

NEW DELHI FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2020

**TABLOID | 16**

Sonam slated to work in Hindi remake of Korean film, *Blind*, produced by Shome Makhija

Vol. 27 No. 213	16 PAGES	₹5.00
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■ **More on Page 4**

IN BRIEF

Missing boy's body found in Noida canal

Noida: The body of a 14-year-old boy was found stuck in a culvert of a canal in Greater Noida on Thursday, three days after he went missing, police said. The body was found in the Khareli canal near Banjarpur village in the Dankaur Police Station area, a senior officer said. "Locals had alerted the police about the body stuck in the culvert, following which it was fished out. The boy has been identified. His family had approached the police with a missing complaint earlier this week," Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central Noida, Harish Chander said. The boy had gone missing from Babaawad village under the Badalpur Police Station limits on Monday, and an FIR was lodged the next day, he said. "Now a fresh complaint has been made by the boy's family at the Badalpur police station, and a probe has been taken up to ascertain the cause of his death and nab the person behind the act," the DCP added. The body has been sent for an autopsy and further proceedings are underway, the police said.

Man hurt after being attacked with knife

New Delhi: A 30-year-old sweeper was injured when a man attacked him with a knife after an argument broke out between them in southeast Delhi's Jamia Nagar area, police said on Thursday. The victim, Sonpal, a resident of Nehru Nagar, works as a sweeper in the municipal corporation on contract basis in Jamia Nagar. Following the incident, which took place on Wednesday morning, the accused was arrested, they said. "Around 7 am, when Sonpal was on duty, a man named Mohammad Shiraz (28), also a resident of Jamia Nagar, attacked him with a knife after an argument broke out between them over cleaning," DCP (southeast) RP Meena said. Police said the accused told the victim that he was not cleaning properly, after which the argument escalated. Sonpal sustained injuries on his neck and right arm. He was rushed to the Holy Family Hospital for treatment, the DCP said.

40-year-old man found dead in Noida

Noida: Bodies of a man and a woman were found on Wednesday in separate incidents of suspected suicides, police said. The 40-year-old man's body was found hanging from a tree near Hindon river, they said. "The deceased's brother told the police that he was having mental health issues from past some time and that drove him to take the extreme step," a local police official said. In the other case, the body of a 32-year-old woman was found hanging from a fan at her rented accommodation in Kulesara village, which comes under the jurisdiction of Ecotech 3 police station, police said. "The body was spotted by her brother-in-law who had returned from his home in Bihar this morning and reached the home. After getting no response for a long time, he peeped inside through a window and saw the body hanging from a fan," according to a local policeman. The brother-in-law said he had gone home to Bihar amid the lockdown that was placed due to the Covid pandemic, while the woman returned to Noida one day ago from her hometown in West Bengal, the official said.

4 of 'gulel gang' held for stealing

New Delhi: Four members of a gang, who stole expensive items by breaking window panes of parked cars using a catapult, were arrested from Maidan Garhi area, police said on Thursday. The four members of the gang, also known as "gulel gang" have been identified as Mohammad Zakir (23), Ankit (23), Ajay (19) and Mukesh Punia (24), they said. On September 2, the police got information about an incident where a bag was stolen after unidentified men broke the windowpane of a car parked in front of Gargi College on Siri Fort road. The complainant, a doctor in AIIMS, alleged that he had parked his car on the road and left a laptop and an iPad in a bag. He alleged that after he returned, he found the windowpane of his car broken and the bag missing, a senior police officer said.

Covid cases to rise due to increased testing: Jain

Delhi records 4,432 new cases in 24 hours, death toll reaches 4,877

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT 17

As the national capital recorded over 4,400 cases for the second consecutive day, Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday said Covid-19 cases in the city will show a rise in the next 10 days as testing capacity has been quadrupled. He asserted that the plan is to contain the spread of the infection in the long-run through effective isolation.

Delhi recorded 4,432 fresh Covid-19 cases on Wednesday, the second-highest single-day spike. The previous highest single-day spike of 4,473 cases was recorded on September 16. Of total 2,34,701 patients, 31,721 are active and 1,98,103 patients were recovered. With 38 deaths in the last 24 hours, total death counts rose to 4,877.

The number of containment zones in Delhi jumped to 1,670 on Thursday from 1,637 on Wednesday.

The Delhi government has also significantly ramped up testing in the last few days.

"Cases of Covid-19 and active cases will rise in the next 10-15 days as testing has been ramped up four times. But we will then be able to contain the spread of the infection in the long-run through effective isolation, as planned," said Mr Jain.

Interacting with reporters, he also said, reports of the sero-preva-



Health workers at a child-friendly Covid ward at the state-run LNJP Hospital after its inauguration in New Delhi on Thursday. — PTI

lence survey conducted in the first week of September will be first put before the high court. On results of the latest sero-prevalence survey, and asked to respond to a media report that claims 33 per cent of people surveyed had antibodies to the novel coronavirus, he said, "The result is not yet out, so on what basis, this the figure is being claimed. Also, it is to be put before the high court first," he added.

Mr Jain pointed out that according to the Delhi health bulletin, the positivity rate stood at 7.15 per

cent and the death rate stood at 0.7 per cent based on data of the last 10 days. "The situation as of now is fine," Mr Jain said.

The Delhi government has significantly ramped up testing in the past few days. The number of tests conducted and corresponding fresh Covid-19 cases reported ranged from 24,198 (2,312) on September 1 to 62,669 (4,263) on September 15.

On Wednesday again, over 4,000 cases were recorded for the 62,593 tests conducted the previous day. On the availability of beds, he reiterated

there are 14,521 beds as of now. As per the bulletin, 7,738 beds are vacant. "Also, last week order was issued that 80 per cent ICU beds in 33 private hospitals to be reserved for Covid-19 patients," said the Delhi health minister.

The number of rapid-antigen tests conducted on Thursday stood at 50,450, while the RT-PCR, CBNAAT and True NAAT tests figures were 9,564, in all adding to 60,014, according to the bulletin. The bulletin said 1,98,103 patients have recovered, been dis-

charged or migrated so far. The number of people in home isolation stands at 18,038 up from 17,324 the previous day.

In a related development, a child-friendly ward, based on the theme, 'from suffering to happiness', was inaugurated at the state-run LNJP Hospital on Thursday.

Television sets playing cartoons, a painting station and carrom boards are some of the amenities available at the special ward to entertain the children while they getting treated for the infection, officials said.

Opp. leaders meet Prez over Delhi riots case

New Delhi, Sept. 17: Opposition leaders met President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday and raised questions about the role of the police during the February riots, besides expressing their lack of confidence in the probe of the incident.

In a joint memorandum, the leaders raised their concerns over the probe into the riots being conducted by the Delhi Police.

The Delhi Police has set up SIT and its Special Cell is also probing the aspect of conspiracy behind the Delhi riots in which 53 people lost their lives. "There are, however, serious questions about the role played by the Delhi Police during the violence and also the



Opposition leaders Ahmed Patel, D.Raja, Sitaram Yechury, Manoj Jha arrive to meet President Ram Nath Kovind in New Delhi on Thursday. — PTI

manner in which the police is harassing and attempting to falsely implicate activists and young people who took part in the anti CAA/NRC/NPR movements as the perpetrators of violence.

"Such a manufactured conspiracy theory has now begun to falsely implicate political leaders," it said.

The memorandum also criticised the police for the reference made to CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram

Yechury citing disclosure statements by the accused. "This is a disturbing trend that raises serious questions over the manner of such investigations," the leaders said.

They also alleged that there are several publicly documented accounts and videos of police being "complicit in the violence, directing mobs pelting stones or looking the other way when mobs were indulging in violence".

"During the violence, a disturbing video emerged showing uniformed policemen assaulting young men lying injured on the road and forcing them to sing the national anthem while repeatedly beating them. "One of the men, Faizan,

succumbed to his injuries a few days later," the memorandum said highlighting other such instances, including one in which they alleged the "DCP stood quietly next to a BJP leader who was instigating violence against the protestors, warning that if they did not vacate the road, he would do it himself".

"Despite several complaints being filed alleging involvement of senior police officials in the violence, including a DCP, additional commissioner and SHO, it appears no urgency has been accorded to identifying the policemen involved in the violence and ensuring that they are brought to book," it said. — PTI

Milkman among 3 held for burglaries in Noida

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NOIDA, SEPT. 17

A milk vendor was among three alleged members of a gang arrested for burglaries in Uttar Pradesh's Noida on Thursday, police said. The vendor surveyed houses in societies and sectors while delivering milk during the day, looking for easy targets, and would later strike them with his gang at nights, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Noida, Rajesh S said. "Sector 24 police station team had been tracking the gang which was involved in at least three burglaries in different sectors in July. They would break into the houses when their occupants were away and flee with

cash, jewellery and other expensive items like watches," Rajesh told reporters.

The arrested men have been identified as Akash (25), the milk vendor; Karan Jat alias Sonu (30), the gang's kingpin; and Mukesh (35), according to the police.

The trio had broken into at least three houses earlier this year and then went into hiding for some time to avoid tracing and had reunited a couple of days back to sell the stolen items for money, the police said. "Karan Jat had fled to Assam where he had got married to a local woman. He returned recently thinking they would sell the stolen items and make money," the officer said.

BJP is responsible for riots in Delhi, says AAP

New Delhi, Sept. 16: The BJP is responsible for the Delhi riots and there are public records to show that its leaders had spread hatred between two communities, AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj said on Wednesday.

Responding to a question on the recent arrests in the northeast Delhi riots case, Mr Bhardwaj said the AAP holds the BJP responsible for instigating the riots.

"AAP has a straight take on Delhi riots that the BJP and main people of the party are responsible," he said. "This doesn't even need investigation as public records are available to show how they spread



Saurabh Bhardwaj

hatred between two communities and they increased hatred to the extent that it led to riots. Everyone knows how the party, contributed to the riots," he said.

He further claimed that Delhi Police and other investigating agencies have become political wings of the Bharatiya

Janata Party (BJP). "Everyone knows that the police, ED, CBI, I-T department they all are political wings of BJP. Like there is youth wing, women's wing, traders' wing so these are Delhi Police wing of BJP, CBI wing of BJP. Their credibility is minimum so there is no point commenting on them. Delhi Police can name anyone as per their imagination," Bhardwaj claimed. Hitting back, Delhi BJP spokesperson Harish Khurana said, "The matter is in court and the enquiry is happening under court's observation. Why is AAP so afraid of this inquiry and arrests?" — PTI

BJP leaders celebrate PM Modi's 70th birthday

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi turning septuagenarian on Thursday, the Delhi BJP leaders and workers religiously stuck to the figure of 70 by distributing as many sports gears, wheelchairs, prosthetics, shoes, and oximeters.

On the occasion, the Seva Rasoi—an initiative started by BJP leaders Virender Sachdeva, Rajiv Kohli, and Vjender Dhama—which had served food for 56 days to the villagers of Chak Chila Yamuna island by travelling via boat, distributed sports equipment to 70 children of the same island. Delhi BJP general

206 new cases in Noida, total tally at 11,000

Noida, Sept. 17: Gautam Buddh Nagar on Thursday recorded 205 new Covid patients and the district's infection tally reached 10,908, official data showed.

The number of active cases rose to 2,004 from 1,966 on Wednesday and 1,928 on Tuesday, according to data released by the Uttar Pradesh Health Department for a 24-hour period. On the brighter side, 165 more patients got discharged during the period and the total number of recoveries in the district reached 8,856, the data showed.

The district has so far recorded 48 deaths linked to the pandemic, with one of the lowest mortality rates -0.44 per cent - in the state, it showed. — PTI

to reopen and even Delhi Metro has been restarted, then why not the spas. The petitioners have claimed that the spas in other states are running with full safety measures, but are not permitted in Delhi. — PTI

'Govt forcing colleges to pay salaries from students' fund'

New Delhi, Sept 17: The Delhi University Principal's Association (DUPA) on Thursday accused the AAP government of forcing colleges fully funded by it to pay salaries from the students' fund, saying this would amount to misappropriation.

Reacting to DUPA's assertions, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in a statement questioned the source of funds for these colleges and said when they have sufficient money in their fixed deposits, why are they struggling to pay salaries to their staffers.

In an online briefing on Thursday, DUPA said the city government gives grant under two heads - Plan and Non-Plan. "It is clearly mentioned in every sanction letter that funds cannot be transferred from one head to the other. How come the Deputy CM is asking the colleges to pay the salaries from the Student' Society Fund, which is collected from the students for specific activities and purpose?" they said.

Any diversion of funds, would amount to misappropriation, "which we are not doing but the Deputy CM is forcing us to do", they alleged. "It is very unfortunate that he misled by saying that enough funds have been provided in the current financial year," the DUPA said. — PTI



Congress MPs stage a protest over various issues at Parliament House in New Delhi on Thursday. — PTI

Lawyer, fined ₹500 for not wearing mask in car, seeks ₹10 lakh damage

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

The Delhi high court, on Thursday, sought the response of the Centre and AAP government on a lawyer's plea challenging the ₹500 challan issued to him for not wearing mask while he was driving alone. Justice Navin Chawla issued a notice to the ministry of health and family welfare, Delhi government, Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), and the police seeking their stand on the petition which seeks quashing of the challan, refund of the amount paid as fine, and compensation of ₹10 lakh for mental harassment suffered by the

petitioner. The petitioner, Saurabh Sharma, has claimed in his plea that on September 9, while driving to work, he was stopped by Delhi police officials and challaned for not wearing mask even though he was alone in the car.

Mr Sharma, represented by advocate K.C. Mittal, has contended that there is a health ministry notification clarifying that wear-

ing mask is not compulsory while driving alone in a car. Advocate Farman Ali Magray, appearing for the ministry, said that such a notification has been issued. Mr Mittal also argued, during the hearing, that the guidelines issued by DDMA only states that a mask has to be worn in a public place or place of work and a private vehicle is neither.

The DDMA, during the hearing, contended that its guidelines issued in April and June this year makes it mandatory to wear mask in public places and added that the SC has held that a private vehicle is a public place. The court listed the matter for further hearing on November 18.

SHORT TAKES

A-G vetoes contempt case against Rajdeep

New Delhi: Senior journalist Rajdeep Sardesai should not be prosecuted for contempt, the attorney general K.K. Venugopal has said, rejecting requests to file a case against the television news anchor for tweets that were accused of criticising the Supreme Court. The attorney general's office had received a request to begin contempt proceedings against Mr Sardesai for his comments on the Supreme Court ruling that found senior advocate Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt last month. The petitioner had reportedly mentioned a number of tweets by the journalist on the day the court fined Mr Bhushan ₹1 for his social media posts on the judiciary and the chief justice.

'Pak not fulfilling ICJ demands on Jadhav'

New Delhi: India on Thursday said that the Pakistan government has not been able to fulfill its obligations to implement International Court of Justice (ICJ) orders in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case and is yet to address the core issues which includes allowing India to hire a counsel of choice to defend Jadhav in Pakistani courts. "The Government of Pakistan has not been able to fulfill its obligations on implementation of the ICJ judgment in letter and spirit. It has not yet addressed the core issues, which includes provision of all documents related to the case, providing unconditional and unimpeded consular access to Shri Kulbhushan Jadhav and appointment of an Indian lawyer or a Queen's counsel to ensure free and fair trial," spokesperson for ministry of external affairs Anurag Srivastava said. India has proposed to hire Harish Salve to defend for Jadhav during the review of his death sentence in Pakistan.

Opp. slams BJD for 'lax' in Covid control

Bhubaneswar: Odisha's ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Thursday came under the firing line of the Opposition in charged the party with inefficient management of Covid-19 situation and blamed it for rising number of deaths. Senior BJP leader and former minister Bijoy Mohapatra said all leading Covid hospitals in state capital Bhubaneswar had reached their saturation and patients were being forced to visit hospitals in other states. Senior Congress leader Tara Prasad Bahinipati also came down heavily on the Odisha government alleging that it completely failed in managing the Covid-19 pandemic in the state.

Farmers in Punjab announce 'rail roko'

Chandigarh: A farmers' body on Thursday decided to intensify their stir against the Centre's three farm-related Bills, announcing to stop trains in Punjab from September 24 to 26. We have decided to hold a 'rail roko' agitation from September 24 to 26 in the state against the farm bills, said Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee general secretary Sarwan Singh Pandher. Different farmer organisations in Punjab have already given a call for a bandh on September 25 in protest against the Bills. Farmers have expressed apprehensions that the legislations will pave a way for dismantling of the minimum support price (MSP) system and they will be at the mercy of big corporates. — PTI

2 Odisha minors kill mother over 'torture'

Bhubaneswar: Two minor boys, apparently fed up with continuous torture, beat their mother to death in an apartment at Sundarpada under Airfield police station in Odisha capital Bhubaneswar on Wednesday night. The deceased was identified as Binodini Mishra. Reportedly, an altercation broke out between the mother and her sons on late Wednesday night over some family issue. In a fit of rage, the two minor boys aged 12 and 15 years started beating Binodini, 40, with an iron rod killing her on the spot. Police sources, quoting the boys, said the deceased had been torturing her children under the influence of liquor.

PARLIAMENT MONSOON SESSION

Opp. demands April status quo ante on LAC

Several MPs caution govt against entering into any agreement with China over present situation



Members of various political parties stage a protest demanding the clearance of states GST dues at Parliament House in New Delhi on Thursday. — PTI

'Did people recover by eating Bhabhi Ji Ke Papad?'

New Delhi: The fight against coronavirus was not a political fight but a fight to save the lives of people, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut said in parliament as he defended the Maharashtra government's efforts to contain the pandemic which has affected over 10 lakh people in the state. The state government had managed

to control the spread of the pandemic in slum clusters like Dharavi, an effort which had drawn appreciation from the World Health Organisation (WHO), Mr Raut said. These recoveries didn't happen by eating "Bhabhi ji papad", the Sena leader sarcastically remarked, apparently referring to Union Minister and BJP

leader Arjun Ram Meghwal's claim in July that the papad brand had the capacity to develop anti-bodies against coronavirus in the body. Mr Meghwal had later tested positive for the virus.

The Shiv Sena MP said that the state had managed to successfully cure majority of those infected with the deadly virus.

der. "There should be no doubt on this and the entire nation would stand together," he said.

Referring to the recent talks between the Indian defence minister and foreign minister with their Chinese counterparts and

a statement on September 11, Sharma asked: "Do we understand that the restoration of the status quo ante will remain a non-negotiable and final objective for India?"

Antony sought a clarification over Singh's statement in the Upper House.

"You have to clarify that sovereignty means status quo ante as on the middle of April. That is the meaning of sovereignty," he said.

Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh was never a disputed site, the former defence minister said.

Gohil raises death of Asiatic lions in RS

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

Citing "rise" in the death rate of endangered Asiatic lions due to use of radio collars, Congress's Rajya Sabha member Shaktisinh Gohil on Thursday demanded that radio collars, which weigh 2.5 kilograms, be removed as these devices are even put on cubs who grow rapidly and these radio collars are very uncomfortable for them. Raising the issue in the Upper House during Zero Hour, Mr Gohil cited two wildlife experts — HN Singh and AK Sharma — who have strongly opposed the usage of these devices. Mr Gohil, who represents his home state Gujarat in the Upper House of Parliament, which is the only home to the endangered species, with less

than 700 remaining in the wild, said of total deaths of the Asiatic lions, 25 percent have been recorded because of the usage of the device and demanded that the unscientific method should be banned immediately.

Later, PDP member Mir Mohammad Fayaz raised the issue of detention of political leaders, including PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti since the nullification of contentious Article 370 more than a year back. Mr Fayaz demanded that all political leaders should be released who are detained under the PSA (Public Safety Act) or under house arrest. He said Ms Mufti, a former chief minister and three-time Member of Parliament, has been booked under the PSA for allegedly being a "threat."

Battle of Gaixia revisited as PLA troops on LAC play Punjabi songs

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

While Indians are amused over Chinese troops playing Punjabi songs on loudspeakers at line of actual control (LAC) at Eastern Ladakh where for the first time in 45 years shots have been fired, it seems PLA is using the tactics employed by Chinese Han generals some 2,200 years ago during so called "Battle of Gaixia".

In this battle Han King Liu Bang beat his Chu rival Xiang Yu and established the Han Dynasty in China.

Chinese state run Global Times on Thursday talking about Chinese army playing Punjabi songs at LAC said that the Indian army

Chinese state run Global Times on Thursday said that the Indian army is in a situation of "hearing the Chu songs on four sides." Global Times said that the move of playing Punjabi songs sends a message to India that the Indian army is isolated and besieged

is in a situation of "hearing the Chu songs on four sides." Global Times said that the move of playing Punjabi songs sends a message to India that the Indian army is isolated and besieged on all sides.

"Hearing the Chu songs on four sides" is a Chinese idiom, which is said to have originated from the supposed "Battle of Gaixia". After the fall of the Qin Dynasty, the

state of Chu and the State of Han fought for control of China around 206 BC to 202 BC. As per the legends around 202 BC, Chu king Xiang Yu was trapped and surrounded by the rival Han forces in hills at Gaixia.

The legends say to weaken the morale of the Chu forces and King Xiang who was a ferocious fighter, Han soldiers started singing Chu songs from all sides. After listening to these songs, Chu soldiers thought that Han people had captured their homeland and brought Chu people to the battlefield.

As per these stories, Chu soldiers became worried about their family members, homesick and lost the will to fight. Many Chu soldiers

deserted.

Even Chu King is said to have become desperate after listening to the Chu songs and is said to have cried. Xiang Yu committed suicide after his forces tried to break the trap.

However, it seems unlikely if PLA assumes that Punjabi songs played at LAC will have the same impact on a professional and battle hardened Indian army as what happened with Chu soldiers some thousands of years back. Only last week Indian army's Sikh Regiment observed the 123rd Saragarhi Day where 22 soldiers of 4 Sikh in a famous "last-stand" fought thousands of Pathans in North West Frontier Province on 12 September 1897.

Rajya Sabha MP from Karnataka dies of Covid

Bengaluru, Sept. 17: Newly elected Rajya Sabha member Ashok Gasti, who was admitted to a private hospital after testing positive for the novel coronavirus, died on Thursday night, the hospital said.

Fifty-five-year-old Gasti, who was admitted to Manipal Hospital on Old Airport Road on September 2 and diagnosed with severe Covid-19 pneumonia, passed away at 10.31 pm, hospital director Manish Rai said in a statement.

Condoling Gasti's demise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was passionate about empowering the poor and marginalised sections of society. "Rajya Sabha MP Shri Ashok Gasti was a dedicated Karyakarta who worked hard to strengthen the Party in Karnataka. He was passionate about empowering the poor and marginalised sections of society. Anguished by his passing away. Condolences to his family and friends. Om Shanti," Modi tweeted. — PTI

India asks China to disengage soon from 'all areas'

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

India has asked China to work "sincerely" for complete disengagement "at the earliest" from all friction areas including Pangong Tso lake.

"The Chinese side should sincerely work with the Indian side for complete disengagement at the earliest from all friction areas including Pangong Tso lake as well as de-escalation in border areas in accordance with the bilateral agreements and protocols on maintenance of peace and tranquility in border areas. We hope the Chinese side will strictly respect and observe the line of actual control and not make further attempts to unilaterally change status quo," spokesperson for Ministry of External Affairs Mr Anurag Srivastava said on Thursday.

The statement came in response to the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin's comments on Wednesday in which he said the onus lies with India to "ease the tension and lower the temperature along the border."

Union minister from MP tests Covid +ve

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, SEPT. 17

Union tourism minister Pralhad Patel has tested positive for Coronavirus. Mr Patel informed this in a twitter post on Thursday while advising all those who came in contact with him in recent time to stay alert. He was the 41st political leader from Madhya Pradesh who got infected by the virus.

Another Union minister, Dharmendra Pradhan, who



represented MP in Rajya Sabha, had tested positive for the virus earlier. He has since recovered. Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia had also contracted the virus earlier and then recovered.

As many as 10 ministers in the Shivraj ministry including chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had so far contracted the virus.

MP mantri thrashes Cong cadre in public, video viral

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, SEPT. 17

A video showing a senior minister in Shivraj Singh Chouhan Cabinet thrashing a Congress worker in Gwalior on Thursday went viral in social media causing huge embarrassment to the ruling BJP.

State energy minister Pradyumna Singh Tomar was caught on camera advancing menacingly towards a group of Congress workers who were shouting slogans against senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia at Phulbag square in Gwalior city. He was then seen in the video clip delivering punches on a Congress worker.

The incident took place on Wednesday. According to official sources, the Congress workers were staging a demonstration in Gwalior in protest against the move by Gwalior



Municipal Corporation to remove hoardings featuring Congress veteran and former chief minister Kamal Nath erected at some places in the city.

The demonstrators stopped the minister's cavalcade which was passing by the spot and then started shouting slogans against Mr Scindia provoking Mr Tomar to disembark from his vehicle and confront the Congress workers. He first had heated exchanges with them and later gave blows to one of them while snatching the Congress flag from him.

"The minister's unprovoked actions do not behave the position he holds", Congress spokesman Narendra Saluja said.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Asiyana D/o Jamir Khan**, R/o H. No. 4/393, Khichripur, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 04.08.2020 from the area of P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi. In this regard, a case **DD No. 59A dated 05.08.2020** has been registered at P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi. The description of the missing girl is as under.

Age: 22 Years, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Height:** 4' 6", **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Red Top & Blue Colour Jeans & Sleeper in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/Kidnapped girl then please inform P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi at following Tel No./ e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- S.H.O. P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi
Phone: 011-2277 2287

DP/186/ED/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Kajal @ Muskan D/o Rajender Kumar** R/o 67/4 Zamrood Pur, New Delhi, has been missing/kidnapped from the area of PS: Greater Kailash, New Delhi since 5.10.2017. In this regard, a case **FIR No. 173/2017 dated 05.10.2017** has been registered at P.S. Greater Kailash, New Delhi. The description of the missing girl is as under.

Age: 15 Years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 4'6" **Face:** Round, **Hair:** Black & Long, **Wearing:** White colour kurta and black colour pajami and grey colour sandal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/ kidnapped girl then please inform P.S. Greater Kailash, New Delhi following Tel No./ e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- S.H.O. P.S. Greater Kailash, New Delhi
Ph: 011-26241076, 26241077

DP/187/SD/2020

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR Office of the Executive Engineer Quality Control & Procurement Division, HMT, Srinagar GIST OF TENDER					
e-NIT No:- PHE/QC&PD/09/2020-21/e-Tender				Dated: 12-09-2020	
For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of J&K, e-tenders are invited on item rate basis in two covers from Govt. registered / Gem approved manufacturers holding valid CML certification for the manufacture of said diameters of D. I. Pipes who have Supplied Such Items in India and possess Satisfactory Performance and excellent track record in the said field, with documentary evidence from Respective Govt. /Semi Govt. Departments /Corporations /State or National level Undertakings for the following subject item.					
S No	Subject of Supply:	Estimated Cost	EMD free	Cost of tender Documents	Validity of Rates.
1	Supply of ISI marked Centrifugally Cast (Spun) Ductile Pipes conforming to IS: 8329/2000, read with upto date amendments for assorted sizes ranging from NB100mm upto and including NB400mm (in class K7) from Govt. registered / Gem approved manufacturers holding valid CML certification for the manufacture of said diameters of D. I. Pipes required for petty and maintenance works of the Department.	Rs 10.00 Crores	Rs 20.00 Lakhs	Rs 2500.00	180 days from opening of the Price Bid.
The NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of Quantities (BOQ), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be viewed /downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the schedule of dates given below:					
Time Schedule of e-Tender					
1	Date of Inviting Tender	12-09-2020 10.00AM			
2	Documents Downloading Period	14-09-2020 (02.00PM) to 05-10-2020 (02.00PM)			
3	Clarification Period	14-09-2020 (02.00PM) to 26-09-2020 (04.00PM)			
4	Pre Bid Consultation	28-09-2020 (02.00PM)			
5	On Line Document Submission Period	14-09-2020 (02.00PM) to 05-10-2020 (04.00PM)			
6	Date of opening of Cover 1st.	06-10-2020 02.00PM			
7	Tender Document Receiving Authority	Executive Engineer QC&PD PHE Jal Shakti HMT Srinagar. (e-mail: xenmandp@gmail.com)			
8	Tender Inviting Office	Executive Engineer QC&PD PHE Jal Shakti HMT Srinagar payable at Srinagar.			
9	Document Fee	In the shape of treasury Challan favoring to Executive Engineer QC&PD PHE Jal Shakti HMT Srinagar payable at Srinagar or e-transfer to J&K Bank A/c No: 0005010100005110 IFSC: JAKA0CHINAR			
10	Earnest Money	In the shape of CDR/FDR/BG from nationalized banks only having a branch in Srinagar.			
11	Bid Opening Authority	Chief Engineer, Kashmir PHE, Jal Shakti Deptt. Srinagar.			
No.: PHE/QCPD/1901-34 Dated 12.09.2020 DIPK-7508 Dated: 17.09.2020					
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti QC&PD PHE (K) HMT Srinagar.					

'6.6m white-collar professionals lost jobs May-August'

Continued From Page 1

January-April 2016. A year ago, during the survey of May-August 2019, their employment peaked at 18.8 million. It remained almost stable at 18.7 million in the next survey of September-December 2019 and then fell to 18.1 million during the survey of January-April 2020. This survey contained a partial impact of the Covid-19 induced lockdown.

Employment of these professionally qualified white collar workers fell steeply to 12.2 million during the survey of May-August 2020. This is the lowest employment of these professionals since 2016. All the gains made in their employment over the past four years were washed away during the lockdown.

Another group to have suffered big job loss among salaried class is industrial workers. Around 5 million industrial workers lost their jobs post lockdown, translating into a 26 per cent fall in employment in the group over a year. The decline in employment of industrial workers is likely to be largely in the smaller industrial units. This job loss also reflects the distress in the micro, small and medium industrial units in recent times.

The government has been evasive in answering queries by members of Parliament about the post-Covid job losses. The latest data available with the government with regard to unemployment across different sectors is from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the National Sample Survey Office in 2017-18.

When asked by members of parliament on whether the government has done any assessment of the job loss among migrant workers due to the Covid-19 crisis, minister of state for labour and employment, Santosh Kumar Gangwar, had said on September 14 that "no such data is maintained".

Centre to panel: Check if Indian civilisation...

Continued From Page 1

Bharrana and Kunal show Indian civilisation could be as old as 8,000 years even though some studies term its origin with Harappan civilization, while some say it is older than that. Dr Mani, who had conducted the digging at the disputed Ayodhya temple site in 2003, on the orders of Allahabad high court, added that the antiquity of Ayodhya may not go beyond 4,000 years.

"If you look at it, there was no such race as Aryans and this term has been conceived by vested Western scholars about Aryan race. At the most you can say it as a Vedic period. But the mandate of the committee is not to study Vedic period but only about the antiquity of Indian culture and civilisation during which Indians existed in several part of South Asia, which includes Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and parts of Afghanistan," MD Mani said.

As per Government of India's website, KnowIndia.gov.in, history of India begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization known as Harappan Civilization. "It flourished around 2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia, what today is Pakistan and Western India. The Indus Valley was home to the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China," the site says.

'No need for guidelines to regulate TV...

Continued From Page 1

print media and digital web-based news portal and YouTube channels, as well as 'Over The Top' platforms (OTTs)."

It further said that in mainstream media — whether electronic or print — publication/telecast is a "one-time act", while the digital media has "faster reach", a wider range of viewership/readership and its content has the potential to go viral, thanks to WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and should be the first priority for regulation. This is a broad reiteration of the arguments made by solicitor general Tushar Mehta in the hearing on September 15 in response to which Justice Chandrachud had said, "Law has not to be for everything to regulate something", thereby suggesting that just to regulate visual media it is not necessary that there should be law to regulate every platform.

India takes record jump with 97,894 Covid cases in one day

Vaccine for coronavirus expected in the country by next year: Health minister

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

India once again had a record jump in fresh cases with 97,894 new detections of novel coronavirus taking the country's overall tally to 51.18 lakh as per Union health ministry. However, the numbers were close to 51.50 lakh by late Thursday evening according to data from Covid19India.org. Union minister of state for culture and tourism, Prahlad Singh Patel was among the latest politicians in the list to test positive.

Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan told Rajya Sabha Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been personally monitoring the Covid-19 situation and added the vaccines for coronavirus can be expected in the country

by the beginning of next year.

"India has been registering very high recoveries for the two consecutive days as 82,961 active cases were found free of Covid-19 in the last 24 hours. Spurred by this number of very high recoveries, the national Recovery Rate continues to follow its rising curve. It stands at 78.64% today," health ministry officials said.

Maha Opp. leader booked for violating lockdown rules

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 17

An FIR has been registered against Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council Pravin Darekar for protesting outside a hospital over a patient's body being handed over to wrong family. The action was taken against BJP leader Darekar and his supporters for allegedly violating restrictions enforced to curb the spread of Covid-19. On Sunday, the hospital erroneously handed over the body of Ankush Sarvade (28), who succumbed to injuries sustained in a road accident, to the family of another person, Hemant Digambar, who committed suicide, according to the BMC.



An paramilitary soldier holds up a pellet gun as he challenges Kashmiri protesters marching on the streets in solidarity with militants engaged in a gunbattle with soldiers in Srinagar on Thursday.

— AP

Protests begin in Maha over SC stay on Maratha quota

Disruptions across state as Maratha outfits vent anger

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 17

The resentment over the Supreme Court's order staying implementation of 2018 order that granted reservation to the Maratha community is spreading in Maharashtra, as several pro-Maratha outfits staged protests across the state on Thursday. They have demanded that reservation for the community in jobs and education should be continued.

At many places like Jalna, Pune, Kolhapur, the members of the Maratha organisations held protests. Attempts were also made to halt the milk supply to Mumbai

and Pune from Kolhapur.

In Jalna, state health minister Rajesh Tope had to face the wrath of irate activists of Maratha Mahasangh. After attending a function of the Maratha community at the Muktisangram Din at the Town Hall, Mr Tope was heading towards his car when four to five activists of the Maratha Mahasangh started shouting slogans of "Jai Bhavani Jai Shivaji" and "We want reservation," and blocked his way. The police quickly intervened and detained three activists, a police official said. The Marathwada Muktisangram Din is celebrated on September 17 every year to mark libera-

tion of the region from the clutches of Nizam of Hyderabad.

In Pune, members of the Maratha Kranti Morcha staged protests outside the office of district Collector Rajesh Deshmukh wearing black clothes and holding placards over their demands. They also submitted a memorandum to him demanding reservation.

"We handed over a memorandum to the district collector and demanded that the state government take all necessary legal steps to lift the ban on the reservation," said Rajendra Kondhare, the convener of Maratha Kranti Morcha.

PRAMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday filed a supplementary chargesheet against Bilquis Shah, wife of Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Shah, in connection with a terror-funding case in Jammu and Kashmir.

The central probe agency has named her as an accused in its supplementary chargesheet filed in a city court here. The supplementary chargesheet has been filed under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). According to reports, Additional Sessions Judge Dharmender Rana will take up the matter on November 10.

The charge sheet has been filed under Sections 3 and 4 Prevention of Money Laundering Act. The ED had earlier filed a charge sheet against Shabir Shah and Aslam



Bilquis Shah

Wani.

In the chargesheet, the probe agency has alleged that Bilquis Shah, along with Shabir Shah had received ₹2.08 crore from Aslam Wani, an accused in the case and also linked to the banned terror outfit, Jaish-e-Mohammed. Wani allegedly operated as a carrier for collecting the money being sent from Pakistan through the 'hawala' channel for carrying out terror activities in the country. It said the claim was based on Wani's disclosure in the case, where he admitted that "all amounts were in cash and were handed over to

IN THE CHARGESHEET, the probe agency has alleged that Bilquis Shah, along with Shabir Shah had received ₹2.08 crore from Aslam Wani, an accused in the case and also linked to the the banned terror outfit, Jaish-e-Mohammed

Shabir Ahmad Shah and on three occasions to Bilquies Shah.

"She received the said amount knowing fully well that her husband had no known sources of income and this money could not have been obtained through licit means.

"It clearly implies that Bilquies Shah was an active accomplice of Shabir Shah in his illicit criminal activities," said the agency in its supplementary chargesheet.

The ED said Shabir Shah was the main accused, named in both chargesheets, as he was the conspirator who had

devised the whole scheme of money laundering by obtaining illicit funds from outside India to further the nefarious designs of causing unrest in J&K. Shabir Ahmad Shah was in regular touch with Hafeez Saeed, a global terrorist, head of Jamat-ud-Dawa. He was further in regular touch with Mohd. Shafi Shayar, based in Pakistan, whose Pakistani phone number was provided by him to Aslam Wani for collecting the crime money in Delhi on his behalf.

The case dates back to August 2005 in which the Delhi Police's Special Cell had earlier arrested Wani and recovered ₹62.96 lakh cash, five Kgs of explosives and one pistol with 15 live cartridges from his possession. Wani had claimed that he had to deliver ₹52,96,000 to Shabir Shah in Srinagar and the remaining Rs 10 lakh were to be paid to the activists of Jaish-e-Mohammad.

Key PDP leader, others freed from house arrest

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 17

The authorities in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday released People's Democratic Party leader Naeem Akhtar and some other politicians from house detentions.

This comes days after minister of state (home) G. Kishan Reddy, said in Lok Sabha that no leader in J&K is currently under house arrest in the Union Territory. He said in a written reply to a question raised by Trinamool Congress MP Saugata Ray in the house on Tuesday, "As on 11 September, 223 persons are under detention. No person is under house arrest in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir."

Various mainstream and separatist parties in J&K had questioned Mr Reddy's statement and said that more than three dozen leaders and activists continued to be under house arrest across the Valley alone. However, on Wednesday sev-

Magisterial investigation ordered into 'custodial' murder of youth

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 17

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Thursday ordered a magisterial probe into the alleged extrajudicial murder of a 23-year-old youth after he was picked up by the police from his residence in northwest-ern town of Sopore on charges of being an 'Over Ground Worker (OGW)' of a militant outfit.

In an order issued by the concerned DC, Ghulam Nabi Itoo, it is

said that since the local police have been accused of killing the youth Irfan Ahmed Dar in their custody soon after his arrest two days ago he has while exercising powers vested in him under Section 176 of the Ranbir Penal Code asked additional district magistrate of Baramulla, Mohammad Ahsan Mir, to conduct a magisterial inquiry into the incident. The officer has been asked to submit his report within a period of twenty days.

eral senior PDP leaders including its vice-president Abdur Rehman Veeri, general secretary Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura and youth president Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra were allowed by the police to leave their respective homes and attend a meeting at the party headquarters here, the first held since August 5, 2019 when J&K was stripped of its spe-

cial status and split up into two union territories.

On Thursday morning, Mr Akhtar, who served as a minister and chief spokesman of the PDP-BJP government, tweeted, "After 407 days of detention (I) am informed that I am free to move about. Thank you rulers for small mercies while you inflict larger tragedies on our land."

3 Hizb militant, woman killed

AGE VORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 17

Three Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militants and a 45-year-old woman resident were killed and a CRPF officer was injured in a predawn gunfight in Srinagar's Batamallo quarter on Thursday.

The house in which gunmen had been holed up was damaged in the final assault of the security forces during which small and medium weapons were

used, the police sources and witness said.

The slain militants have been identified as Zakir Ahmad Paul, Ubair Mushtaq Bhat and Adil Hussain Bhat-all local Kashmiris from militancy-infested southern Kulgam-Shopian-Pulwama districts. The police claimed that they were involved in several attacks in Srinagar City and South Kashmir.

The police said the local woman Kaunsar Jan was killed in firing of militants.

'Dear Narendra': Merkel takes lead as world leaders greet PM

AGE CORRESPONDENT
with agency input
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Russian President Vladimir Putin are among the prominent world leaders who wished Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 70th birthday on Thursday.

Addressing PM Modi as "Narendra", the German Chancellor said she had "fond memories" of their meeting at the Indo-German inter-governmental consultations last year. "I wish you all the very best in the future - particularly, in these unusual times, health, happiness and fulfilment," she wrote in her message that was shared by PMO on its twitter handle.

Apart from Ms Merkel, Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama, Russian president Vladimir Putin, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his Nepalese counterpart K.P. Sharma Oli and political leaders including Congress's Rahul Gandhi, NCP supreme Sharad Pawar, YSRCP chief and Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to his counterparts in Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan and West Bengal Mamata Banerjee along with President Ram Nath Kovind, vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu and Union ministers wished Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 70th birthday on Thursday. Extending wishes to Mr Modi through a letter in Hindi, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu said "Best wishes on your birthday"

Modi's life teaches us to chart your own course



Syed Zafar Islam

I have often had young people come up to me to seek advice for their lives. The common thing that I see is the stark confusion people have about what they wish to do going forward. There is always this dilemma that today's youth has in their minds. Should they follow what they feel like doing or should they follow popular trends? To those young citizens of our country, I always say that one should study the life of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi and derive an important lesson - must follow the path that you truly believe in, and do not get distracted by the fashionable trends of the day.

At a time and age in his life when most people

around him would have been thinking of securing prized government jobs or even looking to become lawyers, doctors or teachers, Narendra Modi decided to be his own man and work for society. While the methods may vary in today's day and age, what Narendra Modi did is today fashionably called a sabbatical. He paused to think of what he wanted to do in his life and the path that he wanted to traverse. One must therefore learn the important lesson to take away from this incident - clean the cobwebs of your mind so that you can think rationally and clearly. Pause, even take a break if necessary, to figure out exactly what you want to do with your lives.

Choose after detailed deliberation the path that you can put your heart into, I repeatedly tell the youth of today. Mr. Modi's life teaches us a lot about this important aspect of life. One sees the sharpness of mind and the intellect of the man and wonders - what if the man had charted a different, perhaps more conventional trajectory in his life? Would we have witnessed him as India's Prime

Minister today? It is clear by now that Mr. Modi is among the sharpest minds around, and that he could have been a successful person in any other field. And yet, he chose something that was very different from prevalent trends. He dared to be different because he pursued something with passion and vigour, and today's youth can draw inspiration from this just as much. The path should be one that gives your heart joy and utmost satisfaction, just as Narendra Modi chose to serve the people of India for it satiates his soul to no end.

Life, like in politics, often sees people dragging you down. You will see people mocking your initiatives when it starts, only to realize their own follies later. However, that should not deter you from sticking to the path. Had Mr. Modi hesitated to pursue his goal of making India open defecation free or to roll out the world's largest financial inclusion program of the Jan Dhan Yojana, the successes we see today on the two fronts would not have manifested themselves. Do not be swayed by the gimmickry of these



Women make rangoli from flower petals on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 70th birthday at a school in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

— PTI

naysayers in life; instead, view their gimmickry for what it is - a gimmick. Because they do not truly believe in anything that they say necessarily; they are instead seeking perceived momentary benefits without seeing the larger picture. Their myopic vision should not be allowed to overpower your ambition and desires ever. Let your work speak for itself, even as you may face opposition similar to what Mr. Modi has seen coming at him for believing and holding onto his way of doing things. Just

like Mr. Modi, you may be called names, may be misrepresented deliberately and attacked as well. However, do not fear attacks and face them bravely, and see how the malevolent force crumbles by itself just as the opposition has scattered into the wind when faced resolutely by Mr. Modi.

Doing your own thing can make you stand out of the crowd in life just as in politics, and people will try to imitate you. These days, some people have rediscovered their roots even in politics, and think

The writer is a BJP's Rajya Sabha MP, its national spokesperson and former managing director, Deutsche Bank, India

THE ASIAN AGE

18 SEPTEMBER 2020

Covid shot: Cautious hope, but policy key

For a month now, India has been consistently recording the highest daily infection rate in the world for the coronavirus pandemic. Thursday's tally of 97,894 topped all such records and by an unfortunately thin margin, adding to the prevailing atmosphere of fear and anxiety. The death toll is 83,198. The virus has reached the heartlands and ICMR's recently released sero-survey results suggest that for every infection spotted India missed 81 cases.

Independent trackers are reporting a slightly higher death tally than the health ministry. According to Worldometer, India has 5,118,253 confirmed cases and 83,230 people have died due to Covid-19. This is in addition to an independent estimate of 906 people who lost their lives amid a poorly enforced lockdown. The government has denied data on this last count, even as families of these individuals in greatest distress pinned their hopes on relief arriving in the form of a financial compensation.

Science and politics are being conflated in a sickeningly familiar manner in India as elsewhere. It is hype and wordplay against fact and smart decision-making.

The only hope for citizens lies in the quick discovery and distribution of a coronavirus vaccine. On this account, Hyderabad-based drug maker Dr Reddy's Laboratories is ready for clinical trials of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine while AstraZeneca has resumed trials for the "Oxford vaccine" in India and the UK. In the US, it is Pfizer that has assumed the lead in the vaccine race, which is now nearing its finish line, even as numbers at home stack up overwhelmingly. Though experts believe a vaccine will at best have 40-50 per cent efficacy, it will lead to the building up of herd immunity, which has now emerged as the best bet for our hapless populations.

India needs a comprehensive coronavirus vaccine strategy that will mobilise its fairly successful pharmaceutical industry to mass produce shots so that their price — initially astronomical — comes down and they can be administered to the last man quickly and efficiently, after first covering the elderly and most vulnerable. With a crashing economy and a collapsing healthcare, this strategy will be tricky not only to formulate but also to implement. Advance planning can perhaps save the day, advises the Opposition, and the government must pay heed. It cannot afford to while away its time and needs must take its bitter lessons from its failure to build capacity during its very costly lockdown.

Science and politics are being conflated in a sickeningly familiar manner in India as also elsewhere. It is hype and wordplay against fact and smart decision-making. A day after Union health minister Harsh Vardhan said a vaccine against the coronavirus disease would be ready by early next year, Adar Poonawalla of the Serum Institute which is participating in the AstraZeneca vaccine trials rightly warned that there won't be enough doses till 2024. Over in the US, an election-bound Donald Trump contradicted his own expert by declaring that a vaccine will reach his country's population by about the same time. But even if a vaccine for Covid-19 were released now, it would take six to nine months for enough people to receive it to create immunity, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director, Robert Redfield, has held.

Amid the gloom and doom, a tiny glimmer, that governments need to rally.

As Neros fiddle

So in another 21 months India will have a new Parliament? Well, not a new set of members but a modern building that will replace the over 90-year-old monumental circular edifice. Coming up at the cost of a whopping ₹861.9 crores, quite close to the existing 144-column structure, the new Parliament is indeed a grandiose plan of the present day government. When the country is going through a dark patch, economically and otherwise, if a government is keen on moving parliamentarians to a new House with modern amenities, it only reveals a mix up in priorities.

The ostentatious project, which will be given concrete shape by Tata Projects Ltd, also brings to memory stories of ancient monarchs who revelled in building fanciful structures even when their subjects suffered in penury and hunger. In recent times, too, democratically elected leaders had displayed such grandiosity, costing only the exchequer needlessly. The swanky state capital, envisaged at Amaravati, for Andhra Pradesh is one example of one chief minister's grand plan not getting the grants from the next, thus leaving the capital idea remaining an unrealized dream for six years.

It had been worse in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, where a resplendent highrise, designed with care by a chief minister to house the Secretariat and Assembly, was turned into a multi-specialty hospital, where Coronavirus patients are now being treated with care. That, however, was not the first new secretariat project in the state that went bust since successive Chief Ministers had been unsuccessfully trying to shift out of the historic Fort St George for long.

Hope such a fate doesn't befall the new Parliament that the Tata's would build in 21 months, perhaps before another government takes charge. We also hope that Parliamentary Democracy regains its lost vigour and verve in the new premises, ushering in better times for the country with parliamentarians protecting people's rights.

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T. VENKATRAM REDDY
Editor in Chief

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THE ASIAN AGE offices are located at:

New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124. **Mumbai:** Sigma House, # 43, Ground Floor, R. A. Kidwai Marg, Near Wadala Rly Station, Wadala (West), Mumbai - 400 031 Phone (022) 24195301 Fax (022) 24195347 **Kolkata:** 4th Floor, Chowdhury Building, 8/1A Little Russel Street, Kolkata 700 071. Phone: (033) 2289 0676/77 Fax (033) 2289 0686

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M. Mohibul Haque



The curious case of Urdu in NEP 2020

The Union Cabinet approved the new National Education Policy 2020 (hereafter NEP 2020) on 29 July, which proposes drastic changes in the Indian education system. While there are several changes, reforms and policies that are being widely appreciated there are many ambiguities, gaps and contradictions that are creating apprehensions in the minds of many in general and linguistic and religious minorities in particular.

NEP 2020 has given birth to apprehensions in the minds of Urdu lovers due to its unique status. It should be borne in mind that Urdu is a pan-Indian language but it lacks the patronage of any state as official language. Strangely, Urdu has not been mentioned anywhere in the 66 pages NEP 2020 released by the Union government. This conspicuous absence of Urdu drew widespread criticism across the country.

The government tried to alley the apprehensions of Urdu-lovers and Secretary of Higher Education is reported to have said: "Para 4.12, 22.6

and 22.18 of NEP 2020 talk of all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which includes Urdu. Incidentally, what is being deliberately and mischievously suppressed is that these paras do not talk of Hindi also, rather all languages of the Eighth Schedule are mentioned". Despite clarifications by the government the controversy is not dying. It calls for analysis of the NEP 2020 from the perspective of the status of Urdu.

NEP 2020 declares that "wherever possible, the medium of instructions until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language". (para 4.11, p.13) This emphasis on the mother tongue arouses hopes that many languages of India facing the challenge of survival due to deliberate design of the colonial masters and later on the apathy of the successive governments may be saved from extinction.

Under the sub-heading, Multilingualism and the Power of Language, the government recognises the fact

that "young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts more quickly in their home language/mother tongue". While emphasis on primary education in mother tongue is praiseworthy the determination of home-/local language will be problematic because the NEP 2020 does not mention what will be the unit of determination of local or home language. For example, what is the home language of the people living in cities like Lucknow, Delhi, Moradabad, Meerut or states like UP, Bihar, Telangana, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and so on is indeed very difficult to determine. Under these circumstances, the role of the central and state governments will become crucial in implementation of the three-language formula and Urdu in the absence of patronage and lacking job opportunities will certainly be marginalised.

Another important dimension of the language policy under NEP 2020 is the promise that "there will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula, and no language will be imposed on any state. The three

languages learned by children will be the choices of states, regions, and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India." (para 4.13, p.14) However, determination of a 'region' for the purpose of the implementation of the three-language formula needs clarification. Besides, three entities — states, regions and students — are created for exercising the freedom of choice in selection of three languages to be taught. The question is what will happen if there is a clash in choice between states and students. For instance, a group of Urdu speaking students want to study Urdu while state emphasizes on Hindi, Sanskrit, Bangla, Odia, etc.

The apprehensions of Urdu-lovers are not unfounded because NEP 2020 besides especially promoting Sanskrit makes reference to other classical languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian and Prakrit but Urdu is not mentioned as a classical language as it seems that only ancient and not the medieval language/languages

are recognised as classical under NEP 2020.

While the allegation of deliberate exclusion of Urdu is doing the rounds the government decided to introduce the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill 2020 in Parliament under which Urdu is set to lose its status of the sole official language of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The anxiety can also be understood from the fact that according to Census of India 2011 Urdu is showing a steady decline as mother tongue since 1981(5.25), 1991(5.18), 2001 (5.01), and 2011(4.19). Unlike other languages of the Schedule 8 of Indian Constitution whose speakers enjoy strong regional or state backing, people who speak Urdu are spread all over the country and therefore, it needs special consideration by the government for its survival and promotion.

The writer is a professor of political science at Aligarh Muslim University

Subhani



Kashmiris respond to Centre with 'Gupkar II'

Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near



On August 5, 2019, the Narendra Modi government embarked on a dangerous and destabilising course by tearing up the delicate arrangement Free India entered into with Maharaja Hari Singh on the morrow of Independence. The compact, in the shape of Article 370 of the Constitution, gave Kashmir considerable autonomy (as is now being negotiated with the Nagas). On August 22 this year, just 12 months after constitutional havoc was wreaked, accompanied by unremitting repression, Kashmir announced its riposte.

The riposte was resoundingly peaceful. It was contained in a document that its authors called "Gupkar Declaration II". The manifesto, which holds the promise of a fightback by ordinary people in Kashmir, relying only on constitutional means, if the parties that are signatory to it can hold their nerve in the face of both repression and allure, the twin instruments that go with the orchestration of tyranny.

Not to put too fine a point on it, the basis of the promise of Gupkar II is, as of now, no more than a piece of sophisticated political imagination. Its defining feature can be summed by a phrase in it: "nothing about us without us", which seems to constitute a direct challenge to the militaristic, semi-fascistic, style of governance in Kashmir. On the practical side, Gupkar II underscores that all political activities to be undertaken by the six signatory parties will be "subservient" to the restoration of Kashmir's autonomy as captured in Article 370. At this stage, there is nothing specific about public participation in taking the Gupkar II message forward.

The fundamental rea-

son for this is the disdain for mainstream parties that has developed among ordinary people since the August 5, 2019 crackdown. These parties are now held guilty of having sided all these years with New Delhi which trifled with Kashmir's dignity — indeed, even putting mainline politicians themselves in jail in the same manner as the separatists and the extremists, as if to the BJP rulers they were all the same.

It is the irony of the situation that is sought to be underlined, and it is an irony which, subtly conveyed by interested actors, transmutes into disgust for New Delhi, which gets easily transferred to those who are seen as having represented it in the Valley.

For all that, however, a very negative mood against the BJP sweeps the Valley, and it is this that is likely to sway people's behavior when Assembly elections are held — whenever they are held, and especially if the authorities perversely go on delaying it.

The BJP was once a welcome name in Kashmir due to former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's solicitude toward it. The goodwill was transferred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi until his party's true colours were revealed, ending in the stripping of J&K's autonomy and Kashmir's downright derogation and false depiction — for communal motives — as a land of Pakistan-inspired terrorists.

In the past three decades, Kashmir has seen extremist and terrorist violence, principally an aspect of Pakistan's covert and overt war against India, but also lately developing an indigenous component. But now, if Gupkar II can take off, New Delhi could face two very separate battlefields in Kashmir — one constituting the extrem-

ist-terrorist-separatist variety and, in addition, the newly created second front comprising mainstream political parties.

The latter campaigning for the restoration of Article 370, and not only J&K's statehood, are likely to get to be quite a handful unless, in the coming weeks and months, they are forcibly prevented from campaigning. So there could be greater repression, helping the extremist cause psychologically and politically, and, indirectly, Pakistan, in the process infusing greater strategic uncertainty into a region already beset with hostile Chinese military activity.

Should this materialise, few will miss locating its origins in the ideology-laden hubris which has been the hallmark of Modi, Shah & Associates, a partnership that has been so blind as not to see that the mainstream parties of Kashmir have been made victims of terrorist violence because they were seen as accomplices of Indian democracy, which has shown up in Kashmir in badly faded colours.

Gupkar II was preceded by the original Gupkar Declaration of August 4, 2019, enunciated just a day before the constitutional stripping of J&K. Leaders of the mainline Valley parties, who intuitively knew that the omens were all bad, had assembled at the Gupkar Road residence of National Conference chairman Farooq Abdullah, although they were regional rivals of the NC. They resolved, just before being imprisoned, that they would remain "united" to preserve Kashmir's constitutional status.

Gupkar II is a reaffirmation and a resolve for further action. But its distinguishing feature is that in addition to the regional parties that had met in 2019, two national parties — Congress and CPI(M) — also joined them at Dr Abdullah's residence on August 22 this year. A few days later, the CPI in Kashmir extended unqualified support. This makes Gupkar II not only a document of Kashmir but a document for the nation. This makes it unique in Kashmir's annals.

Can history be re-injected? It is hard to say. But it is worth remembering that the official move to break Kashmir's spirit constitutionally was stoutly opposed in Parliament in August 2019 by the Congress leadership, the Left parties, the DMK, RJD, and Trinamul Congress. The BJP's important Bihar ally, the JD(U), also opposed it. Another BJP ally, Akali Dal, spoke against the bill but was obliged to vote with the government.

This is an impressive number of parties standing up with Kashmir in Parliament. In addition, the principal sections of the mainline media too disapproved of the government's action. The Forum for Human Rights in Kashmir, comprising a retired Supreme Court judge, several retired high court judges, a retired home secretary, a retired foreign secretary, and retired military officers published a sharply critical report on the ending of Kashmir's autonomy and the government's subsequent actions in Kashmir. And yet, regrettably, there seems a concerted effort in some quarters in the Valley to spread the disinformation that India slept soundly through the process of Kashmir's belittling by the Modi government.

LETTERS

VACCINE ON CARDS

Russia's sovereign wealth fund RDIF, the leader in the Covid-19 vaccine project, has inked a pact with the Hyderabad-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories to test and supply 100 million doses of the Sputnik V vaccine to India. It is heartening to learn that Phase I and II clinical trials have shown promising results. Dr Reddy's will conduct the Phase III trials in India to meet the regulatory requirements of the Drugs Controller General of India. The US government has planned to give its citizens a free vaccine shot, and India would do well to emulate them.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

SPARE FARMERS

INDIA IS THE WORLD'S fifth largest economy. It has the second largest irrigated land area in the world. A majority of its population live in villages where agriculture is the primary occupation. But the farmers are growing crops the same way they did 30 years ago. They still lack good quality seeds, irrigation facilities, storage and more. And now a new ordinance will confine APMC mandis to their physical boundaries and give a free hand to big corporate buyers. It is also encouraging hoarding. What a deplorable state of affairs.

Mujahidul Islam
Mumbai

ISRAEL EXAMPLE

DAVID BEN-GURION, the first PM of Israel, was leaving home hurriedly one day when his daughter reminded him that the day was the day of annual prayers at Wailing Wall. Ben-Gurion replied matters of state waited to be resolved. The daughter said, what might be more important than the national prayer? Ben-Gurion gave the historic answer, if only prayers were enough, then Arabs praying for the destruction of Israel would have their wish. His words ring true today. Palestinians have been shown that even their brethren will no longer wait for them to smoothen ties with this dynamic nation.

M.M. Islam
Darbhanga, Bihar

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

SHORT TAKES

MIGRANTS JUMP FROM RESCUE BOAT TO REACH ITALY

Rome: Dozens of migrants jumped overboard from their rescue boat outside the Italian port of Palermo, before being plucked from the waves by the coast guard. Proactiva Open Arms, a Spanish charity, said that 76 of the 276 migrants it had saved in the Mediterranean in its latest mission "threw themselves in the water in an attempt to reach the coast". "They are all safe, after being recovered by the Italian coast guard. Some 188 people remain on board, including women and children, two of whom are small," it said in a statement. The charity appealed to the Italian authorities to allow the remaining migrants to disembark. — *AFP*

WORLD'S SMALLEST ULTRASOUND SENSOR DEVELOPED

Berlin, Sept. 17: Scientists have developed the world's smallest ultrasound detector, which is 100 times tinier than an average human hair, and can visualise features that are much smaller than previously possible, an advance that may lead to better ways of studying ultra-fine details in tissues and materials

According to the researchers from the German Research Center for Environmental Health, the core detection technology for these very low frequency sound waves has for decades focused on using piezoelectric detectors which convert the pressure from sound waves into electric voltage. They said the imaging resolution achieved using this process depends on the size of the piezoelectric detector employed, with reduction in size leading to higher resolution and an improved ability to discriminate features in the imaged tissues.

U.S. TO DECLARE UN SANCTIONS ON IRAN ARE BACK

Washington, Sept. 17: In defiance of overwhelming opposition, the United States is preparing to declare that all international sanctions against Iran have been restored. Few countries believe the move is legal, and such action could provoke a credibility crisis at the United Nations.

Virtually alone in the world, the Trump administration will announce on Saturday that UN sanctions on Iran eased under the 2015 nuclear deal are back in force.

But the other members of the UN Security Council, including US allies, disagree and have vowed to ignore the step. That sets the stage for ugly confrontations as the world body prepares to celebrate its 75th anniversary at a coronavirus-restricted General Assembly session next week.

The question is how the Trump administration will respond to being ignored. It already has slapped extensive sanctions on Iran, but could impose penalties on countries that don't enforce the UN sanctions it claims to have reimposed.

UK DEFENDS BREXIT DEAL AS BIDEN SLAMS MOVE

London, Sept. 17: The British government struggled on Thursday to overcome American opposition to its plans to breach the Brexit withdrawal agreement with the European Union, after Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden became the latest US politician to express alarm.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's move to break parts of the EU divorce deal relating to Northern Ireland has triggered fears it could undermine the 1998 Good Friday peace accord that ended decades of violence between Irish nationalists and British unionists. "We can't allow the Good Friday Agreement that brought peace to Northern Ireland to become a casualty of Brexit," Biden tweeted.

"Any trade deal between the US and UK must be contingent upon respect for the Agreement and preventing the return of a hard border. Period," he wrote. Britain and the EU jointly promised in the Brexit agreement to ensure there are no customs posts or other obstacles on the Northern Ireland-Ireland border.

The open border is key to the stability that underpins the peace settlement. British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab is in Washington this week.

Second wave in Czech Republic



People wearing face masks ride an escalator in subway in Prague, Czech Republic, on Thursday. The Czech Republic has been facing the second wave of infections. The number of new confirmed Coronavirus infections has been setting new records almost on a daily basis, currently surpassing 2,000 cases in one day for the first time. — *AP*

Defying China, top US official visits Taiwan

Taiwan Prez to host dinner for American delegation today

Taipei, Sept. 17: A top US diplomat landed in Taiwan on Thursday, the highest-ranking State Department official to visit in 40 years, in a further sign of Washington's willingness to defy China and its campaign to isolate the self-ruled island.

Keith Krach, undersecretary of state for economic growth, energy and the environment, is visiting to attend a memorial service for late president Lee Teng-hui on Saturday, the US State Department said. The trip, the second high-ranking US visit in as many months, sparked an immediate rebuke from China, which balks at any recognition of Taiwan and has mounted a decades-long policy of marginalising the demo-

cratic island.

Beijing considers Taiwan part of its territory, to be absorbed into the mainland — by force if necessary.

"China strongly opposes this," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters on Thursday, saying the trip "encourages the arrogant attitude of Taiwan independence separatist forces".

Relations between the United States and China are at their lowest point in decades, with the two sides clashing over a range of trade, military and security issues, as well as the Coronavirus pandemic.

Washington's increased outreach to Taiwan under US President Donald Trump has become yet another flashpoint between the

two powers.

"The United States honours President Lee's legacy by continuing our strong bonds with Taiwan and its vibrant democracy through shared political and economic values," spokeswoman Morgan Ortugas said in a statement announcing Krach's trip.

Taiwan's foreign ministry said Krach, accompanied by assistant secretary Robert Destro, would also discuss "how to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation" during his three-day visit.

It described him as the highest-ranking State Department official to visit Taiwan since 1979, when Washington switched diplomatic recognition to Beijing

from Taipei.

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen will host a dinner for the US delegation on Friday.

"We look forward to more exchanges and discussions between Taiwan and the US to solidify the foundation for further collaborations, including economic cooperation, through undersecretary Krach's visit," her office said in a statement.

Beijing discourages any official exchanges with Taiwan but in recent months Washington has dramatically increased its outreach.

Last month, US cabinet member and health chief Alex Azar visited to highlight Taiwan's widely praised efforts to stop Covid-19. — *AFP*

Fierce storm hits Finland, 80,000 homes powerless

Talinn, Estonia, Sept. 17: A fierce fall storm has battered Finland, leaving over 80,000 households without electricity, disrupting ferry traffic on the northern part of the Baltic Sea and prompting authorities to issue a warning for citizens to stay inside.

The storm, dubbed 'Aila', first hit the Nordic nation's west coast late Wednesday and swept on Thursday through the central and southwestern parts of the country

of 5.5 million, causing trees to fall and other material damage complete with heavy rain and winds of up to 125 kph (77 mph).

The storm is expected to move further south later Thursday, reach the Finnish capital, Helsinki, in the afternoon and move further across the Baltic Sea to neighboring Estonia where strong winds of up to 115 kph (71 mph) have already been recorded in coastal areas.

Estonian authorities said more than 3,500 households had power cut off as of midday. The Baltic country's weather service also issued a warning of extremely strong winds for Thursday.

Ferry companies operating between Finland and Sweden in the Gulf of Bothnia, the northernmost arm of the Baltic Sea, and Finland and Estonia had canceled most departures on Thursday. — *AP*

Pakistan sends Sharif arrest warrant to UK

SHAFQAT ALI
ISLAMABAD, SEPT.17

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's arrest warrant in the Al-Azizia and Avenfield references was on Thursday sent to the United Kingdom.

The warrant has been issued by assistant registrar of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) and foreign affairs secretary has been ordered to ensure its implementation.

Nawaz Sharif has been ordered to appear before the court at 11:00 am on September 22. The arrest warrant and summonses are sent to Nawaz Sharif's Park Lane address in London.

On Tuesday, the IHC had dismissed Nawaz Sharif's exemption plea while issuing non-bailable arrest warrants for the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) supremo.

The court had also ordered the authorities to



Nawaz Sharif

produce Nawaz Sharif before the court at the next hearing.

Last year in November, former prime minister left for London, 20 days after he was released on bail from a seven-year sentence for corruption.

Nawaz Sharif was granted bail by the IHC on humanitarian grounds, in the Al-Azizia case.

The PML-N leader was diagnosed with an immune system disorder it was recommended by a medical board that he should travel abroad for treatment.

On Wednesday, the IHC noted that the lawyers of Nawaz Sharif failed to satisfy the bench. The IHC remarked that the decision on the appeal against Nawaz Sharif's sentence would be taken on merit. Action will be taken to ensure Nawaz Sharif's presence before hearing his appeals.

The court further said that, according to the law, the presence of Nawaz Sharif was required for hearing his appeals.

Rich nations buy half of promised vaccine stocks

Alarm across Europe over virus surge: WHO

Washington, Sept. 17: Rich nations representing a fraction of the global population have already bought up over half the promised Covid-19 vaccine stocks, a study showed, as US President Donald Trump pledged to begin inoculating Americans within weeks.

Big pharma is racing to produce an effective jab to counter a virus that has now killed more than 9,35,000 people around the world and infected almost 30 million.

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday warned against "vaccine nationalism" that she said could put lives at risk by depriving the most vulnerable in poorer nations of immunity.

But a study released by Oxfam showed a group of wealthy countries representing just 13 percent of the world population has already secured the lion's share of doses.

"Access to a life-saving vaccine shouldn't depend on where you live or how much money you have," said Robert Silverman of Oxfam America.

"Covid-19 anywhere is Covid-19 everywhere." The five leading vaccine candidates currently in late-stage trials will be able to supply 5.9 billion doses, enough to inoculate

Copenhagen, Sept. 17: The World Health Organization on Thursday warned of "alarming rates of transmission" of Covid-19 across Europe and cautioned against shortening quarantine periods as countries in the region scrambled to find ways to reduce infections without resorting to new lockdowns.

The WHO's regional director for Europe Hans Kluge said a September surge — Europe set a new record last week, with some 54,000 cases recorded in 24 hours — "should serve as a wake-up call for all of us." "Although these numbers reflect more comprehensive testing, it also shows alarming rates of transmission across the region," he told an online news conference from Copenhagen.

about three billion people, the Oxfam report said.

Some 51 percent of those jabs have been snapped up by the wealthy world, including the United States, Britain, the European Union, Australia, Hong Kong and

In Britain, new restrictions will take effect Friday, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson warning that pubs may have to close earlier to help avoid a "second hump" of Coronavirus cases.

Residents of northeast England, including the cities of Newcastle and Sunderland, will no longer be allowed to meet people outside their own homes or immediate social circles.

The government already imposed rules across England on Monday limiting socialising to groups of six or fewer, as daily cases reached levels not seen since early May.

Britain has been Europe's worst-hit country, with the government registering nearly 42,000 deaths. — *AFP*

5 Chinese charged in mega hacking scheme, says US

Washington, Sept. 17: The US Justice Department has charged five Chinese citizens with hacking over a 100 companies and institutions in America and abroad, including the Indian government's networks, and stealing valuable software data and business intelligence.

Deputy US attorney general Jeffrey Rosen on Wednesday announced three indictments have been unsealed in the matter that collectively charge five Chinese nationals with computer hacking and charge two Malaysian nationals for helping some of those hackers target victims and sell the fruits of their crime.

The Malaysian nationals were arrested on Sunday and the Chinese nationals have been declared fugitive, according to a Justice Department statement. Rosen severely criticised the Chinese government. "The Department of Justice has used every tool available to disrupt the illegal computer intrusions and cyberattacks by these Chinese citizens. Regrettably, the Chinese Communist Party has chosen a different path - of making China safe for

cyber-criminals so long as they attack computers outside China and steal intellectual property helpful to China," the deputy attorney general said.

"In about 2019, the conspirators compromised government of India websites, as well as virtual private networks and database servers supporting the Government of India. The conspirators used VPS PROVIDER servers to connect to an Open VPN network owned by the Government of India," the indictment said.

In the attacks, the conspirators installed 'Cobalt Strike' malware on Indian government-protected computers, it added.

According to the charges, the computer intrusions affected over 100 companies in the United States and abroad.

The victims ranged from software development, computer hardware, telecommunication, social media and video game companies. Non-profit organisations, universities, think-tanks, foreign governments, pro-democracy politicians and activists in Hong Kong were also targeted. — *PTI*



Barack Obama

OBAMA'S MEMOIR 'PROMISED LAND' TO BE RELEASED IN NOVEMBER

Washington, Sept. 17 : Former US president Barack Obama on Thursday announced the publication in November of the first half of his memoirs, "A Promised Land" — two weeks after the election pitting Donald Trump against Joe Biden.

Publisher Penguin Random House said the book will be released in 25 languages simultaneously on November 17.

"There's no feeling like finishing a book, and I'm proud of this one," Obama tweeted.

"In A Promised Land, I try to provide an honest accounting of my presidency, the forces we grapple with as a nation, and how we can heal our divisions and make democracy work for everybody." Obama, America's first black president, served two terms in the White House from January 2009 through January 2017, when he was succeeded by Trump.

The book will reveal Obama's thoughts during the global financial crisis and his take on Russian President Vladimir Putin, the statement from Penguin Random House says.

It will also revisit the 59-year-old Democratic leader's approval of a May 2011 raid in which Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan.

A release date for the second volume has not yet been set, Penguin Random House said.

SPACE | ODYSSEY

A year on Jupiter-sized planet quickly whipping around is only 1.4 days

Giant planet found orbiting dead star

Washington, Sept. 17: Scientists have, for the first time, discovered a Jupiter-sized planet orbiting a white dwarf or a dead star located about 80 light years away.

The finding, published in the journal *Nature*, shows the likely presence of the planet, named WD 1856 b, orbiting the smaller star remnant every 34 hours.

"This planet is roughly the size of Jupiter, but it also has a very short orbital peri-

od — a year on this planet is only 1.4 days, so it's quickly whipping around its white dwarf star," said Ian Crossfield, assistant professor at the University of Kansas in the US.

A white dwarf is the vestige of a star that has ballooned into a red giant then collapsed back into a dense, dim core that is often about the size of Earth, so this planet is much larger than what is left of its star, the

researchers said. The process usually devours orbiting planets — but not in the case of WD 1856 b, which appears somehow to have avoided destruction, they said. "This tells us white dwarfs can have planets, which is something we didn't know before," Crossfield said. "There are people who now are looking for transiting planets around white dwarfs that could be potentially habitable.

It'd be a pretty weird system, and you'd have to think about how the planets actually survived all that time," he said. The researchers noted that this finding proves that some kinds of planets can survive and be found around white dwarfs. At first, WD 1856 b captured astronomers' interest when they noticed a possible transiting object with NASA's TESS Space Telescope survey. — *PTI*



Picture of the first time, discovered a Jupiter-sized planet orbiting a white dwarf. — *NASA*

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,979.85	-0.82
Nifty 50	11,516.10	-0.76
S&P 500*	3,341.83	-1.29
Dollar (₹)	73.65	-0.16
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.38	-0.56
Euro (₹)	86.96	0.34
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,463*608	1.15
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.35	1.13
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.033	0.041
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.663	-0.024

* As of 9:30 PM IST

ESIC members can file for jobloss benefit

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) subscribers who lost their job due to the Covid-19 situation can claim unemployment relief of 50 per cent of wages under the Atal Bimit Kalyan Yojana. The claims can be made online along with submission of the physical claim with an affidavit, photocopy of Aadhaar card and bank account details to the designated ESIC branch office by post or in person.

ALL bags large order from fuel distributor



Ashok Leyland said it has bagged orders for 1,400 intermediate commercial vehicles (ICVs) from a logistics start-up company, Procure Box. The ICVs will be utilised by Procure Box for its fuel distribution business across 750 districts in the country. The order encompasses Ashok Leyland's most successful product, the Ecomet, and will be executed in the next five-six months, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Israeli and Dubai diamond bourses sign trade pact

The Israeli and Dubai diamond exchanges said they had struck a deal to boost trade, days after Israel signed breakthrough agreements with UAE and Bahrain. Israel remains a major leader in the polishing of large diamonds. The Israeli Diamond Exchange will open an office in Dubai, while the Dubai Multi Commodities Center, an economic free zone, will set up shop in Ramat Gan, Israel, the base of the Israeli exchange.

Skoda Rapid automatic priced at ₹7.49 lakh

European car maker Skoda launched the automatic transmission version of its TSI-powered Rapid at a starting price of Rs 7.49 lakh (ex-showroom) ahead of the festival season. Skoda India had rolled out Rapid with TSI in manual version only in May this year. A TSI (turbocharged stratified injection) engine is a compact, high-powered and uses less fuel while cutting fuel consumption and CO2 emissions.

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■ Irdai panel wants to cover MSMEs first ₹75K-cr pandemic pool suggested

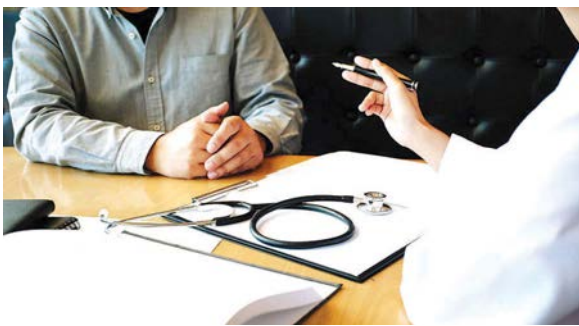
FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEPT. 17

A working group formed by the insurance regulator to study the feasibility of setting up a 'pandemic risk pool' to cover business losses arising due to pandemics and epidemics has recommended setting up a Rs 75,000 crore pool with public-private partnership to cover the business losses of MSME workers in the first phase.

The reinsurer, GIC Re, which has experience of managing the Indian Terrorism Pool and Indian Nuclear Pool, would be an apt administrator for the proposed pandemic pool, the group has said.

Pointing to the need for a pandemic pool, the group said some estimates suggest that the current business interruption premiums in some markets would need to be collected for over 100 years to cover two months of Covid-19-related business interruption costs.

"The working group believes that for the pandemic pool to have an adequate purpose, it needs to cover at least 4-5 crores MSME workers in the first phase and to accomplish that, the assurance from the government to provide a backstop is necessary... the backstop triggers only at the event of pandemic striking and the total loss payouts are higher than the capacity garnered by the local insurance/reinsurance and international market. Globally all pan-



demie pool (including USA, France, Germany) proposals are heavily hinged on their national government's support in the form of similar backstop and are at different stages of approval. The working group has proposed a government backstop of appx. Rs 75,000 crores," said the report.

"The quantum of loss due to an epidemic/pandemic risk event is huge and hence is beyond the capacity of public and/or private companies and/or government alone. Hence a risk pooling mechanism with public-private-government participation would be an appropriate resolution to address this similar concern in future," said the report.

The report said the participation shall be mandatory for the sectors which have been covered under the pool. "This can be with as a standalone product providing coverage for the event or as an add-on with the existing products."

The pool shall provide coverage in a phased man-

ner. As MSME and the unorganised sector are the worst affected segments of society during the current Covid-19 pandemic in India, the first phase of the pool shall cover income losses due to non-damage business interruption resulting from a future pandemic event and subsequent lockdown.

Pandemic losses are covered under currently available health insurance products, hence the coverage for losses in the health segment caused due to a pandemic event, beyond a threshold, may be covered under the pool in the second phase. The coverage under the pool may be expanded to the life insurance segment also in the later phases, said the report.

The pool premium collection is proposed to be invested in government securities or specifically designed bonds by the government. The premiums accumulated over the years and the investment surplus would help in gradually reducing the government backstop.

Advance tax mop-up falls 25.5% in Q2

Mumbai, Sept 17: Advance tax collections fell 25.5 per cent to Rs 1,59,057 crore in the second quarter of the fiscal, an income tax official said on Thursday.

However, there was improvement over the first quarter ended June, when advance tax revenue had plunged 76 per cent to a tepid Rs 11,714 crore as the whole economy was under a stringent lockdown.

During the year-ago period to September 15, 2019, total advance tax collection had stood at Rs 2,12,889 crore, down from Rs 3,70,652 crore a year ago.

"Total advance tax collection in the second quarter fell by 25.5 per cent to Rs 1,59,057 crore from Rs 2,12,889 crore YoY. While corporates paid only Rs 1,29,619.6 crore in advance tax, down by 27.3 per cent in the reporting quarter, personal income tax collection stood at Rs 29,437.5 crore, down 15 per cent from Rs 34,632.9 crore.

"However, TDS (tax deducted at source) fared better at Rs 1,38,605.2 crore, down by 5.6 per cent from Rs 1,46,792.4 crore," the tax official from the Mumbai zone told PTI.

Advance corporate tax mop-up had plummeted by 79 per cent to Rs 8,286 crore in the June quarter, from Rs 39,405 crore in the June 2019 quarter. Advance personal income tax collection in Q1 had declined 64 per cent to Rs 3,428 crore from Rs 9,512 crore. —PTI

Civil aviation revenues dip 85%; over 18,000 jobs lost

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

Revenues of the civil aviation sector dropped by 85 per cent since the lockdown even as the sector lost more than 18,000 jobs.

The Covid-19-induced lockdown had reduced the air traffic to a fraction of what it was before. The regulatory restrictions on flight operations had led to severe curtailment in operations and sub-optimal aircraft utilisation.

As per the ministry of civil aviation data, domestic traffic fell close to 80 per cent from 5.85 crore during March-July 2019 to a mere 1.20 crore in March-July 2020.

International traffic too reduced by 87 per cent from 93.45 lakh to 11.55 lakh during the period.

This led to a steep decline in revenues in the June quarter. The aggregate revenue of Indian carriers came down by 85 per cent from Rs 25,517 crore in the June quarter of 2019 to just Rs 3,651 crore during April-June 2020. Air India's revenue fell to Rs 1,531 crore from



Rs 7,066 crore in the same quarter last year.

Aggregate revenues of airport operators too shrunk from Rs 5,745 crore in the June quarter of 2019 to Rs 894 crore in the June quarter of 2020, a drop of 84 per cent.

Reduced revenues saw more than 18,000 employees losing jobs across airlines, airports, ground handling agencies and cargo operators. As many as 5,298 employees of airlines lost jobs by the end of July while 3,246 people at airports, 4,866 people with ground handling agencies and 1,017 employees with cargo operators lost their jobs between March-end and July-end.

"The fall in domestic air travel demand has been much sharper than the

capacity cuts imposed for the industry. The pick-up in domestic passenger volume since end-May 2020 has been slow, with traffic increasing by only 6 per cent in July from the previous month. We think volume growth will remain in the single digits over the next few months, as the pandemic continues to spread in India and people forego non-essential travel," says Fitch Ratings.

Covid-19 has also adversely impacted the financials of the Airports Authority of India and it is likely to see losses this fiscal. In order to meet the working capital requirements, the AAI has taken 'fund-based working capital' facility of Rs 1,500 crore. Delhi and Mumbai airports were given a three-months deferral, up to July 15, on monthly fee payment against their annual fee obligation. Bangalore and Hyderabad airports have also been granted deferral of four months from July 1 for payment of concession fee to the central government.

SC refuses to resume Ambani insolvency case

UPMANYU TRIVEDI
SEPT. 17

The Supreme Court rejected a petition by State Bank of India to allow a personal bankruptcy case against tycoon Anil Ambani to resume.

A three-judge panel headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao ruled that the bankruptcy case against

A m b a n i will remain suspended and directed the Delhi High Court to decide on Ambani's challenge to provisions of insolvency law.

The case is among the first high-profile ones after



Anil Ambani

rules were set for personal bankruptcy last year. Bankers and investors in stressed assets are keenly watching the case as its final outcome may decide the power of lenders in taking action against founders who guaranteed repayments of loans by companies that later went bankrupt.

—Bloomberg

Covid proves a losing business for insurers

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

Health insurance may be a fastest growing business for the general insurance sector in the pandemic season, but a significant surge in the number of claims and their immediate settlement have led to companies incurring heavy losses on health cover.

Since the Covid-19 outbreak, the health insurers have earned revenue of Rs 450 crore through the sale of corona-specific products, but they have settled a large number of claims on Covid-19 during the period, paying out Rs 1,430 crore, almost over three times the premia they have earned. This was revealed by Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India chairman S.C. Khuntia during a CII virtual summit on Thursday.

"There has been a surge in health insurance claims relating to Covid-19 with a total of 2.38 lakh

claims. Of these, 1.48 lakh claims amounting to ₹1,430 crore have already been settled," Khuntia said, adding that the sector has still witnessed a positive growth of 2.4 per cent between April and August end 2020 as compared to a year ago.

The Irdai is working on a risk-based solvency margin system for the insurers in the next three years' time. "As of now, insurers are supposed to maintain solvency margin to the tune of 1.5 times of their total premium. As the risk varies segment-wise, the regulator is working on varying solvency margins for various segments," he said.

Khuntia said the Irdai is working on standard products for insurance of dwelling units and term insurance as well.

He asked all insurers to ensure repeat purchase and renewal of health-related policies. The Irdai is monitoring the persistency levels (volume of business retained) of life insurance companies.

Global stocks dip on lack of Fed action

Beijing, Sept. 17: Global stocks and US futures sank on Thursday after the Federal Reserve indicated its benchmark interest rate will stay close to zero at least through 2023 but announced no additional stimulus plans.

Indexes in London, Frankfurt and other European markets dropped after Shanghai, Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, India all closed lower.

The Fed said Wednesday it won't raise interest rates until inflation reaches 2 per cent, which the US central bank's own projections say won't happen until late 2023. Chairman Jerome Powell promised the Fed will not lose sight of unemployed Americans but gave no indication of new stimulus.

Markets hoped for the Fed to put policy money where the mouth is but "ended up a tad disappointed," Mizuho Bank said in a report. The Fed was long on talk and short on action. Also Thursday, the Japanese and British central banks left their interest rates unchanged.

—AP

Happiest Minds vaults over 120% on Day 1

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 17

Happiest Mind Technologies gained more than 100 per cent on its stock market debut, doubling shareholders' investments in a week's time from the close of the initial public offering on September 9.

Bengaluru-based IT solutions firm's shares listed at Rs 351 on the BSE and at Rs 350 on NSE, at a premium of 111.44 per cent, against the public issue price of Rs

166 per share. The stock touched a high of Rs 395 on the BSE. Happiest Minds finally closed at Rs 371 on the BSE gaining 123.49 per cent on the first day of listing with a market capitalisation of Rs 5,448 crore.

Earlier the Rs 702-crore public offer by the firm got subscribed 151 times.

The combined turnover on NSE and BSE was a massive Rs 2,353 crore.

Suyog Kulkarni, senior analyst, Reliance Securities said, "Happiest Mind

recorded massive listing gains of 100 per cent plus which we believe suggests investor's confidence on company execution and broad-based technology demand resiliency. Digital capabilities will be in high demand in the post-pandemic world."

"Additionally, mid-size IT companies need to consistently upgrade their offerings through enhanced ecosystem participation and inorganic capability additions," he said.

DELISTING: VEDANTA SEEKS NOD FOR REVERSE BOOK BUILDING

New Delhi, Sept. 17: After mobilising \$3.15 billion to fund the delisting of its Indian subsidiary, Vedanta Resources Ltd has approached the Securities and Exchange Board of India for approvals to start the reverse book building process, sources said.

The company had in May announced plans to delist Vedanta Ltd from the Indian stock exchanges by buying out non-promoter shareholding.

Sources said the firm is expecting to receive Sebi approvals by early next



week, after which it will launch reverse book building and invite bids from public shareholders.

The reverse book building process is likely to be open for five days and will allow public shareholders to effectively discover the

price for the delisting.

"The final exit offer price" will take the shareholding of Vedanta Resources to at least 90 per cent in Vedanta Ltd. The public shareholding in Vedanta Ltd is currently at 49.49 per cent. "Vedanta Resources is looking to complete the entire exercise in the next two-three weeks," the source said.

When contacted, a Vedanta spokesperson said that the company is working to take all "necessary approvals" for the reverse book building.

—PTI

Babus say taxes are fair, but royalty payments are high

New Delhi, Sept. 17: Auto companies should cut costs by reducing royalty payments to their parent companies abroad instead of asking the government to reduce GST, finance ministry sources said on Thursday, responding to criticism on high taxes in India.

Most globally established companies in the sector have flourished in the current taxation and regulatory regime, which is evident from the huge royalty payouts made by Indian partners to their foreign parent firms, they added.

Toyota Motor Corp is not looking at further expansion in India due to the country's high taxes, the firm's vice chairman of India unit Shekar Viswanathan had said in an interview this week.

Finance ministry



sources said India's tax policy on the automobile sector has been quite consistent for the last three decades, in the form of allowing foreign investment and incentivising domestic manufacturing.

GST rates on automobiles are less than what VAT and excise duty rates used to be in the pre-GST times. All of a sudden, dissent in some quarters on tax rates on automobiles is surprising, they added.

"These companies shou-

ld cut down their costs of manufacturing by cutting down the royalty payments to their parent companies abroad instead of asking the government to reduce GST," a source said.

Taxes on automobiles are in the highest bracket across the globe without much exception, the sources said.

Japan currently has three types of taxes on automobiles—once on the purchase, then an annual automobile tax based on engine size, and finally a weight tax at inspections required once every two years. Over and above this, there is GST at the highest end of the applicable rates, they said.

Also, in the EU, the base rate for VAT/GST on automobiles ranges from 20 per cent to 25 per cent.

The UK charges vehicle

excise duties which vary with car emission norms and has 14 rate slabs.

Besides, there are road usage charges. High parking charges are common across the globe, they said.

Sources said vehicles, based on their high pre-GST incidence, were placed in the 28 per cent GST slab.

Passenger vehicles also attract compensation cess ranging from 1 to 22 per cent. But even with this, the tax rate has not gone beyond pre-GST levels, except in few cases which were enjoying certain duty concessions, they added.

"Most of the countries provide certain concessions to electric vehicles. Given this, it would be unfair to claim that the GST rates are a demand dampener," one source said.

—PTI

Toyota Kirloskar takes a U-turn

New Delhi, Sept. 17: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) on Thursday said it remains deeply committed to the Indian market and its national objectives, refuting once again the claims by a senior company official earlier that it would stop further expansion in India due to high taxes.

The automaker said it has firm belief in the core strength of India's economic growth potential and is fully committed to continually work towards contributing to economic development.

Keeping in sync with the vision of 'Grow India Grow with India, during the past two decades, the

company has worked tirelessly to invest in creation of a world-class talent pool and for building a strong competitive local supplier ecosystem in line with the "Skill India" and the "Make in India" initiatives, TKM managing director Masakazu Yoshimura said in a statement.

Toyota's operations in India are an integral part of its long-term global strategy. "As part of these efforts, Toyota Group is targeting to invest over Rs 2,000 crore in India in the coming years on technology and electrification, both for the domestic and the export markets," he said.

—PTI

New Delhi, Sept. 17: Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Thursday said it has settled a litigation with a unit of Bristol Myers Squibb related to patents for Revlimid (lenalidomide) capsules, used to treat various kinds of cancer.

The Hyderabad-based company has settled litigation with Celgene, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bristol Myers Squibb, Dr Reddy's Laboratories said in a statement.

In settlement of all outstanding claims in the litigation, Celgene has agreed to provide the company with a licence to sell volume-limited amounts of generic lenalidomide capsules in the US beginning on a confidential date after March 2022 subject to regulatory approval, it said.

The agreed-upon percentages are confidential, Dr Reddy's said.

The drug maker is already licensed to sell generic lenalidomide capsules in the US without volume limitation beginning on January 31, 2026, Dr Reddy's said.

"We are pleased with the settlement agreement, and look forward to bringing a generic version of lenalidomide to market soon subject to regulatory approval for the benefit of patients," Dr Reddy's Laboratories North America generics CEO Marc Kikuchi said.

Revlimid, a trademark of Celgene, is used to treat multiple myeloma and myelodysplastic syndromes.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Hari slips, Carlsen roars into lead

Chennai: Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna slipped to fifth spot from a share of lead after a win-less day at the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament, where he lost to Ian Nepomniachtchi and world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen. Harikrishna, who shared the lead with Lev Aronian after three rounds, lost the fourth round of the Rapid event to Nepomniachtchi, then drew with Armenian Aronian before losing the sixth to Carlsen. Meanwhile, Carlsen bounced back after a below par opening day to record three wins and jumped to sole lead with nine points. The Norwegian outplayed the India No.2 in 31 moves to wrap up a successful day on which he also defeated Aronian and Leinier Dominguez (USA). Hari held Aronian to a draw in 58 moves after a 45-move defeat at the hands of the Russian. — PTI

NSFs gets SC nod for recognition

New Delhi: The Sports Ministry on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court's go-ahead to it on grant of recognition to National Sports Federations (NSFs) and said it would intimate the court about the process in a week's time. The Supreme Court said the ministry and the Indian Olympic Association are not required to seek the nod of the Delhi High Court before granting recognition to sports federations in the country. The apex court was hearing the sports ministry's appeal against the High Court order which prohibited it from taking decision on granting recognition to NSFs without its prior approval. A total of 57 NSFs were rendered de-recognised because of the HC order. "As per the Honourable Supreme Court's order today, the sports ministry can now give recognitions to NSFs which will help in the preparations for our Olympic-bound athletes," a source said. — PTI

Fed Cup named after Billie Jean

London: The Fed Cup is changing its name to honour tennis great Billie Jean King, the woman whose lifelong battle for equality and social justice laid the foundation for generations that followed. The Billie Jean King Cup will become the first major global team competition to be named after a woman, the International Tennis Federation said Thursday. "I'm still in shock, the 76-year-old King said of the tribute. It's really a privilege, and it's also a responsibility. It's wild, it's great, it's wonderful." The rebranding follows earlier changes to bring prize money in line with the men's Davis Cup and coincides with the 50th anniversary of King's pioneering effort to launch a women's pro tennis circuit. "We feel it's long overdue," ITF president David Haggerty said. — AP

Djoker, Nadal off to winning starts

Rome: Defending champion Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic made winning returns at the Italian Open on Wednesday with the top two men's seeds easing into the third round of the clay-court tournament in Rome. Nine-time winner Nadal swept aside fellow Spaniard Pablo Carreno Busta 6-1, 6-1 in his first match in over six months, played behind closed doors at the Foro Italico. Earlier, Djokovic eased past Italian wild card entry Salvatore Caruso 6-3, 6-2. — AFP

Live on TV

TENNIS

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

FOOTBALL

Spanish League: Getafe vs Osasuna from 12.30 am (Saturday) on LaLiga page on Facebook

WWE SMACKDOWN

Bouts from 5.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

BASKETBALL

NBA Western Conference Finals (Game 1 of best-of-7): Los Angeles Lakers vs Denver Nuggets from 6.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Six, HD

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WRAP AND ROLL

MI look for more finishers to reduce Hardik's load

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 17: Monitoring comeback man Hardik Pandya's workload is paramount for Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene as he intends to groom a "few more finishers" for the upcoming edition of Indian Premier League starting here on Saturday.

Defending champions Mumbai Indians will take on last year's runners-up Chennai Super Kings in the opening encounter on Saturday, which will be Hardik's first game in a year having undergone back surgery for stress fracture last year.

"Hardik is coming back from an injury. So we will have to be mindful of that but he is looking very good in the nets. Both the players (Pandya brothers) have been fantastic for MI over the last three or four years. It brings a lot of energy to the group," Jayawardene said during MI's virtual media conference on Thursday.

The Sri Lankan legend was asked whether Hardik will again be assigned the finisher's job.

"We have used him (Hardik) in different roles in the past and we will look into that. We will have quite a number of other players who can fix into that role as well, so whenever the opportunity is there we ask anyone to finish the game off," said the former Sri Lanka captain.

"It doesn't just fall on Hardik but it is one of his responsibilities, so we want to try and challenge players in different ways in this camp, so we will continue to do that," he said.

Australian dasher Chris Lynn is an opening option but Jayawardene made it clear that Rohit Sharma-Quinton de Kock opening pair wouldn't be tinkered with.

"Having options is always great. Chris Lynn is a great addition to the squad but the combination of Rohit and Quinton has been there for us, last season they complement each other well," he said.

The MI coach is also aware that Jasprit Bumrah's workload management, just like Hardik's, need to be precise, considering that India will be playing a gruelling four-match Test series against Australia Down Under later in the year. — PTI



David Warner

Maxwell, Carey hit tons as Oz clinch series

Manchester, Sept. 17: Glenn Maxwell and Alex Carey both hit brilliant hundreds as Australia sealed a dramatic series win over world champions England in the third one-day international at Old Trafford on Wednesday. Australia, chasing a target of 303, were all but out of the game at 73-5 when Maxwell came to the crease.

But an Australia record sixth-wicket stand of 212 between Carey (106) and Maxwell (108) helped give the tourists a 2-1 success as England suffered their first home ODI series defeat in five years.

Earlier, Jonny Bairstow had revived England from the depths of 0-2 with a superb hundred that saw them to 302-7 after the opener watched from the

other end as left-arm quick Mitchell Starc removed Jason Roy and Test captain Joe Root with the first two balls of the game.

Sam Billings (57) and Chris Woakes (53 not out) also hit valuable fifties.

Maxwell's hundred was just his second century in 113 matches at this level, with Carey's innings the wicketkeeper's maiden century in his 39th ODI.

But when Maxwell holed out off leg-spinner Adil Rashid, Australia still needed 18 off 15 balls. That became 10 off six when Carey, whose century came off 106 balls, was superbly caught by a diving Mark Wood at third man off Jofra Archer.

New batsman Starc, however, hit his first ball, from Rashid, for six and



Mumbai Indians' Hardik Pandya at a net session in Abu Dhabi.

Malinga will be missed, rues Rohit

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 17: Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma on Thursday conceded that "incomparable" Sri Lankan pace legend Lasith Malinga, who has opted out of this year's IPL, will be severely missed by his defending champion team given his "unbelievable" past performances.

The 37-year-old Malinga, who is IPL's highest wicket-taker with 170 scalps to his credit, has pulled out

citing personal reasons in a major blow to the four-time champions. MI will take on the Chennai Super Kings in this season's lung-opener on September 19 here.

"I don't think it is easy to come and fill his boots. He has been a match-winner for Mumbai. I have said it many times, whenever we sort of find ourselves in trouble, Malinga was the one to bail us out from that," Rohit said in a online press conference.

"His experience will be missed, what he did with MI is unbelievable and it is unfortunate that he is not a part of the team this year.

"We have got likes (James) Pattinson, Dhawal Kulkarni, Mohsin (Khan) and these are the names that we are looking to replace Malinga with. But obviously what Malinga did for Mumbai, it is not just comparable," he added. Talking about his own

role, Rohit said he will continue to open.

"I opened the entire tournament last year and I will continue to do that. Again I keep all the options open, whatever the team wants, happy to do that.

"Even when I play for India, message from my side to the management has always been the same 'do not close any doors' keep all the options open and I will do the same here as well." — PTI

Just 36-hr quarantine for Eng, Oz players arriving from UK

New Delhi, Sept. 17: The Indian Premier League franchises will be heaving a sigh of relief as all the 21 Australian and English players arriving to the UAE from the United Kingdom will have to undergo just 36 hours of quarantine instead of the earlier prescribed six days.

All the franchises which have English and Australian players arriving after the white ball series in the UK had appealed for reducing the quarantine period and the BCCI under Sourav Ganguly's leader-

ship has been able to successfully sort the issue out with local authorities in the UAE.

"Yes, I can confirm that all the English and Australian players have to now undergo 36-hour quarantine instead of six days. The matter has been sorted and most of the teams will now have their big stars available from the first game itself," a senior IPL functionary privy to development said on conditions of anonymity.

The likes of Steve Smith, David Warner, Jofra

Archer, Jos Buttler will arrive in the UAE late on Thursday night (UAE time) from the UK and on arrival will undergo RT-PCR test for Covid-19.

"They have undergone one rapid test before boarding (the flight) and will undergo another on arrival. Otherwise, the robust testing protocols will be followed as usual. The rationale behind the move is that all the players are entering from one bio-bubble to another," the veteran BCCI official said. — PTI



Australia's Glenn Maxwell (left) celebrates with Alex Carey after scoring a century during their third ODI against England in Manchester on Wednesday. — AP

sealed victory with two balls to spare with a four. "It probably wasn't the

ideal situation when I came in but being the last batter, I suppose I had a

FRENCH | LEAGUE

Draxler gifts PSG season's first win

Paris, Sept. 17: Julian Draxler scored in added time on Wednesday night to give depleted Paris Saint-Germain their first league win of the season, 1-0 at home against Metz.

PSG, shorn of many stars before kick off, were playing with nine men when Draxler pounced on a rebound to nod home PSG's first goal of the league season.

"I'm very proud, it's incredible, honestly. I still have to think about it because I still can't believe it," PSG coach Thomas Tuchel said after the game.

PSG, who started the game seriously depleted, were reduced to 10 men after 65 minutes when central defender Abdou Diallou collected a second yellow card and his club's fourth of the season.

In the dying seconds, defender Juan Bernat, a 63rd minute replacement, limped off with a knee injury, leaving PSG, who had used all their replacements with nine men.

"All the fans can be proud, we still deserved to win, at 9 against 11," said Tuchel.

While the game was in progress, the French league announced bans of two games for Neymar and

● **PSG, shorn of many stars before kick off, were playing with nine men when Draxler pounced on a rebound to nod home PSG's first goal of the league season.**

Leandro Paredes and six games for Layvin Kurzawa after their red cards during a home loss to Marseille on Sunday that ended in a brawl.

Another star attacker, Kylian Mbappe, remains in coronavirus quarantine while Thilo Kehrer and Marco Verratti are injured.

But striker Mauro Icardi, centreback Marquinhos and goalie Keylor Navas returned after spells in quarantine.

"We made a lot of effort, we had a lot of changes, we used a lot of players who have not trained for a while...With players who haven't played for a long time," said Tuchel. "But the effort is still there."

PSG had opened the season with two defeats for the first time since 1984/85, losing by one goal to Lens and then Marseille. — AFP

Messi brace takes Barca past Girona

Barcelona, Sept. 17: Lionel Messi scored twice on Wednesday as Barcelona beat second-division Girona 3-1 in a preseason friendly.

Messi helped set up Philippe Coutinho, back from his loan at Bayern Munich, for the first goal after 21 minutes.

The Argentine scored his first after 45 minutes, spinning on the edge of the penalty area and drilling a shot in off the base of the far post. He scored his second, with a deflected shot, after 50 minutes.

He went off after an hour. Messi only returned to training at the start of last week after saying he wanted to leave the club.

Messi started Barcelona's first friendly on Saturday, playing 45 minutes without scoring in a 3-1 victory over third-tier Gimnastica Tarragona.

Earlier on Wednesday, La

Liga president Javier Tebas said he was pleased Messi had stayed at Barcelona.

"Messi is important for our competition," said Tebas, at an event to promote the Liga sticker collection. "He is a player who was born in our competition... And hopefully he will finish his career in our league."

Barcelona used 20 players in Wednesday's game at the club's training centre but neither Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez nor Chilean midfielder Arturo Vidal appeared.

Manager Ronald Koeman said after the game he had talked to Suarez and acknowledged Barcelona might not be able to sell him.

"If finally he does not find a team and ends up staying, he will be one more player for the squad," said Koeman. — AFP

BELGIUM TOP FIRST FIFA CHART SINCE SHUTDOWN

Zurich, Sept. 17: The first FIFA men's world rankings for five months were still led by Belgium on Thursday after the shutdown of European teams during the coronavirus pandemic ended in September.

Belgium lead an unchanged top four nations from 2018 World Cup winners France, Brazil — who have yet to play in 2020 — and England.

Portugal, the reigning European and Uefa Nations League champions, rose two places to No. 5.

Rankings after the November international break will decide seedings when FIFA draws the European qualifying groups for the 2022 World Cup in early December. The 10 highest-ranked European teams will be top-seeded in groups where only the winners will advance directly to the finals tournament in Qatar. Three more teams will qualify through playoffs scheduled in March 2022. — AP

Leeds, Saints crash out of League Cup

London, Sept. 17: Leeds and Southampton were the Premier League casualties in the second round of the League Cup on Wednesday

as League One Hull won a Yorkshire derby 9-8 on penalties at Elland Road, while Saints lost 2-0 at home to Brentford.

On their first appearance in the top-flight for 16 years, Leeds were unlucky not to hold Liverpool to a thrilling draw at Anfield on Saturday, but Marcelo Bielsa's decision to make 11 changes backfired as his side were far less clinical against a team two divisions below them.

Mallik Wilks' early deflected effort gave the Tigers something to hold on to and, despite handing club Spanish international forward Rodrigo his first start, Leeds failed to muster a response until

deep into stoppage time when Ezgjan Alioski fired home.

A marathon shootout followed with both sides missing just one of their first eight penalties before Jamie Shackleton's spot-kick was saved and Alfie Jones sent Hull into round three.

Southampton boss Ralph Hassenhutt named a strong side at St Mary's but still got no response from their disappointing start to the season at Crystal Palace on Saturday.

Brentford narrowly missed promotion to the Premier League for the first time when they lost the playoff final to Fulham last month, but showed they do have the quality to compete with top-flight teams despite losing top scorer Ollie Watkins to Aston Villa. — AFP