

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VIJAYAWADA | TUESDAY | 29 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER
Max: 33.0°C
Min: 23°C
RH: 32%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Humid and Partly Cloudy. Max/Min temp. 33/23 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+84,942)	(+1,114)
61,37,952	96,276

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,378)	(+7)
TS: 1,87,211	1,107
(+5,487)	(+37)
AP: 6,81,161	5,745

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,34,66,557
DEATHS 10,04,613
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Adhika Ashwayuja Shuddha Trayodasi till 10.34 pm
Star: Satabhisham till 12.48 am
Varjyam: 6.30 am to 8.14 am
Durmuhurtam: 8.32 am to 9.19 am; 10.53 pm to 11.42 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HILIRI CALENDAR
Safar ul Muzaffar 11, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.30 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.45 pm
Maghrib: 6.12 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.57 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.57 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 4.41 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 4.34 AM

COUNTER POINT

Please vote for me!

IN BRIEF

4 tribals die in Vizag Agency

Visakhapatnam: Four tribals have died and 24 from Agency areas were admitted to King George Hospital for the treatment of various diseases caused by the consumption of polluted water. Members of Forum for Development of North Andhra, who conducted a field study in the agency area, said villages under Ananthagiri mandal of Visakhapatnam agency have no water and food. Those died belong to Karakavalasa of Ananthagiri.

■ Full report on Page 3

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BSY offers olive branch to farmers



WORLD | 5

Report claims Trump paid \$750 as tax in 2 yrs

SPORTS | 8

Wawrinka packs off Murray from Paris



Minister protects erring contractor from action

RSR Infra submitted fake bank guarantee to avail mobilisation advance from government

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 28

P. Anil Kumar, minister for irrigation in the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government, has been reportedly helping an errant contractor firm RSR Infra (India) Pvt Ltd escape punishment. The firm allegedly submitted a fake bank guarantee to avail of ₹15 crore mobilisation advance in the ₹500-crore Vamsadhara package. Local irrigation officials detected the fraud and recommended termination of the contract and forfeiture of the earnest money deposit (EMD) of ₹5 crore besides blacklisting the company. Inquiries by *Deccan Chronicle* revealed that the minister had rescued the contractor at least twice and is still blocking action. When officials

sought the minister's approval for action against RSR Infra in December last year, he raised queries relating to precedents when the government had initiated action against contractors who submitted fake bank guarantees. Anil Kumar raised queries despite the government pleader giving an opinion that criminal proceedings should be initiated against the contractor for cheating, forgery and attempting to make unlawful gains. "The minister could have accorded permission instead of raising queries," sources pointed out. Sources also said the Chief Engineer, North Coast, played a role in delaying action against RSR Infra. Though the superintending engineer had sent a note replying

to the minister's queries through email in March this year, the CE had chosen to ignore it for about three months. "The SE's report was finally circulated to the minister in August in which it was clearly stated that action was initiated against a contractor for submitting fake bank guarantee in Polavaram works and the EMD was forfeited," sources said adding that the two other queries raised by the minister were also answered. A month later, Anil Kumar ordered an inquiry by the Chief Engineer, and the terms of reference gave room for suspicion that the minister had an intent to dilute action against the contractor.

■ Page 2: Anil Kumar delayed penal action

Banks collect credit card dues despite pending case in SC

VADREU SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 28

Many credit card holders are facing harassment from bankers and financial institutions who are insisting on payment of credit card dues with compound interest and penalties. Lenders are engaging collecting agents and third party agencies to collect dues from the cardholders. They are going to the homes of cardholders at early hours and harassing them for recovery leading some card holders to flee their homes. Card holders argue that the moratorium issue is being argued in the Supreme Court and lenders should wait until the verdict is delivered. Meanwhile, the lenders are expediting the recovery of the credit card dues before the verdict.

The lenders think that if the Supreme Court imposes a moratorium for two or three years without interest and also without affecting Cibil scores, their recovery rate may fall. "Due to lockdown, our salaries are often cut and frozen; We have not been paid for months, since the lockdown. Some of the traders are also worried due to lack of business. In these circumstances, the repayment of dues are delayed," said P. Suresh Babu, a credit card holder. Banks also are offering a one-time settlement or a reduction of some of the payable amount if the cardholder pays at once. But the cardholders are afraid that if OTS is availed, it will affect Cibil score.

■ Page 3: Credit card users may get notice

OXYGEN PRICE UP, COVID CARE TO GET COSTLY

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 28

Covid-19 patients may have to shell more for treatment in private hospitals as the Centre has recently enhanced the cost of medical oxygen from ₹17.49 per cubic metre to ₹25.71. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) had notified the cost of medical oxygen at ₹17.49 per cubic meter, excluding 12 per cent GST on March 25. As the demand for medical oxygen has gone up four times due to Covid-19 and also about 50 per cent liquid oxygen is being diverted for medical purpose against pre-Covid period of 15 per cent, the Centre has decided to avoid strain at all levels in value chain of production and supply, especially due to distance factor.

■ Page 3: NPPA will regulate oxygen supply

Jagan launches YSR Jalakala

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 28

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday launched 'YSR Jalakala' that endeavours to drill two lakh borewells at an estimated cost of ₹2,340 crore in four years. This is expected to help farmers draw groundwater for cultivating crops in about five lakh acres.

Speaking on the occasion, he stated that they would drill borewells free of cost for the benefit of small and marginal farmers and even fix electric motors so that they can pump out groundwater. "During my padayatra, I had seen the troubles faced by farmers and promised to come to their help and accordingly I am pressing into service 163 drilling machines. We are

spending ₹2,340 crore for the programme over the next four years," he said. A borewell drilling machine would be kept available in each Assembly segment in the state and farmers could register for installation of borewell in their field through online or with the help of volunteers, he explained.

■ Page 2: Farmers can save ₹9,274 a month

Congress tells states to negate 3 farm laws

Enact state laws under Article 254(2) to save farmers, says Sonia

DC CORRESPONDENTS with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, LUCKNOW, CHENNAI, SEPT. 28

In a move that has the potential of igniting a showdown with the Centre, the Congress on Monday advised states where it was in power to explore formulating laws which can negate the "anti-agriculture" laws passed by the NDA government at the Centre. The advice was given by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who asked "states to explore the possibilities to pass laws in their respective states under Article 254(2) of the Constitution."

In a statement, Congress general secretary organisation K.C. Venugopal said Article 254(2) allows state legislatures to pass a law to negate the anti-agriculture laws passed by Parliament that encroach upon state's jurisdiction under the Constitution. "This would enable the states to bypass the unacceptable anti-farmers' provisions in the three draconian agricultural laws including the abolition of MSP and disruption of APMCs in Congress-ruled



Charred remains of a tractor that was set on fire near India Gate during a protest against the new farm laws, in New Delhi on Monday.

— PTI

states. This would also alleviate the farmers from the grave injustice done by the Modi government and BJP," Venugopal said in the statement. The Congress has been spearheading the Opposition protest against the farmers' Bills both inside and outside Parliament. On Monday morning, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi claimed that

the new laws were a "death sentence" for farmers whose voice has been crushed. "The agriculture laws are a death sentence to our farmers. Their voice is crushed in Parliament and outside. Here is proof that democracy in India is dead," he said on Twitter. The party's youth wing took to the streets against the Acts and burnt a tractor at India Gate in protest.

Delhi Police said that five people claiming to be members of the Punjab Youth Congress have been detained. The BJP hit out at the Congress over the burning of the tractor, accusing it of playing "drama" aimed at publicity and "misleading" farmers. "The Congress shamed the country today," Union minister Prakash Javdekar said.

CRICKET | THRILLER

Utility cricketer surprised all with his run riot

A match too good to be true

R. MOHAN | DC CHENNAI, SEPT. 28

The fairytale win for Rajasthan Royals on Sunday was almost too good to be true. The most creative scriptwriters would have struggled to string together a turnaround scenario tale like this in a T20 game in which history was made. The highest successful run chase in IPL was fashioned by a utility cricketer who could hardly get his bat to the first 20 balls he faced ball after being promoted as a kind of pinch hitter. Rahul Tewatia surprised Kings XI Punjab by suddenly connecting virtually every ball to spank five sixes in an over.



Rahul Tewatia

● THE HIGHEST successful run chase in IPL was fashioned by a utility cricketer who could hardly get his bat to the first 20 balls he faced ball after being promoted as a kind of pinch hitter. Rahul Tewatia surprised Kings XI Punjab by suddenly connecting virtually every ball to spank five sixes in an over.

The watchdog app surveilling unusual betting patterns in IPL 2020 may

not have noticed suspicious gambling designs though the odds sawed dramatically towards the end. Otherwise, we would have known by now.

Seasoned observers of the game were, however, left shaking their heads in disbelief at the fluctuating fortunes and the improbable becoming reality as 86 runs were taken in four overs for Royals to win a 'lost' game. Was it just the Kings XI captain K.L. Rahul's inexperience showing in bringing on pace against a swinging bat and making it easier for it to connect? Tewatia had scored eight off the first 20 balls he faced and even commented on "the worst 20 balls he had ever faced."

■ Page 8: Tewatia turns game on head

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OTHER STORIES

Anil Kumar delayed penal action

From Page 1

The minister wanted the CE to inquire if RSR Infra had subcontracted the work and the sub-contractor had submitted the fake bank guarantee. Even after the officials put all details in their note on action initiated by Polavaram authorities against the contractor who submitted a fake bank guarantee, the minister again wanted a detailed report.

Retired HC judge inquires abuse case

Rajahmundry: High Court retired Justice B. Seshasayana Reddy made an inquiry on Monday regarding allegations of sexual harassment against the English Professor at Adikavi Nannayya University. He took depositions from both parties at the University EC Hall. The English Professor Dr N. Surya Raghavendra, students and others attended to the inquiry. A sexual harassment case was registered against Prof. Surya Raghavendra on 14 October 2019 and the government had appointed retired High Court Judge Justice B. Seshasayana Reddy as the inquiry commissioner. The Judge has previously made an inquiry on September 16 at the University. He postponed the case to October 14. Earlier district additional magistrate B. Srinivas, the University legal officer Nandepu Nagendra Rao and others welcomed Justice Seshasayana Reddy. The University Vice-Chancellor Mokka Jagannadha Rao and the Registrar Prof. Battu Ganga Rao met the retired High Court Judge. Meanwhile, the postgraduate science final year examinations under the University commenced from Monday. Vice-Chancellor Jagannadha Rao, who visited the University Science College exam centre, said that 97 per cent students out of 2,000 attended the examination. He said that the examinations are being held separately for arts and science students given the Covid-19 scare.

Fight to develop TD in Kadapa: Mallela

Kadapa: The Telugu Desam Kadapa Parliamentary Constituency in-charge, former MLA Mallela Linga Reddy said that he would fight for the development of the party in the district without any hypocrisy. Speaking at a press conference on Monday at the district party office in Kadapa, he said, "Kadapa district is not a Y.S. family, it will soon prove to be a bastion for the TD. The YCP, which came to power in the name of a single chance, said it had done nothing for the people." He said that he would lead the TD to victory in the district.

Farmer's welfare is govt motto: Lingala

Kadapa: Ambati Krishna Reddy, advisor to the state government's agriculture department, said that he would take into consideration the problems faced by farmers in the state to the government. He said the welfare of the farmers was the government's motto. He held a press conference on Monday in the conference hall of the office of the JD of Agriculture at the Collectorate. He said that the government has appointed him as an agricultural advisor to know the problems of farmers at the field level and solve them. He said that he would visit villages to create awareness among the farmers about the crop.

Left parties plan stir on farm bills

Visakhapatnam: The Left parties called for a three-day dharna against the farm bills which were given the Presidential assent. The agitation will be launched from Tuesday in the Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies. Announcing this at a press conference, CPI(M) city secretary Dr B. Ganga Rao said that the farm bills were aimed to benefit corporate entities only but not for the farming community. The farmers cannot get minimum support price to their produce, and the involvement of mediators is also needed, they asserted. Moreover, the marketing of paddy produce would become a tough task for the farmers. Metering of agriculture pump sets was another bane for the farmers, who are already deep in informal debts. Apart from Ganga Rao, Ganesh Panda of CPI(ML), Y. Kondiah CPI(ML), S. Govindarajulu SUCI and M. Pydiraju CPI were present at the press briefing. They also released a pamphlet for the protest.

AP's farming community welcomes YSR Jalakala

The new scheme ensures 24/7 water supply to the crops

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 28

Except looking for water resources, the farming community is not anticipating anything from the government in the north coastal district. While participating in the launch of YSR Jalakala, a new scheme to ensure 24/7 water supply to the crops, with Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, the farming community expressed their happiness on the new scheme.

Allowing the government to all-round welfare schemes towards the oppressed communities, the farmers have expressed their happiness on the YSR Jalakala scheme.

The community thanked the government on the new scheme and said that all these decades, no government has looked into the farming communities' needs and the government has rightly identified the right need of the farmers.

As a part of his series of welfare schemes and programmes, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday launched the YSR Jalakala programme to ensure water flow to the irrigation for the small-scale farmers across the state. Under this scheme one dedicated water rig in every assembly constituency to cater to the irrigation needs of the region and bore-well spot to be identified on a scientific basis after conducting a hydro-geological and geophysical survey. The entire cost of the survey and digging of bore-wells to be born under the YSR Jalakala scheme.

"It is a wonderful scheme. The farming community and their families will have assurance under this. Our children and other agriculture workers need not migrate to the other areas for work. Under the scheme, thousands of families of farmers will benefit," said G. Vijayachandrasekhara Rao, farmer of Kichhada of Komarada mandal in Vizianagaram district. "Yes, it is a timely decision from the government. We are all welcoming it. A real farmer needs water supply, and one can do miracles in the production of agro-based supplies. All previous governments have neglected the issue, and the YSRC government assured and started free water supply to the farming community," said K.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launches YSR Jalakala scheme giving free borewells to farmers, from camp office on Monday. MP Pili Subhash Chandrabose, ministers Botsa Satyanarayana, Dharmana Kishnadas, Peddireddy Ramachandra-reddy, Kurasala Kannababu, S. Appalaraju, principal secretary Gopalakrishna Dwivedi are also seen.

Farmers can save ₹9,274 a month

From Page 1

He said that they would conduct a scientific study on locating the most viable place for having a borewell. He also assured that in case the first borewell failed to help draw water, a second one would be drilled free of cost if the farmer applies for such a facility.

Referring to his late father Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy's free power programme for farmers launched in 2004, Jagan Mohan Reddy said that their government had gone one step ahead to provide a borewell free of cost.

He said that the scheme would help farmers save ₹9,274 every month. He wished that this facility would stop the migration of farmers from upland areas for want of water for their farmlands. He said that they had cleared the free power bill dues of the previous government to the tune of ₹8,655 crore and added that they had spent ₹1,700 crore in the last 16 months to enhance capacity of nearly 85 per

Nageswara Rao, a farmer of Bobbili mandal.

"The Jala Kala is a beneficial scheme to the small scale farmers. With this, there will be revenue generation from the grounds and will be a big relief to

cent of feeders. He assured to do so for the remaining 15 per cent feeders in the next few days.

Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy justified the move to fix meters to borewells by saying that it would help ensure supply of quality power to all farm connections. He said that they were going to set up a 10,000 MW capacity solar power plant to ensure quality and free power to farmers.

The Chief Minister announced that in the coming days, farm produce would be purchased at the field itself through e-cropping. Quality of products will be checked at RBKs and e-marketing platforms will be set up to give better marketing facilities for the produce.

He also announced setting up of food processing units at mandal headquarters, Janata Bazaars at every village wherein even fish could be sold.

Later, he interacted with farmers from Krishna, Vizianagaram, Anantapur and Chittoor districts.

the families. If the farmers are happy with the flow of water for agriculture, there is no need for anything is. I am very happy to witness the Jalakala scheme," said Vangapandu Venkataramana.

17 RIGS READY IN EG FOR JALAKALA PROGRAMME

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, SEPT. 29

East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy said that 17 borewell rigs had been sanctioned to the district for 17 Assembly constituencies under Jalakala programme.

He, along with the MLAs of Rampachodavaram, Prathipadu, Tuni, Pithapuram, Peddapuram, Amalapuram and Rajanagar, the MLC Pandula Ravindrababu, Kakinada MP Vanga Githa, Amalapuram MP Ch. Anuradha and others flagged off 12 borewell rigs here on Monday.

Mr Muralidhar Reddy said that Jalakala scheme would be implemented in the district and said digging of borewells and motors would be provided to small and medium farmers under the scheme.

Joint Collector G. Rajakumari said that the eligible farmers for the scheme could apply through online or offline with the help of village secretariats by submitting passbook and Aadhaar cards.

Rajanagar MLA Jakkampudi Raja said that if the farmer digs the borewell, it would cost lakhs of rupees, but the Chief Minister would help the farmers to dig the borewells free of cost.

ing three members to inspect the colleges regularly to ensure transparency in their functioning.

He called for more number of colleges to get autonomous status as out of nearly 3,000 colleges, only 104 were having such status in the state. He said that two universities, one each in Vizianagaram and Ongole, were to be set up shortly.

The officials informed the CM that notices were served on over 200 colleges for a series of violations so far.

TD activist held for attack on Jr civil judge's brother

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, SEPT. 28

A day after TD national general secretary, Nara Lokesh, held the ruling YSR Congress responsible for the attack on Ramachandra, brother of S. Ramakrishna, a Chittoor-based junior civil judge under suspension, the Chittoor district police wing arrested a TD activist in connection with the case.

According to Madanapalli SP S. Senthil Kumar, Ramachandra, 44, was injured when some unknown persons attacked him at B. Kothakota town on Sunday. He was buying vegetables from a roadside vendor near the main road in the evening when some persons, travelling in a car, asked the vendor to move his pushcart to give way to their vehicle.

Ramachandra supported the vendor and picked up an argument with the persons in the car and refused to give way to their vehicle. The argument turned violent, they attacked each other and Ramachandra sustained injuries.

Police launched an investigation and collected CCTV footage and statements from eye witnesses as part of the investigation.

Taking the incident to twitter, Lokesh made unsavoury comments

₹30L RECOVERED FROM MAN WHO DUPED A WOMAN OF ₹1.40 CRORE

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, SEPT. 28

CCS police recovered ₹30 lakh worth property from the Vizag-based accused, who duped a Nellore-based woman allegedly to the tune of nearly ₹1.40 crore on the pretext of selling gold ornaments of Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy through the Simhachalam temple devasthanam.

The police recovered ₹11.35 lakh cash, 280 grams of gold and property, all together worth ₹30 lakh from the accused, Kona Hymavathi, 39, of Pendurthi in Visakhapatnam, who was taken into custody. The police grilled the accused in Vizag from September 23 to 27.

According to the CCS CI S.K. Bajji Jan, Hymavathi developed friendship with one Madduru Sravani of Sullurpeta in Nellore district. She made Sravani believe that gold ornaments of Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy would be sold to her through the devasthanam.

She told the victim that she would help her purchase the gold at a nominal cost as the sale had not been advertised in the newspapers. Believing her, Sravani made a deal with Hymavathi and gave her ₹38 lakh for the gold. When the victim did not get the jewellery, she reportedly called up the devasthanam officials only to know that she was duped.

FORMER MP HARSHA KUMAR CALLS 'CHALO MADANAPALLI' TOMORROW

DC CORRESPONDENT RAJAHMUNDY, SEPT. 29

Former MP of Amalapuram G.V. Harsha Kumar has made a call 'Chalo Madanapalli' on September 30 in protest against attack on Ramachandra Rao, the brother of Judge Mr Ramakrishna and he appealed to all the people belonging to the Schedul-

against the ruling party and Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, saying that Jagan has been attacking Dalits and already many have become his victims.

He asked how many more Dalits were going to be targeted by him. He condemned the attack on Ramachandra and demanded stringent action against the YSRC leaders responsible for the attacks.

However, Chittoor district police ruled out any political involvement in the case and arrested P. Prathap Reddy, who claimed he was a TD activist, for attacking Ramachandra.

Disclosing the details to mediapersons, Kumar said there was no political motive behind the attack. "We have observed the CCTV footage collected from cameras in the vicinity

ed Caste to attend the protest.

He told the reporters on Monday that after YSR Congress assumed power, the attacks on SCs have significantly increased and everyone should condemn it. He alleged that the followers of minister P. Ramachandra Reddy attacked Ramakrishna at Madanapalle.

ity where the incident happened. Prathap Reddy didn't use any lethal weapons in the attack. He also disclosed that he had not met Rama Chandra or his brother earlier and did not know who they were.' Meanwhile, Prathap Reddy while talking to the media said that there was no political motive to in the attack and it happened due to the scuffle that broke out between them, leading to instant rage.

He also claimed that he belongs to the TD party and his mother also once contested MPTC elections.

Police also produced an eye witness, Ramana, who runs a lab at B. Kothakota, before the media.

He said that Ramachandra, who was in an inebriated condition, fell down and sustained injuries during the scuffle between the two.

Attacks on shrines not linked: Police

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 28

The AP police have ruled out any link in 12 out of 19 cases of attacks on temples and temple properties and have advised people not to be carried away by misinformation.

AP Director General of Police Gautam Sawang said on Monday that they had arrested the accused involved in 12 out of 19 cases of attacks on temples and temple properties reported since the chariot-fire incident at Antarvedi. Each case had a different motive and criticised vested interests who were trying to cause trouble by cooking up conspiracy theories.

Referring to the case of desecration of an idol at Srikakulam, Sawang stated that the arm had fallen off last year after heavy rain.

Regarding an incident at Kurnool, the DGP said that the accused had stated that he desecrated the

idol and stole the private parts of the deity as he was made to believe that it would help his wife conceive a child.

Mr Sawang added that in other cases, some treasure mongers damaged idols assuming that some treasure was hidden underneath. Referring to the recent Chittoor incident, he said that a Nandi idol was desecrated by unidentified miscreants and they were taking up an inquiry to find out the culprits, besides serving a notice to the temple management for not ensuring safety.

Explaining the safety measures taken up at all places of worship in the state, Sawang said that they had mapped 47,593 places where 28,567 temples were located and added that out of them, only 10 per cent of them were equipped with CCTV cameras. He said that notices were served to the remaining temples to install CCTV cameras.

POLICE NABS TWO TEMPLE THIEVES

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, SEPT. 28

The Addanki police on Monday arrested two accused in connection with a series of temple theft cases that are reported at various locations in Prakasam district over the past one year.

According to Prakasam district SP Siddarth Kaushal, as part of the "Sadbhavana Programme", the police wing has been conducting counselling sessions to the old

accused, who committed thefts in temples.

In this regard, Addanki SI and his staff caught hold of two accused T. Rama Krishna, 28, and P. Bhupathi, 38, of Addanki town, in Thimmayapalem village on Addanki - Darsi road and arrested them under their confession statement.

During the interrogation, the accused confessed to have committed theft at Ankamma temple at Parvathi Puram village in the recent past.

AP to start new UG, PG programmes

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 28

Andhra Pradesh to start post-graduation programmes with one or two years duration and under-graduation programmes with three to four years by offering courses with advanced topics like robotics, artificial intelligence, data analytics, security analysis and risk management in commerce from the current academic year.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy held a review meeting on

National Education Policy 2020, on Monday at his camp office.

He laid stress on launching a four-year UG programme to offer PhD admission after its completion and also called for starting a five-year integrated PG and four-year integrated B.Ed programmes from the next academic year.

The CM called for all existing colleges including the government colleges, in the state to get accreditation from the National Board of Accredita-

tion and also from National Assessment and Accreditation Council based on relevance in the next three years in the state and directed the officials to serve notices on colleges if they failed to maintain standards to close them if they failed to change in three years. He laid more stress on B.Ed colleges to maintain standards.

He asked the officials to come up with standard operating procedures to maintain quality and also felt the need to form ten teams with each one hav-

ing three members to inspect the colleges regularly to ensure transparency in their functioning.

He called for more number of colleges to get autonomous status as out of nearly 3,000 colleges, only 104 were having such status in the state. He said that two universities, one each in Vizianagaram and Ongole, were to be set up shortly.

The officials informed the CM that notices were served on over 200 colleges for a series of violations so far.

OCEAN | RESEARCH

The proposed seafront facility is expected to be the future hub of ocean technology ESSO-NIOT project in limbo five years after launch

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, SEPT. 28

The ₹250 crore Earth System Science Organisation (ESSO) project by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) that was to be established in Chittedu mandal, Nellore district is in limbo following land disputes for the last five years.

The foundation stone was laid on April 25, 2015 by then Union minister for science, technology and earth sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan. The then CM of AP N. Chandrababu Naidu, then Union minister for urban development, M. Venkaiah Naidu, and then Union minister of state for the ministry of science and technology and Earth Sciences, Y.S. Chowdary, were present at the function.

The purpose of the pro-

posed sea front facility, expected to be the future hub of ocean technology in India, is to validate the working of indigenously developed marine systems in the ocean.

This is in addition to a training facility to cater to software development for ocean data analysis and also to provide training to students in ocean-related R&D areas.

A data centre is also proposed for analysis, data computation and interpretation of ocean data.

The research facility itself

Minerals like copper, cobalt, nickel and manganese can be extracted from such deep-sea mining.

This facility also caters to the sustained development of technology towards harnessing the energy from gas hydrates in deep seas.

With a physical wave basin for scaled model experimental studies, deep water installations, visualisation, a dynamic simulator, high performance computing, the facility was to have a testing facility for marine biotechnology with a marine finfish hatchery cum nursery complex, algal culture process lab, fish feed formulation and testing facility and intake facilities for sea water and brackish water for laboratory testing to study the natural marine resources.

Testing facilities for marine sensor system,

hydrates in deep seas. Spread across over 150 acres, the facility proposed to cater to the needs of the nation in design and installation activities considering the growing needs of off-shore applications.

When asked about the present status of the land disputes, senior scientist in the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai, Dr Vijaya Ravichandran, said the project was delayed solely because the main access to the allotted site is part of the 58 acres of land in legal

tangles. She expressed confidence in commencing the project work as soon as the land litigations are resolved by the subcollector of Gudur and collector of Nellore district.

Referring to two cases filed in the High Court by the owner of the 58 acres land in dispute, Gudur subcollector, R. Gopalakrishna, said that the litigation is solved as the peti-

tioner himself withdrew the cases and HC disposed them two days back.

However, an appeal for compensation with another piece of land is pending before the deputy chief minister for the last two years and the case is scheduled for hearing on September 30, the subcollector said while indicating that it should be resolved.

But the multipurpose project failed to take off even after five years following legal tangles.

research vessels.

IN BRIEF

APPGE CET held in 14 centres

Visakhapatnam: Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasada Reddy released the APPGE CET 2020 code for the forenoon session and Prof K. Samatha, Rector, Andhra University released the SET Code for the afternoon session for post-graduation common entrance test on Monday. The test was conducted in 14 centres in the forenoon sessions and at 20 centres in the afternoon sessions across the state and also at Hyderabad. There is a poor response from the aspirants to the geo-engineering and geoinformatics with 52 per cent of attendance. For computer science and information technology as many as 4,083 candidates applied, however, 2,966 candidates attended the entrance test with 72.64 per cent turnout.

Eamcet for Covid patients

Kakinada: The state government has allowed Covid-19 patients who could not write the examinations to appear for Eamcet 2020. Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Kakinada (JNTUK) organised the AP Eamcet-2020 examinations from 17 to 18 and 21 to 25 in 118 centres. However, many of the students could not write the examination as they were Covid-19 positive.. The AP Eamcet-2020 Convener V. Ravindra said that 20 students appealed to the AP Eamcet office to conduct the exam as they could not attend. He said that the students who suffered from Covid-19 and could not write the exam can apply APEamcet helpline centre mail helpdeskeamcet2020@gmail.com along with their hall ticket and also their Covid-19 positive medical report on or before September 30.

He said that the exam date would be given through <https://sche.ap.gov.in/eamcet>. He said that the parents or students could contact 0884-2340535 and 0884-2356255 phones to clear their doubts. However, he made it clear that the opportunity is provided only for Covid-19 positive patients, and not other students who missed the exam due to the one minute late restriction and others. However, the parents urged the state government and the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to allow their students who were rejected to write the exam

TWO HELD FOR STEALING FROM COVID VICTIM

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 28

The Tirupati Urban Police on Monday arrested two hospital staff including a ward boy and a female nursing orderly (FNO) for stealing gold jewellery and cash from a Covid-19 deceased patient at the State Covid-19 hospital attached to SVIMS in Tirupati.

The accused were identified as K. Sunil Kumar, 30, hailing from Mallaiiahguntla in Tirupati rural and K. Bharathi, 30, from Moolasthanamma street in the urban limits, both working at the hospital. The police also recovered ₹6,000 cash and four gold rings from the possession of the accused.

According to Urban SP Mr Avula Ramesh Reddy said that the Covid-19 patient, who was admitted on September 14 has died on 23rd due to some health issues.

When his family members came to the hospital to offer their final respects to the deceased, they found that gold jewellery on his body had gone missing.

They took the issue to the hospital authorities, who lodged a complaint at the Alipiri PS.

"After registering a case, Police started the investigation and collected CCTV footage. On verifying it, they suspected the role of one K. Sunil Kumar, who works as a ward boy in general surgery-1 ward and one K. Bharathi, who works as an FNO in the hospital. When they were taken into custody and interrogated, they confessed of stealing the gold jewellery from the deceased", the SP explained.

In the investigation, police found that the FNO Bharathi had stolen one gold ring from the Covid-19 deceased patient and sold it to a person for ₹10,000, while Sunil Kumar confessed to have stolen 3 gold rings from the Covid-19 deceased patients earlier, the SP added.

Steep fall in Covid cases

Only 5,487 positive cases and 37 deaths in last 24 hours

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN I DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 28

Andhra Pradesh seems to be witnessing a steep fall in daily Covid-19 cases.

Since September 10, when it registered 10,175 cases, it has been reporting fewer infections every day, with only 5,487 and 37 deaths in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities in their Covid-19 bulletin reported that out of 66,121 samples tested, 5,487 individuals have been found infected with confirmed coronavirus taking the tally to 6,81,161 and the death toll touched 5,745.

Out of 56,66,325 samples tested so far in the state, 6,12,300 patients have been discharged after recovery while 63,116 patients are still active with the virus.

East Godavari continues to lead with the highest number of cases at 1,010, followed by 903 in West Godavari, 634 in Prakasam, 538 in Guntur, 489 in Nellore, 362 in Vizianagaram, 329 in Chittoor, 310 in Anantapur, 286 in Srikakulam, 271 in Kadapa, 145 in Visakhapatnam, 113 in Kurnool and 97 in Krishna.

In terms of cumulative cases, East Godavari has been the worst affected with the highest number of 95,200, followed by 65,336 in West Godavari, 60,149 in Chittoor, 56,519

Permission to 26 pvt hospitals withdrawn

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 28

State government has withdrawn permission to 26 private hospitals for providing Covid-19 treatment on charges of overcharging patients.

Special chief secretary for health Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy told media persons here on Monday that following complaints of overcharging patients by the Covid-19 designated private hospitals, they had withdrawn permission to the tune of 17 in East Godavari, three each in West Godavari and Kurnool and two in Nellore and one in Krishna district so far. He called upon the people to call up at toll-free No. 104 to lodge complaints on any irregularities in Covid-19 treatment and also to seek help for con-

duct of Covid-19 test or to get a bed in both government or permitted private hospitals.

He cautioned that if the private hospitals continue to charge the patients more and flout the norms in providing Covid-19 treatment, they would seize them and even go the extent of cancelling their licence. He said that they would conduct sero surveillance to find out the presence of prevalence of Covid-19 in the state after two weeks.

He said that they were keeping the availability of beds in the hospitals on their portal for the benefit of people to avail them based on need and added that 38,000 beds were available in 260 hospitals in the state.

The enior officials explained at length on the declining trend of Covid-19 positive cases

and also deaths in the last two weeks in the state and said that they had drawn comparison on five parameters observed from August 19 to 26 and again from September 19 to 26 and estimated the number of Covid-19 positive cases, the virus positive rate, deaths and also the prevalence of the Covid-19 pandemic. He said that the capacity to conduct more Covid-19 tests had gone up by 13,000 in the period in addition to decline in Covid-19 positive cases by 2,400. With regard to rate of death, he said death, the number of deaths had come down by 232 in the period. The CS said that the number of Covid-19 cases was coming down in urban areas while more number of cases were being reported from rural areas in the state.

in Anantapur, 55,798 in Kurnool, 53,782 in Guntur, 51,488 in Nellore, 49,502 in Visakhapatnam, 47,356 in Prakasam, 43,132 in Kadapa, 38,879 in Srikakulam, 34,541 in Vizianagaram, 26,584 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery has been high in East Godavari with 84,358, followed by 58,474 in West Godavari, 53,903 in Anantapur, 53,652 in Chittoor, 53,517 in Kurnool, 48,662 in Nellore, 46,914 in Guntur, 45,081 in Visakhapatnam, 39,521 in Kadapa, 36,661

in Prakasam, 34,680 in Srikakulam, 30,393 in Vizianagaram, 23,589 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Meanwhile Kadapa district collector Chevuri Harikiran revealed that he was tested Covid-19 positive.

NPPA will regulate oxygen supply

FROM PAGE 1

The NPPA's order mentioned that as medical oxygen is an essential life-saving drug and needed for critical Covid-19 management and also for management of other health emergencies and for elective surgeries, it intends to ensure adequate supplies of medical oxygen to save human lives.

As delivery of liquid medical oxygen through cylinders has gone up by 50 per cent from 11 per cent of pre-Covid-19 period, it has intended to cap the price of LMO to ensure uninterrupted availability to hospitals and consumers.

The Union ministry of health and family welfare has delegated powers to NPPA to take all steps to regulate the availability and price of LMO and medical oxygen cylinders.

● The state government has to incur additional financial burden due to the rise in cost of medical oxygen.

Accordingly, an order was issued on September 25, splitting the uniform price (₹17.49) of medical oxygen into two. Accordingly, the liquid medical oxygen will cost ₹15.22 per cubic metre and oxygen inhalation (medicinal gas) in cylinder to ₹25.71 per cubic metre, excluding GST and transportation costs. The new rates, which came into effect on Friday, will remain so up to March 31.

Former state president of Indian Medical Association (IMA) Dr D. Srihari Rao said "Rise in cost of medical oxygen will certainly have its impact on cost of treat-

ment as private doctors have no option except to collect the additional financial burden from the patients only. Given the steep rise in demand for medical oxygen, its cost should have been reduced to provide some financial relief to its suppliers and users."

Phani Greshma Agencies, Vijayawada head K. Mohan said, "Supply of medical oxygen has become unviable with the steep rise in operational costs ranging from manufacture to supply to the end-user after the outbreak of Covid-19. We expect some relief due."

Shiva Shakti Air Products, Vijayawada in-charge Murali Mohan said, "Consumption of medical oxygen in hospitals is slowly coming down given the dip in Covid-19 positive cases. We may get a margin of ₹10 if it costs ₹25.71 per cubic metre."

Credit card users may get notice

FROM PAGE 1

Suresh had to pay ₹40,000 by March 2020. He received notices from a financial institute to the tune of ₹89,000. Appealing to the Central government and also the Reserve Bank of India to provide a moratorium on bank loans and credit card payments for at least

3 years without interest and also without affecting the CIBIL score. The banks should provide relaxation on clearing the dues and debts.

Meanwhile, credit card holders are worrying over their repayment dues. According to a cardholder, he has to pay ₹1.29 lakh. Now, the bank has issued a notice

to him at ₹1.79 lakh with compound interest and also penalties. The bank has also warned him in the notice that unless he pays the dues, it will affect his CIBIL score also. Meanwhile, some third party agencies are getting ready to take legal action against cardholders who could not clear their dues.

SVBC to have quality content

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 28

Modernisation of Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel is aimed at spreading Hindu Dharma Prachara activity across the country by way of quality programmes using state-of-the-art studio and infrastructure facilities, said TTD Trust Board Chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy.

Inaugurating SVBC's new building, constructed at a cost of ₹20.45 crore at Alipiri, along with deputy Chief Minister K. Narayanaswamy here on Monday, the Chairman said that the idea of setting up an exclusive channel was to spread the Prachara to every

Alipiri footpath route to get facelift

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 28

TTD Trust Board Chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy on Monday performed bhumi puja for renovating the 7.6 km long footpath route from Alipiri in Tirupati to GNC toll gate at Tirumala. This is expected to cost ₹25 crore.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the

footpath route, which was constructed over two and a half decades ago, was in a bad shape and hence TTD has also decided to renovate shelters along the trekking route.

Usually, during normal days around 20,000 devotees walk to Tirumala via this footpath while on special occasions the number shoots up to over 40,000.

"The SVBC was launched on July 7, 2008. In the last 12 years, the channel made its mark and with the recent

CM WRITES TO PM TO CONFER BHARAT RATNA ON BALU

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 28

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, requesting him to confer the Bharat Ratna on S.P. Balasubrahmanyam who died last week.

Mr Jagan said that S.P. Balasubrahmanyam had sung over 40,000 songs in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi. He had won six national film awards for best male playback singer and 25 Andhra Pradesh state Nandi awards for his work in Telugu cinema in addition to winning numerous awards from states like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The Chief Minister said that the singer was honoured with the Silver Peacock as the film personality of the year in 2016 and was the recipient of Padma Shri in 2001 and Padma Bhushan in 2011.

The CM said that earlier music stalwarts like Lata Mangeshkar, Bhupen Hazarika, M.S. Subbulakshmi, Bismillah Khan and Bhimsen Joshi were conferred with the Bharat Ratna.

FILM SOCIETY PAYS TRIBUTES TO SPB

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 28

The Vizag Film Society, affiliated to Federation of Film Societies of India, paid rich tributes to well-known playback singer S.P. Balasubrahmanyam at Andhra University HRD Centre premises, in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

Prof P. Viswanadham president of VFS, Prof. G.S.N. Raju life member of VFS and vice chancellor of Centurion University, Narava Prakasa Rao secretary of the Society, garlanded the portrait of SPB and observed a two-minute silent prayer as a mark of respect to the great singer.

The speakers said that SPB was a great humanist and the film industry lost a great soul. They said that a saga came to an end and none can fill the void created by him.

The Society members resolved to request the government to declare Bharat Ratna award, construct his statue at the RK Beach and to declare his birthday on July 4 as singers day as a real tribute to him.

MAN MURDERED IN VIZAG CITY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 28

An unidentified person murdered a 30-year-old man in Durga Adarsh Nagar under Pendurthi police station limits in Vizag city in the early hours of Monday. The deceased was identified as K. Dileep alias Dileep of ASR Nagar.



The fungus ridden polluted water pit from which 70 families of Karakavalasa draw water for drinking and cooking

Four Adivasis die, 24 hospitalised

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 28

A number of Adivasis in far-flung villages under Ananthagiri mandal of Visakhapatnam and close to Vizianagaram are dying and falling ill due to lack of potable water, food and access to health services.

Four people died in King George hospital (KGH) in a span of one month and 24 were admitted. Of them, 20 were released on Monday and another four are undergoing treatment.

The general secretary of the forum for development of north Andhra, A.J. Sharma, who visited KGH and later the affected villages, told *Deccan Chronicle* that the four died due to drinking polluted water and malnutrition-caused beriberi, which was confirmed by the doctors at KGH.

Sharma said all the deaths occurred in Karakavalasa village under Rompilli panchayat of Ananthagiri mandal during the last one month. He said during their visit to the village, which is 150 km away from Paderu ITDA, they found people drawing water for drinking and cooking from a single pit which was completely polluted.

The panchayat raj department constructed a water tank with a 20,000 litres capacity in Rompilli in 2017 but due to lack of power

supply, the tank never came into operation. A temporary tank was built but the water supply was not sufficient for all the villages under the panchayats.

Confirming the deaths and rampant illness, additional district medical and health officer, Dr K. Leela Prasad, said it was true they died of consuming highly polluted water and beriberi. "In addition to these two factors, consumption of illicit brew is adding to their illness. All the four diseased persons died due to liver disease caused by polluted water, illicit brew and lack of nutrition," Dr. Prasad told *Deccan Chronicle* on Monday.


He said he drew the attention of project officer of ITDA, Paderu, S. Venkateswarlu and Araku MLA, Chetti Palguna, to supply essential commodities and power to the water tank immediately.

The ADMHO also added that the five panchayats have no road point and are located about 150 kms from Ananthagiri.

Sharma also wrote a letter to minister for tribal welfare, Pamula Pushpa Srivani, to include the five panchayats - Rompilli, Gummakota, Rampole, Bhimpole, SR Puram and Garugubilli - under Scheduled Areas and provide water, road and medical facilities to save the lives of the adivasis.

 KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD. (A Government of India Undertaking)	
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Chief Engineer, Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., invites Open Tender in Two bid system through E-Tendering on IREPS portal from eligible contractors for the following work. Tender Notice No.: KR-W-18-2020-06. Name of Work: Complete Track Renewal (P) between Km 693/000 to 739 / 800 Udipi (UD) - Thokur (TOK) in AEN / Udipi Section in Karwar Region of Konkan Railway in Karnataka State. Estimated Cost: ₹ 1364 Lakhs Excluding GST. Closing Date/Time: 20/10/2020 up to 15:00 hrs. for submission of online Offers/Bids. Completion Period: Twelve Months including Monsoon. Manual offers shall not be accepted. Please visit https://www.ireps.gov.in website for details / participation. Corrigendum / addendum will be hosted in this website only.	

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SHORT TAKES

DASH WINS
SHANTI SWARUP
BHATNAGAR PRIZEAKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO |
DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 28

Dr Jyotirmayee Dash from Jagatsinghpur district has won the prestigious Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for Science and Technology for 2020 in the field of Chemical Sciences.

Ms Dash's team works on new methodologies for synthesis of diverse molecules that can be used to study structure and function of therapeutic targets.

She will receive the award comprising ₹5 lakh from Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a presentation ceremony by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research at a later scheduled date.

Ms Dash became the first woman from Odisha to win the prize.

After pursuing MSc in Chemistry at the Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Dash did her PhD in synthetic organic chemistry from IIT Kanpur. She is currently associated with School of Chemical Sciences, Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Kolkata.

Expressing happiness over her achievement, Dash said the prize will inspire her for further research in the field. Odisha Governor Prof. Ganeshi Lal and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik have congratulated Dash for the feat. Odisha governor Ganeshi Lal also congratulated Ms Dash for her achievement.

ASSAM GROUP
OPPOSES 25% NRC
RE-VERIFICATIONMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, SEPT. 28

A leading civil society group - the Forum Against Citizenship Act Amendment Bill - here on Monday said that they are opposed to idea of BJP-led alliance government for re-verification of 25 per cent names already included in the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam.

Claiming that Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and his deputy in the cabinet Himanta Biswa Sarma were in New Delhi seeking support of the Central government for re-verification of 25 per cent names in the NRC, the chairperson of the forum Hiren Gohain in a statement feared that re-verification of NRC at such large scale may provoke communal elements and lead to serious social disturbances in the state.

He, however, said that only a minor re-verification may be undertaken, if it is necessary, in an atmosphere of peace and transparency. The forum said that the recent New Delhi visit of the Chief Minister was said to be to discuss the implementation of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord but some other sources claimed that his visit was aimed at seeking nod of the Central government for 25 per cent re-verification of the NRC.

Admitting that final NRC may have some errors, the forum which was pro-actively involved in the anti-CAA movement said that the intention behind re-verification of NRC at such large scale was certainly not to ensure peace and harmony but the contrary.

WB GOVT REJECTS
RAJ BHAVAN'S
REQUEST

Kolkata, Sept. 28: The West Bengal government has turned down a request from the Governor's House to increase its budget allocation, a senior official said on Monday.

The governor's office had written to the state secretariat a couple of times in the recent past, seeking additional funds of ₹53.5 lakh to meet everyday expenses.

The state government, however, expressed its inability to allot more funds, claiming that it has adopted austerity measures amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The governor's office had sought additional funds of ₹53.5 lakh. As our state has adopted certain austerity measures to handle expenses during this pandemic, the request was turned down," the official at the state secretariat said.

Notably, the state finance department has slashed 50 per cent of the budget allotted to the Raj Bhavan, and set aside ₹16 crore for its expenditure in 2020-21 fiscal.

Covid suspect can take exam: SC

Court says student can appear for the CLAT in a separate isolation room

New Delhi, Sept. 28: Hours before the scheduled start of Common Law Admission Test (CLAT)-2020 the Supreme Court on Monday allowed a suspected Covid-19 positive aspirant to take the entrance test in a separate isolation room.

The CLAT-2020 exam, an entrance test for the 22 National Law Universities (NLUs) for admission to LLB, LLB 5 year Integrated and LLM, courses was held at 2 pm on Monday.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said, in the facts of the present case, we are of the view that the student Deepansh Tripathi should be permitted to take his CLAT examination on September 28, 2020 in a separate isolation room to be provided by his Centre Superintendent.

The bench also comprising Justices R. Subhash Reddy and M.R. Shah said that the student shall ensure that a downloaded copy of this order should be presented before his Centre Superintendent as early as possible by any other non-symptomatic person. On such order being produced, the Centre Superintendent shall provide a separate room for applicant to appear in the examination.

Applicant shall enter into the centre after other candidates take entry and shall first leave the examination centre, it said. The top court said the Centre Superintendent may also request the Chief Medical officer of the District or Superintendent, Government Hospital to provide medical staff to render necessary assistance.

The student has contended that although as per the admit card issued to him, Covid-19 symptomatic candidates will be allocated to isolated room, instructions have been issued by the Consortium of NLUs that candidates who have been tested positive and are under medical surveillance or in isolation will not be permitted to take the CLAT, 2020 examination.

The bench recorded that the student has already received admit card show-

ing his centre as ION Digital Zone IDZ Chitoura Road, Bhartiya Vidya Mandhir Shiksha Samiti at Gwalior. In his intervention application filed by the student, he said that he is aspiring to clear the CLAT exam and is holding a valid admit card for the CLAT Exam.

However, he is presently in isolation due to his being suspected of being Covid positive. He is otherwise fine and is fully ready and prepared to give the CLAT-2020 examination scheduled to take place on September 28, he has said in his application.

On September 21, the top court had directed that for conduct of CLAT-2020 examination on September 28, taking all precautions and care for health of the students after following the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Ministry of Human Resource Development.

The plea of Tripathi had sought clarification of the September 21 judgement on CLAT and order to the Consortium with regard to denial to appear in entrance examination to aspirants suffering from Covid-19 by not providing isolation rooms at the exam centres.

As per the latest order of the CLAT Consortium, the candidates who have tested positive for Covid-19 and are under medical surveillance will not be permitted to take the CLAT 2020 examination scheduled to be held on 28 September 2020.

The student in his application said, "The sudden change in the stand of the Consortium of National Law Universities has deprived the applicant of his fundamental right under Article 14 of India to be treated as an equal and be given opportunity to appear in the examination on September 28, 2020 which otherwise he was well entitled to like any other student."

Nearly 78,000 students of the Nagpur University in Maharashtra will appear for their final year exams online through a mobile app from October 1 in the wake of the pandemic, officials said. —PTI



Women wait in long queues to cast their vote at a polling station during Panchayati Raj elections, amid the ongoing pandemic at Jhala ki Chauki village near Beawar on Monday. — PTI

KERALA TO
HOLD ALL-PARTY
MEETING TODAYGILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPT. 28

With Kerala reporting a huge spike in Covid-19 cases, chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan has convened an all-party meeting on Tuesday to devise an effective strategy for dealing with the massive spread of infection in the state.

The total cases reported in Keala so far are 1,79,922 of which 1,21,268 persons have recovered and 57,879 patients are currently under treatment in various hospitals across the state.

Meanwhile, the government decided to allow only a limited number of devotees to the Sabarimala shrine during the annual pilgrimage season including Makaravilakku. The CM said though notwithstanding the restrictions imposed on the number of devotees, all rituals and ceremonies at the temple will be held as usual.

India sees over 82k cases,
over 74,000 recoveriesDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28

The total number of coronavirus cases in India crossed 60 lakh on Monday as 82,170 fresh cases were reported from various parts of the country.

India's total toll was 95,542 with 1,039 fresh fatalities in the last 24 hours.

At this rate, by Tuesday, India's death toll will cross one lakh.

As per union health ministry, India's total recoveries have crossed 50 lakh on Monday with 74,893 recoveries.

"With a very high number of Covid patients recovering every single day, India's steady trend of posting high levels of daily recoveries continues. India has witnessed a very high level of more than 90,000 recoveries every day in the recent past. The total recovered cases have outpaced active cases by more than five times. With the exponen-

tial increase in the recoveries, there is close to 100% increase in recovered cases in one month," health ministry officials said.

Among the new recoveries, 73% are being reported from ten states — Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Kerala, Odisha, West Bengal and Punjab.

Maharashtra leads the tally with more than 13,000 new cases of recovered patients.

"The rise in total recovered cases from 1 lakh in June has been steep. The last 10 lakh recoveries were added in just 11 days," officials added.

Health economist Dr Rijo M. John said cases growth (1.5%) has decreased considerably over a week, 7-day average daily cases have shown some decline and is beginning to look up again.

He added that daily active cases are rebound-

ing after being negative for a few days.

"Although the country has a relatively low mortality rate at 1.57%, the variation across states is high. High mortality rates in states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and Delhi are worrying. Many north eastern states and Kerala have very low mortality rates," John said.

He added that most states do not report test results by type of tests and there is considerable variation in the aggregate daily testing reported by all states together and that by the ICMR.

"51.7% of cases and 63.6% of deaths now come from top 50 districts. This share has consistently declined indicating the wider spread

Bengaluru urban, Pune, Mumbai, Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram, Coimbatore, Indore, Jaipur etc. are all reporting new daily highs on an average," John said.

Custodial death sparks
tension in MP villageRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
CHOPAL, SEPT. 28

The death of a man, accused of theft in police custody in a village in Madhya Pradesh on Monday triggered tension in the locality.

The 42-year-old victim Rajpatti Kushwaha, resident of Simhpur village in Satna district, was hit by a bullet on his head fired from the service revolver of the in-charge of the local police station Vikram Pathak, while he was in the police custody. He later succumbed to bullet injuries in the hospital, police said.

Satna district superintendent of police Riyaz Iqbal was transferred following the development, even as Pathak and a police constable Ashish Mishra were placed under suspension.

According to the police, Kushwaha was arrested late on Sunday night on charges of stealing jewel-

ry and a revolver from the house of a local villager two months ago.

He received bullet injury while he was in police custody.

He was rushed to a government hospital in Rewa where he succumbed to injuries.

The incident sparked tension in the village with locals staging demonstrations at the police station. The demonstration later turned violent with the people pelting stones at police.

Later, reinforcement rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control.

Mr Iqbal told reporters that the victim tried to snatch away the service revolver put on the table in the police station and was injured in accidental firing in the process.

Former chief minister leader Kamal Nath condemned the incident and demanded a high level inquiry.

FOR BIHAR
POLLS, CENTRE
DEPLOYS 30,000
SECURITYMENDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28

The Home Ministry has decided to deploy 300 companies, roughly 30,000 para-military security personnel, for the three-phase Bihar Assembly polls starting Oct. 27.

Since these are the first major elections being held during the Corona pandemic, all security personnel would be given special training in managing health protocols during elections and counting.

The Assembly elections in Bihar are scheduled to be held in three phases on October 28, November 3 and 7 while the results will be declared on November 10.

Following detailed consultations between the Election Commission and the Home Ministry, the poll panel decided to hold Bihar Assembly polls in less phases in order to minimise the movement of security personnel and ensure their safety along with that of other polling staff in wake of the Corona pandemic.

"Since elections involve large scale deployment of security forces, all efforts have been made to minimise their movement over long distances. This is due to their fatigue as well as Covid-19. The number of phases to three due to this," a senior Home Ministry official said.

Also, for the first time all security personnel being deployed for polling duty will be briefed in details about all health protocols and safety measures that they will have to follow while on duty.

The security personnel will also ensure that the common people coming for voting also follow all strict health safety measures that have been laid down by the Health Ministry and the EC.

Both the Home Ministry and the poll panel are confident that they would be able to contain spread of Corona in Bihar during the elections.

HEROIN WORTH
₹25CR SEIZED
IN ASSAM

Guwahati, Sept. 28: Over five kg of heroin worth ₹25 crore was recovered from Karbi Anglong district in Assam and one person held in this connection, DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta said on Monday.

The operation was part of the ongoing action against the drug smuggling activities in the state, he said.

"The @karbianglong-pol (Karbi Anglong police) on Sunday night seized a whopping 5kgs of Heroin at Assam Nagaland border. Kudos to the team," the director general of police said, adding that this was the biggest blow to drug peddlers.

Ismaail Ali, son of Akabor Ali, has been taken into custody in the case, he said.

The market value of 5.05 kg of heroin recovered is estimated at ₹25 crore, he added. —PTI

REAL | DRAMA

The court says the BMC's conduct while demolishing Kangana Ranaut's bungalow was 'fishy'

HC tells Raut, Ranaut to show guts to own their comments

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28

The Bombay High Court on Monday told Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut and actor Kangana Ranaut to show guts to own up their comments made against each other on social media and public interviews.

The court's observation came after Mr Raut's counsel denied in the court that his client's comment "should be taught a lesson" was aimed at Ms Ranaut. The court also said that the

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's conduct while demolishing Ms Ranaut's bungalow was "fishy".

A bench of Justices S.J. Kathawalla and R.I. Chagla continued to hear the writ petition filed by Ms Ranaut challenging the demolition of a part of her bungalow in Pali Hill in suburban Bandra by the BMC on September 9.

While arguing on behalf of Ms Ranaut, advocate Dr Birendra Saraf played a clip of a news interview where Mr Raut had

allegedly said that Ms Ranaut "should be taught a lesson". However, Mr Raut's counsel Pradeep Thorat argued that in the entire interview, the Sena leader had not referred to Ms Ranaut by name.

"If it is your stand that you (in the audio) have not called the petitioner a 'haramkhor', we will record it. Should we record your statement?" the court said, referring to an alleged comment Mr Raut made in the interview. "Don't run around the bushes... Have the guts

THE BENCH questioned the BMC's conduct and said that in Ms Ranaut's case, the civic body did not follow its own practice of attaching photos of alleged illegal constructions with its stop-work notices and waiting for some days before carrying out demolitions.

to say (before the court) what you have tweeted or told a news channel," the court said to both Mr Raut's and Ms Ranaut's

counsels. The bench also questioned the BMC's conduct and said that in Ms Ranaut's case, the civic body did not follow its own practice of attaching photos of alleged illegal constructions with its stop-work notices and waiting for some days before carrying out demolitions.

The judges were questioning the BMC's ward officer Bhagyawant Late under whose jurisdiction Ms Ranaut's property falls. During the questioning, the bench noted that in cases of similar illegali-

ties in buildings close to Ms Ranaut's, the BMC had waited for several days to carry out the demolition. Besides, in most other cases, it had attached photos of the alleged illegal constructions with its stop-work notices served to building owners, and in such cases, it did not often take the police along for demolition, it said.

However, when it came to Ms Ranaut's case, the BMC did not have any photos with digital date and time stamps of the alleged illegalities, and the demoli-

tion had been carried out in the presence of a huge police force just 24 hours after the stop-work notice was served to the actor, the bench noted. In its reply to Ms Ranaut's petition, the BMC had claimed to have demolished a similar case of illegality on September 8. But when the bench asked Mr Late for photos or records of the demolition, he said no such photos or documents existed. The ward officer said the BMC team had not taken the police along for the September 8 demolition.

IN BRIEF

Shooting outside strip club: 6 hurt

Detroit: A shooting early Monday outside a Detroit strip club has left six people wounded, police said. A large group was outside the club on the city's west side shortly before 2 a.m. when at least one person opened fire, police said, citing preliminary information about the investigation. Details about what led up to the shooting were under investigation, police said. No arrests were immediately reported. Those shot were in their 20s, police said. Five were taken by medics to the hospital and another was transported by private vehicle. Two men were listed in critical condition, police said, and two men and a woman were in stable condition. The condition of another woman who was shot wasn't immediately known by police.

Romania mayor wins poll after death

Bucharest: A mayor in southern Romania grabbed a landslide election victory — despite dying of Coronavirus days earlier, local reports said on Monday. Ion Aliman clocked up 1,057 of 1,600 votes cast in Deveselu municipality even though he died on September 17, reports said.

The ballots had already been printed at the time of Aliman's death and his name could not be removed, according to local officials. After the polls closed, local supporters flocked to his grave to "celebrate the victory". "We want to congratulate him," a Deveselu resident commented under a photo posted on Facebook that showed dozens of people with candles at the local cemetery.

A re-run of the election is now expected.

Deveselu previously hit the headlines in 2018 when a local farmer was ordered to move his flock of sheep because they kept triggering the alarm at a US military facility.

Writer Alexievich leaves Belarus

Minsk: Belarusian writer Svetlana Alexievich has left the country for treatment in Germany, her friend said Monday, after the Nobel Literature Prize winner faced official pressure for supporting the opposition. The 72-year-old author, who has been summoned for questioning by investigators after joining the opposition's Coordination Council, has gone to Germany for planned treatment, her friend Mariya Voiteshonok said. "She will return to Belarus in a month. She is not dropping her activities as a Coordination Council member," Voiteshonok said. She added that Alexievich also planned to visit Italy where she has been awarded a literary prize. The announcement of her departure comes as President Alexander Lukashenko has jailed or forced out most of the country's prominent opposition activists. Known for her Russian-language books with witness accounts of the Soviet era, including World War II and the Chernobyl disaster.

11 KILLED IN MEXICO BAR SHOOTING

Mexico City, Sept. 28: Gunmen killed 11 people, including four women, early Sunday in a bar in the central Mexico state of Guanajuato. State prosecutors said the bullet-ridden bodies were found at a bar near the town of Jaral del Progreso. The area is near the border with Michoacán state, which has been a point of incursion for the Jalisco cartel, which wants to move into Guanajuato. Local media reported the four dead women may have been employed as dancers at the bar, located on the side of a highway. There was no immediate information on a possible motive in the attack, but it bore the signs of a drug gang killing. Guanajuato has been the most violent state in Mexico in recent years, but authorities had hoped the detention of a leader of a local gang on Aug. 2 would help stem the violence.

The detained leader of the Santa Rosa de Lima gang, José Antonio Yépez Ortiz, was better known by his nickname "El Marro," which means "The Sledgehammer." He had long fought a bloody turf battle with the Jalisco cartel, and authorities blamed him for much of the violence in the state.

While murders across the state dropped slightly to 339 in August from 403 in July, they may be rebounding in September as gang members fight to fill the vacuum left by Yépez Ortiz's detention.

Trump paid just \$750 tax in 2016, 2017



Donald Trump

Washington, Sept. 28: President Donald Trump paid just \$750 in federal income taxes the year he ran for president and in his first year in the White House, according to a report in *The New York Times*. Trump, who has fiercely guarded his tax filings and is the only president in modern times not to make them public, paid no federal income taxes in 10 of the past 15 years.

The details of the tax filings published Sunday complicate Trump's description of himself as a shrewd and patriotic businessman, revealing instead a series of financial losses and income from abroad that could come into conflict with his responsibilities as president. The president's financial disclosures indicated he earned at least \$434.9 million in 2018, but the tax filings reported a \$47.4 million loss.

The tax filings also illustrate how a reputed billionaire could pay little to nothing in taxes, while someone in the middle class could pay substantially more than him. Roughly half of Americans pay no income taxes, primarily because of how low their incomes are. But IRS figures indicate that the average tax filer paid roughly \$12,200 in 2017, about 16 times more than what the president paid. The disclosure, which the *Times* said comes from tax return data it obtained extending over two decades, comes at a pivotal moment ahead of the first presidential debate Tuesday and weeks before a divisive election against Democrat Joe Biden.

Speaking at a news conference Sunday at the White House, Trump dismissed the report as "fake

news" and maintained he has paid taxes, though he gave no specifics. He also vowed that information about his taxes "will all be revealed", but he offered no timeline for the disclosure and made similar promises during the 2016 campaign on which he never followed through.

In fact, the president has fielded court challenges against those seeking access to his returns, including the US House, which is suing to get Trump's tax returns as part of congressional oversight.

During his first two years as president, Trump received \$73 million from foreign operations, which in addition to his golf properties in Scotland and Ireland included \$3 million from the Philippines, \$2.3 million from India and \$1 million from Turkey, among other nations. He in 2017 paid \$145,400 in taxes in India and \$156,824 in the Philippines, compared to just \$750 in US income taxes. The *Times* said the tax records did not reveal any unreported connections to Russia. Trump found multiple ways to reduce his tax bills. He has taken tax deductions on personal expenses such as housing, aircraft and \$70,000 to style his hair while he filmed *The Apprentice*. —AP

President pocketed \$21.2 mn in state, local refunds

Washington, Sept. 28: A *New York Times* report that President Donald Trump paid just \$750 in federal income tax the year he entered the White House — and, thanks to colossal losses, no income tax at all in 11 of the 18 years that the *Times* reviewed, suggests why that might have been so. It reported that many of Trump's top businesses are losing money, even as those losses have helped him shrink his federal tax bill to essentially nothing.

The *Times* noted that Alan Garten, a lawyer for the Trump Organisation, said that "most, if not all, of the facts appear to be inaccurate" and asked for the documents on which the reporting was based, which the *Times* declined to provide to protect its sources. He then directly disputed only the amount of taxes Trump had paid.

Trump's sizable refund became the subject of a now-long-standing Internal Revenue Service audit of his finances. The audit was widely known. Trump has claimed it was the very reason why he cannot release his returns. But the report is the first to identify the issue that was mainly in dispute.

As a result of the refund, Trump paid an average \$1.4 million in federal taxes from 2000 to 2017, the *Times* reported.

By contrast, the average US taxpayer in the top .001% of earners paid about \$25 million annually over the same timeframe.

Trump initially paid \$95 million in taxes over the 18 years it studied. But he managed to recover most of that money by claiming — and receiving — a stunning \$72.9 million federal tax refund. According to the *Times*, Trump also pocketed \$21.2 million in state and local refunds, which are typically based on federal filings.

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By contrast, the average US taxpayer in the top .001% of earners paid about \$25 million annually over the same timeframe.

Trump has financed an extravagant lifestyle with the use of business expenses

From his homes, his aircraft — and \$70,000 on hair styling during his television show *The Apprentice* — Trump has capitalised on cost incurred from his businesses to finance a luxurious lifestyle.

The *Times* noted that Trump's homes, planes and golf courses are part of the Trump family business and, as such, Trump classified them as business expenses as well. Because companies can write off business expenses as deductions, all such expenses have helped reduce his tax liability.

Many of President's best-known businesses are money-losers

The President has frequently pointed to his far-flung hotels, golf courses and resorts as evidence of his success as a developer and businessman. Yet these properties have been draining money.

The *Times* reported that Trump has claimed \$315 million in losses since 2000 on his golf courses, including the Trump National Doral near Miami, which he has portrayed as a crown jewel in his business empire. Likewise, Trump International Hotel in Washington has lost \$55 million.

Foreign visitors have helped support Trump's properties

Since Trump began his presidential run, lobbyists, foreign governments and politicians have lavished significant sums of money on his properties, a spending spree that raised questions about its propriety and legality.

The report illustrates just how much that spending has been: Since 2015, his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida has taken in \$5 million more a year from a surge in membership. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association spent at least \$397,602 in 2017 at Trump's Washington hotel. —AP

TAX CHARGES ADD FUEL TO FIRST DEBATE

Washington, Sept. 28: US President Donald Trump on Sunday faced allegations that he paid little or no income tax for years before he came to power, as his cloudy financial past stoked controversy ahead of the first election debate. The *New York Times* alleged the billionaire president paid just \$750 federal income taxes in 2016, the year he won the White House, and no income taxes at all in 10 of the previous 15 years because he reported losing more money than he made.

Trump, who immediately dismissed the accusations as "totally fake news," is readying to come face to face with his Democratic opponent Joe Biden at a live debate on Tuesday.

The Republican leader has broken with presidential tradition by refusing to release his tax returns, fighting a long battle in the courts and triggering speculation about what they might contain.

"First of all, I paid a lot and I paid a lot of state income taxes too... It'll all be revealed," Trump said as he shrugged off the *Times* story that cited tax data extending more than 20 years.

The paper said the records "reveal the holowness, but also the wizardry, behind the self-made-billionaire image" of the president. —AP

Russia, China paid money to Biden son: Don

Washington, Sept. 28: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's son Hunter received a large sum of money from Russia and China, US President Donald Trump has alleged and said that the mainstream media is "underplaying" the story and keeping quiet on it.

"It's hard to believe, when you see the kind of money that he (Hunter) has made from China,

from Russia, where the wife of the mayor of Moscow gives him three-and-a-half million dollars and nobody even has any question about it," Trump told reporters at a White House news conference on Sunday.

According to a Senate Republican report released last week, during Biden's tenure as vice president, Hunter, 50, received a \$3.5 million

wire transfer from Elena Baturina, the widow of Moscow's former mayor Yuri Luzhkov.

The report further alleged that Chinese nationals lavished Hunter and other members of the Biden family with money, giving Hunter and Biden's brother James credit cards for a \$100,000 international shopping spree.

Despite such a damaging report being published,

the mainstream media is "underplaying the story and keeping quiet on it," Trump said.

"If we had a media that was fair — even just reasonable — this would be the biggest story for years and years and years. Then you'd really be entitled to real Pulitzer Prizes, not the fake committee that gives you these fake awards," he told reporters. —PTI



People cross a street in Melbourne's central business district on Monday as five million residents in Australia's second biggest city emerged from an almost two-month overnight curfew as just five Coronavirus cases were recorded in worst-hit Victoria state. —APF

Quarantine breach: Tougher UK fines in force

DUBAI TO RESTRICT NIGHTLIFE AMID COVID-19 INCREASE

London, Sept. 28: People across England will be required by law from Monday to self-isolate if they test positive for the Coronavirus or face a £1,000 fine, which increases to £10,000 for repeat offenders. The government said that as the infection is now spreading rapidly again across the country, the tougher measures are aimed at ensuring compliance and reducing the spread of Covid-19.

"These new measures are about saving lives. Everyone must take personal responsibility and self-isolate if they test positive or if told to do so by NHS Test and Trace," said UK Home Secretary Priti

Dubai, Sept. 28: Dubai has announced new restrictions on nightlife to curb a rising tide of Coronavirus infections.

Dubai's tourism authorities have ordered all bars and restaurants in the city-state to stop serving and halt "entertainment activities" at 1 a.m.

Hotels will be restricted

by law to offering only delivery and room service after 3 a.m.

Authorities urged dining and drinking establishments to adhere to anti-virus protocols or face "consequential procedures and violations," including shutdowns and huge fines.

The new rules are the first since restaurants and

bars were allowed to reopen in July as Dubai, a top travel destination known for its lively nightlife, emerged from lockdown.

The United Arab Emirates has recorded more than 90,600 infections since the pandemic began, including over 400 deaths. —AP

as a result of the compulsory quarantine, lasting around 14 days, will also be eligible for a new £500 Test and Trace Support Payment. The rules come in as infections continue to rise across the UK but only 18 per cent of people with symptoms of the deadly virus going into isolation, according to a study commissioned by the UK government.

"These simple steps can make a huge difference to reduce the spread of the virus, but we will not hesitate to put in place further measures if cases continue to rise," he said. Local authorities will set up the Test and Trace Support Payment schemes. —PTI

Pak court stays release of Pearl murder accused

Money laundering case: Shahbaz held

Lahore, Sept. 28: Pakistan's top Opposition leader and PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif was arrested by the country's anti-graft body on Monday after a court rejected his bail plea

of Pearl in 2002, to seven years. The court also acquitted his three aides who were serving life terms in the case — almost

in a money laundering case. Shahbaz, the Leader of the Opposition and the younger brother of three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, was taken into custody from

the Lahore High Court's premises, where PML-N workers gathered ahead of the hearing in the Rs 700 crores (\$41.9 million) money laundering case. —PTI

COURT INDICTS ZARDARI, SISTER

Islamabad, Sept. 28: An anti-corruption court in Pakistan on Monday indicted former president Asif Ali Zardari and his sister Faryal Talpur in a money laundering case. It comes just ahead of the planned protests next month by Opposition parties to demand the resignation of PM Imran Khan. —PTI

550 Armenians killed in fight with Azerbaijan

Yerevan, Sept. 28: Armenia and Azerbaijani forces kept fighting Monday over the disputed separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh after hostilities broke out the day before, with both sides blaming each other for resuming the deadly attacks.

Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry told the Interfax news agency Monday that over 550 Armenian troops have been killed, a claim that Armenian officials denied. According to Nagorno-Karabakh officials, 31 servicemen have been killed so far.

Armenian Defence Ministry spokesman Artsrun Hovhannisyan said Monday over 200 people have been wounded.

The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry claimed that Armenian forces started shelling the town of Tartar on Monday morning, while Armenian officials said the fighting continued throughout the

night and Baku resumed "offensive actions" in the morning.

The heavy fighting broke out between the two countries on Sunday morning in the region that lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since 1994 at the end of a separatist war.

It was not immediately clear what sparked the fighting, the heaviest since clashes in July killed 16 people from both sides. Mostly mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh — a region around 4,400 square kilometres (1,700 square miles) or about the size of the United States state of Delaware — lies 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the Armenian border. Local soldiers backed by Armenia also occupy some Azerbaijani territory outside the region. —AP

US: China using SCS outposts for control

Washington, Sept. 28: China is using its militarised outposts in the South China Sea as platforms of coercion to assert control over waters it has no lawful claim over, the United States has said, demanding President Xi Jinping to honour his commitment that these maritime constructions "would not target or impact any country". Beijing claims almost all of the 1.3 million square-mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. China has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region which, in parts, is claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Beijing has impeded commercial activity like fishing and mineral exploration by neighbouring nations in recent years, saying the ownership of the resource-rich maritime territory belongs to China for hundreds of years. US State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortogus on Sunday said five years ago on September 25, 2015 the Chinese President, standing in the

White House Rose Garden, promised 'China does not intend to pursue militarisation' of the Spratly Islands, and China's outposts 'would not target or impact any country'.

Instead the Chinese government backed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has pursued reckless and provocative militarisation of these disputed outposts, deploying anti-ship cruise missiles, expanding military radar with signal intelligence capabilities, constructing dozens of fighter jet hangars and runways capable of accommodating combat aircraft, Ortogus said.

"The CCP uses these militarised outposts as platforms of coercion to assert control over waters to which Beijing has no lawful maritime claim," Ortogus said. They serve as staging grounds for the hundreds of maritime militia vessels and China Coast Guard ships that regularly harass civilian carriers and impede legitimate law enforcement activities, offshore fishing, and hydrocarbon development by neighbouring states. —PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

29 SEPTEMBER 2020

Arbitrary tax policies harm India's image

A Hague-based international arbitration tribunal's decision to reject India's retrospective tax demand worth ₹20,000 crore against Vodafone Plc and term it as unfair should serve as a lesson to governments that seek to change the rules of the game arbitrarily. The tribunal's award underscores the importance of a stable and fair policy environment for investors. The case relates to the acquisition of Hutchison Whampoa's telecom interests in India by London-based Vodafone Plc by taking over a holding company based in the Cayman Islands, a noted tax haven. With Hutchison booking huge profits in the sale, the government had asked Vodafone to cough up the capital gains as it had failed to withhold money for tax from the payment made by Hutchison. Vodafone argued that Indian tax authorities do not have jurisdiction over the acquisition deal between two foreign companies involving the takeover of another foreign company. But the Indian argument, led by Pranab Mukherjee, the finance minister of the second United Progressive Alliance government, was that India had the right to demand tax as the underlying asset was in the country. The Supreme Court upheld Vodafone's argument as the Income-Tax Act, 1961 does not envisage such tax levy. But Mukherjee got the law amended in 2012 to allow taxmen to levy tax retrospectively from 1961.

Whereas the government was well within its rights to amend the law, it is the last thing investors would like. Instead of being a rare aberration, the midway policy change — either by executive order or legislation or judicial pronouncements — has become a norm in the country, reflecting poorly on the investor-friendliness environment in the country. Several sectors have borne the brunt of arbitrary policies in the country. The telecom sector, in particular, has ended up with a mountain of debt because of frequent interventions by the judiciary. Several infrastructure companies had become bankrupt when the governments did not meet their obligations on time. The government's sudden demand for switching over to electric vehicles was threatening to nullify thousands of crores invested by automobile companies in adding capacities. Such practices show that businesses in India can flourish until it has the blessings of the government — a scenario that is not any different from a banana republic.

In February 2014, before he became the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, as the Bharatiya Janata Party's prime ministerial candidate, had said that traders take more risk than soldiers. Though he retracted his statement immediately, Modi was speaking the truth, especially in India where an official can wipe out the entire wealth of a person with a mere stroke of a pen. However, his government also continued past mistakes and further consolidated the power of bureaucrats. Tax terrorism still continues with tax officials getting greater powers to meet the revenue estimates given in the Union Budget. It is high time the Prime Minister works towards providing a stable policy framework for businesses in the spirit of his 2014 statement. Otherwise, India will end up in the league of countries governed by ruling class plutocracy.

Akalis out: What next for NDA?

The Shiromani Akali Dal's formal parting of ways with the BJP-led NDA late Saturday took no one by surprise: It was widely anticipated for some time, certainly after Harsimrat Kaur Badal, the lone Akali minister in the Narendra Modi government, quit the Union Cabinet in protest over the agricultural marketing bills passed in Parliament (amid much drama in the Rajya Sabha) a week earlier. The Akalis hadn't spoken out while this legislation was being discussed in Cabinet, and its change of stance gives rise to the suspicion they were driven to it amid the farmers' rising anger to protect their political base. While many commentators and Opposition parties noted the significance of the BJP's "oldest ally" walking out of the saffron alliance, there is little sign the BJP is all that unhappy, which has triggered speculation on whether it was SAD that decided to leave the alliance, or whether it was driven to do so by the BJP which was seeing it as an encumbrance. The NCP and Trinamul Congress, among others, hailed the Akalis' move, hoping it would be a nail in the NDA's coffin, generating talk about possible political realignments, but the Congress' Punjab unit had a different view. Punjab's PCC chief claimed the Akalis were "thrown out" of NDA and "staged a drama" to ensure its political survival.

Where does the BJP go from here? Some in the party wanted to break with the Akalis long back, thinking SAD was a millstone around its neck, and it can now seek more compatible partners, like the breakaway faction led by S.S. Dhindsa. On Sunday, Akali chief Sukhbir Badal said for many years the NDA all but ceased to exist, with the BJP disinclined to consult its allies. The ruling party, however, still needs allies to pass bills in the Rajya Sabha and govern several states. More important, it must sit down with the farmers and find solutions so their anger is defused, else it may start a bigger fire. The Punjab CM, among others, plans to move the Supreme Court over the "Jethal" farm bills that got the President's assent Sunday, but the real solution must be a political one.

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Aakar Patel

Several NGOs trying to uplift India might be forced to shut

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act is a funny old piece of legislation. It appeared in India in 1976 as a law to prevent external interference in India's electoral process and democracy. It prohibited the receiving of foreign money by political parties and their candidates, journalists and newspaper publishers, judges, bureaucrats and members of Parliament.

In time, liberalisation meant that many of these categories could receive foreign money legally and the Indian government actively promoted the bringing in of such money. That, after all, is the foreign direct investment whose numbers this government is so proud of and speaks of regularly. For instance, the media, both print and television and certainly online (which is the most dominant form of media today), can not only receive foreign investment, it can be dominated by it. The largest media companies in India are Facebook and Google, which are entirely foreign owned and managed. Newspapers can receive equity investments from foreign firms as can news channels. Even political parties managed to

get themselves off the hook on FCRA. In January 2013, a public interest litigation case was filed in the Delhi high court claiming that the BJP and the Congress had got donations from the same company, Vedanta/Sterlite, which were in violation of the FCRA Act. On March 28, 2014, the court held that the BJP and Congress were guilty of violating FCRA and asked the Narendra Modi government and the Election Commission to act against the two parties.

In December 2015, it was reported that the government was making amendments to the law that would get both parties off the hook. This happened in the 2016 Budget, when the definition of foreign source was changed, legitimising the donations received by the political parties. Unfortunately for the parties, this was done in a fairly slipshod fashion and so another amendment was passed in 2018 to again try and get the parties off. This finally happened in March 2018 through the amendment of a repealed law, an entirely farcical operation.

This is the background to the political side of the FCRA, which was the

intent of the legislation. What has happened over the years is that the law has been turned around and instead of reducing foreign influence on politics, it has been made a weapon against non-profit organisations. No government has any fondness for the sector called civil society, but the BJP in particular is hostile to it. In 2016, The Economic Times reported a speech in Bhubaneswar that the Prime Minister made to put forth his views on the subject. Mr Modi offered no evidence for his accusation that NGOs were foreign agents, but was convinced that they were trying to topple his government.

In the entire Modi era, the government has been trying actively to cut the size of the NGO sector. India has over 30 lakh such organisations, which range from neighbourhood associations to the most powerful NGO in the world, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The groups work on education, disaster relief, violence against women, public health, human rights, the criminal justice system, the environment, agriculture and so on. Between 2014 and 2018, a report estimated, there

had been about a 40 per cent cut in foreign funding for these groups.

Yet another amendment made to the FCRA this month seeks to squeeze them further. This was introduced without any advance notice or consultation and passed without much debate. What it does is make it even more difficult for NGOs to function in India and in fact is an invitation for them to shut down.

I have worked in the sector for a few years and can say that it is filled with highly committed individuals who do the work in many sectors that the State in India simply cannot do. This is work that happens without a problem in large parts of the world and in all parts of the democratic world. The damage that is being done to the Indian NGO sector is being done in part because of the paranoia of the BJP that there is some sort of giant agenda behind organisations who do such work. Many of them are highly respected organisations around the world and the one that I worked for has won the Nobel Peace Prize. It is not in the interest of India or its people or even the government to persecute and harass these organisations.

Unfortunately that is what has happened and is happening and the reality is that many of them, already under assault from the State, will have to wind up operations and others will have to scale down.

India's civil society is full of motivated people and much of their work will continue because these individuals are not doing this work because of the money.

I have worked with people with a background in investment banking, law and of course the media who have chosen to work in an NGO for much less than in their corporate job. Such Indians will continue their work and it is a shame that they are being hindered.

Today India invites foreign investment in arms and ammunition and bombs and guns, and in alcohol and tobacco, and petroleum and pharmaceuticals and everything else that one can think of. But it restricts investment in India on health, education and people's rights. Something is very wrong with such a state of affairs.

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist

Subhani



Reforming bureaucracy: Many pitfalls lie ahead



Mohan Guruswamy

Six years ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated a discussion under the aegis of the Niti Aayog on the reform of the bureaucracy. Sixteen years ago Dr Manmohan Singh too had said that his topmost priority was the reform of the bureaucracy. Little has happened. We haven't even had a decent and half-intelligent discussion about it. The object of concern clearly doesn't share the need to discuss its reform. The government is now a golden gated community and takes away as much as 11.5 per cent of the country's GDP for its own upkeep. And yet, the dil maange more!

The base of government is the district. A typical district officer is usually still in his twenties or early thirties. But unlike his Indian Civil Service predecessor (of the British Raj era), the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) district collector/magistrate or deputy commissioner has neither the unquestionable authority conferred either by racial exclusivity or superb education or social class, or all three, to dominate and control the lower bureaucracy.

As required in a democracy, the administration is subservient to a government run by elected politicians.

They play havoc with civil service tenures. According to a study by S.K. Das, an IAS officer, the average tenure of a district officer is about seven months.

He or she invariably falls victim to the constantly changing and treacherous currents of an intensely competitive political system.

The lower and permanent bureaucracy has adjusted well to this essential change and has become a tool in the hands of the politicians. In fact, the lower bureau-

cracy has increasingly become the nursery for the new political class. Little wonder, no one gives a fig for our district officers any longer. But quite clearly, ordinary citizens are paying a heavy price for this. India still ranks among the bottom half of the United Nations' global Human Development Index.

Clearly, we need to restructure the government and the administration in each of India's 600-plus districts.

The district collector, like his Indian Civil Service predecessor, must become the executive head of the district with all branches of the government subject to his/her authority and power. This must particularly include the police. He/she must be redesignated as the commissioner and should be an officer with over 16 years of service, a mature and seasoned individual with the seniority and clout to exercise complete authority over the administrative apparatus.

This seniority will also give him/her the experience and guile needed to deal with the political system. Above all, the commissioner must have a fixed tenure of at least five years and a board consisting of elected representatives of the district as well as his/her administrative superiors must make the officer's selection to the position.

In the late 1980s, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was reportedly contemplating such a restructuring of the government.

No sooner had the word got around, the traditional politicians opposed it, as it would deprive them of much of their clout. Former deputy prime minister Devi Lal jeered that it would be a "PM to DM system" which would bypass all other

Poor Dr Manmohan Singh had listed the reform of the bureaucracy as his first priority, but the politicians paid no heed to him, and hence the bureaucracy saw no need to take him seriously.

political structures. From the mid-1990s, even amidst the most severe economic downturns, one industrial segment has posted consistent and significant growth. This is the segment called the white goods sector, which accounts for consumer durables like refrigerators, washing machines and other home appliances.

This spurt coincides with the selective implementation of the Pay Commission's recommendations. Apart from recommending whopping increases in salaries and benefits, the Pay Commission noted the low productivity and also recommended that the numbers employed in the government should be drastically slashed. Consequently, the wage bill of the Central government alone is now the second biggest item in the Union Budget after interest payments.

The state governments together now directly employ 7.5 million people in addition to the Central government, which gainfully or painfully employs about 3.3 million. Given the comparatively high salary levels in the Central and state governments, one can easily compute the approximate cost of government by way of salaries alone.

In addition to this huge army of babus, the Centre and the states employ a further 6.3 million people in PSUs and departmental undertakings like the Indian Railways.

Local bodies like municipalities, zilla parishads and panchayats employ another 2.3 million.

This entire cohort of about 23 million people belongs to the 27.2 per cent who make up our

middle and upper income groups.

A look at the capital expenditure on account of "development" suggests that it costs the Centre and the states about ₹10 to give us a benefit of ₹1!

Revenue expenditure very simply means wages, utilities, fuel, repairs and maintenance, and chai-pani aur dawa-daru kharcha. So, the effective cost of government is almost 90 per cent of the cumulative receipts of which the Centre and the states collect as taxes from us and/or beg, borrow and steal for us. This is about a good one-third of our GNP, and growing!

However, the real slap in the face is that "public administration" is categorised as a part of the services sector for national income accounting, and the 14 per cent annual growth in the cost of government is what mainly accounts for the growth of this sector. Even in the time of the coronavirus pandemic, this sector is happily growing. The growth of the industrial sector is marginal, like that of the agricultural sector.

The burgeoning cost of government is our single major public policy issue. Yet, it is not debated at all. All parties go into a funk when they are confronted with these facts. Thus, for the BJP, once again it seems there are only two issues that really matter: Hindutva and the Ram Mandir. And as for the sycophants in the Congress, they are only concerned with the interim Congress president's two issues: Rahul or Priyanka.

Poor Dr Manmohan Singh had listed the reform of the bureaucracy as his first priority, but the politicians paid no heed to him, and hence the bureaucracy saw no need to take him seriously. Now it is Narendra Modi's turn.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, has held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS

FARM REFORMS

The reforms apparently seek to loosen rules around sale, pricing and storage of farm produce — rules that have seemingly protected India's farmers from the free market for decades. Any reforms that open farming sector to private players would definitely harm the interests of the farmers as a whole. The government should therefore come up with a foolproof plan of implementation of the new law so that farmers' interests are protected first.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

The President has given his consent to the farmer bills in spite of fervent objections raised by the combined opposition. Such highly constitutional posts should never be political appointees. Governors, Presidents, judges, RBI governors, Election Commissioners, CBI directors etc., must be devoid of political interference.

SPB

As mentioned rightly in the editorial, S.P. Balasubrahmanyam's career began in 1966 and ended on the day of his admission to hospital in August 2020 (*Golden voice of SPB, DC, Sept. 28*). It was serendipitous that he sang a song *Bratukanta pratinimusham pata laga sagali* (every minute of life has to go like a song) penned by Devulapalli and SPB's life also went by the same token.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Charan Singh asked to resign

LUCKNOW, SEPT. 28.

Political developments in the crisis ridden Uttar Pradesh took a dramatic turn this morning when leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Girdhari Lal staked his claim to form a Government following Governor B. Gopala Reddy's directive to Chief Minister Charan Singh to tender his resignation.

Mr. Girdhari Lal (Opposition Congress), as leader of the Opposition in Assembly backed by Jana Sangh and the Samyukta Socialist party said it was the "moral and constitutional duty" of the Governor to invite him to form a Ministry after the fall of the present Government.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37,981.63	1.59
Nifty 50	11,227.55	1.60
S&P 500*	3,352.21	1.63
Dollar (₹)	73.78	-0.21
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.50	-0.54
Euro (₹)	85.85	-0.05
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,449▼194	0.38
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	6.056	0.018
IN 10-Yr bond yield	0.658	-0.001
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	42.37	0.45

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Deadline for various schemes extended to Dec.

Providing relief to companies, the government has extended the duration of "several schemes" till December 31. The corporate affairs ministry has extended the Companies Fresh Start Scheme and the LLP Settlement Scheme, besides allowing companies to conduct EGMs and board meetings through video conference or other audio-visual means till end of this year. The earlier deadlines were to end on Sept. 30.

SBI rolls out festive offers for retail customers



State Bank of India announced several festive offers for its retail borrowers, including 100 per cent waiver of processing fee for customers applying for car, gold, and personal loans through Yono. The bank is giving concessions up to 10 bps on interest rates for the customers based on their credit score and home loan amount. For car loan borrowers, it is offering interest rate starting from 7.5 per cent.

Sebi slaps ₹20 L fine on Bonanza Portfolio

The Sebi slapped a penalty of Rs 20 lakh on stock broker Bonanza Portfolio Ltd for mis-using clients' funds and securities, among other issues. The Sebi carried out a multi-theme inspection of books of Bonanza (noticee) during May-July 2018 and found that the broker misutilised client funds. It was observed that the misutilisation of the clients' funds by Bonanza is in the range of Rs 9.6 crore to Rs 45 crore.

Housing sales in top 7 cities down 61% in Sept. qtr

Housing sales are estimated to have fallen 61 per cent year-on-year during July-September to 14,415 units, against 36,826 units, across seven major cities on lower demand, says property consultant JLL India. Housing sales are reported at 1,742 units in Bengaluru, 1,570 units in Chennai, 3,112 units in Delhi-NCR, 2,122 units in Hyderabad, 390 units in Kolkata, 4,135 units in Mumbai and 1,344 units in Pune, JLL said.



Meet postponed; 3 members' term ends
Oops! Truncated MPC can't meet

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday announced a rescheduling of this week's interesting meeting after the government failed to appoint external members to the monetary policy committee (MPC). The RBI in a statement said that new dates will be announced shortly without giving any reason for postponing the bi-monthly monetary policy review that was scheduled during September 29 to October 1. The terms of three external people on the six-member MPC ended last month, and they are yet to be replaced by the government. The rules of the panel require at least four members to be present at the meeting.

The RBI is awaiting the government's decision on new external members to the committee. As per the RBI Act, external members of MPC have a tenure



of four years. The terms of the previous external members—Pami Dua, Chetan Ghate, and Ravindra Dholakia—are unlikely to be extended as that can be done only through legislative changes to the Reserve Bank of India Act. The MPC came into existence in October 2016. Some economists pointed out that the move would create uncertainty at a time when the economy is facing its worst contraction while some downplayed the move.

"The government may have its own reasoning and we may have to wait and see what is its thinking (for delaying the appointment of the new members)," said an economist. "Postponing of the MPC meeting a week or two weeks later may not make a great difference to the current economic situation," said another economist.

The RBI is likely to maintain a status quo on rates as retail inflation continues to remain elevated beyond the tolerable limit.

However, the RBI would continue to emphasise its accommodative stance and keep doing tweaks to liquidity and regulatory operations to keep financial market conditions benign said economists.

The RBI has cut repo rate by 115 basis points since February last year. One basis point is one hundredth of a percentage point.

ITI set to make 4G, 5G equipment

New Delhi, Sept. 28: IT company Tech Mahindra is in an advanced stage of sharing technology with ITI Limited and said the state-run electronics manufacturing entity will be ready to make 4G and 5G equipment in a few months, an official of the Mahindra group firm said.

The country's potential to produce talent and software at large scale, coupled with geo-political scenario with China, presents a wonderful opportunity for India to indigenise technologies, Tech Mahindra network services CEO Manish Vyas told PTI.

In June, the company

signed an agreement with ITI for development of 4G and 5G technologies.

"We are in the stages of exchanging design, starting to plan and also doing a couple of test runs and trials based on the technology that they are looking to manufacture," Vyas said.

—PTI

Stocks rise on stimulus hope, unlock moves

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28

The broad-based rally in the market, led by the banks and financials sector, continued on Monday on expectations of the government announcing a stimulus ahead of the key festivals, further opening of the economy, postponement of a Supreme Court verdict in case relating to interest on loans during the moratorium period and positive global cues.

Sensex and Nifty-50 gained over 1.5 per cent, with the Sensex rising above 38,000 mark intraday and closing 592.97 points up at 37,981.63. The Nifty-50 gained 177.30 points to close at 11,227.55. Siddhartha Khemka, head-retail research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said, "The global cues turned positive amid signs of China's economic recovery, given its upbeat

industrial data. Further, the hopes of a stimulus package announcement by the US government also kept the mood positive. On the domestic front, positive global cues, expectations of a stimulus package from the Indian government along with news flows around further opening up of the economy, cheered the market. Banking stocks gained on hopes that the government may infuse some capital into the sector in order to provide support to the banks over waiving interest rates on loans under moratorium."

The broader market outperformed the benchmarks with Nifty Mid-cap 50 up 3.63 per cent and Nifty Smallcap 100 up 3.58 per cent.

Reports saying the Maharashtra government may soon allow dine in services in Restaurants led to rally in hotel stocks.

Probe into dumping of API from China

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 28

The government has initiated a probe against alleged dumping of active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) ceftriaxone sodium sterile by China.

Based on complaints by Nectar Life Science and Sterile India, the Directorate General of Trade Remedies has initiated an investigation against the imports of ceftriaxone sodium sterile, the API of cephalosporin antibiotic used for treating various infection and inflammatory conditions.

The applicants have contended that material injury is being caused to the domestic Industry due to dumped imports from China and have requested for imposition of anti-dumping duty on the imports of the goods from that country, a notification by DGFT said.

The applicants have claimed that the goods produced by the domestic industry are identical to the subject goods exported to India.

According to them, Chinese producers are not able to demonstrate that their costs and price information are market-driven.

Dumping happens when a country exports an item at a price lower than prevailing in its domestic market.

"On the basis of the duly substantiated written application by the domestic industry and having satisfied itself, on the basis of the prima facie evidence submitted by the domestic industry, about dumping of the subject goods originating in or exported from the subject country, injury to the domestic industry and causal link between such alleged dumping and injury ... the authority, hereby, initiates an investigation," the DGFT said in the notification.

Startup space gets \$63 bn, 27 unicorns in five years

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI SEPT. 28

The startups ecosystem has raised \$63 billion growth capital between 2016 and 2020 and has spawned 27 unicorns.

Of the total inflows, nearly half, or \$34 billion, came in 2019 alone and another \$17 billion in 2020 till May, according to the data collated by the Indian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association and Praxis Global Alliance.

This huge funding has helped India become the third largest tech startup ecosystem in the world after the US and China. As per the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, India has around 24,000 firms registered as startups. In recent years, the market has witnessed emergence of a large number of tech-based startups. Nasscom data shows that there are 8,900 to 9,300 tech startups in the country and the ecosystem is adding more than 1,000 every year.

Tech-enabled players continue to drive investors' interest and have dominated early stage funding.

Between 2016 and 2019, the startup ecosystem saw the emergence of 27 unicorns, or those with valuation of \$1 billion and more. Byju's, BigBasket, Delhivery, Flipkart, Hike, Makemytrip, Oyo, Ola, Paytm, PolicyBazaar, Quickr, Snapdeal, Swiggy, Udaan and Zomato are some of the PE-funded unicorns.

Analysts fear Lakshmi Vilas is heading Yes Bank way

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28



- RBI appoints committee of directors to run the bank's operations
- Move comes after AGM votes out 7 directors, including promoters and RBI-appointed CEO
- Analysts fear deposit withdrawals could precipitate liquidity issues at bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of a three-member committee of directors to run the day-to-day functioning of cash-strapped Lakshmi Vilas Bank. The move comes after its shareholders voted out seven directors, including both its promoters and the newly RBI-appointed CEO S. Sundar, at its annual general meeting on Friday.

Analysts worry that the negative news around the bank could lead to an increase in deposit withdrawals, which may precipitate the liquidity issues at the bank, thereby requiring the RBI to impose a moratorium on the deposit withdrawals, further denting the depositor confidence in the banking system.

Depositor confidence which took a hit after the PMC Bank and Yes Bank crisis a year ago, has stabilised in the last six months, they said.

Bankers said that in the immediate term, the RBI will have to focus on ensuring that the liquidity in the bank remains sound and ensure a sustainable resolution for the bank in the long-term. They also pointed out that amalgamation with a big bank should not be preferred as it acts as a drag on the acquirer and creates uncertainty among the investors of the other banks.

"A resolution similar to Catholic Syrian Bank or Yes Bank will reinforce the confidence of investors and should be explored, whereby a strategic investor could be

inducted in the bank for a sustainable turnaround without impacting the other banks in the system," said a banker.

The three-member committee of directors (CoD) will exercise the discretionary powers of MD & CEO in the ad-interim, the bank said in a statement on Monday. The RBI on Sunday appointed the CoD composed of three independent directors—Meeta Makhan, Shakti Sinha, and Satish Kumar Kalra—and the committee will be headed by Meeta Makhan, the bank statement said.

The LVB annual general meeting outcome was unprecedented in many ways. According to Shriram Subramanian, founder and MD of InGovern Research Services, a proxy advisory and corporate governance firm, "Shareholders are increasingly demanding that directors be performing. We saw this last month when shareholders voted out an independent director who did not have sufficient attendance in Shriram Transport Company."

"The RBI will have to facilitate a quick merger or give approval for any new investor to stabilise

the bank," added Subramanian. The developments have unfolded when the Chennai-based bank is undergoing a challenging phase and is in talks for a merger with Clix Capital. The bank, meanwhile, said its liquidity position remains strong. The lender also said that it has a fully functional board despite the rejection of seven directors by shareholders.

The Tamil Nadu-focused bank was placed under prompt corrective action (PCA) by the RBI in September 2019 over high level of bad loans, lack of sufficient capital and negative return on assets for two consecutive years. Under PCA, banks are mandated to cut lending and focus on reducing the concentration of loans to certain sectors. They are also restricted from opening new branches and paying dividends. The bank's deposits declined 27 per cent to Rs 21,161 crore at the end of June on a year-on-year basis.

The Lakshmi Vilas Bank stock ended 5.21 per cent higher at Rs 20.20 on the BSE after dipping in early trade.

ATHER ENERGY UNVEILS SERIES 1 E-SCOOTER

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, SEPT. 28

Ather Energy, the electric vehicle startup, has revealed the collector's edition of the Ather 450X scooter called 'Series1'.

The Bengaluru-based company has announced that the Series1 will be given only to the customers who pre-ordered the 450X scooter before their prices were announced on January 28.

While Ather 450X scooter was priced at Rs 1.59 lakh at Bengaluru showroom, a spokesperson at the company told PC that Series 1 electric scooter would also carry the same price when it will be made available in November.

The company said that the deliveries of Series1 scooters will begin in all 11 cities —Bangalore, Chennai, Kozhikode, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Coimbatore, Delhi NCR, Kozhikode, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Kolkata.

BBB to interview 15 for SBI MD post on Oct. 5

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28



The government is likely to soon pick a candidate for the position of managing director (MD) in State Bank of India (SBI) out of 15 short-listed candidates. A government panel, Bank Board Bureau (BBB), will interview the candidates online on October 5, said a finance ministry source.

By the existing structure, SBI has four MDs, namely, Dinesh Khara, Arijit Basu, S.C. Setty and Ashwani Bhatia. Khara has been already named as the next chairman of SBI once incumbent Rajnish Kumar hangs up his boots on October 7. Once this post is filled up, the country's largest lender will fall short of one MD and another post will become vacant on Basu's superannuation in October end.

"The BBB will soon appoint the vacant position of MD in the SBI. It has already selected 15 candidates for the interview from within and outside the SBI. Apart from seven internal candidates from the SBI group, there will be eight candidates from outside the group," the source told Finance Chronicle.

"The eight non-SBI candidates short-listed for the interview are executive director rank officials. Besides, some of the internal aspirants from SBI who are throwing their

Adani debunks GDP rhetoric, says India will be 2nd largest by 2050

‘₹1 invested in Adani Ent. yielded 800-times return’

New Delhi, Sept. 28: A rupee invested in Adani Enterprises two-and-a-half decades back has given over 800-times return, Gautam Adani said as he saw his infrastructure conglomerate evolve into an integrated 'platform of platforms'.

Speaking at the JP Morgan India summit Adani said the seaports-to-airports-to-energy group's incubation model has created six publicly traded companies with thousands of jobs and unprecedented shareholder value.

"A one-rupee investment in Adani Enterprises (at the time of) our first IPO in 1994 has returned over 800x," he said. A college dropout, Adani, 58, started with trading in commodities and went on to build a conglomerate. "We basically build infrastructure that enables 'flow'—the flow of goods and materials, the flow of electrons, the flow of people, and the flow of data. This focus on helping build India's infrastructure forms the core of our philosophy," he said. —PTI

"For the sake of the fans of the GDP metric, let's look at some statistics. The

global GDP in 1990 was \$38 trillion. Today, 30 years later, this number is \$90

trillion. Projecting for another 30 years, in 2050 the global GDP is expected to be about \$170 trillion with India becoming the second-largest economy in the world," he said.

Adani said short-term setbacks due to a global crisis cannot be used to write off the country, as its fundamentals remain intact.

"The current focus on standardised GDP predictions as against truly understanding what a nation could look like over a decade has unfortunately become one of the primary elements for measuring the health of an economy. In my view, patience and long-term planning and most importantly, an alignment with the government's business agenda are what creates the greatest value," he said.

Adani said India needs \$1.5 to 2 trillion of capital over the next decade. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Wow-rinka
downs Murray

Paris: Roland Garros got underway in the “ridiculous” chill and damp of Paris on Sunday with Stan Wawrinka brushing aside fellow three-time major winner Andy Murray in the day’s mar-

quee clash. Murray, playing his first clay court match since losing a five-set semi-final to the Swiss star in 2017, may have wished it had remained shut as 16th seed Wawrinka swept to a 6-1, 6-3, 6-

2 win. On a grim day for Britain, ninth seed and 2019 semi-finalist Johanna Konta was knocked out by teenage sensation Coco Gauff. The American making her debut in the main draw having been the junior champion just two years ago, eased to a 6-3, 6-3 win despite serving up 12 double faults.

Serena Williams advanced to the second round of the French Open by beating Kristie Ahn 7-6 (2) 6-0. — *AFP*

Leicester hit
Man City for five

London: Jamie Vardy’s hat-trick dealt an early blow to Manchester City’s hopes of wrestling back the Premier League title as they conceded three penalties in a 5-2 defeat to Leicester, while Newcastle’s late spot-kick to snatch a 1-1 draw at Tottenham sparked fresh debate over the handball rule. City were without a host of first-team regulars due to injury and Covid infections, but the deficiencies at the back that undid their title defence last season were again exposed by the pace and finishing prowess of Vardy as a Pep Guardiola team conceded five for the first time in his coaching career. Leicester stormed to the top of the league, but had to come from behind to extend their perfect start to season. — *AFP*

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RCB mum Indians

ABD’s knock powers Bangalore to down MI in super over

Dubai, Sept. 28: Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Mumbai Indians in a thrilling Super Over contest in the Indian Premier League on Monday after the match was tied during regulation 20 overs.

In the Super Over, Navdeep Saini conceded only 7 runs and RCB skipper Virat Kohli hit Jasprit Bumrah for a boundary off the final delivery to win it for his team.

Chasing a target of 202, Mumbai Indians managed 201 for 5 after Ishan Kishan (99 off 58 balls) and Kieron Pollard (60 off 24 balls) nearly pulled off an incredible chase but could manage 8 off the required 19 runs in the last over.

When RCB batted, half centuries from AB de Villiers, Aaron Finch and Devdutt Padikkal propelled them to 201 for 3 after being put into bat.

De Villiers scored 55 off 24 balls while Finch (52 off 35 balls) and Padikkal (54 off 40 balls) also contributed handsomely.

For MI, Trent Boult got 2 for 34 and Rahul Chahar got the other wicket.

Earlier, it was De Villiers, who used all his might during the death overs to smash his way to an unbeaten 55 off 24 balls, taking the score past 200-run mark. His innings had four sixes and as many

boundaries as the swift yet brutal assault of Jasprit Bumrah (0/42 in 4 overs) will be remembered for a long time.

Even James Pattinson (0/51 in 4 overs) received a lot of stick as two speed merchants accounted for 8 off the 10 sixes in the RCB innings.

The last five overs produced 78 runs with Shivam Dube scoring 27 not out off 10 balls.

While Australia’s white ball skipper Aaron Finch scored 52 off 35 balls to get his team off to a flying start, the extremely elegant Padikkal upped the ante in the later half with some delightful big hits, scoring 54 off 40 balls. The duo added 81 runs for the opening stand.

Padikkal’s innings was studded with five boundaries and two sixes and a good stand of 62 runs for the third wicket with De Villiers, who then provided the final flourish as he has been doing for years now. The tall upright Padikkal’s second IPL half-ton will be remembered specially for two sixes off fast bowler James Pattinson. The first was when the left-hander rocked on the backfoot and punched it over mid-off and the next was a stand and deliver straight into the sight screen.

— *PTI*

AB de Villiers of Royal Challengers Bangalore en route to his unbeaten 55 against Mumbai Indians in their Indian Premier League match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Monday.

— *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Devdutt Padikkal c Pollard b Boult 54, Aaron Finch c Pollard b Boult 52, Virat Kohli c Sharma b Chahar 3, AB de Villiers (not out) 55, Shivam Dube (not out) 27. **Extras: (lb-7, w-3) 10. Total: (for 3 wks, in 20 overs) 201.**

FoW: 1-81, 2-92, 3-154.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-34-2, James Pattinson 4-0-51-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-31-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-42-0, Krunal Pandya 3-0-23-0, Kieron Pollard 1-0-13-0.

Mumbai Indians: R. Sharma (c) c sub (P. Negi) b Washington Sundar 8, Q de Kock c sub (P. Negi) b Chahal 14, S. Yadav c de Villiers b Udana 0, Ishan Kishan c Padikkal b Udana 99, H. Pandya c sub (P. Negi) b Zampa 15, K. Pollard (not out) 60, K. Pandya (not out) 0. **Extras: (w 5) 5. Total (for 5 wks, in 20 overs) 201.**

FoW: 1-14, 2-16, 3-39, 4-78, 5-197.

Bowling: Isuru Udana 4-0-45-2, Washington Sundar 4-0-12-1, Navdeep Saini 4-0-43-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-48-1, Adam Zampa 4-0-53-1.

Super Over: Mumbai Indians (7/1) lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore (11/0).

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	2	2	0	0	4	+1.100
Rajasthan Royals	2	2	0	0	4	+0.615
Royal Challengers Bangalore	3	2	1	0	4	-1.450
Kings XI Punjab	3	1	2	0	2	+1.498
Mumbai Indians	3	1	2	0	2	+0.654
Kolkata Knight Riders	2	1	1	0	2	-0.767
Chennai Super Kings	3	1	2	0	2	-0.840
Sunrisers Hyderabad	2	0	2	0	0	-0.730

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

Tewatia turned
match on head

R MOHAN | DC

Rahul Tewatia’s His flailing efforts to hit the ball were at one time so painful that his partner, the free striking Sanju Samson, had even declined a single in order to keep the strike.

Trolls were pouring their scorn on Tewatia but soon enough began targeting Kings XI Punjab for “snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.” How many teams make 51 off the last three overs to win a game when chasing, even in a relatively smaller ground like the Sharjah Stadium. Of course, we would have to forget all about past links of this venue to the betting maze of D-Company controlled cricket *satta* markets when Dawood Ibrahim had a private box in the pavilion stand for the elite.

The drama was far from over even after Tewatia’s heroics. It appeared the chasers were losing their nerve on the threshold of victory.

Rajasthan Royals, a team once banned for two years from IPL because their owner was betting on games, nearly made a hash of the final over when two were needed and one batsman was also bowled taking a wild swing. A final lofted hit settled the issue on a night of the big sixes as RR made the target, a task that their opponents had not managed against Delhi Capitals and then lost the Super Over.

Fluctuations in form are the norm in T20 cricket. But was Kings XI Punjab guilty of a crucial tactical mistake by bringing on a pace bowler against Tewatia when the batsman showed no signs he could read spin at all? Rahul had not thought of spin even when runs were leaking in the field-restrictions overs.

And the Kings XI skipper had overs of spin in hand besides the pace of

Sheldon Cottrell who panicked after bowling a couple of juicy length balls for the bits-and-pieces all-rounder to connect as he swung in an ambitious arc to the on side.

A shell-shocked Cottrell of the famous Territorial Army salute had given the game away by being taken for five sixes and only escaping with the fifth ball at which Tewatia, a player who had been traded out before being brought back into RR as an economical domestic recruit, swung and missed.

Cottrell’s over-the-wicket left arm into the batsman line was the perfect gift for a left-handed batsman. And Rahul had overs of Murugan Ashwin in hand besides those of the sharp Mohammed Shami.

The T20 game is the perfect format to make fools of predictors and fantasy game players. The odds on events can change so rapidly as to leave only the bookies happy because the punters are so bewildered as to make bets at the right time at the wrong price on most matches or events. When an impossibly odd-on favourite like the Kings XI tumbles, the bookies as well as online bookmaking and fantasy cricket firms are laughing all the way to the bank.

The point is cricketers cannot aid them in any way in this exercise of taking the punters for a ride. Did that happen in this game is a question IPL management has to answer.

After all, they are the ones who were singled when the game was in disarray for bringing it into disrepute with owners betting enthusiastically on games involving their teams. The organisers might believe this game was a dream offered for cricket fans provided, of course, no room is left for suspicion over events being scripted.

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