

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | THURSDAY 17 | SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 32°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: 1.4 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Purattasi 1
Tithi: Amavasai
Star: Puram/ Uthiram
Rahukalam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm
Yamagandam:
6 am to 7.30 am
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.47 am
Zohar: 12.10 pm
Asar: 3.21 pm
Maghrib: 6.11 pm
Isha: 7.22 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.09 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 5.40 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 6.20 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+94,443)	(+1,116)
51,12,480	83,207

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,652)	
TN: 5,19,860	8,559

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,99.28,676

DEATHS

9,42,575

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	213
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worldometers.info

Tirupati MP Balli Durga Prasad Rao dead

Tirupati: Tirupati Lok Sabha MP Balli Durga Prasad Rao, who was battling Covid-19 for over a month, died at a hospital in Chennai on Wednesday, family members and the hospital said. Chennai-based Apollo Hospitals, where the 65-year old YSRCP MP was admitted on August 14, said doctors treated him in the intensive care unit “for severe Covid pneumonia” and his end came at 5.45 pm.

Arts scholar

Kapila Vatsyayan dies

New Delhi: Scholar, author and connoisseur of the arts Kapila Vatsyayan died at her Delhi home on Wednesday. She was 92. “She passed away at 9 am today at her home in Gulmohar Enclave,” Kanwal Ali, secretary of the India International Centre where she was a lifetime trustee, told PTI. Vatsyayan, who was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 2011.

COUNTER POINT



Sorry, I don't need your services any more... I have hired this police officer!

Indian Americans favour Biden over Trump: Survey

San Francisco/ Washington (US), Sept. 16: Sixty-six per cent of Indian Americans currently favour Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden for the 2020 presidential election as compared to only 28 per cent who prefer President Donald Trump, according to a survey released Tuesday.

Indiaspora, a nonprofit member organisation of global Indian diaspora leaders, and Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAP) Data on Tuesday released their joint report on Indian

American voters' attitudes in the upcoming 2020 US presidential election.

“66 per cent of Indian Americans currently favour Vice President Biden, 28 per cent favour President Donald Trump, and 6 per cent were undecided. In the 2016 presidential election, 77 per cent voted for Secretary Hillary Clinton, and 16 per cent voted for President Trump. If the remaining undecided voters broke in the same pattern as those who have made up their mind, Biden would secure 70 per cent of



the vote, when compared to 30 per cent for Trump,” the report read.

Election experts project that Democrats should be worried about Indian American voters attrition

● **66 per cent of Indian Americans currently favour Vice President Biden, 28 per cent favour President Donald Trump, and 6 per cent were undecided,” the report read**

considering the overall percentage number may have dropped down for the Democrats from the 84 per cent that supported Obama in 2012 and the 77 per cent who supported

Hillary Clinton 2016 as compared to the 66 per cent supporting former Vice President Joe Biden.

Meanwhile, President Trump's vote share has gone up from 16 per cent in 2016 to 28 per cent.

“I think Democrats absolutely should be concerned about making sure that they conduct sufficient outreach to Indian Americans that they conduct sufficient outreach to the different groups that comprise bases and Indian Americans because every vote is going to count

especially in those battleground states,” said Raja Krishnamoorthi, a Democrat congressman.

An Indian American himself and a representative from the state of Illinois, Krishnamoorthi further said that the states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Florida and North Carolina could be a part of the tipping factor this election. “And because of that I think the Biden campaign has to be especially attentive,” Krishnamoorthi further asserted.

— ANI

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Over 5L fake beneficiaries in PM Kisan Samman fund



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Trump: Vaccine could be ready in a month

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Economic recovery to be gradual: Das



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TN ASSEMBLY PASSES 18 BILLS

Punishment enhanced for crimes against women, kids

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced stringent punishment for a slew of crimes under various sections of the Indian Penal Code with a view to protecting the rights of women and children and ensuring their safety in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday.

Under the amended act, the punishment for stalking women (Section 254-D) will be increased to seven years from five years.

Similarly a maximum punishment of life imprisonment can be given for trafficking minors, both for those selling the girls and those procuring them for sex work (Section 372). Presently it is 10 years.

The other sections under which offenders will get enhanced jail terms are Dowry death (Section 304-B) — to 10 years from 7 years — and Assault or Criminal Force with the intent to outrage a woman's modesty (Section 354-B) — to 7 years from 5 years.

Making the announcement under Rule 110, Palaniswami listed a series of steps taken by his government for the safety and welfare of women and children. He said a separate Crime Against Women and Children Unit had been functioning since March 6, 2019.

The pioneering project was the first of its kind in

● **Under the amended act, the punishment for stalking women (Section 254-D) will be increased to seven years from five years. Similarly a maximum punishment of life imprisonment can be given for trafficking minors, both for those selling the girls and those procuring them for sex work (Section 372)**

India, he said.

Other measures taken by his government had been the launching of 35 exclusive patrol vehicles in 35 police stations in Chennai to prevent crimes against women and children and create awareness on drug abuse and child marriage and the setting up of Investigative Units for Crime Against Women (IUCAN), Special Juvenile Unit (SJU) and a cell against dowry crimes and children — ACTU.

The Chief Minister also recalled the various schemes launched by late J. Jayalalithaa for the welfare of women and children, which included the formation of all-Women police stations in 1992 to put an end to atrocities against women and the fast track courts to hear cases against women in every district.

HIGHLIGHTS OF BILLS PASSED

▶ The Assembly on Wednesday adopted a Bill to replace an ordinance issued for possession of late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa's residence here and to facilitate vesting of movable properties therein with the government

▶ Another bill seeks to extend the tenure of special officers of urban local bodies by another six months as their elections are due for long

▶ It also enacted a bill to amend The Anna University Act, 1978 and bifurcate the varsity.

▶ The varsity's four campuses in Chennai will be constituted as a 'unitary type' institution and called 'Anna Technological and Research University' while a new affiliating type university called 'Anna University' will be constituted to manage the affairs of the constituent and affiliated colleges

Govt firm on bilingual policy

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

But for the redrawing of the syllabus, none of the things proposed in the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has been acceptable to the State government, which would anyway take a final decision on it after the two expert committees that are studying the policy gave their recommendations.

This was what the government said at the State Assembly, which saw a lengthy discussion on NEP 2020, initiated through the call attention motions by the Leader of the Opposition M K Stalin and

other MLAs on Tuesday.

Stalin said the NEP sought to impose the three-language system while the State had been following the practice of teaching two languages for more than half a decade. Imposing Hindi was the aim of the policy that gives more importance to Sanskrit than any other Indian language.

The several changes were being sought to be introduced in the examination system, which were unacceptable and the policy's objective was to reintroduce hereditary vocational teaching and also take away the rights of the State, he said. ■ P3

₹861.90 CR CONTRACT

Tata Projects wins bid to construct new parliament building: Officials

New Delhi: Tata Projects Limited on Wednesday won the bid to construct a new Parliament building at a cost of ₹861.90 crore, officials said. he L&T Ltd had submitted a bid of ₹865 crore, they said. “The Tata Projects Limited has won the contract to build a new Parliament building,” an official said. —PTI

DMK, Congress oppose amendments to banking regulation law

New Delhi, Sept 16: The Congress and DMK were among the Opposition parties that opposed the Banking Regulation

(Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, raising concerns that the proposed legislation will infringe upon the rights of states.

The bill, which seeks to bring cooperative banks under the supervision of the

Reserve Bank of India (RBI), will replace an ordinance promulgated in June.

The bill was later passed by Lok Sabha. The Congress, DMK, RSP, AIMIM and IUML, among other Opposition parties opposed the bill.

During the debate on the bill before it was passed, Congress member Manish Tewari urged the government to withdraw the bill

and said that resorting to the ordinance route to make laws “undermines the majesty of Parliament”.

At a point when the country's GDP growth rate has been in a freefall for seven quarters preceding the lockdown and when all economic activity during the lockdown had come to a complete standstill, there was absolutely no rationale

for promulgating the ordinance, especially when the bill was under consideration in this House, he said.

“In a federal polity, this ordinance and the bill which seeks to replace (it) is a frontal assault on the federal structure of the Constitution and this will have long-term implications on the democratic polity of India,” Tewari said. —PTI

Unable to handle stress of online lessons, city student ends life

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

A class nine student from Medavakkam died by suicide after failing to cope with the pressure of online lessons. S. Karthik, the deceased student was facing problems in following online lessons from home. He lived in Pushpa Nagar in Medavakkam with his parents.

The 14-year-old was studying class nine in a private school in the city ever since the online class-

es begun, of Karthik told his family he was struggling with the online classes and that it was difficult to understand lessons. He told his parents that he would learn his lessons when the schools reopen. However, he was made to attend his courses via online classes. He was scared that he would be unable to fulfil his parents' dreams of educating him.

Unable to cope with the stress, he decided to hang himself when his parents went for work.

OTHER STORIES

IIT-M collaborated study wins award

DC CORRESPONDENT,
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

A study project done jointly by US-based RICOVR Healthcare Inc, a rapid diagnostics platform company and IIT Madras (IITM), has won the 'Ignition Grants' Award instituted by the U.S. India Science and Technology Endowment Fund (USISTEF).

USISTEF, a joint fund established by the US and India to promote innovation through science and technology, announced the award recently after a bi-national review process of over 400 proposals. The RICOVR -IIT M team was selected for its idea on COVID-19 antigen test that can provide results in five minutes using saliva.

Now, MTC offers driving course

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

Metropolitan Transport Corporation is offering a three month driving course to people in its Heavy Vehicle Driver Training Centre, Chromepet. After training the MTC will facilitate issuance of driver's license for Light Motor Vehicle through RT0.

Training has been offered by experienced teachers and women trainers teach women candidates. Interested candidate can contact 044-29535177.

Two poachers, crude bombmaker arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT,
COIMBATORE, SEPT. 16

The Forest officials have arrested two persons, for poaching a wild boar, and a notorious crude bomb expert from Seeliyoor in the Coimbatore forest division.

According to DFO D. Venkatesh, a shadow watch operation was initiated to eradicate the crude bomb (ovuttukai) menace used for poaching animals in which a few elephants were injured in Kerala and Coimbatore.

On Tuesday, based on a tipoff from the shadow watch team, the staff of Periyanaickenpalayam range and Karamadai range led by rangers S. Suresh and P. Saravanan followed a crude bombmaker from Velliyanakadu. While the offender tried to escape near Seeliyoor, the officials nabbed the bombmaker identified as Moorthy. Rangers also seized an air-gun and explosive materials used to make crude bombs from the house of Moorthy. He was handed over to police with a request to book him under the explosives act along with the forest department act.

The team also arrested a duo from Seeliyoor on Tuesday night while they were attempting to cook wild boar meat.

They were identified as Govindaraj, from Velliyanakadu-Bommanaickenpalayam, and Mohanraj from Seeliyoor. Each was imposed a fine of ₹10,000. Further investigations are on.

Subway renovated



Anna subway at Government Estate 'Entry B' opened for public use on Wednesday. — DC

Renovated Anna subway opened for public

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

The renovated old Anna subway near the Chennai Metro Rail Limited's Government Estate underground metro station was opened for the public on Wednesday.

In a release, the CMRL said the renovation was done as part of multimodal integration initiatives.

The old Anna subway,

one of the biggest subways in Chennai, is located beneath Arignar Anna Statue, beautified with the surrounding metro entry structures including ACP cladding, granite flooring, wall tiling, new lighting and designer GFRG jalli works.

The subway will give commuters direct connectivity to the Government Estate Underground Metro Station Concourse Level and it will provide a

convenient access to the station from Wallajah Road, Ellis Road, Blacker's Road and Anna Salai.

The subway also connects to the iconic Khadi Bhavan and Tamil Nadu Government Multi-Super Specialty Hospital at Omandurar. Adequate signages have also been installed at the entries and inside the subway to guide passengers to the metro station.

Cop's bike, purse stolen from police checkpost

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

The motorbike of a police special sub-inspector, which was parked outside a police check post in Santhosapuram in Selaiyur near Tambaram, was allegedly stolen.

The police have launched a hunt for the suspect with the help of CCTV footage.

The bike belongs to

Ilango, 45, a special sub-inspector attached to the Selaiyur police station. Police sources said on Tuesday night Ilango was posted at the Santhosapuram police checkpost. He parked his vehicle outside the checkpost and locked his belongings in a cupboard inside the room and left for the routine inspection.

When he came back on

Wednesday morning, he found the bike missing. His purse kept inside the room also was stolen.

He lodged a complaint with the Selaiyur police. The police secured the CCTV footage of the incident. CCTV footage shows two unidentified men taking the bike from the police station. Investigations are underway.

High Court orders notice to TN over Veda Nilayam

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

J. Deepak, the nephew of former Chief Minister late J.Jayalalithaa has approached the Madras high court to declare as illegal, the Tamil Nadu ordinance, dated May 22, 2020 taking over possession of the premises of Veda Nilayam at Poes Garden in the city, which belongs to his aunt Jayalalithaa.

The First bench comprising Chief Justice A.P.Sahi and Justice Senthil Kumar

Ramamoorthy before whom the petition filed by J.Deepak came up for hearing, ordered notice to the state government and posted after six weeks, further hearing of the case.

He said Pughulendi filed a petition for administering the property of Jayalalithaa and it was dismissed by a single judge. Against which, he filed an appeal. Subsequently, his petition was allowed and Pughulendi's appeal was dismissed. In that order, a division bench had observed "the state gov-

ernment shall consider and decide the suggestion of this court to avoid making Poes Garden property "Veda Nilayam" as "Memorial" by acquiring the property, as it would incur huge expenses to the public exchequer". In the said circumstances, an ordinance was announced and published on May 22, 2020. However, he was unable to find the ordinance on the website of the government. It was not uploaded, he added.

He said when his petition challenging the land acquisition proceedings

Man electrocuted in front of wife, son

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

A day after a woman in Puliyantope was electrocuted after she accidentally stepped on a live electric cable, a 34-year-old man in Malaipattu village in Sriperumbudur died of electrocution after he came in contact with a high tension overhead cable on Tuesday evening.

Police identified the deceased as Rajesh, 34 a resident of Malaipattu village. He lived with his wife Amulu and son Nithish Kumar. He worked at a private tyre manufacturing company in the city. His

family owned farm animals. The accident happened around 5:30 pm on Tuesday, while he was with his wife and son grazing their cows in a field. A cow reportedly climbed on a heap of m-sand near the field and when Rajesh

rushed to save it from being electrocuted, he came in contact with a high tension 11, 000 megawatt overhead cable and died on the spot in front of his wife and son.

After alerted, the Somangalam police rushed to the spot. Sriperumbudur electricity board was informed of the tragic accident and the power was cut off in the village. The body of the man was taken to the Sriperumbudur government hospital for post-mortem.

Police registered a case against a stone quarry owner who had illegally

heaped m-sand near the fields. Further investigation is under way.

On Monday, Alima, a domestic help in Pulianthope, was electrocuted after she accidentally stepped on a live electric cable near a lamp post in a waterlogged street. Residents alleged that though they had been complaining about the exposed cable a week ago, no action was taken by the authorities concerned. Two officials from the Chennai Corporation have been temporarily suspended from their posts following the death of the woman.

BJP celebrates PM b'day with 70 kg laddu

CHENNAI/COIMBATORE
SEPT. 16

An eye-catching 70 kg laddu, distribution of welfare aid and conducting 'Thamarai' medical camp by BJP workers in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday marked the birthday celebrations of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Prime Minister will be celebrating his 70th birthday on Thursday. The rank and file in the saffron party went into a celebratory mood on the eve of Modi's birthday and the cadres made a 70 kg laddu, signifying the 70th birthday of the PM and offered it to Lord Shiva at the Sivan Kamatchi Amman Temple in Coimbatore.

The huge laddu was taken in a procession outside the temple to mark the occasion and later distributed to the public. The party supporters offered prayers for a long and prosperous life for their leader.

"The party launched a week-long programme to celebrate the 70th birthday of our Prime Minister," Tamil Nadu state BJP president L. Murugan said. —PTI

Arrears row: HC notice to govt over ex-VC plea

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

Former Vice Chancellor of Anna University E.Balagurusamy has approached the Madras high court to quash a GO dated August 26, 2020, by which the state higher education secretary has declared all students as passed, who have arrears of university exam papers.

A division bench comprising Justices M.M.Sundresh and R.Hemalatha before whom the PIL filed by E.Balagurusamy came up for hearing, ordered notice to the higher education secretary. All Indian Council for Technical Education, University Grants Commission and Union government and posted to September 30, 2020, further hearing of the case.



He contended that the impugned GO will definitely lower education standard of students and universities. The same will badly affect the reputation, credibility, prospects of good, meritorious students and quality of the education. It was the duty of the government and the university to accord fair and equal opportunities to students to ensure academic credibility career opportunities, future progress of students globally. Academic evaluation of

students was very important mile stone in any education system. The performance in examination gives confidence and satisfaction to the students and was a reflection of competence, performance and credibility that was necessary for the global acceptability, he added.

He said the impugned GO has demoralized the good and meritorious students who has toiled day and night, shredded sweat and blood and passed their university exams. The impugned G.O issued by the government was against the guidelines issued by the Union government dated July 6, 2020.

Therefore, he sent a representation to the authorities to withdraw the GO. But there was no response. Hence, he has filed the present petition, he added.

Medical centre opened



BJP state president Dr L. Murugan after inaugurating Tamarai Medical Centre along with Dr Anitha Ramesh and Saidai Chandru at Saidapet on Wednesday. —DC

Rural TN learns to live with frugal food

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16

Even as life became miserable with millions losing jobs across the globe as a result of the pandemic, the food habit of rural Tamil Nadu has started changing.

A survey carried out by Boonbox, a rural e-commerce platform, in partnership with Economix Consulting Group (ECG), in eight rural districts including Ariyalur, Kanyakumari, Madurai, Pudukottai, Thanjavur, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Virudhunagar from April 1 to July 20 has found that shrinking income was the reason for the change in food habits.

The study conducted

At least 87% of participants from Ariyalur district shared the same view while 72 per cent of candidates from Pudukottai and 70% of respondents from Madurai admitted that their family cut short meat and egg intake due to shrinking income

among women homemakers aged between 20 and 67 from towns or villages with population less than 50,000 says 89 per cent respondents in Thanjavur said that they had reduced meat and egg consumption (meat – 69 per cent and eggs 60 per cent) due to the increasing price.

At least 87 per cent of participants from Ariyalur district shared the same view while 72 per cent of candidates from

Pudukottai and 70 per cent of respondents from Madurai admitted that their family cut short meat and egg intake due to shrinking income.

Meanwhile, the study, conducted in the families with incomes ranging from less than Rs. 1,000 to 50,000 per month, has revealed a cut in overall consumption of kitchen essentials including grains, pulses, spices, cooking masala, cooking oil, sugar, salt, milk, coffee, tea and vegetables.

The admission rate of candidates in the top three districts goes as Kanyakumari (90 per cent) followed by Virudhunagar (88) and Pudukottai (86). Steep drop in consumption of cooking and

kitchen needs fell from 75 percent to 55 between the second week of lockdown and Unlock 1.

"Given that rice is the staple food in Tamil Nadu and the substantial increase in diabetes in rural Tamil Nadu, the significant shift away from a balanced protein-inclusive diet could invite health complications," the study says.

Ramachandran Ramnathan, founder, Boonbox, said that the intention of study was to find out how the rural households were dealing with the problems caused by the pandemic. It has been found that the significant reduction in household income has led to contraction of food expenditure.



A view of Vandalur flyover which will opened by the CM on Thursday.

—DC

CM buries hatchet, lauds Bedi for dip in corona cases

Puducherry, Sept. 16: Chief Minister of Puducherry V.Narayananasamy on Wednesday attributed the dip in COVID-19 cases here to Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi's cooperation and the team spirit of all engaged in combating the pandemic.

Addressing a virtual press conference, the Chief Minister, who has been at loggerheads with the Lieutenant Governor since she assumed office in May 2016, said, "All sections and also cooperation of the Lt Governor have been playing a pro-active role in fighting COVID-19."

He said this unified approach is responsible for the decline in the cases of infection. "All are putting in team work and there is also cooperation of the Lt Governor to fight the pandemic," he said. —PTI

CM TO INAUGURATE



India Covid no touches 50l mark

DC
CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT
16:

The number of people infected by Covid-19 galloped past 50 lakh on Wednesday, just 11 days after it crossed 40 lakh, with 90,123 infections being reported in a day. According to the Union health ministry data, the total ononavirus cases mounted to 50,20,359, while the death toll climbed to 82,066 with a record 1,290 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours. India took 110 days for Covid-19 cases to reach one

lakh while it had taken 59 days more to go past the 10-lakh. The Covid tally, however, moved faster later and the cases jumped from 10 lakh to 20 lakh in 21 days, while the next 10 lakh milestones were covered in 16 and 13 days, respectively. **AP tally nears 6 lakh:** Andhra Pradesh will shortly touch the six-lakh mark of cumulative Covid-19 positive cases, which reached 5,92,760 with addition of 8,835 new cases during the last 24 hours. **2,273 new cases in TS:** Covid-19 deaths in Telangana neared

the 1,000 mark with the toll reaching 996 with 12 deaths on Wednesday. The state also reported 2,273 new positive cases, taking thr total tally to 1,62,844. **Kerala records highest ever spike:** Kerala recorded the highest single day spike of 3,330 Covid cases. The day also saw 14 deaths. **Karnataka has 9,725 new cases:** Karnataka on Wednesday reported 9,725 new Covid-19 cases and 70 deaths, taking the total infections to 4.84 lakh and the toll to 7,536. The day also saw 6,583 patients getting discharged.

SERUM INSTITUTE GETS DCGI PERMISSION TO RESUME TRIAL OF OXFORD VACCINE

New Delhi, Sept. 16: Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) Dr V.G. Somani on Tuesday gave permission to Serum Institute of India to resume clinical trial of the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine candidate in the country while revoking its earlier order of suspending any new recruitment for phase two and three trial. The DCGI, however, put certain conditions like taking extra care

during screening, providing additional information in informed consent and close monitoring for adverse events during follow-up of the study which have to be "scrupulously" followed by Serum Institute of India (SII). SII has also been asked to submit to the DCGI details of medication used in accordance with the protocol for management of adverse events.

PTI

Jaleel: From a firebrand leader of SIMI to poster boy of CPM

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT. 16

Even in the face of state wide protests by opposition parties seeking Kerala higher education minister K.T. Jaleel's resignation, the ruling CPM has stood solidly behind him. The protests which turned violent in many parts of the state have not been able to force the government or the ruling party to change its position. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and CPM state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan have repeatedly defended Jaleel terming Opposition charges as "totally baseless." 'Quit Jaleel' demand had gained momentum after the Enforcement Directorate questioned him five days ago

on the charges of violating Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (accepting foreign aid without Centre's permission) and accepting consignments of Holy Quran brought from UAE through diplomatic channels. To understand Jaleel's importance in Kerala politics, one has to trace his journey thus far. From a firebrand leader of SIMI to a poster boy of ruling CPM, the 53-year-old's political journey has been remarkable in many ways. After his sting with SIMI, Jaleel joined the Muslim League and went on to become the state president of Muslim Youth League in 2004. But he was thrown out of the League in 2005 for questioning leadership on misuse of Tsunami

funds. The CPM which was waiting for a popular face in Malappuram district to take on the League, seized the opportunity and fielded Jaleel as LDF backed independent in 2006 Assembly polls. As they say the rest is history. Riding on the popularity of his anti-corruption crusade, Jaleel trounced Muslim League general secretary P.K. Kunhalikutty scripting one of the stunning victories in state's electoral history. The LDF too gained winning five of the 12 seats marking its strong presence in the Muslim heartland. Jaleel who has a PhD on the topic related to 1921 Malabar rebellion and is known for his fiery speeches and clean image, has remained loyal to LDF since then. He

won back to back elections in 2011 and 2016. Though his induction as a minister in Pinarayi Cabinet in 2016 came as a surprise for many, the ruling LDF had its plans in place. He was given local bodies ministry, a portfolio usually reserved for top CPM leaders, along with welfare of minorities, wakf and Hajj. Later the local bodies portfolio was taken away from him and given to CPM's A.C. Moideen. However, Jaleel was given the high-profile higher education portfolio. While most part of Jaleel's 14 years in parliamentary politics has remained free of controversies, the minister faced a series of charges in the last two years.

Not once, shots were fired three times on India-China border

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16:

There have been atleast three incidents of firing at the line of actual control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh where Indian and Chinese troops are engaged in a four month long military standoff. Sources also said that

despite an in-principle agreement for the military dialogue, Chinese army has still not confirmed a date for Corps Commander-level talks. Out of these firing incidents, two happened at the Southern banks of Pangong Tso and one in the finger area on its northern banks. Indian Army has officially

acknowledged only one firing incident which took place on September 7 at Mukhpari in the Chushul sector. However, sources said that the first firing incident took place earlier, between August 29-31 when Indian Army in a pre-emptive move occupied strategic heights on the Kailash

range which overlook entry points of the Spanggur gap in the Chushul sector. The third and bigger firing incident happened on September 8-9 when Indian Army occupied higher positions overlooking Chinese posts on the ridgelines of Finger 4. Chinese troops were also trying to come near Indian positions and

both sides fired more than 100 rounds. All these incidents involved warning shots being fired in the air and not directly at each other. But, it remains a fact that for the first time in 45 years fire are being shot at the LAC by both sides. Indian Army changed the rule of engagement at LAC

after the Galwan Valley clash on June 15 where Chinese had used improvised weapons including iron rods studded with nails to attack Indian soldiers breaching the agreements between the two countries. Now Indian Army's local commanders are free to use any weapon under their command when threatened

by Chinese troops. Sources said the situation in the Eastern Ladakh remains tense with Indian army and Air Force at a high alert. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Wednesday that it is imperative for India to immediately correct its wrong practices, disengage on the ground as soon as

possible and take concrete actions to ease the tension along border. He said China is not responsible for the recent border situation and it was India that first violated bilateral agreements, illegally crossing the border line for provocation and unilaterally changing the status quo of the border area.

WORLD

IN BRIEF

Greek camp fire: 13 detained

Athens: Thirteen people have been detained on the Greek island of Samos after a fire threatened the local migrant camp, police said Wednesday, days after another blaze destroyed Europe's largest migrant camp on Lesbos. "We are examining the possible participation of these suspects in the incident," a Samos police source said. The officer declined to identify the nationalities of the suspects. It broke out in a forested area near the Samos camp late on Tuesday, but firefighters were able to place it under control. The Lesbos fire at Moria camp on September 8 left over 12,000 asylum seekers homeless.

3 FATF-RELATED BILLS PASSED IN PAK, 1 BLOCKED

Islamabad, Sept. 16: A joint sitting of Pakistan's Parliament on Wednesday passed three crucial Financial Action Task Force-related legislations, as part of the government's efforts to escape from being black-listed by the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. President Arif Alvi called the joint sitting of both houses of Parliament on Wednesday evening after Senate earlier in the day rejected the Anti-Terrorism Act (amendment) Bill, 2020, making it the third FATF-related legislation to have been blocked by the Opposition-dominated upper house. Last month, the Anti-Money Laundering (Second Amendment) Bill and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Waqf Properties Bill, were rejected by Senate. The three legislations were part of efforts by Pakistan to move from the FATF's grey list to the white list. Under the 18th Amendment, if a bill passed by one house of Parliament is rejected by the other, it can become a law only if it is passed by a joint sitting of the two houses. Prime Minister Imran Khan attended the joint session which was chaired by National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser. The opposition staged a walk out after most of their proposed amendments to the bills were rejected and they were not allowed to speak. Khan thanked lawmakers who voted in favour of the legislations for "standing with their country". He said that the opposition's "attitude" on the bills showed that the "interests of [opposition parties] and their leaders were the opposite of Pakistan's interests".

Trump: Vaccine could be ready in a month

Philadelphia, Sept. 16: US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that a Coronavirus vaccine may be available within a month — an acceleration of even his own optimistic predictions — but added that the pandemic could go away by itself. "We're very close to having a vaccine," he told a town hall question-and-answer session with voters in Pennsylvania aired on ABC News.

"We're within weeks of getting it you know — could be three weeks, four weeks," he said. Only hours earlier, speaking to Fox News, Trump had said a vaccine could come in "four weeks, it could be eight weeks". Democrats have expressed concern that Trump is putting political pressure on government health regulators and scientists to approve a rushed vaccine in time to help turn around his uphill bid for reelection against challenger Joe Biden on November 3. Experts, including top US government infectious diseases doctor Anthony Fauci, say vaccine approval is more likely toward the end of the year. At the ABC town hall Trump was asked why he'd downplayed the gravity of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has now killed close to 200,000 people in the US. Trump replied by saying: "I didn't downplay it. I actually, in many ways, I up-played it in

SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL NOT HELP COMBAT COVID-19, SAYS UNGA PREZ

United Nations, Sept. 16: Social distancing at the global level will not help as no country could combat Covid-19 alone, President of the UN General Assembly's 75th session Volkan Bozkir has said, asserting that multilateralism is the "panacea" to all the problems in the world. Bozkir, addressing the UN ambassadors and delegates, said that since the beginning of the crisis earlier this year, critics of multilateralism have become more vocal and the pandemic has been used to justify unilateral steps and weaken the rules-based international system. "In the past six months, our plans for the 75th year of the United Nations have changed. Today, we have other urgent priorities. Our masks remind us of the very serious threat we face... They remind us we are in this together," Bozkir said as the 75th session of the General Assembly commenced on Tuesday. Wearing masks, UN diplomats and envoys sat socially distanced in the iconic General Assembly Hall as the high-level annual session begins in a largely virtual format this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "International organisations have been reproached and the need for international cooperation has been questioned. These criticisms are not baseless but their conclusions are misguided," the veteran Turkish diplomat said. Giving a clarion call for strengthening multilateralism to combat the pandemic, Bozkir said, "Make no mistake: No state can combat this pandemic alone. Social distancing will not help at the international level."

— PTI

terms of action." But Trump himself told journalist Bob Woodward during taped interviews for the new book "Rage" — published Tuesday — that he had deliberately decided to "play it down" to avoid alarming Americans. Returning to one of his most controversial views on the virus, that has ravaged the economy

and which government scientists say will remain a danger for some time, Trump insisted "it is going to disappear". "It would go away without the vaccine but it's going to go away a lot faster with it," he said. Challenged about how the virus would go away by itself, he said "you'll develop like a herd mentality," apparently mean-

ing the concept of herd immunity, when enough people have developed resistance to the disease to effectively stop transmission. "It's going to be herd developed and that's going to happen. That will all happen but with a vaccine, I think it will go away very quickly. But I really believe we're rounding the corner," he said. The president, who is rarely seen wearing a mask in public and long refused to push Americans to adopt the habit, said "a lot of people don't want to wear masks and people don't think masks are good." Asked what people he meant, Trump answered: "Waiters". "They come over and they serve you and they have a mask," he said. "I saw it the other day when they were serving me and they're playing with the mask. I'm not blaming them. I'm just saying what happens: They're playing with the mask. So the mask is over, and then they're touching the plate, and that can't be good." Polls show that a majority of Americans disapprove of Trump's handling of the health crisis. The latest NBC News/SurveyMonkey Weekly Tracking poll Tuesday found that 52 percent of adults do not trust Trump's statements about an upcoming Coronavirus vaccine, compared to 26 percent who do.

Israel hits Gaza after rocket fire during US ceremony

Jerusalem, Sept. 16: The Israeli military struck Hamas militant sites in the Gaza Strip early Wednesday in response to rocket fire toward Israel the previous night that coincided with the signing of normalisation agreements between Israel and two Arab countries at the White House.

The barrage against Israel began Tuesday night just as the ceremony in Washington was getting underway to formalise the new agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Two Israelis were lightly wounded. The rocket fire continued overnight, with sirens sounding across southern Israel. The military said five projectiles landed in open areas with the rest intercepted by Israel's rocket defence system. In response, the military said it struck about 10 sites belonging to Gaza's militant Hamas rulers, including a weapons and explosives manufacturing factory, underground infrastructure and a military training compound.

The renewed exchange offered a stark reminder that the festive events in Washington would likely do little to change Israel's conflict with the Palestinians. In addition to the bilateral agreements signed by Israel, the UAE and Bahrain, all three signed a document dubbed the "Abraham Accords" after the patriarch of the world's three major monotheistic religions.

The Palestinians are opposed to the agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, viewing them as a betrayal of their cause by the Arab

IRAN SAYS UAE, BAHRAIN WILL BEAR 'CONSEQUENCES' OF ISRAEL DEALS

Tehran, Sept. 16: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain will be responsible for any "consequences" resulting from their normalisation of relations with Tehran's arch-foe Israel. The remarks came a day after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the foreign ministers of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates signed agreements establishing full diplomatic ties at a ceremony at the White House. Speaking at a cabinet meeting, Rouhani said Israel was "committing more crimes in Palestine every day". "Some of the region's countries, their people are

countries, which agreed to recognise Israel without securing territorial concessions. They vow that the agreements, and any others that may follow, will not undermine their cause. Neither President Donald Trump nor Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mentioned the Palestinians in their remarks at the signing ceremony, but both the UAE and Bahraini foreign ministers spoke of the importance of creating a Palestinian state. Upon his departure back from Washington, Netanyahu said he was not surprised by the rocket attack or the timing of the militants. "They want to take pea-

pious Muslims but their rulers neither understand religion nor (their) debt... to the nation of Palestine, to their brothers speaking their language," he said in televised remarks. "How could you reach out your hands to Israel? And then you want to give them bases in the region? All the severe consequences that would arise from this are on you." US President Donald Trump said that similar Washington-brokered deals were close to being signed between Israel and several Arab countries, including Iran's regional rival Saudi Arabia. "After decades of division and conflict we mark the dawn of a new Middle East," Trump said. — AFP

ce backwards but they won't succeed," he said. "We will strike hard against all those who seek to harm us and reach out a hand in peace to all those whose hand is reached out to peace with us." The Islamic militant group Hamas has ruled Gaza since 2007, when it seized power from the internationally-backed Palestinian Authority. Israel and Egypt have imposed a crippling blockade on the coastal territory since then. A number of Palestinian militant groups operate in Gaza, but Israel holds Hamas responsible for all attacks and typically responds to rocket fire with airstrikes on militant targets. — AP

FILM | FEST

South Korean director Lim Sun-ae's *An Old Lady* ends with a nod to the MeToo movement

Woman, 69, raped. Where did you pause? At rape, or 69?

SUPARNA SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16

Woman, aged 69, raped by a 29-year-old man. We often read this sort of headline in newspapers. But where do we pause? At rape, or at 69 and 29? South Korean writer-director Lim Sun-ae's film, *An Old Lady*, asks that question, and then she wants us to consider: Is there an age limit to being raped? *An Old Lady*, which is playing at TIFF, opens to a black screen. We hear two people talking. It seems one is a nursing assistant, and he is with a female patient who has

come for physiotherapy for her frozen shoulder. "No one would guess your age," he says. "Do you swim? Your legs... you don't look old at all." He puts the infrared lamp on. "How long will it take?" she asks. "Nine minutes." The screen lights up and we stare at a row of curtained cubicles. There's a loud beep and in one of them and the red light goes off. We are left with the feeling that something has happened. But the patient, Hyo-jeong (Ye Su-jeong, known for her role in *Train To Busan*), seems normal as she chats with Mr Nam (Ki

Joo-bong) who has come to pick her up. He owns a small book store, and she works for him. She was once his nurse. At home, Hyo rubs her wrists. He notices a bruise on her arm. The nursing assistant was clumsy with the needle, she says. Later she says to him, "I should report it to the police."



A scene from *An Old Lady*, starring Ye Su-jeong.

An Old Lady is framed in a way that everything seems to be against the woman who claims she was raped by the handsome nursing assistant, Lee Joong-ho.

He's 29, and she's 69 and in a live-in relationship. That makes the young cops snigger. It was not rape. It was consensual sex, Lee tells the cops. Though Hyo's poly-

graph tells them that she may be telling the truth, there are bruises and she has the stained clothes she wore that day, old people, you know, they forget, they mix up things. And in any case, he says he didn't do it. He's 29. Handsome. The burden of proof on the elegant, stylish Hyo keeps mounting. She must convince the cops first, to even attempt a proper investigation. She must herself prove to them that it was rape and not consensual sex. She is forgetting things. Maybe dementia is setting in. Maybe... But those flashes keep interrupting, dis-

turbing her. The bruise on her wrist is fading, but it still aches. Director Lim Sun-ae has said that she was riled up to make *An Old Lady* by a real-life case in which the warrant dismissal letter said, "There is not much reason for a young man to rape an old woman." *An Old Lady* ends on an empowering note, with a nod to the MeToo movement. But it leaves you wondering how many women must still be keeping their sexual assault, rape a secret because they are scared they'll be asked, "Who will rape an old lady?"

DECCAN Chronicle

17 SEPTEMBER 2020

Rajnath disappoints: A lot left unanswered

Defence minister Rajnath Singh's much-awaited statement in both Houses of Parliament on Tuesday on the situation in eastern Ladakh was disappointing on several counts, as the country sought clarity from the highest quarters on one of its biggest crises. The minister, however, told us very little we didn't already know, and though he put the current confrontation between the two sides in the historical context of the fractured India-China relationship, beyond acknowledging the obvious fact that this standoff was qualitatively different from earlier ones, in the scale of the troops involved and the number of friction points, and that India was "facing a challenge", we were none the wiser. He told us due to the two sides' differing perceptions of the Line of Actual Control, India and China needed a common perception of the LAC to avoid emergence of new friction points, a process China has been stalling since 2003 as it sees advantage in the continuing ambiguity. All this is well known. There were expressions of hope. If the Moscow agreement between external affairs minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi was "sincerely implemented" by the Chinese, peace would return! Did we not know that already? Mr Singh offered a timeline of the border standoff since early May but left out one crucial bit: the September 7 incident in which shots were fired at the LAC for the first time in 45 years.

Unlike many of his Cabinet colleagues, Mr Singh enjoys a well-deserved reputation for plain speaking, of telling it like it is, as he demonstrated earlier during this crisis while visiting the troops in Ladakh. Therefore, while speaking at Parliament's first meeting after the crisis broke, more was expected of him: that he would share with the country the real story of what was happening, of what had gone wrong. No one expected him to share operational details of ongoing or future Army operations. Despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's truly puzzling declaration at the virtual all-party meeting on June 19 — days after the Galwan incident in which 20 Indian soldiers, including a commanding officer, and an unknown number of Chinese troops were killed — that no Chinese forces were on Indian soil, the Indian Army and others have acknowledged, before and afterwards, that all-out efforts were on to ensure that the People's Liberation Army goes back to its side of the de facto border. Mr Singh could have shed more light on this. His statement made no mention of the 20-km-deep intrusion by the PLA in the Depsang Plains at all. Many such questions, on which the country was hoping for clarity, remain unanswered.

Mr Singh urged MPs to pass a resolution expressing confidence in the armed forces in these difficult times. There is no doubt that all sections of the nation are united on that issue. But in not responding to questions raised by the Congress and others, the government may inadvertently have missed a great opportunity. It has often been said that the India-China competition will define our "Asian century". Here was a chance to show the huge difference between democratic India and the Communist Party oligarchy that runs the People's Republic. An endorsement by a legislature that asks searching, critical questions of the executive would have sent out a message to the world that Xi Jinping's rubber-stamp National People's Congress simply cannot.

A welcome ruling

The Supreme Court order on Wednesday prohibiting Sudarshan TV from telecasting the future episodes of a TV show portraying the entry of Muslims into the civil service as an attempt to infiltrate it is welcome for more than one reason. First, the apex court thought it fit that an early intervention to stop the programme which it found "insidious" was warranted and waiting for the statutory authorities to consider the complaints against it would make "irreversible damage". Second, it showed there are existing legal ways to confront such programmes that make use of the fundamental right to speech and expression and create animosity among sections of society. Third, the existing constitutional institutions are still able to assert their independence and decide the fine line between the use and abuse of the right to free speech, thereby obviating the creation of another government mechanism to regulate the media.

The bench while hearing the petition read out Clause 6 (c) of the programme code the ministry of information and broadcasting framed under the Cable TV Network (Regulation) Act, 1994, which prohibited the transmission of programmes that contain attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes. This clause makes it incumbent on the part of the government to act and ensure that peace and harmony prevailed in the country and people with vested interests are stopped in their course before weakening the nation's social fabric through such TV programmes. It is curious that the Union government was seen in the court fighting for media freedom. The court's insistence that "no freedom is absolute, not even journalistic freedom" was met with a comment by the solicitor-general that the freedom of a journalist is supreme and any regulation of the same would need extensive debates. Debates are fine, the government must remember, but insidious programmes are not.

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Subhani



Freedom and bias: How Facebook comes of age



Shashidhar Nanjundaiah

What a year it is turning out to be for Facebook!

Its sway over voters has made incumbent governments in several countries seek to exact their pound of flesh. As a self-proclaimed proponent of free speech with limited control over content, the social media company now finds itself stuck in both legal and moral conflicts in many countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Australia and elsewhere.

The ongoing deposition before India's parliamentary standing committee on information technology was always going to be a perfunctory but important attempt to raise questions of Facebook's influence over societies and their behaviour. The committee is multi-partisan, but the original agenda — whether Facebook has systematically favoured the BJP — was so politically divisive that such a panel could have never found a consensus unless the agenda was broadened to a generalisation.

Potentially, the deadlock in the deposition heralds some independence for Facebook. The Congress Party and the Trinamul Congress say Facebook has displayed a pro-BJP stance, while the government claims the contrary, even accusing Facebook's employees of abusing the Prime Minister. In the end, Facebook can claim that since both sides are claiming bias, they cancel each other out and that there is no real bias. That is why it was important that the parliamentary committee work pragmatically towards a united, non-partisan and achievable public goal — helping to independently curb hate.

WHO IS 'WE'?

Economic and political power makes great nego-

tiators. But for Facebook, this is a battle of identity. Three recent episodes are of relevance:

1. Facebook will soon add additional text to its terms of use to consolidate its position. In effect, Facebook has emerged from the shadows to stake its claim as a private company with full authority to tweak its rules, not as the public service that it can be mistaken for.

2. Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad shot off a strategically timed letter — coinciding with the parliamentary committee deposition — accusing Facebook's staff in India of colluding to discredit the government.

3. Following Facebook India MD Ajit Mohan's deposition, its global leaders Neil Potts and Mark Zuckerberg have issued statements that assure the world that Facebook is a neutral carrier and that hate speech will not be tolerated on it.

On September 1, Facebook forewarned its users of an impending addition of a self-protective clause to its section (3.2): "We also can remove or restrict access to your content, services or information if we determine that doing so is reasonably necessary to avoid or mitigate adverse legal or regulatory impacts to Facebook." As many digital business experts point out, this is an overdue survival clause. But it underlines the arrival of a more proactive approach to censorship — with larger implications on who gets to influence it.

On the face of it, the additional clause should provide comfort to those who may view it as a sort of social media garbage disposal. But if there is one word that's ambiguous in the otherwise crystal-clear message, it is "we". As much as its use in legalese is well-understood, who is this unseen

This year, and not 2016, when Facebook was first accused of gerrymandering, marks its growth from innocence to experience

hand in digital practice that restricts access, service, information or content? It could be the content desk, fact check desk, and standards-and-practices desk. However, given that algorithms are partly in control, is Facebook telling us that it will take more responsibility to rein them in?

Communicating on social sites like Facebook is both public and permanent. In the absence of proper (self-)regulation, it is at once a personally empowering and socially debilitating tool. Unlike edited content on the mainstream media, the free-flowing content on social media had accepted little accountability. That may be changing.

To prove the point, on the heels of the first day of the deposition, Facebook barred a known hatemonger, BJP's T. Raja Singh. If that is supposed to be exemplary somehow, it does not make the cut. Many people in our circles have abandoned the platform to avoid the mentally draining intensity and abuse. Removing the hundreds and thousands of trolls and others who indulge in hate speech alone can bring back public confidence in social media and in humanity in general.

ACCOUNTABILITY GAME

Facebook has turned its attention over the past two years to issues pertaining to privacy and complications arising from its business-to-government deals. While governments seek a piece of the content action, is Facebook's government business jeopardising its founding principles?

It is clear that many, even quasi-democratic, governments want more control over social media content and content in general. In Thailand, a constitutional monarchy, the government asked

that access to a group of voices against the government be blocked, and Facebook is suing the government to dispute such a restriction. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte's supporters are known to have peddled fake news on the platform. The country's largest news network had to shut shop recently, thanks to governmental machinations. In Australia, the battle is to make social media accountable for borrowed content. Facebook has threatened to block news from Australian newspapers in retaliation over an impending pay-per-use law that seeks to shield its news media and requires Facebook to share revenues for news items taken from the newspapers.

Platforms such as Facebook face the consequences of not having thought through risks and challenges and pay the price of democratising processes. As a free marketplace of relationships and ideas — "the digital equivalent of a town square", as co-founder Mark Zuckerberg wrote in 2019 — Facebook needs better control over credibility. A growing number of people with Facebook accounts have chosen to stay away because they are dismayed at what they see in that ecosystem. Facebook can help by making its users media literate. As the social media grows and as we become more social media literate, the distinction between satire and fake news, between claims and opinions, and between facts and myths grows on us. Organically, media literacy is a longitudinal process. But intervention can accelerate the education.

This year, and not 2016, when Facebook was first accused of gerrymandering, marks its growth from innocence to experience. How the company pivots this experience will determine its future.

The writer has led reputed institutes of higher education and is the founder of "Being Responsible", which does media literacy programmes for schools

LETTERS

RESERVATION FOR NEET

The decision of the Tamil Nadu government to provide 7.5 per cent reservation in the under graduate medical admissions for students who pass out from government schools should have come as a shot in the arm for students studying in government schools. But one thing is perplexing. The Centre, on the one hand, talks more about privatisation of the economy including the education sector. Tamil Nadu government on the other wants to develop its schools. Also, one wants to know why Neet is given so much importance.

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

REOPENING SCHOOLS

THE REOPENING of schools needs to be reviewed with even greater concern than that of the economy. The privileged few in private schools have their online education, those in government schools manage with a hybrid system but it is the rural and semi urban children who stand to be cut off for a year or more. This is calamitous for an entire generation of under privileged section of our society. A long gap in rural schooling will set us back years in national education. This is the time that every NGO is encouraged to work in the villages and effect the last mile delivery of whatever inputs we can provide till normalcy is expedited. If we delay, it will be a huge effort to bring the students back to classes. Sadly this government treats NGOs as anathema in its pet socio-political considerations.

R. Narayanan, Chennai

SURIYA'S NEET COMMENT

THE SPARK that Anitha first lit against Neet has taken the lives of 13 students so far. Instead of condemning the student suicides against Neet, actor Suriya takes up cudgels against the judiciary that ordered in-person examination for Neet candidates with the best intention of saving their one academic year (*Suriya 'Neet' comment draus mixed responses*, Sept. 15). The actor's comparison between judges adjudicating cases online to protect their own life during the pandemic and students made to appear physically for the examination is odious and ill-advised. What is more distressing is that political parties vie with each other in distributing largesse to the families of the deceased or garlanding the portrait of the deceased. As to the ruling party, it goes a step further to announce a government job for many of the families of the deceased. Indeed the glorification of student suicides by the political class and their fulminations against Neet could trigger more student suicides in future.

Kangayam R. Narasimhan, Chennai

Dilip Cherian Dilli Ka Babu



PM Modi plugs 'Karmayogi' in pep talk to IPS probationers

A total of 131 IPS probationers, including 28 women, who completed 42 weeks of basic course phase-1 training at the prestigious Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad had a rare opportunity to interact with Prime Minister Narendra Modi through a video conference. He is known to do this infrequently, but it thrills those who chance into one.

During the basic course training at SVP NPA over two segments, probationers are imparted training in various indoor and outdoor subjects like law, investigation, forensics, leadership and management, criminology, public order and internal security, ethics & human rights, modern Indian policing, fieldcraft and tactics, weapons training and firing. This was their final training before field postings in their respective state cadres.

In his address to the 2018-batch of IPS probationers, the Prime

Minister urged them to excel in their careers. He also used the opportunity to plug the government's new theme "Mission Karmayogi", a scheme for capacity building of civil servants, a task which the National Police Academy has been performing quite ably since its inception back in 1948. The theme immediately got national attention, way beyond police lines, as expected. The academy director, Atul Karwal, a 1988-batch IPS officer from Gujarat cadre, presided over the Dikshant (convocation) Parade and addressed the probationers.

MESSAGE TO J&K BASUS

The message is loud and clear from the Modi sarkar that no anti-national rhetoric, especially by government employees shall be tolerated at any cost. One year after the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has constituted a six-member committee, headed by

J&K chief secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, to look into cases related to government officials allegedly indulging in anti-national activities.

The high-level committee has been empowered to scrutinise cases and recommend action against those officials involved in anti-national activities under Article 311(2)(c). Apart from the J&K chief secretary, the others members of the high-level committee include administrative secretary of the Home department, J&K DGP, administrative secretary of the general administration department, additional DGP, CID and administrative secretary of the department of law, justice.

Experts say any government official, including IAS and IPS officers if found guilty by the committee for "anti-national" activity can be dismissed from service without an inquiry.

According to sources, it is rumoured that many government

officers are under the scanner in Jammu and Kashmir for their involvement in 'anti-national' activities.

MEDIA AND MUMBAI POLICE

What made seven former DGPs and a police commissioner approach the Bombay high court in the Sushant Singh Rajput case?

The media's obsession with the Sushant Singh Rajput death case has overridden the raging corona pandemic, our stalled economy and the Chinese threat on the border. After the CBI, Enforcement Directorate and sundry agencies have been brought in by the Centre, the Mumbai Police has been forced into a corner. It has been accused of political bias and for botching up the investigation, though in the freestyle mud wrestling that the nation has seen, it is hard to determine who is cleaner.

Now, the former IPS officers have urged the court to put an end to the

"media trial" and the "unfair, malicious and false media campaign" against the Mumbai police in the case. The petitioners include former Maharashtra DGPs M.N. Singh, P.S. Pasricha, D.K. Sivanandan, Sanjiv Dayal, Satish Mathur, K. Subramanyam and former additional DGP K.P. Raghuvanshi, and former Mumbai police commissioner D.N. Jadhav. According to the petition, the adverse media campaign "appears to have been designed with sinister motives to tarnish the fair image of the Mumbai police".

Significantly, the petition urges courts to frame rules or guidelines which would help media cover investigations that are sub-judice. But, for now, it is a no-holds-barred approach as far as some sections of the media are concerned.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com . Let's multiply the effect.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,302.85	0.66
Nifty 50	11,604.55	0.72
S&P 500*	3,413.64	0.37
Dollar (₹)	73.52	0.18
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.85	0.13
Euro (₹)	87.26	0.300
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	53,030▼137	0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.18	1.65
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.992	-0.037
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.667	-0.012

* As of 9:30 PM IST

DP World, Israeli company to bid for Haifa port



Dubai-based port operator DP World said it would partner with an Israeli firm in a bid to take over the country's Haifa port, the largest shipping hub for the emirate. DP World said it signed MoU with DoverTower, a company owned by Shlomi Fogel, the co-owner of Israel Shipyards and the Port of Eilat. The two firms also will explore creating a direct shipping route from Dubai's massive Jebel Ali port to Eilat, the statement said.

■ RBI remains 'battle-ready' to back economy

Economic recovery to be gradual: Das

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

The country's economic recovery is likely to be gradual as efforts towards reopening the economy are confronted with rising Covid-19 infections, Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday. He said the economic recovery is not fully entrenched and that the GDP data for the first quarter (Q1) was a telling reflection of how Covid-19 has affected the economy.

The economy contracted by a record 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter as the pandemic outbreak and the subsequent lockdown brought economic activity to a complete halt. For the full year, the economy is expected to contract by 8-14 per cent.

"The end-August press release of the National Statistics Office (NSO) was a telling reflection of the ravages of Covid-19. Nevertheless, high frequency indicators of agricultural activity, the purchasing managers index (PMI) for manufacturing, and private estimates for unemployment point to some stabilisation of economic activity in Q2, while contractions in several sectors are also easing. The recovery is, however, not yet fully entrenched and moreover, in some sectors, upticks in June and July appear to be levelling off. By all indications, the recovery is likely to be gradual as efforts towards reopening of the economy

ISING INFECTIONS POSE A CHALLENGE



► Recovery is not yet fully entrenched and in some sectors, upticks in June and July appear to be levelling off

► Immediate policy response to Covid has been to prioritise stabilisation of the economy

are confronted with rising infections," said Das while addressing the Ficci national executive committee meeting.

The central bank chief said the policies for durable and sustainable high growth in the medium-run after the crisis are equally important and listed five critical areas, which according to him, would determine the ability to step up and sustain India's growth in the medium-run: (i) human capital, in particular education and health; (ii) productivity; (iii) exports, which is linked to raising India's role in the global value chain; (iv) tourism; and (v) food processing and associated productivity gains.

"While dealing with the immediate crisis management challenges, we need to strategically prepare for our combined overriding goal—the pursuit of strong and sustainable growth. The private business sector has a critical role in each of the five areas I covered today. The enabling policy environment would

evolve around the initiatives taken by India's businesses to seize these opportunities and actualise the potential of the Indian economy as a rising economic power of the 21st century. Covid-19 has changed our lives and it is increasingly clear that life will never be the same again. We should look upon these fundamental changes as opportunities rather than threats, converting them into game changing new vistas of progress," said Das.

The governor said the RBI remains 'battle-ready' to take measures to support the economy as and when needed and that the immediate policy response to Covid in India has been to prioritise stabilisation of the economy and support a quick recovery.

Das said that despite a large government borrowing programme, the steps taken by the RBI to ensure ample liquidity has ensured that bond yields remain low and are currently the lowest in the past 10 years due to surplus liquidity.

Frustrated ONGC exits Sudan over pending dues

New Delhi, Sept. 16: Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) has exited from Sudan oilfields after the African nation refused to pay for oil it lifted from the fields.

ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the overseas investment arm of the state-owned firm, as also its Chinese partner CNPC and Malaysia's Petronas have withdrawn from the block, a company official said.

OVL had a 25 per cent stake in Block 2A&4 in Sudan while CNCP had 40 per cent and Petronet 30 per cent. Sudan's Sudapet had 5 per cent interest.

Sudan had since 2011 not paid OVL and partners for oil the country bought from the block. Sudan's dues towards OVL totalled \$430.69 million, the official said.

OVL initiated arbitration proceedings against the Government of Sudan to recover the dues and has terminated the exploration and production sharing agreement, he said.

OVL had also not been paid about \$99 million for the 741-km pipeline it built from Khartoum to Port Sudan.

The project cost and rental of \$254 million was to be paid by Sudan in 18 half-yearly equated instalments of \$14.135 million each starting from December 30, 2005. OVL got 11 instalments (\$155.48 million) till December 2010 and none after that.

—PTI

Prepaid meters must for new power connections: Draft rules

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 16



Every new electricity connection will come with a smart prepaid meter or a prepayment meter, as per the Draft Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020.

According to the new rules circulated by the power ministry for comments, no connection will come without a smart prepayment meter or a prepayment meter. Any exception to this should be approved by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Smart prepayment meters should be read remotely once in every month and in case of other prepayment meters, they should be read by a representative of the distribution licensee once in three months. Consumers with smart prepayment meters will be given access to check their consumption on a real time basis.

sumption on a real time basis.

The draft also recognises consumer as a prosumer if he generates renewable energy (RE). "While the prosumer shall maintain his consumer status and have the same rights as consumer, he will also have the right to set up renewable energy generation units, including roof-top solar PV systems, either by himself or through a service provider," the draft bill says.

The total generation capacity of the RE units should not exceed the

limit prescribed by the commission.

Based on the application received from the prosumer, a technical feasibility study should be completed within 20 days. He would be compensated automatically for those parameters that can be monitored remotely. The distribution licensee will create an online facility on which the prosumer can register and claim compensation amount.

The draft rules also calls for setting up a call centre for consumer services by the commission and a grievance redressal mechanism. The grievance redressal forum will be headed by an officer of the licensee and have two to three members as representatives of consumers and prosumers.

The power ministry has sought suggestions on the draft rules till September 30.

ICICI launches home loan for informal workers

FC BANKING BUREAU
MUMBAI, SEPT. 16

ICICI Home Finance on Wednesday said it has launched a new loan scheme 'Apna Ghar Dreamz', with credit amount in the range of Rs 2 lakh to 50 lakh, for skilled workers employed in the informal sector in Delhi.

The scheme is meant for skilled workers such as carpenters, plumbers, electricians, tailors, painters, welders, auto mechanics, manufactur-

ing machine operators, computer mechanics, water machine repair technicians, small and medium business owners and grocery store owners in the city, the company said in a release.

The loan scheme is targeted at the informal segment of the population who wish to purchase their own home, but may not have all documents that a formal financial institution would require.

ICICI Home Finance said. Customers seeking to

avail the special 20-year tenure loan would need to provide documents such as PAN and Aadhaar details, and bank statement of past six months.

The customers should have a minimum account balance of Rs 1,500 for loan up to 5 lakh and Rs 3,000 for loan above 5 lakh.

Customers can also avail of benefits of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, a credit-linked subsidy scheme for LIG/EWS and MIG I & II homes, the company said.

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Ruturaj unlikely for IPL opener

Dubai: Chennai Super Kings batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad, who tested positive for COVID-19 last month, remains in isolation and is unlikely to be available for the team's IPL opener against Mumbai Indians on September 19 in Abu Dhabi. CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan said the India A batsman is doing "absolutely fine" but has not yet got the BCCI's clearance to join the team's bio-bubble. "Ruturaj has still not been cleared by the BCCI medical team and is in isolation. He is unlikely to be available for the first match. We are expecting him back in the (bubble) in the next couple of days and he is doing absolutely fine," Viswanathan said. Gaikwad is seen as Raina's replacement in the team after the latter pulled out of the tournament and flew back home due to personal reasons. Senior spinner Harbhajan Singh has also withdrawn due to personal reasons. — PTI

Djoker behaves better, in 3rd round

Rome: Novak Djokovic behaved better Wednesday in his first match since being defaulted from the US Open. The top-ranked Serb was mostly courteous with the chair umpire and had no interaction with the line judges during a 6-3, 6-2 win over local wild-card entry Salvatore Caruso in his opening match at the Italian Open. The performance came in sharp contrast to the scene in New York 10 days ago, when Djokovic was disqualified. — AFP

BEAT THE HEAT

Adapting to UAE climate biggest challenge, says ABD

Dubai, Sept. 16: South African star AB de Villiers believes the biggest challenge for all teams in the upcoming Indian Premier League will be adjusting to the prevailing hot and humid conditions in the UAE.

Most games will be played in the night but the conditions would still be challenging.

"I am not really used to these kind of conditions to be honest. It's very hot, it reminds me of a Test match we played in July in Chennai once where Viru (Virender Sehwag) scored 300. It was one of the hottest weather conditions I have experienced in my life," he said in an interview posted on RCB's Twitter handle.

"The humidity is similar to that, even at 10 at night. When I arrived here I checked the weather conditions of a few months and it seems to be getting better. It is definitely going to play a part and you have to make sure you have the energy for the backend of the innings or last 5 overs of your bowling spell," he added.

De Villiers said he would also miss playing in front of packed crowds in India with the event to be played behind closed doors in UAE due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

De Villiers said young Australian wicketkeeper batsman Joshua Philippe is an exciting cricketer and he would love share his knowledge with the Australian opener in RCB dressing room.

The 36-year-old dashing cricketer, said not just him, every player is just happy to be back on the field after international cricket came to a halt in mid-March because of the pandemic.

— PTI



Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni in action in this file photo.

Waiting for Dhoni delight: Viru

Mumbai, Sept. 16: Virender Sehwag expects this year's IPL to be "extra special" and a major reason for that is Mahendra Singh Dhoni getting back on the pitch after announcing his international retirement follow-

ing a year-long sabbatical from the game.

"I think this tournament will be extra special for everyone — the players as well as the audience... watching Dhoni back on the pitch is sure to be a delight. There's so much

in store, need I say more?" Sehwag said.

Meanwhile, former Australian cricketer Dean Jones reckons Suresh Raina's absence from the IPL would be a major concern for CSK.

"Raina's absence is a

major concern this time and he is in the top 5 run getters in IPL. He is a left hander and plays spin very well and the weakness for CSK could be that majority of their players are right handed," Jones said.

— PTI

BCCI set to use Fraud Detection Services

New Delhi, Sept. 16: The BCCI has tied up with UK-based company Sportradar, which will offer its "integrity services" to prevent betting and other corrupt practices during the upcoming IPL through its Fraud Detection Services (FDS).

With the 13th Indian Premier League being held behind closed doors, the challenge for the Board's Ajit Singh-led Anti-Corruption Unit is very different as there has been a surge in betting-related frauds and it's expected to increase manifold during the lucrative event.

"BCCI has inked a deal with Sportradar for this year's IPL. They will be working closely with the ACU and offer their integrity services," an IPL source confirmed.

According to Sportradar, Fraud Detection System (FDS) "is a unique service that identifies betting-related manipulation in sport. This is possible due to the FDS's sophisticated algorithms and constantly maintained database of odds which are leveraged for the purpose of detecting match-fixing."

— PTI

BALE SET FOR HIS RETURN TO TOTTENHAM

London, Sept. 16: Gareth Bale is "close" to a sealing a sensational move back to Tottenham but the deal is "complicated", Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett said.

The Wales international has been frozen out by Real manager Zinedine Zidane and he said earlier this month he was open to returning to the Premier League.

Manchester United have also expressed an interest in Bale but they see him as more of a back-up option behind other targets, including Borussia Dortmund's Jadon Sancho.

That has left Spurs in pole position to sign Bale, who left the club for a then world-record fee of 85 million in 2013.

When asked about Tottenham's move for Bale, Barnett said: "It's close but not done. It's a complicated deal."

Bale has two years left on a contract that pays him around 30 million euros a year at Real Madrid. The Spanish giants Madrid are pushing for a permanent transfer.

— AFP

TJI TOWERS AS MONTPELLIER TAME LYON 2-0

Paris, Sept. 16: Midfielder Tji Savanier scored once in each half as Montpellier beat Lyon 2-1 to move up to fifth place in the French league. The match was rescheduled from the first round of games because Lyon reached the Champions League semi-finals, losing to eventual champion Bayern Munich.

Savanier opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 38th minute and Lyon midfielder Houssein Aouar was sent off just before the break.

Savanier slotted a shot inside the left post in the 59th to make it 2-0 but Lyon was awarded a way back into the game when Vitorino Hilton was sent off in the 81st.

Netherlands' forward Memphis Depay tucked away the penalty amid reports he will soon join Lionel Messi at Barcelona.

"We haven't received any offer from Barca. Not even a phone call to ask the price for Memphis," Lyon's sporting director Juninho said.

Lyon is in action again on Friday when it hosts Nimes.

— AP

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