

IN BRIEF

Bilkis, Shaheen Bagh protester, in TIME list of 100 influential ppl

New Delhi: Eighty-two-year-old Bilkis, who shot into the limelight last year during the months-long anti-citizenship law protest at Shaheen Bagh here, has been recognised by the TIME magazine as one of the 100 most influential people of 2020. During the protest, which began in December, the octogenarian sat under a tent with hundreds of women and children, braving icy winds. She emerged as the face of the protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens. The protest at Shaheen Bagh ended in March this year in view of the Covid-19 outbreak and a subsequent lockdown announced by the government to contain the spread of the disease. — PTI

**2 held for assaulting father after quarrel**

Noida: Two men were arrested on Wednesday for allegedly assaulting their father in Greater Noida over a domestic dispute, police said. A purported video of the incident that took place on Tuesday evening in the Dankaur area surfaced on social media. In the video, the two brothers, in their 30s, can be seen assaulting their father, who is around 60, on a road. The duo was seen dragging the old man on the road holding him by his legs, prompting action by police. "The police took cognizance of the matter and the duo was tracked down. They have been arrested from their home and further proceedings against them are being carried out," additional deputy commissioner of police, Greater Noida, Vishal Pandey said. According to officials, Ram Kishor and Hari Kishor had a dispute with their father Jagmaal over some domestic issue that led to the Tuesday evening episode. — PTI

Retired man kills self over health issues

Noida: A 64-year-old man died on Wednesday after he allegedly jumped off his fifth-floor apartment in Noida, police said. The man, who retired from Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, has mentioned in his purported suicide note that he was troubled with his health issues, the police said. The incident took place around 7 am at Amrapali Sapphire in Sector 45, under Sector 39 police station limits, a local policeman said. "The man lived with his son in the fifth floor apartment. He jumped from there and died. A suicide note was found from his home in which he stated that he was taking the extreme step because he could no longer bear his illness, for which he was under medication for a long time," SHO Sector 39 Azad Singh Tomar said. Tomar said the deceased's son has also told the police that the man was not keeping well and was upset because of his health issues. The body has been taken into custody and further proceedings are being carried out, the police said. — PTI

Man stabbed to death, 3 nabbed

New Delhi: A 30-year-old man was stabbed to death on Wednesday morning in west Delhi's Khayala area, police said. Police said they have apprehended three juveniles in this connection. According to police, the victim — identified as Vijay, a resident of Raghubir Nagar — used to bully the juveniles. On Wednesday morning, police received information that a man was lying in an injured condition in a lane near B-Block Chowk, Raghubir Nagar. "Police rushed to the spot and took the injured, who had stab injuries over his body, to Guru Gobind Singh Hospital where he was declared brought dead," deputy commissioner of police (West) Deepak Purohit said. His body has been sent for the post-mortem, police said. Police said that Vijay used to live alone. He used to bully the suspects and also snatch their money. On Wednesday morning, the juveniles met Vijay and stabbed him in a fit of rage and later fled from the spot, police said. A murder case has been registered. — PTI

Delhi hospitals have enough oxygen for 6-7 days, says Jain

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said on Wednesday there is no shortage of medical oxygen in Delhi hospital and that enough stock is available for the next six to seven days. The minister's remarks come amid reports of shortage of medical oxygen in some parts of the country.

Mr Jain also said the Covid-19 positivity rate in the national capital has plateaued out a bit and a downward trend is expected in a week or two.

"There is no shortage of oxygen in Delhi hospitals. I took a stock of the situation. There is a slight issue, but there is enough oxygen for six to seven days in Delhi government-run hospitals," he said.

"We believe that there should be enough oxygen for seven days. A few hospitals have less than that," the minister added.

Delhi gets oxygen from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Some suppliers in Rajasthan have been told to first supply



oxygen there. These issues are being talked out, Mr Jain told reporters here. He said Delhi reported 6.47 per cent Covid-19 positivity rate on Tuesday. The average positivity rate for the last seven days stood at 7 per cent.

It was 8.5-9 per cent in the near past. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the cumulative positivity rate has come down from 12 per cent to 9 per cent.

"The positivity rate has plateaued out a bit and there will be a downward trend in a week or two," he said. Mr Jain also said the government is going to appeal against the Delhi High Court stay on the city government's order directing private hospitals to reserve 80 per cent of the ICU beds for Covid-19 patients. "We are very hopeful... We had issued the directions after careful considerations. The Delhi government is taking steps according to the situation," he said.

■ Major fall in city Covid cases under home isolation for 1st time since August 3,714 +ve cases, 36 deaths in 24 hrs

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Delhi recorded 3,714 fresh Covid-19 cases on Wednesday as the tally in the city mounted to over 2.56 lakh, while the death toll rose to 5,087. These fresh cases were recorded from the more than 59,580 tests done the previous day.

Thirty-six new fatalities have been recorded, taking the death toll to 5,087 according to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department.

The active cases tally on Wednesday stood at 30,836. The death toll from Covid-19 in Delhi stood at 5,087 on Tuesday.

The Wednesday bulletin said the death toll from coronavirus infection rose to 5,087 and the total number of cases climbed to 2,56,789.

The number of Covid-19 patients in the national capital, who are in home isolation fell for the second consecutive day. On Wednesday, the number of Covid-19 patients under home isolation fell by 630. On Tuesday, it fell by nearly 750 compared to the previous day, the decline being recorded after nearly a month of a steady rise in such cases. Currently there

Sisodia hospitalised, 2nd Delhi minister to test Covid-19 +ve

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, who tested positive for Covid-19 last week, has been hospitalised on Wednesday after he complained of fever.

The 48-year-old Aam Aadmi Party leader has been admitted to the Delhi government's LNJP Hospital. "Mr Sisodia was admitted to hospital as a precautionary measure since he is having a little higher body temperature and his oxygen level dropped slightly. The doctors are assessing his condition but there is nothing serious about it," said a



Manish Sisodia

Due to fever, Mr Sisodia did not attend one-day session of Delhi Assembly on September 14.

Mr Sisodia is the second minister in the Arvind Kejriwal government, who has tested positive for the novel coronavirus. In June, health minister Satyendar Jain had tested positive for Covid-19 and recovered.

are 17,834 patients under home isolation.

On Monday, the number of home isolation cases had mounted to 19,213 and the city had 1,889 containment zones that day. The next day, the number of home isolation cases dropped to 18,464, according to data shared by the

Delhi health department.

Since last week of August, both the number of home isolation cases and containment zones have shown a steady rise, except on September 19 when the count of home isolation cases was 18,648, a very marginal fall from the previous day's figure of 18,701.

Noida: Recoveries cross 10K mark, Covid tally 11,817

Noida, Sept. 23: Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar recorded 152 Covid-19 cases on Wednesday, pushing the district's tally to 11,817, official data showed. The number of active cases came down to 1,615 from 1,623 on Tuesday, while overall recoveries crossed the 10,000-mark, according to data released by the UP health department.

On the brighter side, 162 more patients got discharged during the period, as the total number of recoveries reached 10,152, the data showed. The district, adjoining Delhi, has so far recorded 50 deaths. — PTI

However, this Tuesday, for the first time in nearly 30 days, home isolation case count fell by a sizable margin of 749, to 18,464.

Experts feel the drop could be due to two reasons, with a senior doctor at a Delhi government-run dedicated Covid-19 facility asserting that home isola-

tion as been very effective in managing the pandemic in the city.

Covid-19 cases have shown a surge since the beginning of this month with September 16 recording 4,473 cases, the highest single-day spike here till date. The daily surge in cases in Delhi had breached the 4,000-mark for the first time on September 9 while the number of fatalities recorded that day was 20.

"From September 9-19, fresh cases have been recorded more than 4,000 per day except on September 14 when the figure stood at 3,229 with 26 deaths being recorded that day," according to official data.

The Delhi government has significantly ramped up testing in the past few days. The number of tests conducted and corresponding fresh cases reported, ranged from 24,198 and 2,312 respectively on September 1 to 61,973 and 4,071 on September 19. On September 20, fresh cases and home quarantined cases stood at 3,812 and 18,910 respectively. On September 21 the city had 2,548 new case and 19,213 patients in home quarantine.

Pollution may aggravate Covid situation: Docs

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Doctors and environment experts believe that extreme levels of air pollution in the national capital during winter is likely to aggravate the Covid-19 situation in the city and pose a serious challenge to the government.

Every winter, Delhi's air quality dips to a dangerous low due to many reasons, including the city's geographic location, unfavourable weather, stubble burning and local sources of pollution.

A Supreme Court-mandated pollution control body had in November last year declared a public health emergency and ordered the closure of schools, construction activities and diesel generators in Delhi-NCR after a toxic haze shrouded the region.

Dr Akshay Budhraj, consultant in Department

of Pulmonology, Aakash Healthcare Super Specialty Hospital, said air pollution poses a serious threat to people suffering from chronic bronchitis and inflammation of lungs and such patients are more prone to Covid-19. The severity is more if they contract the viral disease, he said.

"Air pollution makes asthma worse. It will be a challenging time for us too, as it takes 10-12 hours to conduct a radiological examination and an RT-PCR test to determine whether it's a case of asthma flare-up or coronavirus," he said.

Dr Laxmikant Kaotekwar, consultant, pulmonology, Columbia Asia Hospital, Pune, said, "If there is a previous history of dust allergies, it points towards asthma flare-up. Asthma patients are more prone to Covid-

► **HIGH AIR** pollution-level will aggravate the situation as it seriously compromises the respiratory system and the immune system, said Sunil Dahia, an analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

► **Santosh Harish**, a fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, said pollution levels will be relatively lower this year due to subdued economic activity.

19. Such people should get evaluated beforehand so they can keep their asthma under control."

Santosh Harish, a fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, said pollution levels will be relatively lower this year due to subdued economic activity. "However, air pollution exposure is likely to

increase vulnerability to Covid-19 and the severity of the infection. It is a matter of serious concern. We are going to witness very high levels of pollution soon and this is going to coincide with the time the Covid-19 cases will peak," he said.

High air pollution-level will aggravate the situation as it seriously compromises the respiratory system and the immune system. There will be serious complications among Covid-19 patients, said Sunil Dahia, an analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air. "Stubble burning is not the only cause behind dangerous levels of air pollution in Delhi. Among other measures, the government should order closure of coal-fired power plants during winter to arrest the dip in air quality," he said. — PTI



Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, and other Opposition leaders speak to media after meeting President Ram Nath Kovind outside the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Man opens fire outside former girlfriend's house, arrested

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Delhi Police has nabbed a 27-year-old man for allegedly opening fire outside the residence of his former girlfriend in south-east Delhi as she had been ignoring him after his marriage.

The accused has been identified as Sumit Tomar. According to R P Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district, late on Sunday night Tomar opened fire in Dharampal Colony in Aali Vihar when the 24-year-old woman was at home with her family.

"After hearing the gunshot, she opened the door and found Tomar with a country-made gun in his hand. On seeing her, he shouted, 'come outside, I will kill you and your family.' Then he ran away," said the DCP.

"She found the main gate damaged and an empty

► **DURING INTERROGATION**, accused Sumit Tomar told police that he procured the gun last month from Agra

cartridge and bullet lead. The woman told police that she was in a relationship with Tomar for 10 years but after his marriage in 2018, she had started ignoring him," said the DCP.

"Tomar did not like it and had threatened her with dire consequences. During investigation, police received information on Tuesday that Tomar was hiding in Aali Vihar jungle. A raid was conducted and Tomar was arrested," said the DCP.

During interrogation, Tomar told police that he wanted to marry the woman but could not. He had procured the gun last month from Agra, said the DCP adding the gun was found with him.

Man arrested for stealing vegetables from Okhla mandi

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

A 35-year-old man who allegedly used to steal vegetables from Delhi's Okhla sabzi mandi and sold them outside the market at a lesser price has been arrested by the Delhi Police.

Police said that the man, identified as Sarfaraz, is a drug addict and unemployed. He lives with his family in Delhi's Srinivaspuri, and would steal vegetables from the mandi to fulfil his daily needs.

"If someone saw him stealing, he would threaten them on knife-point. The accused was arrested on Tuesday when police were patrolling near Okhla Sabzi Mandi. A knife was recovered from his possession, police said.

Pay public prosecutor's 8-yr pending dues, HC tells govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Delhi government to clear the dues of a public prosecutor, whose bills have been pending for the last eight years, and warned that if bills are not paid then it will pass strictures on the next date of hearing. A division bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan made the remark while hearing an application filed by the public prosecutor, whose bills were pending. The court asked the government agencies to make payment of legally payable amounts to the person concerned.

"If a legally payable amount is not paid, we will pass strictures on the next date," the bench said and listed the matter for further hearing on December 4. The High Court also

► **THE PUBLIC** prosecutor had filed an intervening application in a petition earlier filed by a lawyer Piyush Gupta seeking direction to immediately clear the pending fee bills

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asked the government bodies to put their house in order. Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma also said that bills should be cleared.

The public prosecutor had filed an intervening application in a petition earlier filed by a lawyer Piyush Gupta through advocate Kapil Goyal seeking direction to immediately clear the pending professional fee bills of panel advocates of government. Gupta, in his petition, said that government counsels play a vital role in the jus-

Employees' salary issue will be solved soon: N. Delhi mayor

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

North Delhi mayor Jai Prakash on Wednesday said that a permanent solution to the problem of employees' salary will be found soon.

According to Mr Prakash, who recently recovered from Covid-19, employees' salary will be taken up when he rejoins office. "The Delhi government is not providing due funds of the North Corporation, due to which the corporation is facing many problems. Our employees are the backbone of the corporation and it is our first priority to solve the problem of employees as soon as possible," said the mayor.

He assured that all efforts are being made to solve the problem.

■ Delhi riots: No coercive action against Facebook VP till Oct. 15, rules apex court**Assembly panel defers proceedings after SC order**

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

The Assembly panel, which had summoned Facebook India vice president Ajit Mohan with regard to the northeast Delhi riots, deferred its proceedings on Wednesday after the Supreme Court stopped it from taking any "coercive" action.

The Peace and Harmony Committee of the Delhi Assembly said it would notify its further course of action and the next date of sitting in due course of time. The announcement came hours after the Supreme Court directed the committee not to take coercive action against

Mohan till October 15 in connection with its summons asking him to depose before it.

"In view of the issues of law pending before the Supreme Court, today's proceedings before the Delhi Legislative Assembly's Committee on Peace & Harmony has been deferred," it said in a statement. "Further course of action and next date of sitting of committee will be notified in due course."

The committee had issued a fresh notice to Mohan to appear before it on Wednesday after he did not appear before the panel for deposition in the previous hearing on September 16.

► **THE PEACE** and Harmony Committee of the Delhi Assembly said it would notify its further course of action and the next date of sitting in due course of time

► **THE COMMITTEE** had issued a fresh notice to Facebook India vice president Mohan to appear before it on Wednesday after he did not appear before the panel

The apex court's order came on a plea by Mohan, Facebook India Online Services Pvt. Ltd and Facebook Inc, which contended that the committee lacked the power to summon or hold petitioners in breach of its privileges for failing to appear and it was exceeding its constitutional

limits.

They challenged the notices by the committee that sought Mohan's presence before the panel, which is probing the communal violence in February and the social network's role in spread of alleged hate speeches. The panel had earlier said it

took cognisance of allegations against Facebook for its alleged complicity in the riots on the premise of "incriminatory material" produced on record by the witnesses, as well as their depositions in its previous meetings.

The committee, chaired by AAP MLA Raghav Chadha, had begun its hearing in the backdrop of a Wall Street Journal report that claimed that one of Facebook India's senior policy executives intervened in internal communication to stop a permanent ban on a BJP lawmaker from Telangana after he allegedly shared communally-charged posts.



Hindu Sena activists protest against Pakistan's illegitimate occupation of Kashmir and misadventure of planning to merge Gilgit-Baltistan with Pakistan at Chanakyapuri in New Delhi on Wednesday.

— PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

SHORT TAKES

BKU stir against poor power supply

Mathura: Some activists of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) on Wednesday started an indefinite protest here against the alleged erratic power supply causing difficulties for the farmers. According to the district president of the union, Raj Kumar Tomar, the BKU activists are sitting on a dharna in front of power sub-station in Baldeo as timely irrigation of agricultural fields has become difficult for farmers in the absence of uninterrupted power supply. Tomar said the dharna would continue, and if needed BKU activists from the entire district would be called to join the protest. Earlier, senior power department and administration officials met the activists. SDM, Mahaban, Krishna Nand Tewari also reached the spot and tried to understand the problems being faced by the farmers.

294 new corona cases in Surat

Surat: Coronavirus cases in Surat district rose to 26,137 with 294 new infections being reported on Wednesday, the highest in Gujarat during the day, the health department said. With four fatalities, the death toll in the district rose to 913, it said. Surat city reported 183 new cases and 180 recoveries, while the rural parts reported 111 new cases and 94 recoveries. Out of four deaths, three were reported in rural parts and one in the city, the department said in its release. The Surat Municipal Corporation said it has so far surveyed 8.9 lakh people from the areas of the city from where Covid-19 cases were reported. 37,693 people have been quarantined in the city after they came in contact with the people infected with the virus.

— PTI

MP for law to check population growth

New Delhi: BJP Lok Sabha MP Uday Pratap Singh on Wednesday asked the Modi government to bring in a law to control population growth and said it would be the most significant legislation of the century. Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the Lower House, he said unemployment and law and order problems are due to the increasing population of the country. He said the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi had removed Article 370, cleared the way for construction of Ram Temple at Ayodhya, and brought a law against the practice of triple talaq. "I request the government to come up with the most significant law of the century," Mr Singh said.

Swine fever: Assam to cull 12,000 pigs

Guwahati: Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Wednesday ordered to cull nearly 12,000 pigs in the areas affected by the deadly African swine fever and asked officials to compensate the owners adequately. So far, 18,000 pigs have died after contracting the virus across 14 districts of the state, a senior official of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department told PTI. "Chairing a meeting with department officials, the chief minister said that in compliance with the guidelines of the Centre and the state government, and adhering to experts' opinion, culling of the infected swine population in all the affected districts should be completed before Durga Puja," according to an official statement. — PTI

Session ends, Opp. protests continue

■ **Continued from Page 1**
In the Rajya Sabha, before adjourning sine die earlier on Wednesday, Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu urged members in a valedictory speech to ensure that the "unseemly behaviour" which led to the suspension of eight Opposition MPs was not repeated, saying while it was the Opposition's right to protest, the question was how it should be done. Mr Naidu said the Upper House's productivity had been 100.47 per cent in the session, with 25 Bills passed, but there were some areas of concern — for the first time a notice for the deputy

'Rafale manufacturer violated clause'

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

The CAG report on "management of defence off-sets" said on Wednesday that French company Dassault Aviation and European missile maker MBDA has not transferred technology to DRDO which they had initially proposed in the ₹59,000 crore deal for 36 Rafale jets.

Dassault Aviation is the manufacturer of Rafale jets and MBDA provided missiles Meteor, MICA and SCALP for the fighter jet.

CAG in its report submitted in Parliament said that in many cases, it was found that the foreign

vendors made various offset commitments to qualify for the main supply contract but later, were not earnest about fulfilling these commitments. "For instance in the offset contract relating to 36 Medium Multi Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA), the vendors M/s Dassault Aviation and M/s MBDA initially proposed (September 2015) to discharge 30 per cent of their offset obligation by offering high technology to DRDO," said CAG report. It said that DRDO wanted to obtain Technical Assistance for the indigenous development of engine (Kaveri) for the Light Combat Aircraft. "Till date the Vendor has not confirmed the transfer of this technology," said the report.

India and France in 2016

■ **DASSAULT AVIATION** and European missile maker MBDA has not transferred technology to DRDO which they had initially proposed in the ₹59,000 crore deal for 36 Rafale jets

had signed an inter-governmental agreement (IGA) which has a 50 per cent offset clause to be executed by the French partners.

However a controversy arose when Dassault Aviation chose Anil Ambani-owned Reliance Defence as their offset partner which had no experience in the defence sector. In 2005, India adopted the offset policy

for defence capital purchases. This meant that for all capital purchases above ₹300 crore made through imports, the foreign vendor was required to invest at least 30 per cent of the value of the purchase, in India. This investment was to be made in the Indian defence and aerospace sector.

Various avenues were available to the vendor to discharge these offset obligations. This included foreign direct investment, offering of free Transfer of Technology to Indian firms, and purchase of eligible products manufactured by Indian firms (exports) among others.



Congress MP Raj Babbar and other Opposition MPs march from Gandhi statue to Ambedkar statue in protest against the recent farm and labour bills during the ongoing Monsoon Session at Parliament House in New Delhi on Wednesday.

— PTI

Maha building collapse toll rises to 40

SHAHAB ANSARI
MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

The death toll in the building collapse in Bhiwandi in Maharashtra's Thane district increased to 40 on Wednesday with the recovery of 14 more bodies overnight. Twenty five persons have been pulled out of the debris alive so far and are being treated at hospitals in Bhiwandi and Thane, an official said.

The search operation continued throughout the night despite heavy rains. The bodies recovered from the debris were mutilated and highly decomposed as they had remained there for over 50 hours, the official said.

Even at the time of writing this news more people were feared trapped. Due to heavy rains rescue teams were facing difficulties in rescue operation however they continued rescue operation throughout night.

MoS railways Suresh Angadi dies of Covid

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Minister of state for railways and Karnataka BJP MP Suresh Angadi passed away on Wednesday, days after he tested positive for Covid-19.

The 65-year-old passed away at around 8 pm at the AIIMS trauma centre which has been converted into a dedicated Covid-19 facility, sources at the hospital said.

A fourth-term MP from Belagavi, Angadi is the first Union minister to have died of coronavirus. At least six MLAs and three MPs have earlier succumbed to it. Former President Pranab Mukherjee, who died on August 31, was also diagnosed as Covid-19 positive.

Angadi had on September 11 himself announced on microblogging site Twitter that he had



Suresh Angadi

contracted the disease. The MP from Belagavi had requested all those who came in close contact with him over the last few days to monitor their health and get tested in case of any symptoms.

India's Covid-19 count now stands at 45,62,415, including 9,43,480 active cases, 35,42,664 recoveries and 76,271 deaths.

Shri Suresh Angadi was an exceptional Karyakarta, who worked hard to make the Party strong in Karnataka. He was a dedicated MP and effective Minister, admired

across the spectrum. His demise is saddening. My thoughts are with his family and friends in this sad hour. Om Shanti, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter. "Extremely saddened by the passing away of Central Minister Shri Suresh Angadi Ji. He was a remarkable leader who dedicated all his life for organisation and went on to serve society with utmost diligence and compassion," BJP president J P Nadda tweeted. Railway minister Piyush Goyal said on the micro-blogging website, "Deeply anguished at the unfortunate demise of Suresh Angadi ji. He was like my brother. Words fall short to describe his commitment & dedication towards the people."

— PTI

Bihar top cop of SSR fame quits

■ **Continued from Page 1**
CM Nitish Kumar" On Wednesday, while talking to reporters, Mr Pandey said that "people from various districts where I served earlier have been asking me to contest polls but I have not taken any decisions yet. But as far as my interest in serving people is concerned, I can do that even without joining politics".

He praised Bihar CM Nitish Kumar for his effort for state's development and said that "he never compromises on the issue of crime and



Former DGP Gupteshwar Pandey in Patna on Tuesday.

corruption". While JD(U) leaders have been maintaining silence on Mr Pandey's early retire-

ment, BJP spokesperson Nikhil Anand said in a statement that "questions should not be raised as he

has decided to quit voluntarily. In a democracy he has the right to choose his political ideology or party". Late on Tuesday evening, the state home department issued the notification granting voluntary retirement to Mr Pandey effective from September 22, 2020, under the provisions of All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958.

Director general (home guard and fire services) S.K Singhal has been given additional charge of the state DGP.

NCB to question Deepika...

■ **Continued from Page 1**
Prakash, revealed that she had allegedly asked for hashish. The NCB may also grill the duo together at a later stage, officials said.

Deepika is likely to appear before NCB on Friday, whereas Sara and Shraddha would be there for questioning on Saturday, officials said. "The summons have been issued and further probe is underway. Others, if found involved, may also be summoned as and when needed," said an NCB official.

Mantena reached the

■ **NCB HAS ARRESTED** several drug peddlers and found a chain of drugs reaching Rajput via his girlfriend

NCB office at around 11.30 am, the official said. The NCB on Tuesday summoned Deepika's manager Karishma Prakash and KWAN talent management agency's CEO, Dhurv Chitgopekar. However, Prakash could not appear before the agency due to ill-health. She has been exempted from appearance till

Friday, an official said. NCB has arrested several drug peddlers and found a chain of drugs reaching Rajput via his girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty's brother Showik. The brother-sister duo is behind bars and officials are now probing the larger drug and Bollywood nexus.

Rajput was found hanging in his Bandra apartment on June 14 and various angles in the incident are now being probed by the NCB, the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate.

House bids farewell to 11 MPs

V-P: Conduct of some members is 'deeply painful'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Making an appeal to Rajya Sabha MPs to ensure that the "unseemly behaviour" that led to the suspension of eight Opposition parties members from the House is not repeated, Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday said to protest is the right of the Opposition but the question is how it should be done.

In his valedictory speech before the House sine die eight days ahead of scheduled due to Covid-19, Mr Naidu informed that the 252nd session of the Rajya Sabha witnessed a productivity of 100.47 percent, with 25 bills being passed and the session has been satisfying in terms of productivity but there were some areas of concern as well, including for the first time in the history of the Upper House, a notice of motion for removal of the deputy chairman was given.

Mr Naidu said it is "extremely unpalatable" when bills are passed amid a boycott of proceedings by some sections of the House,



but not taking up legislative work in such a situation may legitimise their action as an "instrument of blocking legislation". Fifteen bills including the three farm sector related bills, over which the House, witnessed unruly scenes and suspension of eight members, were passed in the last two days with no opposition member present in the House as they were boycotting the proceedings.

Expressing concern over the conduct of some of the members, he said it was "deeply painful" and all need to "collectively ponder" over these issues.

Over the suspension on the eight members, Mr Naidu said rules of the House do provide for such action when it becomes inevitable. Earlier during the day, the House bid farewell to 11 members will retire in November this year, including civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Samajwadi Party's Ram Gopal Yadav.

MP agri mantri remark divides Shivraj ministry

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, SEPT. 23

The recent statement by Madhya Pradesh agriculture minister Kamal Patel in which he admitted that the Kamal Nath government had waived crop loans of around 27 lakh farmers in the state has divided the Shivraj ministry with one of its senior members contesting it.

State urban development minister Bhupendra Singh on Wednesday countered his colleague on the issue saying that his statement was not based on fact.

He, however, blamed the state government officers concerned for providing "incorrect information" on the matter to the house.

"Incorrect information on the implementation of crop loan waiver scheme (by the Kamal Nath government) was provided (to the house) by officers. The state government is still probing the contentious issue (on implementation of the scheme)", Mr Singh told reporters here. Mr Patel's statement has taken the state BJP leadership here by surprise since the ruling party was planning to make the issue a major poll plank.

SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED GIRL



General public is hereby informed that one female namely Sheela Kumari D/o Suresh Rai. Age: 14 yrs, Height: 5', complexion fair, face round. Wearing red colour suit, Yellow colour salwar and bare footed has been kidnapped from C-4, Old Govindpura, Parwana Road, Jagatpuri, Delhi on 08.08.2019.

Sheela Kumari In this regard a FIR No. 217/2019 dated: 08.08.2019 U/s 363 IPC has been registered at PS Jagatpuri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped girl, but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing/ kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-230111334
Ph: 011-23014046
011-23015218
DP/205/SHD/20

S.H.O.,
P.S. Jagarpuri, Delhi
Ph: 011-22420362, 22420363

Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Executive Engineer Jai Shakti PHE (QC&PD) Division, HMT, Srinagar
Phone: 0194-2496302, E-Mail: ecmhchd@gmail.com

Corrigendum-01
Subject: - Supply of Alumina Ferric Grade-IV conforming to IS 299: 2012 with upto date Amendments.
Ref: This office NIT No: PHE/M&P/11 of 2020-21/e-Tender Dated: 19-09-2020 issued under endorsement vide No: PHE/M&P/2018-67 dated: 19-09-2020
It is to inform all the intending bidders for the subject e-NIT that due to typographical error the quantity of Alumina Ferric Grade-IV in the Gist of e-NIT has been erroneously stipulated as:-
Supply of 200 Metric Tons, Alumina Ferric Grade- IV conforming to IS 299: 2012 (with upto date Amendments).
So the same is corrected and shall be read as:-
Supply of 2000 Metric Tons, Alumina Ferric Grade- IV conforming to IS 299: 2012 (with upto date Amendments).
Rest all the terms and conditions, dates etc shall remain unchanged.

No: PHE/M&P/2073-75
Dated: 21-09-2020
DIPK-6086/20 DATED 23.09.20

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
QC&PD, Jai Shakti
HMT Srinagar

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
-----Telefax: 0194-2496089, Email ID:- ecmhchd@yahoo.in-----

Gist of e-tender
NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/17/e-tendering
Dated: 18-09-2020.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited from Registered & Experienced firms for the below mentioned work:-

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Earnest Money (Lacs of Rs)	Time of completion (in Days)	Position of AAA/Funds
1	2	3	4	5	6
Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of one (01) no. 320 KVA of D.G set along with AMF Panel, Cement Concrete Foundation AMC for Three years at Govt. Kashmir Nursing Home, Srinagar.	25.00	1000	0.50	45	Available

1. Downloading of Bids: The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 18.09.2020 (18.00 hrs) and can be downloaded from 18.09.2020 (18.00 hrs).
2. Pre-bid meeting shall Pre Bid Meeting: Pre Bid meeting shall be held in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar on 21-09-2020 (12.00 hrs) either in person or through virtual meeting.
3. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 18.09.2020 (10.00 hrs) to 28.09.2020 (15.00 hrs) in two (02) covers.
4. Opening of Bids: The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on 09.10.2020 at 14.00 hrs or any date convenient to the Department.
5. Link for virtual pre-bid Meeting: Time: Sep 23, 2020 12:00 PM India
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71427997189?pwd=MSNldFR5bHk1OHFyRWtubUNSAUdTBjdz09>
Meeting ID: 714 2799 7189
Pass code : 9NIDPK

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

DIPK-5954/2020 DATED 23.09.20

SHORT TAKES

Allahabad HC rejects plea to rename itself

Lucknow: The Allahabad high court has dismissed a plea to rename itself either as Prayagraj High Court or the Uttar Pradesh high court. A Lucknow bench of the high court dismissed the lawsuit, filed in the form of a Public Interest Litigation, terming it as a publicity stunt litigation. The petition filed by advocate Ashok Pandey was dismissed by a bench of justices P.K. Jaiswal and D.K. Singh. The petitioner had raised the plea to rename the high court on the ground that the state government rechristened Allahabad district as Prayagraj on October 16, 2018. In its recent order, the bench said renaming its name is within the powers of the Legislature under the Constitutional scheme and hence it cannot interfere in the issue. The high court, however, restrained itself from imposing cost on the petitioner. — PTI

HC stays warrant against Shourie

Jodhpur: The Rajasthan high court on Wednesday stayed the arrest warrant against former union minister Arun Shourie and one other in a case involving the sale of an Udaipur hotel at an alleged loss of ₹244 crore to the exchequer. The HC, however, told Shourie to appear before the trial court on any day by October 15—the next date of hearing—and furnish a personal bond of ₹2 lakh and two sureties of ₹1 lakh each. The hotel's valuer, Kantilal Vikamsey, has been told to do the same on October 8. On Wednesday, the CBI told the High Court that no irregularity was committed by them, justifying the closure report filed by it earlier. Centre's Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju stated that the CBI court's order was not in conformity with law. — PTI

Boy beaten to death for stealing money

Baripada: A 14-year boy was beaten to death for allegedly stealing ₹500 in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, police said on Wednesday. The incident happened in Kiapan-oposhi village in the Karanjia police station area, they said. Rajan Behera, a student of Class 7, had gone to his friend's house on Tuesday and returned home after some time. His friends mother, who was away when Rajan visited their house, found that ₹500 was missing after she returned, police said. The woman first asked his son and then called Rajan when she learned about his visit during her absence. Satyanarayan Kola, the investigating officer, said. The boy was allegedly thrashed by the woman, identified as Samita Behera.

TN minister's PA abducted by gang

Coimbatore: The personal assistant (PA) of a Tamil Nadu Minister was kidnapped at knife point by a masked four-member gang in Udumalpet in nearby Tirupur district and released after three hours at a spot some 10 km from where he was abducted on Wednesday, the police said. The motive behind the abduction is not known, they said. Karman, the personal assistant of Animal Husbandry Minister Udumalai K Radhakrishnan, was sitting in the latter's office when the gang barged in, bundled the PA into a waiting car and sped away around 11.30 am, the police said. The minister was not in the office and only a woman staff member was present when the incident happened, the police said. — PTI

'Make kids aware about use of masks'

Guwahati: An association in Assam has proposed to open 'Awareness Clubs' (Chetana Manch) in all 355 secondary government schools in 33 districts across Assam to raise awareness among children about the use of masks to fight Covid-19. "Children play an important role in the family and among the various groups and sections of the community. Hence, children are the best communicator of any behavioural change in the family or in the society," said Heritage Conservation Society of Assam secretary J. Sharma.

Record rain in Mumbai, rail & road traffic hit

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

Mumbai's life was thrown out of gear on Wednesday as the city received its second-highest rainfall in 24 hours in the month of September since 1994. The incessant rains caused flooding at several areas in the city and left the rail and road traffic heavily disrupted. According to reports, two security guards in Agripada area died after they were trapped in a flooded elevator.

The incident took place at Nathani Residency, a high-rise near Kala Pani junction of Agripada area. Security guards Jamir Ahmed Sohanan (32) and Shehzad Mohammed Siddhique Memon (37) took the lift to go to the basement to open

a valve for water supply, a police official said. But due to heavy rains throughout the night, the basement was flooded, and the water rushed into the lift as soon as the doors opened, he said. Before the two could step out, the doors got closed and they were stuck inside, the official said. They pressed the alarm button to alert the residents, following which the police and fire brigade were called in. Fire brigade personnel cut open the upper portion of the lift and pulled the duo out but both were dead, probably due to drowning, the official said.

Rains across the island city and the western suburbs picked up late on Tuesday evening. There were intense spells across Mumbai overnight, a civic



Waterlogged railway tracks at Chunarbhathi railway station after heavy monsoon rain in Mumbai on Wednesday.

official said. On Wednesday morning, public transport services were hit and normal life affected in the financial capital due to heavy down-

pour and waterlogging. Several streets and low-lying areas were waterlogged due to overnight rains and the road traffic was also badly hit, a civic

official said. Some vehicles broke down in the water, affecting the traffic movement. Several people were seen wading through knee-deep water.

Climate change is a real thing: Aaditya Thackeray

Mumbai, Sept. 23: As Mumbai once again gets flooded due to heavy rains, Maharashtra environment minister Aaditya Thackeray on Wednesday said climate change has become a real thing and stressed on undertaking mitigation measures as part of a larger action plan to deal with the phenomenon. He visited the headquarters of the BMC, controlled by his party

Shiv Sena, to take stock of the situation after overnight torrential rains flooded parts of Mumbai and disrupted rail and road traffic on Wednesday in what has become an annual occurrence during the monsoon. In a series of tweets, Thackeray said parts of Mumbai have received over 83 per cent of the annual normal September rainfall in less than 12 hours. — PTI

The railways also bore the brunt of monsoon fury as the suburban train services on both Central Railway and Western Railway were suspended

in the morning. The services were resumed in the afternoon after the rains receded. Railways also cancelled many long-distance trains.

'Prefer Chinese rule'

Today, Kashmiris do not feel Indian: Farooq Abdullah

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 23

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah who, according to his critics, has as a politician grown accustomed to settling off controversies, said in his latest harangue that the people of Kashmir do not feel Indian and do not want to be as such.

"Today Kashmiris do not feel Indian and do not want to be Indian. They are slaves. They would rather have the Chinese rule them," he said in an interview to veteran journalist and television commentator Karan Thapar.

Reacting sharply to the government's doing away with the '1927 State Subject Law' and replacing it with new domicile law in what is now called as the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Abdullah said, "Every Kashmiri believes the new domicile laws are intended to create a Hindu majority. The gap between Kashmiris and the rest of the country is wider than ever before and growing." He added that alleged attempts to

Mehbooba Mufti daughter moves SC over detention

Srinagar, Sept. 23: Itija Mufti, the daughter of former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, has approached the Supreme Court seeking to modify her petition challenging the detention of her mother under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA).

In her application before the Supreme Court, Itija said it has been filed praying for permission to amend the writ petition seeking inter alia a writ of habeas corpus. The writ petition has challenged Mehbooba's detention on several grounds. — PTI

change the demography of J&K have further embittered the Kashmiri people.

He accused Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, of "deceiving" and keeping him in the dark about the Centre's plan to abrogate Article 370 and bifurcating J&K.

Terror accused planned camp to radicalise youth

RAJIB CHOWDHURI and PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI
KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE, SEPT. 23

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has found that one of the nine arrested Al Qaeda cadres had plans to run a radical camp in the guise of Madrasa, which has come under its scanner, in line of the terror module at Simulia Madrasa ran by Jamaat-ul-Millat in Bangladesh in Burdwan in West Bengal that had come to light six years ago after the Burdwan blast.

NIA sources revealed that Al Mamun Kamal, the accused, told the

WEST BENGAL

investigators that he had raised funds for the purpose and even opened a Madrasa privately at his village: Paschim

Nawdapara at Domkol in Murshidabad where he wanted to run a camp to radicalise young minds. He, alongwith others, had also started building a mosque nearby.

To raise funds, Kamal, facing the NIA's interrogation now, targeted hundreds of migrant workers, who had travelled to Ernakulam in Kerala, with the help of another arrested accused: Murshid Hasan, accord-

ing to sources. The amount of donation ranged in between ₹5 and ₹10.

After collecting funds from the migrant workers, Kamal used to send them the subscription bills to Ernakulam and other parts of Kerala, confirmed his neighbour: Shahjahan Mondal. He said, "Kamal is the brain behind the Madrasa. But due to Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, his fund raising spree stopped and the madrasa was closed."

Meanwhile, a mosque at Jalangi has come under the NIA's scanner after many among the accused were found to have held their meetings there.

TEACHERS FACE UNCERTAIN FUTURE IN TRIPURA



A teacher (left), terminated from her job, pleads with an official to continue their protest against the government demanding alternative employment. Other teachers (above) brave water cannons during the protest in Agartala, Tripura, on Wednesday. The contracts of 10,323 school teachers, including graduate, under-graduate and post-graduate teachers, who were inducted in different phases since 2010, were terminated over faulty recruitment process by the Tripura high court in 2014. The order was later upheld by the Supreme Court in 2017. — PTI

CBI books former Visva Bharati V-C

New Delhi, Sept. 23: The CBI has registered an FIR against former Visva

Bharati University vice-chancellor Sushanta Duttagupta for alleged corrupt activities during his tenure, officials said on Wednesday.

The action comes after a two-year-long preliminary enquiry (PE) into the allegations levelled against him during 2012 and 2013.

In the first instance of sacking of the head of a central university, the then President Pranab Mukherjee had approved the dismissal of Duttagupta, a physicist,

GRAFT CHARGES

on February 15, 2016, on the basis of a recommendation from the Union Ministry of Education.

The President is the Visitor of the Visva Bharati University founded by Rabindranath Tagore in Shanti Niketan, West Bengal.

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) had referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation three complaints against Duttagupta related to alleged financial irregularities, violation of rules,

and misuse of official position, among others.

The CVC had also attached a report of an education ministry committee that looked into the allegations and corroborated them, according to the officials.

Based on the reference, the CBI conducted a PE. It has prima facie shown that Duttagupta allegedly hid the fact that during his tenure as the VC he was also getting pension from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, thus receiving excess payment of over ₹13 lakh, the officials said.

The allegations against him also pertain to hiring a private law firm, which charged higher fees than government-approved counsels, to represent the university, they said.

The PE also found that Duttagupta paid Rs five lakh as honorarium to a retired judge for conducting a departmental enquiry which was against all rules, the CBI has alleged.

The education ministry had sent the file to Mukherjee recommending Duttagupta's dismissal over allegations of financial and administrative irregularities. — PTI



Members of Rajput community pay floral tribute at the statue of Maharaja Hari Singh on the occasion of his birth anniversary in Jammu on Wednesday. — PTI

What is Covid? Ask Bonda tribals of Malkangiri dist

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
MALKANGIRI, SEPT. 23

Far from the madding crowd, they live on the top of Bonda hills under Khairput block of Odisha's Malkangiri district. Little do they know that the world has plunged to a major health crisis called Covid-19 pandemic. The Bondas, one of the primitive tribal groups, are still unaware of the catastrophic Covid-19 and continue to live their life like any other normal period. Neither are they using masks nor sanitisers to ward off Covid infections, much because of the fact that they have not yet been apprised



A file picture of Bonda tribal women in Odisha

about the disease and its damaging impacts.

"No one has come here so far to make the people aware about the disease. These people who are living on hilltops rarely visit local markets and hence have little chance of get-

ting infected. However, if any of them get infected by any means, the situation will be beyond control as our people do not have much knowledge of modern healthcare and hygiene," Dambaburu Sisa, a Bonda tribal and

former Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), said. Mr Sisa said there was an urgent need on the part of the state government to depute special officers to Bonda hills and ensure good hygiene," said Bonda leader and former MLA Dambabu Sisa.

Bigna Kirsani, a Bonda youth who was previously chairperson of Khairput block, said the local residents do not have access to information.

"Since most of the villages under Mudulipada and Andrahah gram panchayats don't have power supply, they can't watch television. Other means of communication like tele-

phone and radio still remain a distant dream for them. The only medium of reaching to them is engagement of volunteers and social workers. Some of us who have got a little bit of education are giving our best efforts to make them aware about the threats posed by Covid-19," said Kirsani.

Sharing an interesting experience while distributing masks and sanitisers, Kirsani said when they entered different hamlets and villages, the people asked them, "What is Covid?"

He informed that some social workers had mobilised some masks and sanitisers from non-governmental organizations and distributed them among the tribals.

They are giving our best efforts to make them aware about the threats posed by Covid-19," said Kirsani.

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MP home minister shuns mask in public, sparks row

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, SEPT. 23

Madhya Pradesh home minister Narottam Mishra on Wednesday triggered a row by saying that he shunned face-

mask, taking everyone by surprise. "I don't use face-mask (in public)," he said while fielding a question by reporters in this regard.

"I never wear facemasks when I attend public pro-

grammes. *Isi mein kya hota* (what purpose it serves)", he quipped.

Incidentally, the Indore district administration has made it mandatory for people to wear face-mask in public and imposed a fine of ₹100 on those who violated the rule.

Opposition Congress seized the opportunity to attack BJP on the issue, saying that the home minister of the state has scant regard for the rules framed by his own government. "Mr Mishra has thrown the rules to the wind by saying that he shunned facemask in public," a Congress leader said.

THE ASIAN AGE

24 SEPTEMBER 2020

With Opp. away, govt sneaks in labour code

The government on Wednesday pushed through a set of key pieces of legislation that will impact the lives over 50 crore people who form the country's workforce. The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, along with the code on wages, which has already been enacted, subsume and replace 29 central laws that governed the country's industrial relations.

The Industrial Relations Code raises the threshold on the number employees needed in an organisation for retrenchment and closure of establishments without government approval to 300 from 100. While the law throws job security of a large number of people into the wilderness, it is welcomed by the industry as it makes hiring and firing easy. It also redefines the sole negotiating union in an establishment as the one in which more than 51 per cent of the workers are members. Establishments now need not listen to the voice of smaller sections of their employees.

Critics have noted an alarming and unusual feature in the bills that gives the government wide powers to frame rules that will form the operational part of the legislation

have to maintain a database on them online. They can also avail the benefits of the public distribution system either in the native state or the state of employment, and insurance and provident fund benefits available to other workers.

Critics have noted an alarming and unusual feature in the bills that gives the government wide powers to frame rules that will form the operational part of the legislation. They include the conditions for increasing the threshold for layoffs, retrenchment, and closure, for applicability of different social security schemes to establishments, and specifying safety standards, and working conditions to be provided by establishments under the occupational safety code.

The government has made its intention clear when it said the purpose of labour reforms is to provide a transparent system to suit the changed business environment. The codes also empower the state government to offer relaxations in provisions on labour security, with an aim to trigger a race to attract capital.

That the codes cleared parliamentary scrutiny in less than three hours of discussion, that too when the Opposition was boycotting the proceedings, reflects the disdain the government has shown towards not only to parliamentary practices but also to the people whose lives they will impact. The government showed a similar high-handedness when it got the farm bills passed. Every trade union, including the Bharatiya Mazdur Sangh affiliated to the Sangh Parivar, has voiced their protest against the anti-labour provisions in the codes. It remains to be seen how the government will tackle the disaffection within India's workforce.

Callous disregard of data

Data, they say, is the new oil. The finance minister had poured scorn on the new maxim in her Budget speech saying it is just a cliché though she did acknowledge the significance of credible data to base decision-making on. The real import of the importance of data in modern administration may have dawned on the government when it confessed in Parliament that it had no data on the deaths of guest workers who were forced by the suddenness of the declaration of the world's most severe lockdown to collectively log millions of miles as they trudged home in distress. This human tragedy, so gut-wrenchingly portrayed when a child was photographed trying to wake its dead mother on a road in Bihar, surpassed even the horrors of the pandemic.

In the absence of credible data gathering, the figure of a crore migrant workers having walked or ferried home by special trains and buses can only be taken as a ballpark figure conjured to satisfy questions tabled in Parliament. If it did not collate any data from different states on the fatalities and the number of returning migrants, the government is guilty of carelessness. But if the real reason is that data is being withheld because of the embarrassment it would cause, the government stands condemned by its own callousness. The suspicion is data — media sources put guest workers' deaths near about 300 — is a tool to be manipulated in the hands of the current dispensation as amply proved in several debates over statistics regarding job losses in a downward spiral of the economy in the last couple of years.

The government also admitted in Parliament that it had no data on farmer suicides in the last three years. The fact that its own national crime database reveals 10,281 farmer suicides in 2019 and 10,357 in 2018, besides counting 42,480 deaths by suicide of farmers and daily wage workers last year, shows up the rulers as shying away from the truth when it comes to keeping people's representatives informed in Parliament. In refusing to address inconvenient data, the government is proving unworthy of the people it governs.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Editor in Chief

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Subhani



Are we ready for 'give & take' with China at LAC?



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray
Reflections

The five teenaged Arunachal Pradesh boys who went missing on September 4 and were later found on the Chinese side of the border highlighted the dilemma that the top Indian and Chinese Army commanders must have faced during Monday's mammoth meeting.

Of course, the boys, who had unwittingly strayed across the border and were later found in China by People's Liberation Army personnel, were close to the extreme northeastern end of the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control between India and China. The meeting of Chinese and Indian commanders at Moldo was on the Chinese side of the LAC's north-western end. This is where, as Jawaharlal Nehru famously told Parliament before the 1962 border war, "not a single blade of grass grows".

In contrast, the Northeast is lush with vegetation and bristling with game. Moreover, as one of the lost boys put it: "We are hunters, we move around a lot." Yet, despite their experience and expertise, they got lost and could not be found for several days. "The borders are not demarcated well", they said. "We can't say which side is which."

It must be even more difficult to do so among the barren rocks and snow-clad heights of Ladakh where there are often no marked borders at all, as narrated in Kyle J. Gardner's forthcoming book, *The Frontier Complex: Geopolitics and the Making of the India-China border, 1846-1962*. This is where India accuses the Chinese PLA of encroaching on Indian territory in early May.

New Delhi and Beijing have been at loggerheads over charges and counter-charges for the past five months, re-enacting the tensions between Washington and Beijing that resulted in the recent menacing Chinese video of an aerial attack on what looks like a fortified American military position in Guam.

A September 6 meeting in Moscow of India's external affairs minister, Subrahmanyam Jai-shankar, and China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, on the sidelines of a gathering of foreign ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation went on for more than two hours. But it did not break the stalemate.

India is in the dual position of being both the aggrieved party and the one which enjoys a slight tactical advantage. It is pressing China to agree to a three-step process of disengagement, de-escalation and de-induction. The basis of the demand is that India now occupies tactical heights on the south bank of the Pangong Tso-Chushul river system.

This is the area that Raja Gulab Singh's general, Zorawar Singh, invaded in 1834. The Chinese, with their much vaunted sense of history, could not forget that the Dogra forces of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir soundly defeated the Qing emperor's Sino-Tibetan army during the Sino-Sikh War of 1841-42. Ladakh's king, Tshespal Namgyal, was dethroned and exiled and Ladakh incorporated into the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. China's PLA may be trying to regain through backdoor means what the Chinese lost fair and square in a war 178 years ago.

However, it must be

admitted that the proposed Johnson-Ardagh line (for Tibet's northern boundary with Chinese Turkestan) and the abortive Macartney-MacDonald Line (to delineate Aksai Chin) were even more inconclusive than the McMahon Line which those Arunachal Pradesh boys so unwittingly transgressed.

One wonders whether either side at the Moldo talks in a fresh bid to ease the months-long standoff remembered Rajiv Gandhi's warning about these mythic lines. India's sixth Prime Minister, who paid an epochal five-day visit to Beijing in December 1988 to meet Deng Xiaoping, reminded everyone that the disputed Sino-Indian border was a thick pencil line on a small-scale map, blurring all physical features. Identifying the border in the ground can't be easy since according to Gardner, the British left large stretches of it without delineation or demarcation.

Indians are indignant about the Chinese intrusion into our sacred motherland only because they have been told about them by their political and military leaders. No one has any direct knowledge of those inaccessible heights. Similarly, when the Chinese complain similarly of Indian encroachments, they are only echoing the PLA and what the *Global Times* prints. Again, there is no independent corroboration.

The Indian delegation for Monday's sixth round of military talks was headed by Lt. Gen. Harinder Singh, the commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps. Opposite him

The protracted campaign which the Chinese call 'wei qi' is hardly best suited for the onset of winter. It's not in anyone's interest to be lost in the uncharted mountains like those five Arunachal Pradesh boys.

was the South Xinjiang military district chief, Maj. Gen. Liu Lin. The inclusion in the Indian team of an external affairs ministry joint secretary, Naveen Srivastava, made it the first simultaneous military-diplomatic meeting between the two sides.

This was the first meeting between the two corps commanders since their 10-hour August 2 deliberations at Moldo. Indian and Chinese troops have clashed at least twice since August 2, accusing each other of firing warning shots in the air in violation of a long-standing agreement against using firearms within 2 km of the LAC.

It is futile now to reflect that a positive response to Zhou Enlai's suggestion of swapping Aksai Chin for Arunachal Pradesh, which the Chinese call "South Tibet", would have avoided much anguish. But one lost opportunity does not invalidate the underlying give-and-take principle that is so necessary for good neighbourliness. In fact, Russia resolved its territorial disputes with China only by relinquishing its claim to several hundred islands on the Argun, Amur, and Ussuri rivers and approximately 50 per cent of Bolshoy Ussuriysky Island. Now, Japan, Indonesia, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Laos, Nepal, Bhutan, Singapore and even protégé North Korea can solve their problems with China on a give-and-take basis without emulating Pakistan, which bought China's "irreplaceable, all-weather friendship" with a slice of India's Jammu and Kashmir that it had occupied.

The protracted campaign which the Chinese call "wei qi" is hardly best suited for the onset of winter. It's not in anyone's interest to be lost in the uncharted mountains like those five Arunachal Pradesh boys.

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

GO TO SCHOOL

I am very pleased to read about the newspaper's recommendations to reopen. Education, too, is a vital part of society. Hence state education departments should implement a new methodology of assembling students of each grade, in smaller groups, if necessary. The curricula can be trimmed. As one who taught in a village school in Tamil Nadu, I know the efforts needed by a teacher, with lack of amenities. Your piece concludes with the warning that the government, if lazy, must face "electoral ire". I feel it is unwarranted to view every action and inaction of the government purely from the electoral angle.

V. Balasubramanian
Mumbai

COURT GAMES

AMY CONEY BARRETT, the frontrunner for the US Supreme Court, has said we should always remember that a "legal career is but a means to an end... and that end is building the Kingdom of God". With a judicial philosophy akin to that of former SCOTUS associate justice Antonin Scalia, her elevation to the Court will solidify a conservative majority in that institution. But the question to be asked really is what was the rush in going through with this appointment? Is it a bid to rally the increasingly disillusioned Republicans and their constituents behind the President for one last time before the November election?

Priyanka Mathur
Kolkata

RESTART TRAINS

WE HAVE HAD enough of the lockdown. Mumbai cannot restart until the local trains restart. It is the lifeline of Mumbai. Buses are too expensive to travel in and not all can afford them. Also, people have to change several buses in order to reach their workplace or destination. Chief minister Uddhav Thackeray should realise this.

Jubel D'Cruz
Mumbai

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

Suresh Rajan



Investor visa: A way out of the Covid-19 conundrum?

Eight months after the first human case of the new coronavirus (Covid-19) was diagnosed in the United States, a countless number of dreams and plans have been permanently tabled or put on hold. Businesses have shuttered, some colleges and universities will be starting the fall fully remote, and racial strife is adding to the turmoil in the country.

While "unprecedented times" is now a cliché for describing this time we are in, it's also apropos to describe this year as a time like no other. If someone were to make a movie about the 1918 Spanish Flu, the Great Depression, and 1968 race riots all happening at once, it would look and feel like 2020.

Amid all the uncertainty in the US surrounding public health, job security, unemployment figures, and education, no one wants to put their future on hold. Foreign investors will continue to see opportunities to invest in US businesses and in support of creating more jobs and securing permanent US green cards.

Despite the pressures that the pandemic and surrounding rhetoric have

placed on immigration and some visa programs, the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Programs continues to be a viable, solid alternative to getting a quality US education and becoming US residents.

PRESSURES ON OTHER VISA PROGRAMMES

The topic of immigration has received particular attention from the Trump Administration this summer and has targeted some visa programs but not others.

Mr Trump's June 22, 2020, presidential proclamation effectively shut down L-1 and H-1-B visa channels by suspending visa issuances for workers, their spouses and children. Then, the administration said international students would have to transfer or leave the country if their universities opted for online-only learning this fall; this proclamation was later rescinded after major universities like Harvard and MIT sued.

On August 19, exemptions to the June order were announced for tech and healthcare workers who would be resuming employment with the same employer. Even then, there's an

uncertainty around these visas that cannot be shaken.

As a consequence, we are likely to see renewed interest in the EB-5 program, which provides mutually beneficial arrangements for immigrants and job creators. A one-time investment of \$900,000 for a new US business that creates at least 10 jobs for US workers earns the investors green cards and the ability to achieve permanent residency.

The "at-risk" capital is returned after the permanent green cards are received. Students who take advantage of this program are not limited by the industry they will work in after graduation — unlike other visas — and they do not have to worry about having to re-apply for visas or work permits.

In an average year, about 10,000 EB-5 visas are issued per year, and just under half that figure was used as of June over the course of fiscal year 2020 (which ends September 30), according to department of state visa control chief Charles Oppenheim in a June IIUSA webinar.

He acknowledged issuance has been slowed by the pandemic impacts, and

he predicted the programme could gain at least 4,200 new visas in FY2021. In other words, we could see 14,000 new EB-5 visas next year (starting October 1).

This is good news for residents of countries that have limits on the number of immigrant visas or that tend to have a higher number of EB-5 applicants.

Part of the sluggishness this past year was due to the limitations or resistance to in-person meetings and the increase in the minimum investment from \$500,000 to \$900,000 that became effective last year. Applications for EB-5 could take longer for investors to make if they cannot see projects firsthand.

Another shift we'll see from the pandemic's impacts is the categorisation of Targeted Employment Areas (which are rural or high unemployment areas) toward the end of 2021, as some regions in the US have been hit harder than others.

This could open up or shift opportunities for some investors. Similar to the most recent financial crisis, when stock market return potential has diminished, investors in a strong posi-

tion are likely to turn to real estate for stability, as demand in real estate is increasing.

High net worth investors may also be enticed to put their funds toward other countries, such as Portugal, whose Golden Visa Program is attractive for fast-tracking residency into the European Union.

Taxation in Portugal is considered more favourable and can be an important factor as investors and their families decide where to reside. The country also offers universal health care and affordable yet quality education.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the coming months, businesses are going to be picking up the pieces. Some international students may have opted for a gap year rather than deal with visa uncertainty and the limits of virtual-only learning.

The next year could be an opportune time to plan carefully the kind of future families and investors want to establish for themselves.

The writer is executive chairman and founder of LCR Capital Partners

IN BRIEF

6th term: Belarus Prez takes oath

Kyiv: President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus was sworn in Wednesday to his sixth term in office at an inaugural ceremony that was not announced in advance amid weeks of huge protests of the authoritarian leader's reelection, which the opposition says was rigged. Several European countries used the occasion to reiterate that they don't recognise the results of the election and refused to regard Lukashenko as the legitimate president. The ceremony was held in front of several hundred dignitaries at the ornate Palace of Independence in the capital of Minsk, the state news agency Belta said. Police and other security forces blocked off parts of the city and public transportation was suspended.

Navalny released from hospital

Berlin: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was released from a Berlin hospital after more than a month's treatment for poisoning, with doctors now believing that a "complete recovery" from the Soviet-era nerve agent is possible for him, the hospital said Wednesday. Navalny spent 32 days at Berlin's Charite hospital, 24 of them in intensive care, before doctors deemed his "condition had improved sufficiently for him to be discharged from acute inpatient care." As he was released Tuesday, the 44-year-old displayed his characteristic sarcastic sense of humour. In an Instagram post, he took swipe at Russian President Vladimir Putin, scoffing at reported comments by the Russian leader suggesting that Navalny might have intentionally poisoned himself. He was flown to Germany two days after falling ill on Aug. 20.

UK: Truck lines if no-deal Brexit

London: The British government says there could be lines of 7,000 trucks at the English Channel and two-day waits to get into France immediately after the UK makes its economic break from the European Union at the end of the year. Michael Gove, the minister in charge of Brexit preparations, described that as a reasonable worst-case scenario in a letter to logistics firms. The government letter says that between 30% and 50% of trucks wanting to cross the Channel may not be ready for new paperwork and regulations that will come into effect on Jan. 1. "This could lead to maximum queues of 7,000 port-bound trucks in Kent and associated maximum delays of up to two days," the document said. The UK withdrew from the EU's political institutions on Jan. 31 but remains in a tariff-free transition period until the end of the year.

COURT: NAWAZ ARREST REPORT BY SEPT. 30

SHAFQAT ALI
ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 23

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday directed the concerned representative to submit report on the implementation of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) supreme Nawaz Sharif's arrest warrant through United Kingdom's County Court by September 30. During the hearing of Avenfield and Al-Azizia references conducted by a two-member bench, Additional Attorney General has assured the court that official of Pakistan High Commission will reach the PML-N supreme's residence in London to inform him about court orders. The IHC had issued non-bailable arrest warrant against Nawaz for September 22 and rejected his plea seeking exemption from the hearing. The court had also directed the concerned authorities to initiate proceedings to declare him as proclaimed offender. His petition to continue the case hearings through legal representative was also turned down by the IHC. Nawaz had requested the IHC to nullify its ruling and allow him to become a part of the court proceedings through his representative. He made the request on medical grounds. The IHC had ordered him to surrender and appear on September 10 at any cost in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption reference. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani had said in his remarks, "Nawaz Sharif has to appear before the court for hearing. He may face additional three-year imprisonment if he is absconder in the reference."

Trump: Harris incompetent

Washington, Sept. 23: US President Donald Trump has termed Senator Kamala Harris as "grossly incompetent," saying he was surprised when his Democratic rival Joe Biden picked her as his running mate in the November 3 presidential election.

Harris, 55, is the first-ever PoC and Indian-American woman to be the vice-presidential candidate of a major political party. "I was surprised to learn when Biden selected Harris as his running mate. Believe it or not, it's true she is rated the most liberal person in Congress. I think she's grossly incompetent I'll be honest with you," Trump said during a rally in Pennsylvania on Tuesday.

Trump, a Republican, said during the Democratic primaries no one treated Biden as badly as Harris. "Also, Harris was dropped out of the Democratic Party's presidential race as her popularity ratings dipped low," he said. Former vice president Biden has defended Harris, saying she is smart, tested and prepared. "She (Harris) is smart. She is tested. She is prepared," Biden said during a virtual fundraiser event with Harris.

"The way she talks about her mom, her immigrant story that started Indian. It's one of the things that really stood out to me. We both talked about our moms. My mom was all about sacrifice and community and how much they sacrificed for both of us, my mom and hers. And I know the pride you feel in her nomination," Biden said. Harris, who is busy campaigning in various parts of America, on Tuesday distributed yard signs to supporters who drive by parade-style and

Don: US has most powerful weapons ever produced

Washington, Sept. 23: The US has the most powerful weapons ever produced and is the envy of the world, President Donald Trump has said, hoping that he will never have to use them, as he vowed to keep America out of "endless, ridiculous and stupid" foreign wars.

Trump said for decades, American politicians spent trillions of dollars rebuilding foreign nations, fighting foreign wars that never ended, and defending foreign borders. "Instead of endless war, we are forging peace in the Middle East, it's so great. Peace in the Middle East," he said.

"We will strike down terrorists who threaten our citizens and we will keep America out of endless, ridiculous, stupid foreign wars," he said at an election rally in Pennsylvania on Tuesday night. "I am just telling you the most powerful weapons ever produced we have and other countries know that and it's a good thing that they know it and I don't think we will ever be using them and I hope we don't, I hope to God," Trump said.

The president said by saying so, he was not leaking any classified infor-

mation. He said he was allowed to speak about it because he is the president of the United States. Trump said that he has rebuilt the US military. "It was totally depleted when I took over. We built a military, \$2.5 trillion we spent all made in the US saying, the greatest equipment, the greatest planes and rockets and missiles and our nuclear," he said.

CHINA TRAILS U.S. IN DEVELOPING 6TH-GEN CRAFT

Beijing, Sept. 23: China, which in recent years tried to catch up with the US in the design and production of new generation warplanes, is trailing the American air force in the development of the sixth-generation fighter jets by several years, according to a media report. America is leading the world in the sixth-generation fighter jets with the US Air Force saying it has flown a prototype - a milestone that is still years away for China, South China Morning Post reported.

He said he was allowed to speak about it because he is the president of the United States. Trump said that he has rebuilt the US military. "It was totally depleted when I took over. We built a military, \$2.5 trillion we spent all made in the US saying, the greatest equipment, the greatest planes and rockets and missiles and our nuclear," he said.

At stake," Harris told a woman as she made a brief stop at a woman-owned cold pressed juice company in Michigan.

Senate GOP plans vote on Don court pick before election

Washington, Sept. 23: Votes in hand, Senate Republicans are charging ahead with plans to confirm President Donald Trump's pick to fill the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Supreme Court seat before the November 3 election, launching a divisive fight over Democratic objections before a nominee is even announced.

Trump said Tuesday he will name his choice Saturday, confident of support. Democrats say it's too close to the election, and the winner of the presidency should name the new justice. But under GOP planning, the Senate could vote October 29. "I guess we have all the votes we're going to need," Trump told *WJBX FOX 2* in Detroit.

"I think it's going to happen," Republicans believe the court fight will energize voters for Trump, boosting the party and potentially deflating Democrats who cannot stop the lifetime appointment for a conservative justice.

The Senate is controlled by Republicans, 53-47, with a simple majority needed for confirmation. The one remaining possible Republican holdout,

WOMAN WROTE 'GIVE UP' IN RICIN NOTE TO TRUMP

Washington, Sept. 23: A Canadian woman accused of mailing a package containing ricin to the White House included a threatening letter in which she told President Donald Trump to "give up and remove your application for this election," according to court papers filed on Tuesday. Pascale Ferrier, of Quebec, was arrested Sunday at the New York-Canada border and is due to make her first court appearance Tuesday afternoon in federal court in Buffalo, New York. She faces a charge of threatening the president.

Mitt Romney of Utah, said Tuesday he supports taking a vote. Still, with early presidential voting already underway in several states, all sides are girding for a wrenching Senate battle over health care, abortion access and other big cases.

2L dead as Don vilifies science, prioritises politics

New York, Sept. 23: "I did the best I could," President Donald Trump said. Huddled with aides in the West Wing last week, his eyes fixed on Fox News, Trump wasn't talking about how he had led the nation through the deadliest pandemic in a century. In a conversation overheard by an *Associated Press* reporter, Trump was describing how he'd just publicly rebuked one of his top scientists — Dr Robert Redfield, a virologist and head of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Redfield had angered the president by asserting that a COVID-19 vaccine wouldn't be widely available until late 2021.

So hours later, with no supporting evidence, Trump called a news conference to say Redfield was

"confused." A vaccine, Trump insisted, could be ready before November's election. Mission accomplished: Fox was headlining Trump's latest foray in his administration's ongoing war against its own scientists. It is a war that continues unabated, even as the nation's Covid-19 death toll has reached 200,000 — nearly half the number of Americans killed in World War II, a once unfathomable number that the nation's top doctors just months ago said was avoidable. Over the past six months, the Trump administration has prioritised politics over science at key moments, refusing to follow expert advice that might have contained the spread of the virus and Covid-19, the disease it causes.

China denies forced labour in Xinjiang

Beijing, Sept. 23: China on Tuesday lashed out at the passage of a bill by the US House of Representatives that threatens sanctions over the alleged use of forced labour in China's Xinjiang region, calling the accusation a lie.

Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the bill "maliciously slandered the human rights situation in Xinjiang" and sought to curb devel-

opment and progress in the region while stirring up ethnic divisions and interfering in China's internal affairs. "The so-called problem of forced labor is totally a lie fabricated by some organisations and personnel in the United States and the West," he told reporters at a daily briefing.

The House voted 406-3 to declare that any goods produced in Xinjiang are

presumptively made with the forced labour of detained Uighurs and other ethnic minorities, and therefore banned from being imported to the US. If enacted into law, it could force companies to avoid a region that produces 80% of the cotton in China, one of the world's top producers of the fiber, as well as tomatoes and manufactured goods.

involved to suggest the student's entry could lead to donations, Howle said. "There's at least another 400 or so students...that were really questionable," Howle said, including some student athletes who didn't appear to have any athletic ability. UC President Michael V. Drake, who took over the job in July, said in a statement that he took the findings and recommendations "very seriously and will do all I can to prevent inappropriate admissions."

"The University will swiftly address the concerns the State Auditor raised. Furth-

ermore, individuals involved in improper activities will be disciplined appropriately," Drake said. The audit recommends that the UC President's office take a more robust role in auditing the admissions processes at the nine campuses and closely examine what is called "admissions by exception," granted for student athletes, artists, or those who have other specific talents that are attractive to a campus.

"We think that the Office of the President and their audit function should be not only looking deeper at these four campuses but looking

IT'S 'CHINA VIRUS', NOT CORONAVIRUS WHICH SOUNDS LIKE A BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN ITALY, SAYS U.S. PRESIDENT

Washington, Sept. 23: US President Donald Trump has hit out at China for not stopping the Covid-19 pandemic that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives globally, as he yet again used the term "China virus" and urged his supporters not to call it Coronavirus, saying the name sounds like a "beautiful place" in Italy. Addressing a packed election rally in the battle ground State of Pennsylvania, Trump told his supporters on Tuesday that if re-elected, over the next four years, his administration will make America a manufacturing superpower of the world and will end US reliance on China

once and for all.

Describing the November 3 election as a "matter of economic survival", Trump said that the country was doing great on economic front before the plague was unleashed on the United States, and blamed China for it. "You had the greatest year you have ever had last year, and you were really on your way — we were very, very sadly disturbed by what happened with China. They let the plague out. They shouldn't have done it," he said.

"We built the greatest economy in the history of the world. And right now we're doing it again," he asserted.

— PTI

MORE CURBS IN HARD-HIT MADRID

Madrid, Sept. 23: Health authorities in Madrid may extend to more communities the restrictions on movement it imposed on areas of the Spanish capital with high Coronavirus infection rates.

About 860,000 Madrid residents already are required to justify trips out of 37 neighbourhoods. The region's deputy health chief, Antonio Zapatero, said Wednesday that a decision on additional measures would be announced on Friday.

— AP

FAKE PAGES FROM CHINA TRIED TO DISRUPT US POLITICS: FACEBOOK

Washington, Sept. 23: Facebook says it has removed a small network of fake accounts and pages that originated in China and focused on disrupting political activity in the US and other countries.

The US-focused activity was just a "sliver" of the

accounts' overall activity and gained almost no following. Their primary focus was Southeast Asia, including the Philippines. The accounts posted material both in support of and against Pete Buttigieg, Joe Biden and Donald Trump.

— AP



French police officers secure the bridge leading to the Eiffel Tower, Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2020 in Paris. Paris police have blockaded the area around the Eiffel Tower after a phone-in bomb threat. — AP

Paris police barricade Eiffel Tower following phone-in bomb threat

Paris, Sept. 23: Paris police have blockaded the area around the Eiffel Tower after a phone-in bomb threat.

The Eiffel Tower in Paris was evacuated for two hours Wednesday after an anonymous caller threatened to blow up the great edifice situated in the heart of the French capital, police said.

Police cars and tape surrounded the streets below the tower and the bridge stretching from across the Seine River to the Trocadero Plaza.

Some tourists were still walking in the area, but it was unclear if any were still inside the tower on Wednesday.

Two police officers at the scene told The Associated Press that the operation was the result of a phone-in bomb threat.

Eiffel Tower management did not respond to requests for comment.

After an inspection was carried out, nothing suspicious was found and the Eiffel Tower was able to reopen to visitors.

"A man phoned up,

shouted 'Allah Akbar' and said he was going to 'blow up everything'" at the Eiffel Tower, said a police source, who asked not to be named.

A security cordon was put around the monument, traffic diverted and the Eiffel Tower evacuated at 12:15 pm (10:15 GMT).

Its operator SETE said in a statement that after a thorough search nothing was found and the tower was able to reopen at 2:15 pm.

The 131-year-old tower gets about 25,000 tourists

daily in normal years and about seven million visitors a year, some three-quarters from abroad, but visits are down this year because of Coronavirus travel restrictions.

While the Eiffel Tower is scheduled to be open every day, it occasionally closes because of suicide threats, bomb threats or labour strikes.

The monument had reopened on June 26 after its longest closure since World War II forced by the coronavirus pandemic.

— Agencies

ACADEMIC | ANOMALY

Admission policies and practices from 2013-14 to 2018-19 at 4 campuses examined

Auditor: UC wrongly admitted well-connected students

San Francisco, Sept. 23: The University of California "inappropriately admitted" at least 64 wealthy students over the past six years as "favours to donors, family, and friends," according to an audit released on Tuesday that found hundreds more questionable cases of student athletes accepted to the top UC schools.

"This is a significant problem that the university needs to deal with," State Auditor Elaine Howle said in a telephone interview. The audit examined admission policies and practices

over a six-year period at four of the UC's nine campuses — UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego and UC Santa Barbara. It reviewed the academic years of 2013-14 through 2018-19.

Auditors found that 22 applicants were falsely designated as student-athlete recruits "because of donations from or as favours to well-connected families." These students "had little or no athletic skills," Howle said. "UC Berkeley really had some significant weaknesses in their admissions process," Howle said.

The audit found that the

elite school admitted 42 applicants based on their connections to donors and staff while denying admission to others who were more qualified. Howle said she believes the findings have barely scratched the surface of problems in the UC admissions process.

The 64 students identified as being improperly admitted were based on "definitive evidence," such as emailed communications showing a student was denied admission but then reconsidered and accepted after an athletic coach or the development office got



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37,668.42	-0.17
Nifty 50	11,131.90	-0.20
S&P 500*	3,304.65	0.33
Dollar (₹)	73.56	0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	93.25	1.13
Euro (₹)	85.96	0.48
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,697*684	-1.36
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.20	0.48
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.990	-0.021
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.676	0.012

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Hexaware Tech to offer ₹475 per share for delisting

Hexaware Technologies on Wednesday said will offer ₹475 per share as the final price for its delisting offer. The company stated the offer was successful and 8.72 crore equity shares had been validly tendered. The bid process for the delisting offer had started on September 9 and closed on September 16. "The acquirer and promoter have accepted the discovered price of ₹475 per equity share as exit price."

Mobile World Congress will be held in June 2021



The world's biggest four-day telecom assembly Mobile World Congress has been scheduled to start from June 28, 2021, global industry body GSM Association said on Wednesday. The Mobile World Congress is held in the last week of February every year but this year, it was cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic, and after telecom companies one after the other started pulling out of the conference.

Toyota launches Urban Cruiser priced ₹8.4 lakh

Japanese auto major Toyota on Wednesday launched its compact Sports Utility Vehicle Urban Cruiser, which it has sourced from compatriot Suzuki, in India with price starting at ₹8.4 lakh as it looks to use cross-badged products from the latter to draw more customers in the volume segment. The Urban Cruiser is the second model to be launched in India under the global Toyota-Suzuki alliance after premium hatchback Glanza.

Airtel picks up stake in tech start-up Waybeo

Bharti Airtel on Wednesday said it has picked up a strategic stake in Waybeo under its start-up accelerator programme, in line with its strategy to ramp-up cloud offerings. The company did not divulge into the financial details of the deal. Tech start-up Waybeo, focused on deep artificial intelligence-based analytics for cloud telephony, is fifth to join the Airtel Startup Accelerator Program.

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Boycott call fails to reduce import of Chinese products

Chinese share in imports rose to 19% as against 14% last year

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 23

Despite the drop in demand post-lockdown and the general resentment towards Chinese products after Ladakh incursion, China has increased its share in imports into India. Imports from the Communist country came down only by 29 per cent between April and August this year compared to 48 per cent decline in overall imports. China's share in India's total imports has gone up to 19 per cent between April and July, up from 14 per cent in the year-ago period. During the lockdown months of April and May and even during the initial months of unlock, the flow of imports in general

FOREIGN DEPENDENCE

- While India's total imports declined by 48 per cent, the country's imports from China have dropped merely by 29 per cent.
- Agro chemicals, medical and scientific instruments, other miscellaneous chemicals, handicrafts and petroleum products have seen rise in imports

and especially those from China had faced several issues. During these months, the shipments of many items got stuck at the ports, consumption was curbed and logistics remained unresolved. Further, the Chinese incursion into Ladakh evoked a strong resentment among Indian consumers and calls to ban

Chinese imports had become loud. Small and medium traders under Swadeshi Jagran Manch and the Confederation of All India Traders had given open calls to boycott Chinese products. This was followed by increased scrutiny of Chinese products at ports and consequent delays. The government also wanted to cut

the Chinese imports wherever possible and promote indigenous production. Certain curbs in the form of increased import duties were also brought in for select items. However, the share of Chinese imports in India's overall imports has gone up to 19 per cent in the period between April and July compared to 14 per cent in the year-ago period. Among the top 50 commodity groups, import of agro chemicals rose from \$321 million to \$377 million, medical and scientific instruments grew from \$200 million to \$205 million, other chemicals from \$212 million to \$240 million, handicrafts from \$156 million to \$168 million and petroleum products from \$60 million to \$68 million.

UTI MUTUAL FUND PLANS ITS IPO ON SEPT. 29

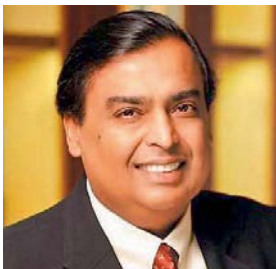
RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

The successful listing of IPOs floated by Happiest Minds Technologies and Route Mobile has inspired many others to list their shares on bourses. Following CAMS, Chemcon Speciality Chemicals and Angel Broking, many more companies have fasttracked their IPO plans. Sources said UTI Mutual Funds' ₹3,000-crore IPO would kick off on September 29. The IPO of Computer Age Management Services (CAMS) got huge response from all categories of investors and was subscribed 47 times on the final day of bidding. The qualified institutional bidder portion got subscribed 73.18 times excluding the anchor investor portion. Chemcon Speciality Chemicals' ₹318-crore IPO, which was closed on Wednesday, got subscribed over 149 times on the last day of bidding. Chemcon, being a smaller size issue, received bids 40.91 times shares on offer from retail individual investors, 449.14 times from HNI investors and 113.53 times from qualified institutional buyers category.

Angel Broking's ₹600 crore IPO got fully subscribed on the second day of bidding. At the time of closing, it got subscribed 1.46 times. The agency said its pool of 11 entities grew their revenue by three per cent in FY20, but the revenue growth has been 16 per cent per annum on a compounded basis since FY16, and added that its outlook on the industry is "cautiously stable". While growth momentum is expected to continue, operational and funding challenges could have a bearing on the performance, particularly for small to mid-sized brokerage companies, it said. "In the current fiscal, the industry aggregate revenues are expected to increase to ₹23,000 crore (Y-o-Y growth of 10-12 per cent)," it said. "While the

US PE buys 1.28% stake in Rel Retail for ₹5,550cr

New Delhi, Sept. 23: US private equity firm KKR & Co will invest ₹5,550 crore to buy a 1.28 per cent stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's retail arm as the Mukesh Ambani-run conglomerate extends fundraising spree that has already netted more than \$20 billion.



Mukesh Ambani

"KKR will invest ₹5,550 crore into Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd," RIL said in a statement. The investment values Reliance Retail, which runs grocery stores and fashion chains, at a pre-money equity value of ₹4.21 lakh crore. "KKR's investment will translate into a 1.28 per cent equity stake in RRVL on a fully diluted basis" it said. This is the second investment by KKR in Reliance Industries (RIL) units. It had previously

picked up a 2.32 per cent stake in the digital arm, Jio Platforms for ₹11,367 crore. For Reliance Retail, KKR is the second investor. US private equity firm Silver Lake Partners had earlier this month agreed to buy 1.75 per cent stake in the venture for ₹7,500 crore. Reliance Retail Limited, a subsidiary of RRVL, operates India's largest, fastest-growing and most profitable retail business spanning supermarkets,

consumer electronics chain stores, cash and carry wholesale business, fast-fashion outlets, and online grocery store JioMart. It operates almost 12,000 stores in nearly 7,000 towns. The investment will add fire to Ambani's battle for dominance in the retail market that is also being eyed by Jeff Bezos' Amazon.com and Walmart Inc's Flipkart. In May, Reliance launched an online grocery delivery service JioMart. It has tied up with WhatsApp to connect customers with local kirana stores. Late last month, Reliance acquired the retail and logistics businesses of Future Group for ₹24,713 crore to boost its retail vertical. Founded in 1976, KKR has \$222 billion in assets under management as of June 30, 2020. — PTI

TELECOM STOCKS CRASH AFTER JIO'S POSTPAID PLANS

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Telecom stocks on Wednesday tumbled up to 10 per cent a day after Reliance Jio unveiled its postpaid plans. Vodafone Idea shares plummeted 10.05 per cent to close at ₹9.22 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 14 per cent to ₹8.81. Bharti Airtel also tumbled 7.89 per cent to settle at ₹433.90 after falling 9.99

per cent to ₹423.95 during the day. Bharti Airtel was the biggest laggard in the Sensex pack. "Telco stocks like Vodafone Idea and Airtel plunged after Reliance Jio released a new postpaid tariff plan," said Sumeet Bagadia, executive director, Choice Broking. After unleashing a price war in mobile tariffs and fibre-broadband services,

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio on Tuesday unveiled postpaid plans, bundling up to 500 GB of data and subscription to Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney + Hotstar. JioPostPaid Plus for mobile customers will have a monthly tariff from ₹399 to ₹1,499 with different benefits, the company said in a statement. — PTI

Brokerages to see no Covid impact

Mumbai, Sept. 23: The domestic brokerage industry's revenue will grow up to 12 per cent in FY21 on the back of heightened retail participation in markets, a report said on Wednesday.

While the economy has been reeling under the pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic, the trading volumes in the domestic markets have been on an upwards trajectory

— ICRA

The agency said its pool of 11 entities grew their revenue by three per cent in FY20, but the revenue growth has been 16 per cent per annum on a com-

pounded basis since FY16, and added that its outlook on the industry is "cautiously stable". While growth momentum is expected to continue, operational and funding challenges could have a bearing on the performance, particularly for small to mid-sized brokerage companies, it said. "In the current fiscal, the industry aggregate revenues are expected to increase to ₹23,000 crore (Y-o-Y growth of 10-12 per cent)," it said. "While the

economy has been reeling under the pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdowns, the trading volumes in the domestic capital markets have been on an upwards trajectory, reaching an all-time high in July 2020," it said. The option of work from home, limited investment opportunities and attractive valuations have helped drive investor interest to capital markets, ICRA's Samridhhi Chowdhary said. — PTI

MONEY | MATTERS

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter agree on common definition, external auditing, standard reporting

Social media, advertisers in deal to curb hate content

London, Sept. 23: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have agreed with big advertisers on first steps to curb harmful content online, following boycotts of social media platforms that advertisers had accused of tolerating hate speech. The agreement comes three months after Facebook was hit by a boycott from major advertisers in the wake of anti-racism demonstrations that followed the death of George Floyd, an American Black man, in police custody.

Advertisers have complained for years that big social media companies do too little to prevent ads from appearing alongside hate speech, fake news and other harmful content. Big tech companies, meanwhile, want to be seen as taking action on the issue to fend off calls for more regulation. Under the deal, announced on Wednesday by the World Federation of Advertisers, common definitions would be adopted for forms of harmful content such as hate speech and

bullying, and platforms would adopt harmonised reporting standards. The platforms agreed to have some practices reviewed by external auditors, and to give advertisers more control of what content is displayed alongside their ads. "The deal comes less than six weeks before a polarising US presidential election. "This is a significant milestone in the journey to rebuild trust online," said Luis Di Como, executive vice president of global media at Unilever, one

Any progress in reducing harmful online content is to be welcomed. However, up to now voluntary action from social media companies has rarely lived up to its initial promises.

DAVID BABBS, Clean Up the Internet

of the world's biggest advertisers. "...Whilst change doesn't happen overnight, today marks an



Depositors and account holders of Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank hold placards during a protest near the Reserve Bank of India in New Delhi on Wednesday. On Tuesday, the central bank said net worth erosion, steep fall in deposits posed serious challenges in finding a workable plan for the revival of the fraud-hit bank. — AFP

Gold price likely to touch record high by November

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 23

The uncertainty around US Presidential elections may see gold making new highs, finds a report by Citigroup. A revisit of the record high levels in the international market will see gold touching ₹56,000 in the Indian market. Uncertainty over the contest and delays about the outcome may "be underappreciated by precious metals markets," Citigroup said in a quarterly commodities outlook. This could see gold moving up by more than \$200 an ounce from the current levels to cross \$2,070.

Even if gold moves back to the record high levels of \$2,070, at the current rupee levels, gold in the domestic market may move past ₹56,000 per 10 gm towards ₹58,000 levels.

HIMANSHU GUPTA, V-P, Globe Capital

Gold had touched \$2,070 in the first week of August. But the metal has been witnessing some correction with the movement of the dollar index. The US elections in November would see incumbent Donald Trump pitting against Joe Biden. The election "could be an extraordinary catalyst

for gold flat price and volatility skew late in the fourth quarter, even though historically there is no clear pattern for gold trading or price volatility into and after US elections," Citi said. "That is one reason why we expect gold prices to hit fresh records before year-end," it added. According to Himanshu Gupta, vice-president and head of commodities and currencies research, Globe Capital, gold went up during the last presidential elections, but due to the lack of support

from the macro fundamentals, it fell later. "However, this time, gold has the support of macro fundamentals. Interest rates are low and are expected to remain lower until 2023. Despite the recent recovery in the dollar index, the greenback is in bearish territory. Further, the global economies are not going to recover any faster," he said. "Our medium term target is \$2,250-\$2,300 levels. Even if gold moves back to the record high levels of \$2,070, at the current rupee levels, gold in India may move past ₹56,000 per 10 gm towards ₹58,000 levels. Even our Diwali target is around those levels," said Gupta. Kedia Commodities has set a 3-month target of \$2200 and a 6-12 month target of \$2400 per ounce. "We lift the 2021 base case gold price forecast by \$300 per ounce versus our early July forecast, to \$2,275," said Ajay Kedia, the MD of Kedia Commodities.

PE flow in realty dips 85% in eight months

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Private equity investment in Indian real estate plunged 85 per cent during January-August period of this year at \$866 million (around ₹6,500 crore) as investors remained cautious due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Colliers International and Fioori report.

The private equity (PE) inflow stood at \$5,795 million in the corresponding period of the previous year. Data centres segment attracted maximum investment so far this year at 46 per cent of the total inflows. Office segment accounted for 24 per cent of the total PE investment at \$207 million (around ₹1,500 crore) till August of this calendar year. Industrial and warehousing share stood at 12 per cent, hospitality 9 per cent, housing 8 per cent and co-living one per cent. "Investors, both foreign and domestic, are adopting a cautious approach to Indian real estate in the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic," said the report. "Future India: Captivating Strategic and Private Equity Investments." "According to Colliers International, through August 2020, overall private equity inflows into Indian real estate stood at ₹65 billion (\$866 million), which is just 15 per cent of the corresponding period in 2019," it added. The report said that newer asset classes such as data centres and rental housing gained prominence among investors. "During 2020 through August, the leading segments have been data centres, driven by demand for cloud infrastructure, as well as offices as, they tend to offer steady rental income," the report said. During January-August 2019, office segment got 47 per cent of the total PE inflows that stood at \$5,795 million. Industrial and warehousing had received 9 per cent funds, hospitality 12 per cent, housing 8 per cent, retail 18 per cent and mixed use development 6 per cent. — PTI

SEBI ENHANCES FINE ON ICRA, CARE RATINGS

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has enhanced penalty imposed on credit rating agencies ICRA and Care Ratings in the IL&FS matter from ₹25 lakh to ₹1 crore each, in the wake of serious nature of the threat their ratings posed to the securities market. "The lapses while rating the securities of IL&FS and IFIN have resulted in real and severe financial loss to investors. It has shaken up the investors' faith in the reliability of credit ratings in the context of the corporate debt market," Sebi in the order. "Had the Noticee (Credit Rating Agencies) downgraded the ratings at the appropriate time and thereby forewarned the investors, the impact of the default on investors who invested in AAA rated instruments, could not have been this severe," the market regulator said in its order.

Defamation League and NAACP, two of the oldest and biggest anti-racism campaign groups in the US. The campaign did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment. In a statement last week, it said: "Facebook's failures lead to real-life violence and sow division, and we're calling on the company to improve its policies. We need to urge people to vote and demand Facebook stop undermining our democracy. Enough is enough." — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

Marsh ruled out, Holder in for SRH

Dubai: Australian and Sunrisers Hyderabad all-rounder Mitchell Marsh was on Wednesday ruled out of the remainder of the Indian Premier League with an ankle injury he suffered in the team's opener against Royal Challengers Bangalore. West Indies captain Jason Holder has been named as Marsh's replacement and is expected to join the Sunrisers squad soon in the UAE. "Mitchell Marsh has been ruled out due to injury. We wish him a speedy recovery. Jason Holder will replace him for #Dream11IPL 2020," Sunrisers posted on its official Twitter handle. Marsh came out to ball the fifth over in Sunrisers' opening game against Royal Challengers Bangalore on Monday. However, he could only bowl four deliveries as he twisted his right ankle in the second ball while trying to stop a drive by Aaron Finch in his follow through. — PTI

Focus is more on fun, says Stoinis

Dubai: Star all-rounder Marcus Stoinis says carrying the confidence of good BBL performance into the 13th IPL and not putting too much pressure on himself should help him deliver for his new team Delhi Capitals. The 31-year-old made a quick-fire 53 off 21 balls to help his side score 157 for 8 and then snapped two wickets to drag their IPL opener against Kings XI Punjab into a Super Over, where they emerged victorious. "I've come in with some confidence through good performances this year, but also maybe putting less responsibility on myself than some other years. My focus is on just having a lot of fun and trust that I'll be good. Everyone who plays cricket at this level, the main reason you play it, is because you love it. That's the main ingredient," said Stoinis. — PTI

Medvedev goes down in Hamburg

Hamburg: Daniil Medvedev lost his first match since reaching the US Open semifinals as he was beaten 6-4, 6-3 by unseeded French player Ugo Humbert in the first round of the Hamburg European Open. The top-seeded Medvedev was a break up at 4-3 in the first set but was broken twice in a row by Humbert, who is ranked 36 places below the Russian at 41st. This was Medvedev's only clay-court warm-up ahead of the French Open. He hadn't played on clay for 16 months since a first-round defeat at last year's French Open and played only at hard-court tournaments in the last 14 months. Humbert next faces qualifier Jiri Vesely. Medvedev lost to eventual winner Dominic Thiem in the semifinals of the US Open. — AP

West hammer Hull amid Covid scare

London: West Ham manager David Moyes and Hammers players Issa Diop and Josh Cullen tested positive for the coronavirus just before the Premier League club's 5-1 win over Hull in the League Cup on Tuesday. Sebastian Haller and Andriy Yarmolenko both scored twice and Robert Snodgrass was also on target. West Ham's medical team were informed of the test results while Moyes and his squad were at the London Stadium preparing for the third round tie. Diop and Cullen had been named in the West Ham team and both had to withdraw from the line-up. — AFP

Live on TV

TENNIS

ATP Hamburg European Open: Fourth day's action from 4 pm on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

UEFA Super Cup: Bayern Munich vs Sevilla from 12.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

BASKETBALL

NBA Western Conference Finals (Game 4 of best-of-7): Denver Nuggets vs Los Angeles Lakers from 6.30 am (Friday) on Sony Six

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Mumb high Indians

Blues vault from bottom to top as Rohit cracks whip

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 23: Skipper Rohit Sharma's effortless batting formed the cornerstone of Mumbai Indians' resounding 49-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders in an Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday.

On a big Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Rohit pummelled the KKR bowlers into submission for a 54-ball 80 and powered Mumbai to an imposing 195/5.

The night belonged to Rohit, the great white-ball exponent, whose knock was laced with sixes.

Then the Jasprit Bumrah-led Mumbai attack did most things right to restrict KKR to 146 for 9.

KKR were never on course for a comfortable chase as they lost openers Shubhman Gill (7) and Sunil Narine (9) cheaply to be in a spot of bother at 25 for two.

One-down skipper Dinesh Karthik (30 off 23) and Nitish Rana (24 off 18) tried to up the ante but they were still playing the catch-up game with 125 runs needed from the last 10 overs.

Kolkata were dealt a double blow in quick succession — first Karthik was trapped by Rahul Chahar (2/26) in front of the wicket and then Hardik Pandya grabbed a running catch on the fence to send back Rana.

Bumrah (2/32) in the 16th over sealed the game for Mumbai as he removed Andre Russell (11), who was bowled, and then forced Eoin Morgan (20) to edge to the wicket-keeper: Pat Cummins (33 off 12) launched into Bumrah with four sixes in a very expensive 18th over, but it was too late for Kolkata.

Kieron Pollard (1/21), Trent Boult (2/30), James



Rohit Sharma of Mumbai Indians plays a shot against Kolkata Knight Riders in their IPL match at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi of United Arab Emirates on Wednesday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Mumbai Indians: Quinton de Kock c Naik b Shivam Mavi 1, Rohit Sharma c Pat Cummins b Shivam Mavi 80, Suryakumar Yadav run out (Sunil Narine/ Eoin Morgan), 47, Saurabh Tiwary c Pat Cummins b Sunil Narine 21, Hardik Pandya hit wicket b Andre Russell 18, Kieron Pollard not out 13, Krunal Pandya not out 1. **Extras:** (lb-2, nb-1, w-11) 14.

Total: (for 5 wickets in 20 overs) 195.

Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-98, 3-147, 4-177, 5-180.

Bowling: Sandeep Warrier 3-0-34-0, Shivam Mavi 4-1-32-2, Pat Cummins 3-0-49-0, Sunil Narine 4-0-22-1, Andre Russell 2-0-17-1, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-39-0.

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubhman Gill c Pollard b Trent Boult 7, Sunil Narine c de Kock b James Pattinson 9, Dinesh Karthik lbw b Rahul Chahar 30, Nitish Rana c Hardik Pandya b Pollard 24, Eoin Morgan c de Kock b Jasprit Bumrah 16, Andre Russell b Bumrah 11, Nikhil Naik c Pandya b Boult 1, Pat Cummins c Pandya b Pattinson 33, Shivam Mavi st de Kock b Chahar 9, Kuldeep Yadav not out 1. **Extras:** (lb-2, w-3) 5. **Total (for 9 wickets in 20 overs) 146.**

Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-25, 3-71, 4-77, 5-100, 6-101, 7-103, 8-141, 9-146. **Bowling:** Trent Boult 4-1-30-2, Pattinson 4-0-25-2, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-32-2, Rahul Chahar 4-0-26-2, Kieron Pollard 3-0-21-1, Krunal Pandya 1-0-10-0.

Gambhir lashes out at Dhoni

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Mahendra Singh Dhoni did not lead from the front by dropping himself down the batting order during a mammoth chase, opined former India batsman Gautam Gambhir, tearing into CSK captain's decision to bat at number seven against Rajasthan Royals.

The former India opener reckons that if any other captain had done this, he would have drawn a lot of flak but since it is Dhoni, people are not even talking about it.

With Chennai Super Kings chasing a massive 217-run target in Sharjah, Dhoni came to bat when they needed 103 runs from 38 balls.

Dhoni sent the likes of Sam Curran, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Kedar Jadhav ahead of him. CSK lost the match by 16 runs.

"I was a bit surprised to be honest. MS Dhoni batting at No. 7? And sending (Ruturaj) Gaikwad, Sam Curran before him. Makes no sense to me. In fact you should be leading from the front," Gambhir told *ESPNCricinfo's* T20 Time Out.

RAYUDU SET TO MISS ONE MORE GAME

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR
CHENNAI, SEPT. 23

After Covid-19, now it's an injury scare for Chennai Super Kings. M.S. Dhoni's three-time champions are sweating over the fitness of their key batsman Ambati Rayudu and experienced all-rounder Dwayne Bravo.

Rayudu who played a stellar role in CSK's win over Mumbai Indians in the opener is nursing a hamstring injury and is set to miss Friday's encounter against Delhi Capitals. Rayudu didn't play Tuesday's game against Rajasthan Royals as Chennai hit a bump with a 16-run defeat.

K.S. Viswanathan, CEO of Super Kings, said Rayudu's fitness will be assessed on Thursday.

West Indian all-rounder Dwayne Bravo missed the first two games due to a knee injury, but young Sam Curran proved to be a blessing in disguise for CSK. However, Rayudu's prolonged absence from the XI could disrupt the team's balance.

The pull-outs of Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh have already depleted the CSK squad, but the team management hasn't pressed the panic button yet.

"We are not thinking of replacements," Viswanathan said.

Coach Stephen Fleming said there could be some movement in the batting order, suggesting that in-form Faf du Plessis may open the innings.

"Maybe...keeping in mind that we have had a couple of injuries. We already had to shuffle because of Rayudu injury. It's still early days and we are trying to find out who can drive this car. We are playing another game in a quick succession. We have to make sure that we don't panic and we never do," added the Chennai Super Kings coach Fleming.

"This is not what you call leading from the front. Batting at No.7 when you're chasing 217. The game was over. Faf was probably the lone warrior," he said.

"See, if someone else would have done this, some other (batsman) captain had batted at

No.7, he would have got a lot of flak. It is MS Dhoni — probably that's why people don't talk about it" he added.

Gambhir also questioned CSK's intent to win the game.

"There is nothing wrong if you end up getting out early, at least

start leading from the front, trying to inspire the team as well. What you did in the last over (hitting 3 sixes in last over), probably if you'd done that coming in at No.4 or 5, alongside Faf, you could have made a game out of it," said Gambhir.

— PTI

QUARANTINE DIDN'T HELP, SAYS DHONI

Sharjah, Sept. 23: The extended two-week quarantine of Chennai Super Kings hampered his preparations as he did not get enough time for batting practice, said captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni after his side lost to Rajasthan Royals by 16 runs in their second IPL game.

Dhoni came in to bat at No.7, sending Sam Curran and Kedar Jadhav ahead of him in a mammoth 217-run chase on Tuesday.

Asked why he came so low in the order, the CSK captain said, "I haven't batted for a long time. 14-day quarantine doesn't help."

Dhoni was not out on 29 off 17 balls with three sixes in the last over.

"With 217 on the board, we needed a very good start which was not the case. Smith and Sanju batted very well. We need to give credit to their bowlers. Once you've seen the first innings, you knew the lengths to bowl," Dhoni said. — PTI

Kings XI to lock horns with RCB

Dubai, Sept. 23: Kings XI Punjab will look to put behind the controversial 'short run' decision in their IPL opener and start afresh when they take on Virat Kohli's buoyant Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Thursday.

In their opening game against Delhi Capitals, the square-leg umpire erroneously called KXIP's Chris Jordan for a 'short run' in the third ball of the 19th over, effectively costing his team the closely fought game.

In contrast, RCB opened their campaign on a winning note defeating Sunrisers Hyderabad by 10 runs, raising hopes that things might finally fall into place for them this season.

Devdutt Padikkal started his IPL career on a classy note hitting a sublime half-century and will once again be in focus, while AB de Villiers will also look to continue in the same vein following a crucial half-century.

Both Kohli and Aaron Finch looked good on Monday night and would be itching to spend more time in the middle.

Yuzvendra Chahal, as always, will be the key man in the RCB bowling attack. The leg-spinner was instrumental in his team's victory on Monday, triggering a batting collapse.

However, RCB will again miss the services of South African all-rounder Chris Morris who has picked up a side-strain. Morris was bought for a whopping ₹10 crore at the auction.

Umesh Yadav continues to leak runs in the IPL and going by his showing in the first game, he could be replaced by Mohammad Siraj. It remains to be seen if the team can fit in England all-rounder

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 24
- Punjab won: 12
- Bangalore won: 12

MEETING IN 2019

- Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Kings XI Punjab by 8 wickets at Mohali
- Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Kings XI Punjab by 17 runs at Bangalore

FOR THE RECORD

- Mohammed Shami recorded his best bowling for Kings XI Punjab by taking three for 15 in the previous match against Delhi Capitals. He took 22 wickets at an average of 22.00 in 15 matches for Kings XI Punjab in IPL.

- Virat Kohli, who scored 5426 runs at an average pf 37.68 in 170 innings of 178 matches for Royal Challenger Bangalore, is the highest run-getter in IPL. He scored just 14 runs in the first match against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

Moeen Ali in the middle-order.

For KXIP, Mayank Agarwal looked in imperious touch but was gutted to not be able to get his team over the line with just one run required to win.

Rahul, Glenn Maxwell and Nicholas Pooran will be expected to step up as they possess the ability to take away the game from any opposition.

Big hitters Chris Gayle, who was left out of the opener for better balance in the eleven, could be back and batting all-rounder Jimmy Neesham could also be given a chance. — PTI

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	2	1	1	0	2	+0.993
Rajasthan Royals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.800
Royal Challengers Bangalore	1	1	0	0	2	+0.500
Delhi Capitals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.000
Chennai Super Kings	2	1	1	0	2	-0.145
Kings XI Punjab	1	0	1	0	0	+0.000
Sunrisers Hyderabad	1	0	1	0	0	-0.500
Kolkata Knight Riders	1	0	1	0	0	-2.450

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

Sanju sharpened during the break

Sharjah, Sept. 23: Convinced that possessing an array of shots is a must to go with power-hitting, wicket-keeper batsman Sanju Samson says he worked on these aspects during the Coronavirus enforced break.

The work done by Samson was there to be seen when he pulverised the Chennai Super Kings on Tuesday night, setting up a Rajasthan Royal's win with his blistering 32-ball 74-run knock, studded with nine sixes and a boundary.

That he is an impact player is a known fact but his clean and elegant hitting earned praise from one and all.

"I think range-hitting is what the game demands in

this generation. I had time to work out in these 5 months, and I think I've increased that ability," Samson said.

"I've been working hard on my fitness, diet and training, and on my strength, because my game relies a lot on power hitting," he added.

Samson, who was adjudged Man-of-the-Match, said his plan is to go and hit all the deliveries in his arc.

With Robin Uthappa and Jos Buttler also in the squad, the Royals are spoilt for choice in the wicket-keeping department.

However, Samson said he is happy to play any role the captain and coach deem fit for him. — PTI



Jamal Murray (centre) of Denver Nuggets goes up for a shot against Los Angeles Lakers during their NBA Western Conference final in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, on Tuesday. Nuggets carved out a 114-106 victory. — AP

Murray magic spurs Nuggets

Orlando, Sept. 23: Jamal Murray scored 28 points as the Denver Nuggets held off a ferocious late fightback from the Los Angeles Lakers to roar back into contention in the Western Conference finals series on Tuesday.

Murray nailed two crucial late three-pointers in the closing minutes as Denver held on for a 114-106 victory in game three to reduce the Lakers' lead to 2-1 in the best-of-seven series.

But the Nuggets — who looked in complete control for long periods of the contest — were given a mighty scare by the Lakers in a thrilling fourth-quarter battle.

The Lakers had trailed by 20 points with just over 10 minutes remaining but whittled away the Denver lead to just three points

That's my whole energy, my whole approach to the game, not getting down if I miss a couple of shots. I'm just trying to be aggressive.

— JAMAL MURRAY

Nuggets player after beating Los Angeles Lakers

with 3min 53sec left on the clock in Orlando.

But just as it looked as if LeBron James and Anthony Davis were poised to complete a remarkable comeback, Murray regrouped to take the game away from the Lakers.

The 23-year-old Canadian's three-pointer from 26 feet gave Denver a seven-point advantage at 106-99 and he then provided the assist for Paul Millsap to make it 108-99.

With less than a minute on the clock, Murray struck the dagger blow with a 29-foot three-point jumpshot to

make it 111-99 and effectively seal victory.

Denver coach Michael Malone said his team — who had suffered an agonising buzzer-beater defeat in game two on Sunday — were determined not to go 3-0 down in the series.

The Nuggets have already overturned 3-1 series deficits en route to the Western Conference finals.

"I had no doubt we were going to show up tonight," Malone said.

Asked about his late flourish, Murray said he had set out to lead by example. "That's my whole energy,

my whole approach to the game, not getting down if I miss a couple of shots. I'm just trying to be aggressive," Murray said.

The Lakers meanwhile were left reflecting on an uneven display which ultimately left James and Davis with too much to do.

LeBron James led the scoring with a triple double comprised of 30 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists, with six turnovers while Anthony Davis garnered 27 points.

Murray, who also had 12 assists, was backed with 26 points from Jerami Grant while Nikola Jokic weighed in with 22 points, 10 rebounds and five assists.

The winner of the Western Conference will play either the Boston Celtics or Miami Heat in the NBA Finals. — AFP