricted marriage related gatherings to 50 persons and funeral and last rites gatherings to 20 persons.

"The said position has been continued till September 30, vide DDMA

order dated September 3, 2020," Goyal stated. "It is therefore quite clear that at present, all social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious, political functions, other gatherings and congregations are prohibited throughout NCT of Delhi," he said.

The Delhi Police also said in a tweet that all political, cultural and social gatherings in NCT of Delhi will remain suspended till September 30. On Monday, the police also detained over 40 Delhi Congress workers, including state president Anil Kumar, who were marching towards Parliament to protest the farm bills.

Meanwhile, more than 400 children have recovered from coronavirus at the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital, the Delhi government's largest Covid facility, since

March, officials said on Monday.

Around 50 Covid children are currently admitted to a special ward designed for them at the hospital.

"Around 415 children have successfully recovered from coronavirus. Around 10 per cent of them were severe cases," Dr Urmila Jhamb said.

Children suffering from other diseases such as tuberculosis, cancer and kidney issues become severely ill if they contract the coronavirus, she said, adding most children show mild symptoms such as diarrhea and vomiting.

Mothers are allowed to stay with their Covid-positive children even if they themselves are coronavirus-free, but they can engage with their child only, Dr Jhamb said.

The hospital recently created a special Covid ward for children, a first-of-its-kind facility in the national capital.

"Non-profit 'Doctors for You' helped us create a separate ward for children because they need some recreational activity. Children can watch cartoons on TVs installed in the ward and play with toys," she said.

Court dismisses Khalid's plea to meet family

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21

Umar Khalid

A Delhi court has dismissed an application by former JNU student leader Umar Khalid, arrested under the stringent anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, seeking permission to meet his family during his police custody. Khalid is in police custody for 10 days, till September 24, in a case related to the large conspiracy in the communal violence in north east Delhi in February.

He was arrested on September 13 and the next day the court allowed police to interrogate him in its custody saying it was a fit case for police custody remand. The cops had said they wanted to confront him with documents running into 11 lakh pages.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat dismissed his application seeking permission to meet his family members saying there were no merits in it.

"The counsel for the accused (Khalid) had made specific request for allowing the meeting time of accused with the counsel during police custody remand and the same was allowed for every day for 30 minutes during the entire police custody remand. Counsel for the accused is meeting the

accused every day during the remand in terms of the order dated September 14. There was also an apprehension of safety raised by the counsel for the accused and thus a specific direction was also given to the concerned DCP (Deputy Commissioner of Police) to ensure the safety of the accused.

"In the totality of facts and circumstance of the case, I see no merit in the application, and accordingly, the application is dismissed," the judge said in his order passed on September 19.

In his application filed through his counsel, Khalid stated that verbal assurance was given by the police at the time of remand that he would be allowed to meet his family but they were not being permitted. During the hearing, his counsel told the court that since the police custody remand was extraordinarily long, he should not be deprived of meeting with his family or friends.

55-year-old retired Navy man shot dead in Dwarka

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21

A 55-year-old retired naval official, who was into real estate business, was shot dead by a man following an altercation in the parking area of an apartment in Delhi's Dwarka area, police said on Monday.

The deceased, Balraj Deshwal, who was a leading seaman in the Indian Navy, was shot in his face from a "very close range", a senior police officer said.

The incident took place when Deshwal, who was staying with his family in Sector 12 of Dwarka, was having a conversation with his friend in Dwarka's Sector 23 area on Sunday night, police said.

They said that a bullet hit Deshwal's mouth and he was declared brought dead at a hospital.

The accused, identifies as Pradeep Khokar, is absconding and several teams have been formed to arrest him.

"The apartment, where the incident took place, was constructed by Deshwal and his business partners. Khokar had purchased one of the flats. "Around 8.30 pm on Sunday, Khokar entered the parking space when he looked angry and began an altercation with Deshwal, which led to a scuffle and later he fired at him," police said.

Vijender asks CM to resume MLALAD fund

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21

Delhi BJP MLA Vijender Gupta on Monday wrote to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and urged him to resume the MLA Local Area Development Fund, saying its suspension is hampering development works.

Under the MLALAD fund scheme, each MLA in the 70-member Delhi Assembly is provided ₹10 crore per annum to spend on development works in their constituency.

He said residents in every assembly constituency are waiting for improvement in parks, street lights, bad roads in their colonies and societies and common civic amenities such as water supply, sewerage, health-related services like open gyms, senior citizen recreation centres among others are hit due to suspension of the fund, he said.

Three historical sites in Mehrauli to get state-of-the-art illumination

SHASHI BHUSHAN
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21

Three historical sites in Mehrauli—Jahaz Mahal, Hauz-i-Shamsi, and Bhoal Bhulaiya—will get state-of-the-art illumination. After personal intervention by the Lok Sabha member from South Delhi, Ramesh Bidhuri, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has initiated a proposal to illuminate these centuries-old heritage structures.

Mr Bidhuri suggested proper lighting or illumination of heritage sites and buildings during a recent inspection of the area with the senior officials of various government agencies like the DDA, South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), and ASI. Mr Bidhuri told this newspaper that he has suggested a beautification plan for historical sites to boost tourism and more employment opportunities for the locals.



"The idea is in line with PM Narendra Modi's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat.' Illumination will be done on the lines of Qutub Minar and Tughlaqabad Fort," said Mr Bidhuri.

According to Mr Bidhuri, the green area around the heritage buildings would be beautified by the DDA. "These heritage sites will be developed as tourist destinations in the coming days," Mr Bidhuri added.

An ASI official said, "After Mr Bidhuri's visit, a proposal was initiated. The ASI will take care of the lighting arrangements at these sites. The municipal agency or DDA may install appropriate

lights around them on the plot under their jurisdiction.

"Security of the structures and lighting fixtures is an issue though we have already deployed private guards there. The MP was briefed about the problem after which he advised the shopkeeper or Resident Welfare Association to protect the heritage sites."

The domed octagonal building of the 16th century, Tomb of Adham Khan, is also known as Bhoal Bhulaiya (maze). Jahaz Mahal (Ship Palace), a Lodi era building, was a pleasure resort or an inn. Hauz-e-Shamsi or Shamsi Talab was built by Iltutmish in 1230 CE.

SHORT TAKES

Prasar Bharati
ex-ADG dies of Covid

Bargarh, Odisha: Former additional director general (ADG) of Prasar Bharati Abhaya Kumar Padhi succumbed to Covid-19 at Bargarh in Odisha. 71-year-old Padhi breathed his last while undergoing treatment at a Covid Hospital in Bargarh town. He was diagnosed with Covid-19 a few days ago. Padhi had joined Prasar Bharati in the year 1976. He had also worked with All-India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD). He started his career in the broadcasting agency after completion of his graduation from Gangadhar Meher College in 1970 and post graduation (PG) from Sambalpur University. Linguistics and phonetics was his special paper in post graduation course in English. He was also a former guest faculty at Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Dhenkanal.

Man, sister-in-law
harassed, 6 held

Bhubaneswar: Odisha's Sundargarh district police on Monday detained six persons for allegedly forcing a man and his sister-in-law to wear a garland of shoes and parading them in village road accusing them of having an "illicit" relationship. The incident was reported from Fakarpada village under Rajgangpur police limits. According to reports, Jiten Barua of Fakarpada village under Kutunia Gram Panchayat and Mili Barua, who is said to be his sister-in-law, had an extra-marital affair. On Friday, Mili eloped with Jiten. After their alleged secret love came to fore, Mili's husband Bijay Barua lodged a complaint on Saturday and made it clear that he will not accept his wife any more.

No more lockdown
in MP, says mantri

Bhopal: Amid spike in Covid-19 cases in Madhya Pradesh, state home minister Narottam Mishra on Monday ruled out the possibility of taking recourse to lockdown again to deal with the pandemic in the state in the "interest of economy". On the sideline of the Monsoon Session of state Assembly, Mr Mishra said people needed to follow the Covid guidelines such as maintaining social distance, avoiding crowds and washing hands, strictly, to shield them from the virus. "We are currently working on a twin-plan to deal with the crisis. We need to combat the pandemic as well as ensure speedy recovery of the economy. We can't afford another lockdown in view of the economic crisis caused by the pandemic," the state home minister added.

Raj Thackeray fined
for not wearing mask

Mumbai: MNS chief Raj Thackeray was fined ₹1,000 for not wearing a face mask aboard a boat to Mandwa jetty in adjoining Raigad district, sources said on Monday. The incident happened on Friday when Thackeray, along with some family members and friends, was on board the Mumbai-Mandwa RoRo boat. Officials on the boat pointed out that he had flouted the COVID-19 norms mandating wearing of mask in public, after which he paid the ₹1,000 fine, the sources said. The roll on-roll off (RoRo)-cum-passenger ferry service between Mumbai and Mandwa near Alibaug, allowing passengers to board along with their vehicles, was launched in March. Meanwhile, MNS leader Nitin Sardesai in a statement said "no such thing took place" on board the ferry. — PTI

Mamata slams Centre, says
suspension of MPs 'fascist'

Bengal CM urges other parties to fight together against farm Bills

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, SEPT. 21

West Bengal chief minister and Trinamul Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Monday described the suspension of her party's eight MPs for the remainder of the ongoing Parliament session for their unruly behaviour during the passage of two key Bills on farmers as "unfortunate, autocratic and 'fascist'".

"Suspension of the 8 MPs who fought to protect farmers interests is unfortunate & reflective of this autocratic Govt's mindset that doesn't respect democratic norms & principles. We won't bow down & we'll fight this fascist Govt in Parliament & on the streets. #BJPKilledDemocracy," Ms Banerjee tweeted.

She later claimed, "We watched in surprise on Sunday when votes and division were sought on farmers' Bills. How shamefully the Bills were passed as the BJP MPs were present in lesser

'Centre sometimes blames
people, but not its misrule'

New Delhi, Sept. 21: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday attacked the Centre over Union minister Harsh Vardhan's remarks that people's "irresponsible behaviour" has resulted in a surge in Covid-19 spread, saying the Modi government's "blind arrogance" sometimes blames god, sometimes people, but not its own "misrule". Mr Gandhi's attack on the government came a day after health minister Vardhan, while replying to a special discussion on the coronavirus pandemic in Lok Sabha, said that there is a surge in the spread of Covid-19 in the country due to societal "irresponsible behav-



our". Tagging a media report on Mr Vardhan's remarks, Mr Gandhi tweeted, "The blind arrogance of the Modi government sometimes blames god, sometimes people for the plight of the country, but not its own misrule and wrong policies."

"How many more 'Act Of Modi' will the country bear?" he said in the tweet in Hindi.

Mr Gandhi has been critical of the government over the handling of the Covid-19 crisis and accused it of failing to tackle the situation. The government has dismissed all such claims in the past. — PTI

numbers than that of the Opposition. The farmers were bulldozed and their rights were snatched in

the name of voice vote forcefully. We condemn it." Tearing into the BJP, the TMC chief alleged,

'Paltry' MSP hike cruel joke
on farmers, says Amarinder

Chandigarh, Sept. 21: Punjab chief minister Capt. Amarinder Singh on Monday rejected the Centre's "paltry" hike in MSP of wheat and five other Rabi crops as a "cruel joke" on farmers.

He said the "paltry" hike has come amid their growing apprehensions about the abolition of the MSP regime following the passage of the new agriculture Bills in Parliament.

"This is callous. They have made a mockery of the farmers' protests over the farm Bills, which by all accounts will eventually pave the way for ending the MSP system and abolish the Food Corporation

This is callous. They have made a mockery of the farmers' protests over the farm Bills...

— Amarinder Singh, Punjab CM

of India," the CM said.

The Centre on Monday hiked the MSP for buying six Rabi crops, including wheat, by up to six per cent. The MSP of wheat has been hiked by ₹50 to ₹1,975 per quintal. Besides, MSPs of lentil (masoor), gram, barley, saf-

flower and mustard/rape-seed have been increased.

Capt. Singh said if the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre thought it would appease the agitating farmers with this "trifling" hike, they clearly did not understand the situation.

"You can't just throw crumbs at someone who may be on the verge of losing his livelihood as a result of their shameful actions," he told the Centre.

The farmers have been asking for a written guarantee that MSP will not be tampered with, but instead, the Centre has made a "measly" offering to them, said the CM. — PTI

'Don't want to curtail freedom of speech'

New Delhi, Sept. 21: The Supreme Court on Monday pondered over the nature and extent of its order regulating Sudarshan TV's *Bindas Bol* programme on alleged infiltration of Muslims in bureaucracy saying it did not want to curtail freedom of speech as the programme has public interest involved on issues of foreign funding and reservation.

The apex court, which has already imposed the pre-cast ban on episodes of *UPSC Jihad* as part of *Bindas Bol* pro-

SUDARSHAN TV ROW

► **THE APEX court was irked over the fact that the channel, in its affidavit, has named one English news channel for running two shows on Hindu terror earlier**

grammes on a plea raising grievances against it on grounds, including hate speech, was irked over the fact that the channel, in its affidavit, has named one English news channel for

running two shows on Hindu terror earlier.

"Why you have said about the programmes (of the English news channel). Who asked about your opinion about the programmes," a bench headed by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud asked the counsel representing the news channel.

Lawyer Vishnu Shankar Jain, appearing for editor-in-chief Suresh Chavhanke, said that his affidavit contained reference of the English channel and their programmes on Hindu terror as he was asked earlier

as to why the *UPSC Jihad* episodes have shown Muslim men in skull caps and wearing greens.

"Does this mean that every time, the judges asked questions you will shoot your mouth with your views? If that is the case then judges will stop asking questions. You are not supposed to file affidavits on all the questions which judges ask. Judges ask questions to elicit better response," said the apex court bench which also comprised Justices Indu Malhotra and K.M. Joseph. — PTI

Land scam: Andhra govt moves SC

HC had on Sept. 15 stayed probe, issued injunction restraining media reporting

Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh), Sept. 21: The Andhra Pradesh government on Monday approached the Supreme Court against the gag order passed by the high court here in connection with an FIR registered in the Amaravati land scam case.

The Andhra Pradesh high court had on September 15 stayed the investigation and issued an injunction restraining any media reporting in the issue after the FIR reg-

► **THE ANDHRA Pradesh government, in its plea, said that the order has been passed by the HC in a petition where the FIR was not even questioned**

istered by the anti-corruption bureau alleging corruption and illegal land transactions in relation to the shifting of the capital to Amaravati following the bifurcation of the state in 2014.

The Andhra Pradesh government, in its petition, said that the order has been passed by the high court in a petition where the FIR was not even questioned.

Besides, the orders have been passed not only in respect of the respondent who had filed the writ petition but also in respect of all other accused persons, the state government said in its plea.

The plea said that while only one petitioner had moved the high court

seeking relief in terms of protection from coercive action and bar of media reportage, the high court had passed the order and extended the relief to all the other accused persons as well.

The high court had said that news in regard to the registration of the FIR or in the context of the FIR not to be made public in any electronic, print, or social media with respect to the said respondent and also the other accused persons. — ANI



Karnataka State Farmers' Association members take part in a protest rally against the state government over their various demands in Bengaluru on Monday. — PTI

Crop insurance
shocker: Farmers in
MP get ₹1-4 relief

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, SEPT. 21

Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme has come as a cruel joke for several farmers in Madhya Pradesh as a few of them have received as low as ₹1 as relief for damage to their yields under the programme.

Kaushalya Devi of Satornia village under Sehore district and Pooranlal of Gondhana village under Betul district have received ₹1 as compensation for damage to their crops in 2019 under the scheme.

They were among 22 lakh beneficiaries in MP under the scheme.

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan released the insurance amounts to these farmers a couple of days ago. Similarly, Mulia Bai of Shyampur village under Sehore district has received ₹4 as relief for crop damage she had suffered in 2019, while Puspai Bai of Chhapri village under the same district got ₹7.

Radhashyam, Bholaram, Mangilal and Amit Parmar of Sehore district have received ₹16, ₹18, ₹18 and ₹23 respectively as

► **A SENIOR officer in the state agriculture department, on condition of anonymity, said that a directive has been issued by the govt to insurance companies concerned to probe into such cases**

relief for damage to their crops under the scheme, according to executive president of state unit of Kissan Congress Kedar Serohi. "There are thousands of farmers in the state whose insurance amounts were less than ₹100," Mr Serohi said.

"We are compiling data on the farmers who have received ridiculously meager amounts under the scheme to take up their cases with the government," he added.

A senior officer in the agriculture department disclosed to this newspaper on condition of anonymity that a directive has been issued by the government to insurance firms concerned to probe into such cases.

Meanwhile, Mr Chouhan has indicated that plans are afoot to fix a minimum honourable amount under the scheme.

More working for outfit: NIA
6 held with illegal
arms after arrest
of Al Qaeda cadre

Kolkata, Sept. 21: The National Investigation Agency (NIA), which has arrested six Al Qaeda terrorists from Murshidabad district of West Bengal, has found that more people in the state are working for the terror outfit, an official of the investigating agency said.

On interrogating the six arrested from Murshidabad on Saturday, the NIA sleuths have unearthed the identities of two persons from Malda working in tandem with them, he said.

The Kolkata police held six people with illegal arms from different parts of the city following the arrest of Al Qaeda operatives by the National Investigation Agency, a senior officer said on Sunday.

The police also held 74 more people against whom non-bailable warrants were pending, he said. According to the officer, the city police

apprehended 47 more people on specific charges and 42 others as preventive measure.

The block raids were conducted between 9 pm on Saturday and 1 am on Sunday in different parts of the city, following the arrest of nine Al-Qaeda terrorists in West Bengal and Kerala, the officer said.

Foiling an attempt by the internationally banned terror group to set up a base in India, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) swooped on its cadres in the two states and arrested nine of them.

Acting on a tip-off provided by Central intelligence agencies, the NIA, with the help of the state police forces, carried out raids in the intervening night of September 18 and 19 at Ernakulam in Kerala and Murshidabad in West Bengal, and arrested the nine men. — PTI

Pakistan targeting Indians
working in Afghan: Mantri

New Delhi, Sept. 21: India on Monday said Pakistan was targeting Indian professionals working in Afghanistan through a variety of ways and several of them engaged in various development projects have been attacked and kidnapped over the past 12 years.

Minister of state for external affairs V. Muraleedharan, replying to a question in Lok Sabha, said Pakistan attempted to designate four Indian nationals, who had previously worked in Afghanistan, as terrorists

under UN Security Council resolution 1267.

"However, the 1267 Sanctions Committee, based on its internal procedures, has not approved the request," he said.

Mr Muraleedharan said Pakistan has been targeting Indian professionals working in Afghanistan in a variety of ways.

"Several Indians working in Afghanistan on various development projects have been attacked and kidnapped over the past 12 years," the minister of state for external affairs said. — PTI

Judge recuses himself from case

■ **Continued from Page 1**
by the ED, seeking to declare owners of the company as fugitive economic offenders under a new law.
The ED had approached the court seeking to declare Nitin Sandesara, Chetan Sandesara, Dipti Sandesara and Hitesh Patel fugitives under Section 4 of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act. "All four are promoters of the Sterling Group and have fled the country to avoid criminal probe against them in the Rs 8,100-crore bank loan fraud involving a consortium of banks," ED's counsel

Zohab Hossain said.

The agency has also sought immediate confiscation of the assets, in India and abroad, worth over ₹7,000 crore of the Vadodara-based business family.

A Fugitive Economic Offender is a person against whom an arrest warrant has been issued in respect of a scheduled offence and who has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution, or being abroad refuses to return to India to face criminal prosecution. Arrest warrants have been issued by a court against the four under

the anti-money laundering law.

The agency had filed a chargesheet in the case, under the PMLA, charging the Sandesara and others with money laundering and siphoning bank loans. Investigation revealed that the promoters of the group laundered the proceeds of the crime through various layers and routed the funds outside India. They incorporated more than 100 entities in various countries like UAE, USA, UK, British Virgin Islands, Mauritius, Barbados and Nigeria among others.

8 Opposition MPs suspended

■ **Continued from Page 1**
Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee tweeted in their support. "Suspension of the 8 MPs who fought to protect farmers' interests is unfortunate and reflective of this autocratic Govt's mindset that doesn't respect democratic norms & principles. We won't bow down & we'll fight this fascist Govt in Parliament & on the streets," she said.
The eight members were suspended after minister of state for parliamentary affairs, V. Muraleedharan, read out a motion seeking

their suspension on Monday. It was put to vote and was carried by voice vote. Soon after the Zero Hour, Mr Naidu said that he was "pained" at the happenings during the passage of the Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, on Sunday. The chairman said that some members came to the well of the House and hurled

papers, the rule book at the deputy chairman and abused him.

Mr Naidu also rejected the no-confidence motion moved by 47 members from the Opposition benches against deputy chairman Harivansh, who was presiding when the ruckus over farm Bills took place on Sunday, citing RS rules and precedents. Mr Naidu said that he had gone through the entire proceedings of the House on Sunday in the light of the allegations made against the deputy chairman.



SHORT TAKES

Man shot during clash in UP district

Gorakhpur: A property dealer was injured during firing between two groups in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur district on Monday, the police said. The incident took place in Mohaddipur area here and the injured, identified as Jitendra Yadav, is undergoing treatment at BRD Medical College, they said. The doctors said Yadav sustained two bullet injuries, one in his hand and the other in the abdomen. According to some residents of Mohaddipur area, a dispute over a plot of land between two property dealers — Sunil Paswan of Khorabar area and Yadav of Bhagat Chauraha — led to the incident. The car in which Paswan and his associates were travelling was allegedly intercepted at Bishunpurva turn under Cantt police station area by Yadav and his men, and after a heated argument the groups started firing. — PTI

ASI attacked by sand miners in Raj

Jaipur: An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police was attacked by more than a dozen people allegedly involved in illegal sand transportation in Chaksu area of the district on Monday. ASI Narendra Singh, who is posted in Phagi police station, was on patrolling duty with other police personnel when he spotted a dumper and signalled it to stop. The dumper driver did not obey, following which the team gave chase and intercepted the vehicle, the police said. "As soon as the dumper stopped in Chaksu area, around 15 people, who were travelling in other vehicles along with the dumper, surrounded the police team and attacked them, leaving the ASI injured," they said. — PTI

Cong bandh hits life in Tripura

Agartala: Normal life was partially affected in Tripura on Monday in response to a dawn-to-dusk bandh called by opposition Congress to press for their 12-point charter of demands including improvement of healthcare services in G.B. Pant hospital here. Most shops and markets were closed and private vehicles were off the roads, but attendance in government offices and in civil secretariat here was near normal. Schools and colleges are closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but many teachers turned up at their workplaces, officials said. Police said there was no report of violence from any part of the state so far. Around 3,000 bandh supporters, including 157 in the state capital, were arrested but later released. — PTI

Python causes traffic jam in Maha

Mumbai: A 10-foot-long python slithering across the Eastern Express Highway here caused a traffic jam on Monday morning, a police official said. According to the official, the reptile was spotted by motorists on a stretch of the highway at suburban Chunabhatti. Car drivers and motorcyclists stopped to look at the nearly 10-foot-long snake's attempt to cross the road, causing a traffic jam on the busy highway, he said. After crossing the road, the python hid under a car. After an hour, a team of snake catchers arrived at the spot and rescued the python, the official said. During the rescue operation, local policemen and their counterparts in the traffic branch also reached the spot and restored normal movement of vehicles, he added. — PTI

Five killed in MP truck accident

Satna/Chitrakoot: Five pilgrims died and around 30 were injured after a tractor-trailer overturned in Chitrakoot area of Madhya Pradesh on Monday, the police said. The accident occurred when the pilgrims, who are from Fatehpur of Uttar Pradesh, were going to the Sati Anusuya Ashram in Satna district of the neighbouring state, an officer said. The tractor-trolley overturned near Jhuri river after the driver lost control and fell into a gorge, according to the police. Three women and two men died on the spot. — PTI

7 kids among 13 killed in Thane building collapse

SHAHAB ANSARI
MUMBAI, SEPT. 21

At least 13 people including seven children were killed and many others are feared trapped after a three-storey building collapsed at Bhiwandi in Maharashtra's Thane. Officials said that 20 people, including a 4-year-old boy, were rescued.

According to Bhiwandi police a case under section 337, 338 and 304 (2) of the IPC was being registered against the owner of the building identified as Sayyed Ahmed Jilani. The police ruled out any possibility of finding more people/bodies in the debris.

The incident happened at around 3.40am when a three-storey building collapsed and people were fast asleep at that time. According to an eyewitness, soon after the incident local people started a rescue operation and pulled out some people from the rubble. Soon a team of Thane Disaster Response Force (TDRF) reached the spot and started rescue operation.

Those rescued include a four-year-old boy identified as Ubed Qureshi while among the dead was a two-year-old boy.

The ill-fated Jhilani building was constructed around 30-years ago at Narpoli's Patel Compound near Dhamankar Naka. According to an official it had 40 rooms and around 150 people were residing



National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Fire Brigade personnel rescue an injured woman after a three storey building collapsed at Bhiwandi in Thane district on Monday.

in it. It has also come to light that the building was not in the list of dilapidated structures of Bhiwandi-Nizampur Municipal Corporation.

Later, a team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) also reached the spot and rescue operation was underway till writing of this news. NDRF DG S N Pradhan said that the team used a canine squad to search persons trapped in the debris.

Bhiwandi on Monday received good rains which disturbed the rescue operation to some extent. Dr Pankaj Asiya, the Municipal

Commissioner of Bhiwandi-Nizampur Municipal Corporation (BNMC) said, "The building was on a dangerous building list and notice was issued by the civic body to vacate it."

The BNMC has suspended two senior officials in connection with the building collapse. An official release said the then Assistant Municipal Commissioner Sudam Jadhav and an engineer and Verification Officer Dudhnath Yadav have been suspended. An inquiry committee has also been set up and will include the assistant town planner.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his grief over the incident and tweeted, "Saddened by the building collapse in Bhiwandi, Maharashtra. Condolence to the bereaved families. Praying for a quick recovery of those injured. Rescue operations are underway and all possible assistance is being provided to the affected."

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray also expressed pain over the incident and his office has instructed the administration to ensure proper rescue operation and treatment to the injured.

SUSHANT DEATH CASE

ED to register fresh case against Rhea, her brother

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21

Fresh trouble seems to be brewing for Rhea Chakraborty as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has decided to register a fresh money laundering case against her and Showik Chakraborty on the basis of complaint registered by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) against them.

According to sources the ED sleuths recently collected all relevant documents pertaining to the case from the NCB. Earlier, the ED registered a money laundering case against Showik, his sister Rhea Chakraborty and others on the basis of Bihar Police FIR. Rhea is the prime suspect in the death case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

"This will be a separate case against Rhea and others based on NCB's com-



Rhea Chakraborty

plaint. The NCB on August 26 registered a case against Chakraborty, her brother and others under sections 20, 22, 27 and 29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act", sources said. The NCB got involved in the Sushant Singh Rajput case after Rhea Chakraborty's WhatsApp chats with Samuel Miranda (house caretaker of late actor), Jaya Saha and Gaurav Arya were released by the ED. The NCB recently arrested Rhea, Showik

and others for allegedly procuring non-commercial quantity of marijuana/ ganja from an alleged drug supplier at least 10-12 times between September 2019 and April this year. As per the NDPS Act, for non-commercial quantity, person can get immunity from prosecution in lieu of volunteering for rehabilitation treatment. The NCB generally registers cases involving marijuana only when about 20 kg or more is involved. However, the NCB said it was probing if Rhea, Showik and others were part of a "network" involved in buying and selling of marijuana to Bollywood.

Sources in the NCB claimed that the product in question was not simple marijuana but its more potent and curated version, "bud", which sells at nearly the same rates as cocaine.

Major fire in Covid hospital, 127 rescued

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 21

A major fire broke out on Monday afternoon at a Sadguru Covid Hospital in Jagatpur area in Odisha's Cuttack district leading to panic among the patients.

Fortunately, no casualty was reported in the mishap.

According to chief fire officer Sukanta Sethi, the fire erupted inside the ICU ward on the first floor of the hospital where 27 patients were undergoing treatment. But the exact cause behind the fire was

not known yet. "All 127 patients are being shifted to Ashwini Covid hospital in Cuttack, SUM Covid hospital in Bhubaneswar and other Covid Care Centres (CCCs). Of the total patients, 24 were in the ICU," Mr Sethi said. "At around 1 pm, we

heard a loud noise. Later, the entire hospital was filled with smoke. There was utter chaos and patients came out of the building using mobile flash lights," said a patient.

Senior officials, including the Commissioner of police Sudhansu Sarangi, Cuttack deputy Commissioner of police (DCP) Prateek Singh, Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner Ananya Das, immediately reached the spot and coordinated the rescue operation. "The flames have been

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Terrorists attack CRPF convoy, encounter on

Srinagar, Sept. 21: A CRPF personnel was injured in an encounter between militants and security forces in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, police said.

The security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Nawad area of Charar-e-Sharief in the central Kashmir district after receiving information about the presence of militants there, a police official said.

As the forces were searching the area, the militants fired upon them, injuring a CRPF personnel. The forces retaliated, ensuing an encounter, the official said.

The exchange of firing was going on, the official said, adding that further details were awaited.

This encounter took place as Pakistani troops shelled forward areas along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and Rajouri districts on Monday, prompting strong retaliation by the Indian Army, a defence spokesperson said.

The shelling from across



Army soldiers move towards the site of attack on a road operation party of CRPF at Nowgam, on the outskirts of Srinagar, on Monday.

— PTI

the border at Shahpur, Kirni and Qasba sectors in Poonch and Sunderbani in Rajouri was "unprovoked" and in violation of the ceasefire agreement between the two sides, according to the official.

The Pakistani troops first initiated ceasefire violation around 2.30 pm in the three sectors of Poonch by shelling mortars and firing from small arms. Later, they opened fire and shelled areas at Sunderbani sector, the spokesperson said.

There was no report of any casualty in the cross-

border shelling, which was continuing when last reports were received, he added.

Meanwhile, only a few students turned up to attend special classes in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday as schools for higher classes reopened after a gap of over six months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the union territory administration said. Principal Secretary, School Education and Skill Development, Asgar Hassan Samoon said the reopening of schools was not meant for regular classes.

Women officers to operate copters from Navy warships

Rafale fleet to have 1st woman pilot soon: IAF

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21

Indian women on Monday made major strides in military aviation in Navy and Air Force.

Soon, a woman fighter pilot will be flying Indian Air Force's advance fighter aircraft Rafale, said sources. She will be joining Squadron No. 17 or Golden Arrows at Ambala Air Force Station. The fighter pilot, who is reported to be already flying one of Air Force jets, is going through training for Rafale aircraft. India had earlier this month inducted 5 Rafale jets into Indian Air Force. Some more Rafale jets are expected to come next month from France.

In 2016, India had signed a ₹59,000 crore deal for 36 Rafales.

Indian Navy said on Monday that two women officers have been selected to join as "Observers" (Airborne Tacticians) in the helicopter stream. This will make them first women airborne combat-

ants to operate from warships.

Earlier, entry of women was restricted to the fixed wing aircraft that took off and landed ashore.

Previously some women medical officers have served for short period on warships. These officers, Sub Lieutenant (SLT) Kumudini Tyagi and SLT Riti Singh, are a part of a group of 17 officers of the Indian Navy who were awarded "Wings" on graduating as "Observers" at a ceremony held on Monday at INS Garuda, Kochi.

Both of them now will undergo "specialist training" for the particular helicopter on which they will be deployed.

Speaking on the occasion, Rear Admiral Antony George highlighted the fact that it is a landmark occasion wherein for the first-time women are going to be trained in helicopter operations which would ultimately pave way for the deployment of women in frontline warships.

MP: Covid-19 victim's body nibbled by rats in hospital

Indore, Sept. 21: The body of an 87-year-old Covid-19 victim was allegedly nibbled by rats at a private hospital here in Madhya Pradesh, his family claimed, prompting the district administration to order a probe on Monday.

The shocking incident came to light when a video surfaced on social media.

In the video, injury marks on the face and legs of the corpse are visible, and a distraught person is seen complaining that the body handed over to them by the private

hospital had bite marks made by rats.

Indore's Covid-19 nodal officer Amit Malakar said the elderly man, who was on oxygen support due to the severity of the infection, died in the hospital on Sunday.

"The district administration has ordered a probe into the incident," Malakar informed.

The additional district magistrate will handle the probe, he said.

The deceased's grandson said he was admitted in the hospital four days ago. — PTI

Ex-DGP to appear before SIT on Sept. 23

Chandigarh, Sept. 21: The Punjab police on Monday ordered its former DGP Sumedh Singh Saini to appear before it on September 23 to join investigation in the 1991 Balwant Singh Multani disappearance case.

The SIT of the Punjab Police probing the case, gave the order in summonses, pasted outside Saini's residence.

Mr Saini has been asked to appear before the Special Investigation Team of the police at Mataur police station in



Sumedh Singh Saini

Mohali at 11 am, as per summonses pasted outside his Chandigarh residence. The copies of summonses have also been sent to Saini's counsel. The Supreme Court on

September 15 had granted interim protection from arrest to Saini in this case.

Former Punjab Director General of Police had moved the apex court after the Punjab and Haryana High court had dismissed his bail plea.

Saini was booked in May in connection with the disappearance of Multani in 1991 when he was working as a junior engineer with Chandigarh Industrial and Tourism Corporation.

The police had last month added murder charge under section 302

of the IPC in the FIR in Multani disappearance case after two former Chandigarh police personnel — former UT police Inspector Jagir Singh and former ASI Kuldeep Singh, who are also accused, turned approver.

Saini, a 1982-batch IPS officer, was the youngest DGP in the country when he was appointed the state police chief in 2012. He was removed from the DGP post in 2015 after protests erupted following sacrilege incidents. Saini retired in 2018. — PTI



Tourists participate in river rafting in the Beas river as authorities ease lockdown-restrictions during Unlock 4 in Kullu district on Monday.

— PTI

THE ASIAN AGE

22 SEPTEMBER 2020

House norms junked to deliver govt’s farm laws

The Centre’s use of sledgehammer tactics to ram through the passage of two controversial agriculture-related bills in the Rajya Sabha on Sunday afternoon was unfortunate, to say the least, and there are several questions being raised on whether the government did indeed have the numbers, given that it doesn’t have a clear majority in the Upper House the way it does in the Lok Sabha. The conduct of deputy chairman Harivansh, who was in the Chair, in repeatedly rejecting vociferous Opposition demands for a roll call instead of a voice vote therefore gives rise to doubts. A voice vote is fine if there are no doubts about the outcome, such as when these same bills were passed last week in the Lok Sabha, where the government has a brute majority, but normal parliamentary convention dictates that even if a single member says “nay” as the presiding officer declares “the ayes have it”, the voice vote is halted and a division called, so each MP’s vote can be counted. This is what should be done whenever the numbers are not clear, as on Sunday. It is true this government has managed to pass controversial legislation earlier in the Upper House over the past year or so, despite not having a majority, but two non-Congress Opposition parties which had voted with the treasury benches on those occasions – Telangana Rashtra Samithi and Biju Janata Dal – were opposing these two bills, as was the Shiromani Akali Dal. Had there been a roll call, it would have been instructive to ascertain from where the government got the numbers.

The reason the Rajya Sabha exists is to examine legislation in detail, to revise or refine bills, which can ideally be done by referring them to a select committee, whose members can move amendments. Unlike what this government may think, it’s not meant to just rubberstamp the Lok Sabha’s decisions. That is what the Opposition first sought on Sunday; but even if the government was in a hurry, it should have allowed a proper discussion and made modifications based on the members’ inputs before putting it to a proper vote. It was this unseemly haste to cut the discussion short so that the minister’s reply could be over the same day, instead of deferring it till Monday, that triggered the outrage and led to the ugly scenes in front of the Chair that were visible to all.

It must also be said that the behaviour of some Rajya Sabha members, particularly Trinamul Congress’ Derek O’Brien and several others, was unbefitting for those serving in what is called the House of Elders. Not only is entering the Well a breach of the rules, the snatching of House papers, tearing up bills, throwing books at the presiding officer and trying to snatch his microphone are beyond the pale for legislators. It was inevitable stern action would follow, but Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu should have, in suspending Mr O’Brien and seven other MPs on Monday, also scrutinised the ways in which the deputy chairman rode roughshod over parliamentary norms to deliver the legislation that the government had sought.

Helping or hurting farmers?

Perhaps, the Opposition woke up a bit late and could put up only a hit-and-miss resistance to the travesty of farmers’ rights that was perpetrated in Parliament on Sunday in the guise of passing two ill-conceived farm bills. After all, the Farming Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, were passed as ordinances as early as June by the Narendra Modi government. But it is important to examine its solid offence against them if only to plan course correction.

The Congress has taken on the government on the issue of Minimum Support Price (MSP), dubbing the bills as “black laws” and refusing to sign on the farmers’ “death warrant”. Why is the government running away from its legal obligation, it asked and indeed, outside of empty promises and the unreasonable accusation of misleading the farmer, the government had no answer. In neither of the bills is the pricing of the farm produce referenced to the MSP.

The government says the first law will allow intra-state and inter-state trade of farmers’ produce beyond the physical premises of APMC markets, thus giving freedom to farmers and traders to sell or purchase products anywhere. But this freedom was already available with farmers, so what the new bill is selling to them and what price it will extract in its name remain two critical questions. The proposed law also provides traders only with the freedom to buy farmers’ produce outside APMC markets without having a licence or paying fees. Two equally important questions, raised by the Trinamul Congress and Left parties, respectively, are: (a) why has the Centre chosen to legislate on a state subject? (b) Why were farmers, who hit the streets, not made party to the consultations?

The general consensus that has emerged is that the bills are meant to corporatise agriculture but there is scant concern as to whether or not it will convert the largest Indian professional group into bonded labourers in consequence. Under the garb of reforms, an inefficient and desperate government is abdicating its duty to ensure that farmers get a fair price and that food prices are affordable. Can a private member’s bill offer a token protest and a document for days ahead?

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Aakar Patel

Why it’s unjust to presume guilt before someone proves innocent

It is not seen in that way, especially in our part of the world, but the criminal justice system is deliberately designed to protect the rights of the accused. And this is the correct way of seeing it. Why? Because in a criminal case there are two parties. The accused individual versus the State. The State controls the laws under which the system operates. It appoints, pays the salaries of and manages the police forces who arrest and investigate. The State appoints and pays the prosecutors who will represent it against the individual. The State pays and promotes the judges who determine innocence or guilt.

All these powers are with the State. There is no power with the individual. Most accused in India have no money even to get proper legal representation and therefore defence against the State. That is why we have the principle of “innocent until proven guilty” because the understanding is that the State has overwhelming and terrible power in a criminal case and there is a mismatch. Even though justice is represented as a blind woman with balanced scales, the scales are not bal-

Even with more power against the individual than any other modern democratic nation, the Indian government seeks more. Uttar Pradesh has set up a police force that can arrest without a warrant and without the orders of a magistrate. This is a power that other states and even the Centre has.

anced, and the State can load as much weight as it wants to on one side. We have seen evidence of the State’s mischief in the way that the 2020 Delhi riots are being prosecuted. The majoritarian ideology of a political party is finding expression in the criminal justice system because it is in control of a state machinery with overwhelming power.

In India after Independence, the State has not been satisfied with the amount of power it has and has needed more. This is not a problem because there is nobody stopping the

State from giving more power to itself except the voters. And voters in India have little interest in the criminal justice system. Most middle-class individuals do not think it concerns them. The State can give itself whatever powers it wants. And what it wants is a reversal of innocent until proven guilty and make it guilty until proven innocent. And in India the State has been giving itself this power to reverse the fundamental principle of the criminal justice system.

Laws that Indians protested against when they were being written by the British in a colonial system can be written up and implemented today by a democratic state though their effect on the individual is the same. The Rowlatt Act, over which the Jallianwala Bagh protesters had gathered, allowed preventive detention. This is a power under which the State can arrest individuals without any crime being committed, on the assumption that they may commit a crime in future. Today India has many laws that are similar which have been written by our democratic State which allow pre-

ventive detention. Every state has more than one such law and the Centre has them as well. This is why the protesters, including women, in the Delhi riots can get bail but still remain in jail as there are many options for the State to keep them locked up without conviction. But most of us do not seem to mind this.

Many laws that the government has written for itself, including Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, on money-laundering and even on cow slaughter has a reversal of the burden of proof. This means that until the individual can prove their innocence to the satisfaction of the State, they can be kept locked up and prosecuted. Such laws do not exist elsewhere in the civilised world.

Even with more power against the individual than any other modern democratic nation, the Indian government seeks more. Uttar Pradesh has set up a police force that can arrest without a warrant and without the orders of a magistrate. This is a power that other states and even the Centre has. We have no civic or popular pushback against this sort of acquisition of power by the State. In the absence of this, the State will

continue to acquire more power against us. What we have in India today is autocracy and tyranny in practice under a democratic name. I do not make this accusation against any party because governments are run by different political parties at the level of the states. There is no difference between one part of India and another in this matter. It is also true that under a government at the Centre that wants to enthusiastically expand its power the real danger of this is being seen.

We may not like the individuals who are being tried by the criminal justice system today because we have made up our minds that they are bad people, even though we have never actually met them. But this dislike is not the reason why we should approve the State being given overwhelming power against the individual because this principle is wrong in law and unjust on the face of it.

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist

Subhani



Rethink policy on Tibet, use Dalai help on China



Claude Arpi

It seems obvious to everybody that the Chinese leadership has blundered in jumping too fast and too deep into the Ladakh adventure. A few ambitious generals in Chengdu’s Western Theatre Command sold the idea to President Xi Jinping to advance the Line of Actual Control (LAC); and in the process the trust built during the Wuhan Consensus in 2018 and the Chennai Connect in 2019 between the leaders of India and China has vanished in the ice-cold waters of Pangong Tso. Not only has the bonhomie shown earlier this year become past history, but China has taken a beating on the economic front and this is just beginning.

There is a character of Molière, the famous 17th century French playwright who keeps repeating throughout the play “Mais que diable allait-il donc faire dans cette galère?” (It can be translated as: “but what the hell were they doing in this galley?”), though “galère” has two meanings in French, one is “galley”, the other one “mess”; and it describes perfectly Xi Jinping’s unnecessary and (messy) rowing in the Ladakhi “galère”.

Some in India have suggested using “ten thousand methods” to tackle the Middle Kingdom; the “Tibet Card” is one of these means.

Though the term “card” may not be adequate, one can certainly speak of the Tibet factor in the India-China relations.

Jawaharlal Nehru, during his first encounter with the Dalai Lama in Mussoorie in May 1959, made it clear that India would not politically support Tibet, but New Delhi would help to rehabilitate Tibetan refugees and provide education to its youth. The Prime Minister spoke rather

rudely to the Tibetan leader, who was probably shaken by this first encounter. What choice did he have but to accept Nehru’s decision? The Prime Minister had enunciated India’s first Tibet policy; humanitarian support, yes, political support, no.

But this can be changed.

Even if the Government of India has not wanted to be politically involved, the age-old relations between India and Tibet have remained alive; we have seen it since the beginning of the present crisis in Ladakh.

After visiting Tibet in 1957, Apa Pant, the political officer in Sikkim, wrote a long note; he openly said that the Chinese officers were not interested “in harmony and compassion, but in power and material benefit”;

Pant spoke of the confrontation of two different worlds: “The one so apparently inefficient, so humane and even timid, yet kind and compassionate and aspiring to something more gloriously satisfying in human life; the other determined and effective, ruthless, power-hungry and finally intolerant. I wondered how this conflict could resolve itself, and what was India’s place in it.”

The kinship of shared values and history between India and Tibet has remained; unfortunately, it has never translated into a coherent policy for the Tibetan refugees as well as the populations of the border region.

The Dalai Lama is just an honoured guest of the Indian government, with often very little concrete effect except that New Delhi has looked after his comfortable stay and his security while in India.

What more could be done?

The most radical step would be to give some

kind of recognition to the

government in exile; it may not happen immediately, but it is good to remember that when the Tibet issue came before the United Nations in 1965, Rafiq Zakaria, India’s then permanent representative, read a long statement, before voting in favour of the resolution; Zakaria said: “As the days pass, the situation becomes worse and cries out for the attention of all mankind. As we know, ever since Tibet came under the stranglehold of China, the Tibetans have been subjected to a continuous and increasing ruthlessness which has few parallels in the annals of the world. In the name of introducing ‘democratic reforms’ and fighting a ‘counter-revolution’, the Chinese have indulged in the worst kind genocide and the suppression of a minority race.” Have things changed?

Today like yesterday, the relations with the Dalai Lama are crucial. The views of both the Government of India and the Office of the Dalai Lama need to be harmonised; unless both sides work together, any new policy will have no meaning. Ultimately, New Delhi should get the Dalai Lama more involved in Indian affairs, especially in relation to the northern borders; at the same time, the Dalai Lama should definitely not be encouraged to go on a pilgrimage in Wutai Shan (China) at the present juncture.

As a first step, the foreign secretary, the present incumbent being himself a Buddhist, should meet the Tibetan leader and clearly indicate that India stands by him for whatever mode of reincarnation or emanation he may choose and that India will continue to provide a “special guest status” to the 15th Dalai Lama.

Meetings with the Prime Minister as well as the external affairs minister and the national security adviser need to be organised at the earliest; it can establish a base to coordinate further policies and subsequent

actions.

In this context, candidates for the post of Sikyong (president) of the Central Tibetan Administration, to be elected by the Tibetan diaspora early next year, need to clearly understand India’s security concerns; it has not always been the case in the past.

It is necessary to rethink what could be a new approach towards Tibet and the Tibetan refugees in India. Perhaps, instead of having a new policy only for Tibet, it would be wiser to have a common policy for the Himalayan belt and Tibet, which have shared countless cultural, spiritual, strategic and economic similarities. An Office for Northern Frontiers and Tibetan Affairs could be created, perhaps under the Cabinet Secretary to ensure proper coordination.

This office would look after not only the development of border areas, but also work with the Tibetans, keeping in mind the welfare and customs of the local Himalayan population and refugees; this would include, among other measures stopping the migration of the local populations towards the big cities; the building of infrastructure, revival of pilgrimages and promoting Tibetan culture (particularly Tibetan medicine).

It is today crucial to strengthen the link between New Delhi, Dharamsala and the border areas.

Two principles should guide the new policy, one, a perfect coordination between the different ministries/departments/agencies; this will be required to make any new policy meaningful and two, the active participation of the Dalai Lama and his administration in Dharamsala.

The writer is based in South India for the past 42 years. He writes on India, China, Tibet and Indo-French relations.

LETTERS

MP SUSPENSIONS

The suspension of eight Rajya Sabha members by the deputy chairman of the House for the remaining part of the Monsoon Session over their protest against the passage of two controversial farm Bills is politically motivated. The House witnessed five adjournments as some Opposition members continued their protests over their suspension. It is high time their suspension be revoked and the Upper House of the Parliament must be allowed to function smoothly.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

ANURAG KASHYAP

RECENTLY, PAYAL Ghosh accused Anurag Kashyap of sexual harassment, which was later on denied by Anurag Kashyap. These type of ‘casting couch’ incidents have occurred in almost all fields, especially in film industry. This is a serious issue which the government has to look into immediately. All the persons affected by this type of menace should come out openly so that the culprits will not escape punishment. There should be a law which gives severe punishment so that others should think twice before committing such crimes. The culprits should be barred from continuing in their respective fields even after punishment.

V. Nagendra Kumar
Hyderabad

ONLINE STUDY

IN JULY 2020, the HRD ministry issued guidelines that online classes must not exceed four hours for junior students and five hours for seniors students. However, some schools are openly defying this rule and taking longer online classes. In additions to this, some students are also taking online tuition classes. It means that some of the students are using comuter and laptop for more than eight hours. It has been clearly established that continuous use of computer and laptop by young people is not good for health. HRD ministry should see that their guidelines are strictly followed. There is also a need for regulating online tutition classes.

D.B. Madan
New Delhi

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: letters.asianage@gmail.com.

IN BRIEF

**Canadian ex-PM
Turner dies at 91**

Brussels: European Union foreign ministers on Monday were weighing whether to impose sanctions on dozens of Belarus officials, including President Alexander Lukashenko, after holding talks with his exiled main opponent. The EU has drawn up a list of around 40 people it could hit with asset freezes and travel bans in response to irregularities in the August 9 elections that gave Lukashenko a sixth term in office, and over the crackdown that followed. The question is whether to include Lukashenko, who has repressed opposition and independent news media during 26 years in power and refuses to talk with protesters. Some EU countries want to gradually ramp up pressure if he refuses to enter into dialogue, rather than hit everyone at once.

**Stolen fuel:
Mexico nabs 21**

Mexico City: Mexican authorities said Sunday they have seized a ship, arrested 21 crewmembers and shut down a warehouse presumably used to store stolen fuel along the Gulf of Mexico. The navy statement said the warehouse was located along a coastal highway in the state of Tabasco while the ship was anchored in the port of Coatzacoalcas in neighbouring Veracruz state. It said it found 16 storage tanks for fuel in the warehouse, along with five trucks. Two other trucks were found supplying the ship with apparently stolen fuel. It didn't specify where the fuel had come from. The government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has been crusading against rampant fuel thefts, often from clandestine taps into pipelines, that it says have looted public finances.

**Suga, Trump
hold phone talk**

Tokyo: Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga held his first talks with US President Donald Trump since he took office, a diplomatic phone call that was one of his first as the country's leader and one that highlights the close tie between the two allies. Suga was elected as Japan's new prime minister last Wednesday, replacing Shinzo Abe, who forged close personal ties and regularly held meetings and phone calls with Trump. Abe stepped down due to ill health after nearly eight years in office. "I told him that the Japan-US alliance is the foundation of regional peace and stability, and we agreed to continue to coordinate closely," Suga told reporters late Sunday night after the call with Trump. Suga said Trump also said he wanted to further develop the alliance together.

**ISRAEL TO
EXTRADITE
WOMAN TO OZ**

Jerusalem, Sept. 21: An Israeli court on Monday approved the extradition of a former teacher wanted in Australia on charges of child sex abuse, paving the way for her to stand trial after a six-year legal battle. Malka Leifer, a former educator who is accused of sexually abusing several former students, has been fighting extradition from Israel since 2014. Leifer maintains her innocence and the battle surrounding her extradition has strained relations between Israel and Australia. Earlier this month, Israel's Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Leifer's attorney over a Jerusalem court's ruling that she was mentally fit to stand trial, saying it was "putting an end to the saga that has been drawn out for many years." On Monday, the Jerusalem District Court ruled that Leifer would be deported to Australia to stand trial for 74 charges of child sex abuse, lawyers said.

Critics, including Leifer's alleged victims, have accused Israeli authorities of dragging out the case for far too long. Earlier this year an Israeli psychiatric panel determined Leifer had lied about suffering a mental condition that made her unfit to stand trial.

As a result of the findings, Israel's Justice Ministry said it would move to expedite her extradition. Three sisters — Dassi Erlich, Nicole Meyer and Elly Sapper — have accused Leifer of abusing them while they were students at a Melbourne ultra-Orthodox school. AP does not usually identify alleged victims of sexual abuse, but the sisters have spoken publicly about their allegations.

Support for Assange

Protesters stand opposite the Central Criminal Court, the Old Bailey, in London, Monday, as the Julian Assange extradition hearing to the US continues. — AP

Madrid shuts, US toll near 2 lakh

Madrid, Sept. 21: A million people in and around the Spanish capital on Monday were under a new lockdown to contain another Coronavirus surge, as the US death toll neared 200,000.

The global death toll stood at 961,531 at 1100 GMT on Monday, according to an AFP tally based on official statistics, with more than 31 million infections.

The restrictions in Madrid will last for two weeks, affecting people living mainly in densely populated, low-income neighbourhoods who will be allowed only to travel for essential reasons such as work, medical care or taking children to school. Police cars stopped vehicles at random on a main avenue in Puente de Vallecas, a working class neighbourhood in southern Madrid, to check if people had a valid reason to leave the area.

Most accepted the measures with resignation but some complained that the restrictions were not imposed across the affected region.

"You can't close one part of a neighbourhood and not another one, one street yes, and one street no. So, either you close everything, which will be catastrophic, or you close nothing," said Alejandro Campos, a 30-year-old travel agent.

The United States remains the hardest-hit nation in the world, with more than 6.8 million cases and deaths approaching 200,000 people.

— AFP

**UK medical adviser: Covid
cases could rise exponentially**

London, Sept. 21: Britain has turned a corner in the coronavirus pandemic in a "bad sense", which means infections will rise at a dangerous pace unless tougher action is taken, the UK's top medical adviser said on Monday.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Chris Whitty joined the government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Patrick Vallance, at a Downing Street briefing to present a host of charts and data to warn that the rate at which Coronavirus is spreading across the country

could see 50,000 new cases a day by mid-October without further restrictions. Their warnings indicate that tighter lockdown measures on household interactions and hospitality businesses are imminent.

"We have, in a bad sense, literally turned a corner, although only relatively recently," said Whitty. "If this continued, the number of deaths directly from Covid will continue to rise, potentially on an exponential curve, that means doubling and doubling

and doubling again. And you can quickly move from really quite small numbers to really very large numbers because of that exponential process," he warned.

Both senior scientific experts, addressing their first briefing without being accompanied by either PM Boris Johnson or a senior Cabinet minister, were brought in to issue a stark warning that the UK was headed in the "wrong direction" and lay the groundwork for further UK-wide curbs. — PTI

**CZECH HEALTH
MINISTER QUILTS**

Prague, Sept. 21: The Czech Republic's health minister has resigned amid a record rise of Coronavirus infections.

Adam Vojtech says his move should create space for a new approach to the pandemic. The country coped well with infections in the spring but has been facing a record surge of new confirmed cases over the past week. On Thursday, the day-to-day increase of new cases was higher than 3,000. It is not clear who will replace Vojtech, who was under pressure from the opposition to resign. — AP

2 killed clearing WWII bomb in Solomons

Wellington, Sept. 21: Two men from Britain and Australia who were working in the Solomon Islands to locate bombs left behind from World War II have died after one of the bombs exploded, authorities said Monday.

The Norwegian People's Aid agency said the men were staff members who were working with the government to develop a database of unexploded bombs from the war. The agency identified the men as Stephen "Luke" Atkinson from Britain and Australian Trent Lee.

The Royal Solomon

Islands Police Force said the men died Sunday in the bomb blast at the office of their aid project, located in a residential part of the capital, Honiara. Police said they are still investigating but believe the men had several unexploded bombs at the office and may have been carrying out work to disarm them.

"We are concerned that they decided to conduct explosive ordnance disposal operations within a residential area," Inspector Clifford Tunuki said in a statement. — AP

**BULGARIA COURT JAILS DUO FOR LIFE
OVER 2012 ISRAELI BUS BOMBING**

Sofia, Sept. 21: A Bulgarian court on Monday sentenced two men to life in prison for their involvement in the 2012 bombing of a tourist bus that killed five Israeli tourists and their Bulgarian bus driver and injured nearly 40 people.

Meliad Parah, a dual Lebanese-Australian national, and Hassan El Hajj Hassan, a dual Lebanese-Canadian national, were sentenced in absentia as their whereabouts are unknown, said prosecutor Evgenia Shtarkelova.

On July 18, 2012, Mohammad Hassan ElHusseini, a French-Lebanese national, blew himself up on a tourist bus at the airport in the Bulgarian Black Sea resort of Burgas. According to witness, the man was trying to put his backpack inside the luggage compartment of the bus along with the Israeli tourists when it exploded. — AP

FILM | FEST

All of this year's top winners at Toronto International Film Festival are directed by women

In these listless Covid times, is *Nomadland* the film of '20?

SUPARNA SHARMA
New Delhi, Sept. 21

In these listless, Covid-times, Chinese-American director Chloé Zhao's *Nomadland*, about a woman who travels through the American West in a van after losing her job and her home, seems to be the film of the year. On Sunday, *Nomadland* took home the People's Choice Award at the Toronto International Film Festival 2020 (Tiff). Just last Saturday, it received the Golden Lion Award for the best film of 2020 Venice International Film Festival. That's an

accomplishment no other film can lay claim to. Venice is 77 years old, and Tiff is 45.

Nomadland stars two-time Oscar winner for best actress, Frances McDormand as Fern, along with many "actual nomads" that Ms Zhao cast while on her own travels through the area. An adaptation of journalist Jessica Bruder's non-fiction book, Ms Zhao has scripted and edited the film which is scheduled to release in theatres in December.

Two things set apart the Toronto International Film Festival from others in the group of Big 4 — Cannes, Venice, Berlin and Toronto.

First, unlike the others, Tiff consciously, doggedly and sincerely pursues inclusivity in the films, directors and actors it picks to showcase during the 11-days festival. It also actively seeks to widen and enlighten conversations around films by bringing in "women, people of colour, people with disabilities, and people from the LGBTQ communities" — the marginalised, who are often not seen on or behind the screen. Every year Tiff also seeks out and opens its doors to journalists from under-represented sections. That changes not just what we view, but also how we

view and talk about films. Second, Tiff has, over the years, earned a reputation for being what I call the "Oracle of Oscars". With sharp accuracy, Tiff audiences have been picking and rewarding films that go on to be nominated for various categories at the Oscars, often winning best picture

view and talk about films. Second, Tiff has, over the years, earned a reputation for being what I call the "Oracle of Oscars". With sharp accuracy, Tiff audiences have been picking and rewarding films that go on to be nominated for various categories at the Oscars, often winning best picture

**Thai democracy
plaque removed**

It was installed Sunday at Sanam Luang

Bangkok, Sept. 21: A plaque honouring struggles for democracy in Thailand was removed from a royal field less than 24 hours after being installed by anti-government protesters and was submitted as evidence in connection with a complaint by officials that its installation was illegal, police said on Monday.

The plaque had been installed Sunday at Sanam Luang, the historic field in the capital where tens of thousands of people rallied peacefully over the weekend. The two-day demonstration was the largest this year by protesters who are calling for new elections and reform of the monarchy.

An officer at a nearby police station said the government's Fine Arts Department and the Bangkok city government filed a complaint that protesters had destroyed an archaeological site and "handed the plaque over to us to be used as evidence". "They are the responsible agencies over the area, as it is a public area registered as an archaeological site," said the officer, police Supt. Worasak Pitsitbanakorn.

"They reported the damage to us and we will have to determine which laws

■ **THE TWO-DAY** demonstration was the largest this year by protesters who are calling for new elections and reform of the monarchy.

have been violated." He said that the two agencies were responsible for removing the plaque, but that police were present as witnesses for legal reasons. Sanam Luang is a designated royal site near Bangkok's Grand Palace that until the last few years had been open to everyone. The plaque was installed in a part of the dirt field that was cemented over several years ago.

The plaque was a symbolic replacement for one mysteriously ripped out from the pavement and taken away three years ago. That plaque, located at a plaza in another part of Bangkok's old centre, honoured the 1932 revolution that saw the military force a change from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy. It was replaced by a plaque praising the monarchy.

The new round brass plaque was installed Sunday by activists who made a hole in the Sanam Luang

pavement and held a short religious ceremony.

"At the dawn of September 20, here is where the people proclaim that this country belongs to the people," read part of the inscription. Student protest leader Parit "Penguin" Chirawak, who was among those who installed the new plaque, said that its removal did not matter.

"What matters is this plaque, and its message has been installed in the people's hearts," Parit said on Monday as he headed to the prosecutors' office to deal with legal charges stemming from previous protests.

The protesters' demands, including limiting the king's powers, establishing tighter controls on palace finances and allowing open discussion of the monarchy, are controversial because the monarchy is considered sacrosanct in Thailand.

The activists are considered especially bold because there is a harsh law mandating a three- to 15-year prison term for defaming the royal institution. A representative of the protesters on Sunday delivered a petition addressed to the king seeking royal reforms.

— AP

**Joe: Don't jam through
Ginsburg replacement**

Philadelphia, Sept. 21: Joe Biden on Sunday slammed President Donald Trump and leading Senate Republicans for trying to jam through a replacement for the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and urged more senators to stand with a pair of GOP colleagues who oppose the election-season rush. The extraordinary televised plea from the Democratic presidential candidate to Republican senators reflected the ferocious manoeuvring that has followed Ginsburg's death at 87 on Friday.

Her passing upended a campaign that had, until then, focused on Trump's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic, the na-



Joe Biden

tion's economic collapse and racial unrest that has stoked protests in US cities. Trump has said he intends within days to name a woman to succeed the liberal icon, and Senate Majority Leader Mi-

tch McConnell was moving ahead swiftly with plans for confirmation hearings and votes.

Just hours before Biden spoke, a second Republican senator, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, joined Sen Susan Collins of Maine in opposing efforts to fill Ginsburg's seat before the next president is elected.

It takes four Republicans to break ranks to keep Trump's nominee off the court. Attention quickly focused on Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah, who voted to convict Trump on one count of impeachment, and Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, a former chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

— AP

**Arrest over ricin envelope
addressed to White House**

Washington, Sept. 21: US authorities confirmed an arrest Sunday over an envelope addressed to President Donald Trump that contained a substance identified as the poison ricin.

The suspect was a woman who was carrying a gun when she was arrested by authorities, according to US media reports.

"I can confirm that an arrest was made at the Peace Bridge in Buffalo, New York," Customs and Border Protection supervisory officer Aaron Bowler told AFP, referring to the bridge that connects Canada and the US state of New York.

US media reported Saturday that authorities had intercepted an envelope laced with ricin addressed

**NEBRASKA MAN CHARGED IN DEATH
OF PROTESTER DIES BY SUICIDE**

Omaha (US), Sept. 21: A white business owner charged with manslaughter for fatally shooting a Black man during protests in Nebraska has died by suicide days after his indictment, his attorney said Sunday.

Jacob Gardner, of Omaha, Nebraska, was found dead Sunday outside a medical clinic in Hillsboro, Oregon, the Hillsboro Police Department said in

a news release. His attorney, Stu Dornan, said in a news conference Sunday evening that Gardner's death was a suicide.

"Unfortunately there are two men who have died in a terrible tragedy," Dornan said. "It's a terrible tragedy for the Omaha community, it's a terrible tragedy for James Scurlock and his family. It's a terrible tragedy for the Gardner family." — AP

to Trump. The letter was discovered earlier last week and did not reach the White House, according to *The New York*

Times and *CNN*.

The *Times* said it was believed that the letter was mailed from Canada. — AFP



A scene from *Nomadland*.

and other awards. All of this year's top winners at Tiff are directed by

women. The first runner-up in the best film category was Regina King's *One Night in Miami*, that brings together Muhammad Ali, Malcolm X, singer Sam Cooke and NFL legend Jim Brown for night to discuss race.

For India, however, the film of the year of Covid is most likely Chaitanya Tamhane's *The Disciple* that Tiff's artistic directors called a "masterfully composed second feature" which "examines a lifetime journey devoted to the art of Indian classical music".

Mr Tamhane's last film, *Court*, was India's official

entry to the Oscars in 2015. It didn't make it to the nominations.

The Oscars are still eight months away — the ceremony will take place on April 25, 2021, and the eligibility criteria has been extended to Feb. 28, 2021. But if Tiff audiences have got it right this time, we may see Mr Tamhane at Hollywood's Dolby Theatre, celebrating a film that tells the story of an "idealistic young performer who dreams of capturing the magic of a musical tradition."

Or, as one Twitter review described the film, "AaaaaaAaaaaaAaaaaa..."

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,034.14	-2.09
Nifty 50	11,250.55	-2.21
S&P 500*	3,235.29	-2.54
Dollar (₹)	73.38	0.10
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.39	1.05
Euro (₹)	86.73	0.39
Gold (10gm) (₹)	50,104	1.611
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	41.22	-1.93
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.016	0.002
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.661	-0.033

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Gold, silver prices decline on rupee appreciation

Gold prices fell ₹326 to ₹52,423 per 10 gram in the national capital on Monday, in line with a weak global trend, rupee appreciation and the recovery of United States dollar, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade in New Delhi, the precious metal had closed at ₹52,749 per 10 gram. Silver prices also declined ₹945 to ₹68,289 per kilogram from ₹69,234 per kilogram in the previous trade.

Investors pull out ₹3,907 cr from debt MFs in Aug



After recording net inflows for four months in a row, debt-oriented schemes witnessed a net outflow of ₹3,907 crore in August, largely on the back of a significant pull out from overnight and liquid fund categories. Investors are focusing on fixed income categories having relatively shorter duration profile, given the current interest rate scenario, Morningstar India associate director Himanshu Srivastava said.

HDFC Bank denies charges levelled in class action suit

HDFC Bank on Monday denied the allegations of misleading claims levelled by a US-based law firm to seek damages in a class action suit. Rosen Legal last week filed the class action suit seeking damages for the losses incurred by investors because of alleged "materially false and misleading" representations by HDFC Bank. It had specifically named the bank's CEO Aditya Puri and others as defendants.

Strategic reserves helped India save ₹5K cr: Pradhan

India saved over ₹5,000 crore when the country in April-May used two-decade low international oil prices to fill up its three strategic underground crude oil storages, petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Monday. "Taking advantage of the low crude oil prices, India purchased 16.71 million barrels of crude in April-May, 2020 and filled all the three strategic petroleum reserves," Pradhan said.

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Market fall wipes out ₹4.5L cr

Spurt in Coronavirus cases in Europe, US trigger panic sale in global markets

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 21

The Sensex fell 811 points and the Nifty-50 over 250 points or over two per cent apiece as negative global cues from Europe and Hong Kong rattled the sentiment of investors.

The fall in the Indian market was the worst among the Asian peers which closed early. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index fell 2.06 per cent, the second worst fall after the Indian markets.

The second wave of spurt in Coronavirus cases being reported in Europe and the reports of

suspicious transactions at top global banks led to sell off in European markets as it opened. This had an impact on the Indian market from around 12.30 pm and sell off intensified in the last two hours of trading impacting all sectors and segments of the market.

The Nifty-50 index lost 254.40 points or 2.46 per cent to end the day at 11,250.55. The Sensex closed 811.8 points or 2.09 per cent down at 38,034.14.

Broader market selling was even worse, BSE Midcap index fell 3.43 per cent and BSE Smallcap index fell 3.61 per cent. In the

THE RISING cases of Covid-19 and with most of the EU on the brink of a second wave, most heads of states in the EU are talking about a second lockdown.

ARJUN YASH MAHAJAN,
Reliance Securities

biggest single-day fall this month, investors lost notional wealth amounted to over ₹4.5 lakh crore.

Foreign portfolio investors and domestic institutional investors both turned net sellers of equi-

ties worth ₹539.81 crore and ₹517.95 crore respectively.

"Weak European markets and concerns over the rising pandemic saw a sharp sell-off in the Indian market. The global market collapsed on concerns of growing outbreak of the Coronavirus. The United Kingdom government gave an alert that the country is at a "critical point" in the Covid-19 pandemic and that a second lockdown could be needed to stop the renewed spread of the disease," said Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice-president, equity

research, Kotak Securities.

Only three from the Sensex and Nifty-50 stocks basket managed to close in the green — Kotak Mahindra Bank, Infosys and TCS.

Among the sectoral indices Nifty Bank (-3.36 per cent), Nifty Auto (-4.40 per cent), Nifty (-4.46 per cent) and Nifty Realty (-5.98 per cent) topped the losers list.

It seems the market would remain under pressure as the American markets opened sharply lower too and Covid lockdown fears are haunting markets once again.



Prototype of zero-emission hydrogen-powered aircraft released by Airbus on Monday.

— AFP

Global banks moved illicit funds

Washington, Sept. 21: Massive sums of allegedly dirty money have flowed for years through some of the world's largest banking institutions, said an international journalism investigation published on Sunday, which denounced shortcomings in sector regulations.

"Profits from deadly drug wars, fortunes embezzled from developing countries, and hard-earned savings stolen in a Ponzi scheme were all allowed to flow into and out of these financial institutions,

despite warnings from the banks' own employees," according to the probe from BuzzFeed News and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

The investigation, which was led by 108 international media outlets from 89 different countries, is based on thousands of suspicious activity reports (SARs) submitted to the US Treasury Department's financial law enforcement agency, FinCEN, by banks from around the world.

"These documents, compiled by banks, shared with the government, but kept from public view, expose the hollowness of banking safeguards, and the ease with which criminals have exploited them," wrote US outlet BuzzFeed News, in its report.

The documents relate to \$2 trillion in transactions that circulated between 1999 and 2017.

The investigation points in particular to five major banks — JPMorgan Chase, HSBC, Standard Chartered, Deutsche Bank

and Bank of New York Mellon — accused of continuing to move assets of alleged criminals, even after being prosecuted or convicted for financial misconduct.

"The networks through which dirty money traverse the world have become vital arteries of the global economy," BuzzFeed News reported.

Following the report, HSBC's shares in Hong Kong and Standard Chartered's in London fell on Monday to their lowest since at least 1998. — AFP

FIRMS IMPORT STEEL IN SPITE OF LOW SALES

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 21

Steel plants maintained their capacity utilisation at 53 per cent post lockdown, considering the lower domestic consumption. The country, however, ended up importing steel from abroad.

Between April and August 2020, total finished steel production stood at 29.05 million tonnes. Between April and July the capacity utilisation stood at 53 per cent, as per the data from ministry of steel.

The plants kept the utilisation low due to lower domestic demand. Consumption was 38 per cent down to 26.41 million tonnes due to the pandemic against 42.54 million tonnes in the same period last year. Though the country exported 5.68 million tonnes of finished steel, it ended up importing 1.67 million tonnes.

According to the ministry, the government has been taking steps to curb the imports of steel in order to become self-sufficient.

It has constituted Steel Import Monitoring System (SIMS) for advance registration of steel imports.

The objective of SIMS is to help the government and the domestic industry to identify the exact steel grades being imported into the country in order to plan domestic manufacturing.

Interest will be charged on net delayed GST payments

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 21

Providing a sigh of relief to the industry on the issue of interest levied on delayed GST payment, the government has clarified that the decision to charge interest on net tax liability will be implemented retrospectively from July 1, 2017.

The show-cause notices issued in this respect also have been kept in the call book till the CGST Act is amended.

Charging interest on the unpaid gross tax liability has been a contentious issue, which was also dragged to the courts.

The industry had protested the government move to recover ₹46,000 crore as unpaid interest from the taxpayers.

However, recently the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) notified that from September 1, 2020 interest would be charged on net tax liability and not on gross tax liability and decided to forego ₹46,000 crore.

Still the issue did not resolve completely as CBIC said that the notification has been issued prospectively due to certain technical limitations while the 39th GST Council meeting in March

had decided that the amendment will be effective from July 1, 2017 and law would be amended retrospectively.

On September 18, CBIC issued another notification, which brought in much needed clarity in the issue.

The indirect tax agency said that for the period between July 1, 2017 and August 30, 2020, the interest on the net tax liability only will be recovered.

Further, the show-cause notices issued on gross tax payable will be kept in Call Book till the retrospective amendment in the Section 50 of the CGST Act is carried out.

ROUTE MOBILE DOUBLES IN PRICE ON DEBUT

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 21

Route Mobile made a strong debut on bourses as it listed at ₹717 on NSE and at ₹708 on BSE, which more than double its public issue price at ₹350 per share. Later, Route Mobile closed more than 86 per cent up at ₹651 on the BSE and at ₹650 on NSE.

Earlier, Route Mobile's ₹600 crore initial public offer received a huge response from public investors as it was subscribed over 74 times. The stock touched a high of ₹735 on both BSE and NSE.

The market cap of the company after close of trade stood at ₹3,701.98 crore on BSE.

Rajdikumar Gupta, founder, managing director & CEO, Route Mobile after successful listing said, "Excluding the anchor participation, we drew close to 15 lakh applications for our IPO from institutions, HNIs and the retail investors. I am humbled by the response."

SBI kicks off restructuring of retail loans

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEPT. 21

In line with the directives of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), State Bank of India (SBI) on Monday announced a restructuring scheme for its retail borrowers, who were affected by Covid 19 pandemic. Other banks too are in the process of identifying retail loans that need to be restructured.

SBI has launched an online portal where its customers can check their eligibility for the restructuring of their retail loans such as home loans, auto loans, personal loans etc. The portal is available on <https://bank.sbi/> or <https://sbi.co.in>.

Customers, however, will have to approach SBI branches to complete the process. Under the resolution framework framed by RBI, borrowers whose loan accounts were classified as standard and have not defaulted for equal to or more than 30 days as on March 1, 2020, and their incomes have been impacted by Covid-19 are eligible for restructuring of their loans. However the restructuring will come at a cost.

SBI's individual borrowers upon logging in the portal will be asked to key

● **MORATORIUM WILL** be offered on housing and other related loans, education loans, auto loans (other than loans for commercial use) and personal loans. The bank will restructure the loans based on the customer's assessment of the future income.

in their account number. After completion of OTP validation and inputting a few necessary information, the customer will come to know their eligibility and receive a reference number. This reference number will be valid for 30 days and within which time customers can visit the branch to complete the required formalities. The bank will assess applications based on whether borrowers have lost their jobs or seen incomes reduced or their business have been impacted as a result of the pandemic.

Retail customers will be offered a simple option to opt for a moratorium upto a maximum of 24 months or reschedule of instalments and extension of tenure by a period equivalent to the moratorium granted subject to a maximum of two years.

FIRMS STRUCK OFF

3.8 LAKH

● More than 3.8 lakh companies have been struck off from official records under the companies law during the past three years based on non-filing of financial statements consecutively for two years or more.

● The Special Task Force set up by the government to look into the issue of shell companies has recommended the use of certain red flag indicators as alerts for identification of shell companies.

● Under Section 182 of the Companies Act, companies, other than government companies and companies less than three years old, are allowed directly or indirectly to contribute to any political party with the approval of their boards of directors.

NPAs in pharma biz see a steady decline

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 21

Credit off-take of the pharmaceutical sector has been growing and non-performing assets have been coming down in the past few quarters.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, analysts expect both the credit off-take and the fall in NPAs to continue till March 2021.

The pharmaceutical sector has been demonstrating a healthy trend both in terms of credit growth and decline in NPAs.

Credit portfolio by value stood at ₹78,000 crore as of February 2020, with a year-on-year growth of nearly nine per cent. In fact, the industry has been witnessing continuous growth in credit over the previous 12 quarters, as

per a report by CRIF and SIDBI. Almost 76 per cent of the overall credit by volume and 23 per cent in terms of value are concentrated in the MSME borrower segment.

The report projects that the credit to the sector will grow by 13 per cent by March 2021 to nearly ₹87,000 crore. The credit availed by the mid and large firms which stood at ₹56,900 crore in December 2019 may increase by 19 per cent by March 2021.

The industry has largely seen a healthy portfolio with NPAs declining every quarter in the last one year. As of February 2020, the pharma NPAs stood at 9.5 per cent, declining by three per cent in a span of one year and by 0.9 per cent over the previous quarter.

ByteDance, Oracle issue contradictory statements on control of US operations

ACCESS | CONTROL

TikTok Global's ownership turns contentious

New York/Beijing, Sept. 21: ByteDance and Oracle Corp issued conflicting statements on Monday over the terms of an agreement they reached with the White House over the weekend to allow TikTok to continue to operate in the United States, casting doubt on US President Donald Trump's preliminary blessing of the agreement.

China's ByteDance was racing to avoid a crack-down on its popular short-video app after the US commerce department

said on Friday it would block new downloads and updates to the app. US officials had expressed concern that the personal data of as many as 100 million Americans that use the app was being passed on to China's Communist Party government.

A successful deal would allow Trump to drop his threat of shutting down TikTok and avoid alienating its army of young users ahead of the US election this November.

ByteDance said on Monday that it will own 80

per cent of TikTok Global, a newly created US company that will own most of the app's operations worldwide. ByteDance added that TikTok Global will become its subsidiary.

Oracle and Walmart, which have agreed to take stakes in TikTok Global of 12.5 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively, had said on Saturday that majority ownership of TikTok would be in American hands. On Monday, Oracle said ByteDance's ownership of TikTok would be distributed to ByteDance's

investors, and that the Beijing-based firm would have no stake in TikTok Global.

Trump signed an executive order on August 14 giving ByteDance 90 days to relinquish ownership of TikTok. Oracle's account of the deal would mean that ByteDance would be complying with that order, while ByteDance's account would represent a policy reversal for Trump.

The White House referred to a Fox News interview on Monday, in which Trump said that

Oracle and Walmart will have "total control" over TikTok. "If we find that they don't have total control, then we're not going to approve the deal," Trump said.

The commerce department postponed a ban on downloads and apps to the TikTok app that was due to take effect on Sunday by one week, to give the companies time to finalize the deal.

The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, a US government panel that

reviews deals for potential national security risks, has been overseeing the negotiations.

Some sources close to the deal have sought to reconcile the discrepancies by pointing out that 41 per cent of ByteDance is owned by US investors, so by counting this indirect ownership TikTok Global would be majority owned by US parties. One of the sources said the deal with Oracle and Walmart values TikTok Global at more than \$50 billion. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

Djokovic warned for obscenity

Rome: Novak Djokovic claimed a record 36th Masters crown on Monday, beating Argentine Diego Schwartzman 7-5, 6-3 in the final of the Italian Open. For Djokovic it was a fifth title in the warm-up clay-court tournament for next week's French Open. Earlier, Djokovic knows it isn't model behaviour when he loses his cool on the tennis court. Yet he just can't help himself. Exactly two weeks after he was defaulted from the US Open, and a day after he was warned by the chair umpire for breaking his racket in a fit of rage, Djokovic received an obscenity warning midway through a 7-5, 6-3 win over Casper Ruud in the semifinals Sunday. The obscenity came in the third game of the second set, by which time Djokovic had a running dialogue with the chair umpire over a series of contested calls. — *Agencies*

Pogacar crowned Tour champion

Paris: Slovenian rookie Tadej Pogacar won the Tour de France on Sunday, riding triumphantly into Paris in the race leader's yellow jersey at just 21 years old. Pogacar became the Tour's youngest champion since 1904 as Ireland's Sam Bennett won the 21st and final stage after the eight-lap dash around the iconic Champs-Élysées to clinch the green sprint points jersey. The champion mounted the podium as the sun set behind the Arc de Triomphe to pick up the best climber's jersey, the white top young rider's prize and finally the Tour winner's famous yellow jersey. "I can't find the words to thank everyone, but it's been amazing this three weeks where the fans cheered me all the way," said Pogacar. Long-time race leader Primož Roglič ended second ahead of Australia's Richie Porte. — *AFP*

DeChambeau wins US Open golf title

New York: Bryson DeChambeau has only just started experimenting with golf after his scientific approach was validated with a US Open victory on Sunday at Winged Foot. The 27-year-old American defied conventional wisdom in the way he won his first major title, blasting drives to record lengths and relying on wedges and putting skills to reduce the fear of escaping dense rough. "I kept telling everybody it's an advantage to hit it farther," said DeChambeau. "It was a tremendous advantage this week. As difficult as this golf course was presented, I played it beautifully. Even through the rough, I was still able to manage my game and hit it to correct sides of the greens and kept plugging away. My putting was immaculate." — *AFP*

Davis' buzzer beater lifts Lakers

Los Angeles: Anthony Davis drained a three-pointer as time expired to seal the Los Angeles Lakers' 105-103 victory over the Denver Nuggets Sunday for a 2-0 lead in the NBA Western Conference finals. "People talk about (I've) never been in this moment before, pressure, am I ready for it," Davis said. "I want to take those shots." Davis scored 31 points and pulled down nine rebounds, and LeBron James added 11 rebounds as the Lakers turned back the determined Nuggets — who had taken a 103-102 lead on Nikola Jokic's driving basket with 20.8 seconds remaining. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Rajasthan Royals vs Chennai Super Kings from 7:30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

England Women vs West Indies Women: First T20 from 10:30 pm on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

ATP Hamburg European Open: Second day's action from 2 pm on Sony Six, HD

BASKETBALL

NBA Western Conference Finals (Game 3 of best-of-7): Denver Nuggets vs LA Lakers from 6:30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six, HD

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SUN GOES DOWN

Spectacular collapse hands match to Kohli's RCB

Dubai, Sept. 21: Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 10 runs in their IPL match here on Monday. Chasing a target of 164, the SRH were all out for 153 in 19.4 overs, despite a 43-ball 61 from in-form England wicketkeeper-batsman Jonny Bairstow. Earlier, Devdutt Padikkal's impressive 56 on debut and a typical explosive half century by AB de Villiers (51) helped Royal Challengers Bangalore post 163 for 5 after they were sent in to bat.

The class and calmness Padikkal (56 off 42, 8 fours) showed in his first high-profile game was remarkable, so much so that Australian limited overs captain Aaron Finch (29 off 27) was happy to play second fiddle at the other end.

Sunrisers pulled things back in the middle overs following a 90-run opening stand between Padikkal and Finch. De Villiers (51 off 30) came up with crucial boundary hits towards the end to take the team score past 160. The 20-year-old Padikkal, possessing a near perfect balance in the crease, played all around the ground, playing the pull and aerial cover drive with equal confidence.

Padikkal got going with three boundaries in an over off left-arm pacer T. Natarajan. The left-handed opener brought up his half-century with a slog sweep over the fielder at deep square leg.

With the openers looking good, RCB



Yuzvendra Chahal (left) of Royal Challengers Bangalore celebrates the wicket of Manish Pandey of Sunrisers Hyderabad during their IPL match in Dubai on Sunday. — *BCCI*

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Devdutt Padikkal b Shankar 56, Aaron Finch lbw b Abhishek 29, Virat Kohli c Rashid b Natarajan 14, AB de Villiers (run out) 51, Shivam Dube (run out) 7, J.R. Philippe (not out) 1. **Extras: (lb-1 nb-2 w-2) 5. Total: (for 5 wks, in 20 overs) 163.** **FoW:** 1-90, 2-90, 3-123, 4-162, 5-163. **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-25-0, Sandeep Sharma 4-0-36-0, T Natarajan 4-0-34-1, Mitchell Marsh 0.4-0-6-0, Vijay

Scorecard

Shankar 1.2-0-14-1, Rashid Khan 4-0-31-0, Abhishek Sharma 2-0-16-1.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner run out 6, Jonny Bairstow b Yuzvendra Chahal 61, Manish Pandey c Navdeep Saini b Yuzvendra Chahal 34, Priyam Garg b Shivam Dube 12, Vijay Shankar b Yuzvendra Chahal 0, Abhishek Sharma run out 7, Rashid Khan b

Navdeep Saini 6, Bhuvneshwar Kumar b Navdeep Saini 0, Sandeep Sharma c Virat Kohli b Dale Steyn 9, Mitchell Marsh c Virat Kohli b Shivam Dube 0, T. Natarajan (not out). **Extras: (nb-0, w-8, b-5, lb-2) 15. Total (in 19.4 overs) 153.** **FoW:** 1-18, 2-89, 3-121, 4-121, 5-129, 6-135, 7-141, 8-142, 9-143, 10-153.

Bowling: D. Steyn 3.4-0-33-1, U. Yadav 4-0-48-0, N. Saini 4-0-25-2, Washington Sundar 1-0-7-0, Y. Chahal 4-0-18-3, S. Dube 3-0-15-2.

Punjab appeal 'short run' error

Dubai, Sept. 21: Kings XI Punjab lodged a formal complaint on Monday over an umpiring error which proved critical in their narrow Indian Premier League loss to the Delhi Capitals.

The second match of the world's richest Twenty20 tournament ended in a tie on Sunday before Punjab lost out in a super over. But in the 19th over of Punjab's chase, square-leg umpire Nitin Menon had signalled Chris Jordan for a short run — not grounding his bat inside the crease when running between the wickets.

TV replays showed Jordan's bat was in the crease. But nothing could be done as the third umpire does not have the authority to overturn an on-field call, unless it is referred for review.

"We have appealed against the decision which could have been corrected had technology been brought into play," a senior Kings XI official said on condition of anonymity.

"This one run could prove costly at the business end of the tournament when teams battle for a play-off berth."

Appeals are made to the match referee, who in this case was



Square-leg umpire Nitin Menon called Chris Jordan for a 'short run' on the third ball of the 19th over of Kings XI Punjab's chase. — *Twitter*

Javagal Srinath. However, there is no provision for overturning an on-field decision after a match.

As social media erupted over the short-run decision, former India opener Virender Sehwag tweeted: "I don't agree with the man of the match choice. The umpire who gave this short run should have been man of the match."

Cricketer-turned-commentator Aakash Chopra posted: "One short that wasn't. Technology must take over in these cases... What if #KKIP don't make it to the final four by 2 points?" — *AFP*

'HURT' AGARWAL REGRETS LOSING AGAINST CAPITALS

Dubai, Sept. 21: Crestfallen after losing their IPL opener, Kings XI Punjab batsman Mayank Agarwal said it feels terrible to not close off the game after making a strong comeback against Delhi Capitals.

Chasing 158 to win, KKIP were looking down the barrel at 55 for 5 but Agarwal's blistering 89-run knock took them to 157. They needed one run off the final two balls but Marcus Stoinis' twin strike took the game to the Super Over, which they lost on Sunday night.

"We had a tough day. There are a lot of positives to take out. The way we came back was fantastic, the way we bowled with the new ball was terrific. It really hurts to not close off the game from the situation we were in, feels terrible," Mayank told KKIP TV.

"This is just the first game. We can get things rolling again, let's see how we will go in the coming games. I think to play a game like that first up was fantastic. Everyone was up for it, guys really put in the effort," Mayank added. — *PTI*



Liverpool's Sadio Mane (centre) scores against Chelsea in their English Premier League match at Stamford Bridge in London on Sunday. — *AP*

ASHWIN TO MISS NEXT IPL MATCH?

Dubai, Sept. 21: Senior India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin is hopeful of recovering from his shoulder injury as his pain has subsided considerably and the scan reports have been "encouraging" after a nasty fall during Delhi Capitals' IPL opener against Kings XI Punjab. Ashwin endured dream and nightmare in a space of six deliveries as he scalped two KKIP batsmen and then suffered a jerk on his left shoulder trying to dive and stop a run off his own bowling.

"I was in pain as I left the field last night, but the pain has settled down and the scan reports are pretty encouraging too. Thanks for all your love and support," Ashwin tweeted.

Earlier, skipper Shreyas Iyer had also exuded confidence that his senior bowler will be fit in a few days.

"I briefly spoke to Ashwin, and Ashwin said he'll be ready for the next game. But at the end of the day it's the physio's decision," Iyer said after the match here on Sunday night.

"He's a strong-minded guy and hopefully he will be available," he added. — *PTI*

RR have task cut out against CSK

Sharjah, Sept. 21: A depleted Rajasthan Royals have an onerous task of stopping the mighty Chennai Super Kings on a Sharjah belter with no Ben Stokes in their line-up but skipper Steve Smith's availability after recovering from a concussion injury has lifted some gloom ahead of their IPL match on Tuesday.

The absence of Stokes would severely impact Royals' campaign at least in the first half of the tournament because of the balance he brings to the side but having Smith in the playing XI would mean that the contest will not be without a fight.

Smith, who missed the ODI series against England, has undergone various concussion test protocols and is ready to tee off. He was hit on the head during a net session prior to the first ODI in Manchester.

"Been in Dubai for a couple of days now with some good rest and then got into a bit of running. Yesterday, I did a bit of zig-zag running, which is part of the protocols to pass to get back to play," Smith was quoted as saying in a press statement, issued by the franchise.

"And today I will have a hit in the nets. Hopefully, pull up well from the hit and be good to play tomorrow," the Australian said.

Coach Andrew McDonald also expressed his happiness at skipper's availability. "Fantastic news that

● **The absence of Stokes would severely impact Royals' campaign at least in the first half of the tournament because of the balance he brings to the side but having Smith in the playing XI would mean that the contest will not be without a fight.**

Steve is available. It's fantastic especially on the back of some setbacks back in the UK. It's obviously great to have your skipper available for the first game as I've said before we are in really good hands," he said.

Stokes' father's illness has kept him out of action for some time now and his absence, certainly in the first half of the league, would disturb the balance of the Royals, perennial under-performers.

Apart from premier all-rounder Stokes, also absent from the first match will be Jos Buttler, their impact player at the top-order. The England batsman will be missing the first game as he arrived separately with his family and need to undergo mandatory 36-hour quarantine in Dubai.

Last edition's runner-up, CSK exacted revenge on defending champions Mumbai Indians, beating them by five wickets in the tournament opener. — *PTI*

NUMBERS GAME — CSK vs RR

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 21
● Chennai won: 14
● Rajasthan won: 7

MEETING IN 2019

● Chennai Super Kings beat Rajasthan Royals by 8 runs at Chennai.
● Chennai Super Kings beat Rajasthan Royals by 4 wickets at Jaipur.

FOR THE RECORD

● Murali Vijay, who

smashed 148 sixes in 164 innings of 167 matches, needs just two sixes to become the 86th batsman to hit 150 sixes in Twenty-20 cricket.

● David Miller, who hit 495 fours in 288 innings of 319 matches, requires just five fours to become the 48th batsman to hit 500 or more fours in Twenty-20 cricket.

— *S. PERVEZ QAISER*

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Royal Challengers Bangalore	1	1	0	0	2	+0.500
Chennai Super Kings	1	1	0	0	2	+0.486
Delhi Capitals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.000
Kings XI Punjab	1	0	1	0	0	+0.000
Kolkata Knight Riders	0	0	0	0	0	+0.000
Rajasthan Royals	0	0	0	0	0	+0.000
Mumbai Indians	1	0	1	0	0	-0.486
Sunrisers Hyderabad	1	0	1	0	0	-0.500

Tabulated as Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points, Net Run Rate

Covid-free Gaikwad returns to training

Dubai, Sept. 21: Chennai Super Kings batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad is back in training ahead of Tuesday's IPL game against Rajasthan Royals after clearing the two mandatory COVID-19 tests.

The 23-year old from Maharashtra had tested positive for COVID-19 and was in quarantine for two weeks. He missed CSK's tournament opener against defending champions Mumbai Indians on Saturday.

"The first thing you wanna see on a Monday morning. Look who's back! Smiling face with heart-shaped eyes #Ruturaj

#WhistlePodu #Yellove," CSK posted on its twitter handle on Monday along with a picture of the batsman.

Thirteen members of the CSK contingent tested positive for the dreaded virus and two of them were players — Gaikwad and Deepak Chahar. Chahar, along with 11 others, had recovered and was back in training and played the opening game after clearing his mandatory two tests.

However, Gaikwad, who was in isolation at a separate quarantine facility in Dubai, had to wait longer. — *PTI*

Mane double sinks 10-man Chelsea

London, Sept. 21: Sadio Mane tormented Chelsea as the Liverpool forward struck twice after sparking Andreas Christensen's dismissal in the champions' 2-0 win, while Son Heung-min scored four as Tottenham crushed Southampton 5-2 on Sunday. Mane was involved in the turning point at Stamford Bridge as the first clash between Premier League title contenders this season swung Liverpool's way.

In first half stoppage-time, Jordan Henderson picked out Mane's run behind Christensen and the Denmark defender responded by rugby-tackling the Senegal star to the ground.

Referee Paul Tierney initially booked Christensen, but VAR told him to consult the pitchside monitor and he changed his decision to a red card.

Mane grabbed his first goal of the season in the 50th minute as he met Roberto Firmino's cross with a thumping header after eluding Reece James' slack marking.

Mane was gifted his second goal as Chelsea keeper Kepa Arrizabalaga made a hash of trying to play out from the back, allowing the Liverpool forward to intercept and slot into the empty net.

It was the latest costly blunder from Kepa, who

THE RESULTS

Chelsea	0
Liverpool	2
(Mane 50, 54)	
Newcastle	0
Brighton	3
(Maupay 4-pen, 7, Connolly 83)	
Southampton	2
(Ings 32, 90-pen)	
Tottenham	5
(Son 45+3, 47, 64, 73, Kane 82)	
Leicester	4
(Barnes 20, Pieters 50-og, Justin 61, Praet 79)	
Burnley	2
(Wood 10, Dunne 73)	

was dropped twice by Chelsea manager Frank Lampard last season despite his status as the world's most expensive keeper.

SON SHINES

At St Mary's, Jose Mourinho hailed Son and Harry Kane after the pair destroyed Southampton.

Just 24 hours after Tottenham signed Gareth Bale, Son delivered a virtuoso display that showed Mourinho's side already have plenty of firepower.

Bale has returned to Tottenham on a season-long loan from Real Madrid seven years after he left the north London club. — *AFP*