


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VIJAYAWADA | TUESDAY | 15 SEPTEMBER 2020




WEATHER

 **Max:** 29.0°C
Min: 24°C
RH: 32%
Rainfall: 44.9mm
Forecast: Humid and Partly Cloudy. Max/Mintemp. 31/24 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+78,172)	(+1,026)
49,23,175	80,780
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,417)	(+13)
TS: 1,58,513	974
(+7,956)	(+60)
AP: 5,75,079	4,972

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

 **2,92,85,028**
DEATHS
 **9,30,007**
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
 **213**
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Bahula Trayodashi till 10.55 pm
Star: Ashlesha till 2.19 pm
Variyam: 1.18 am to 2.45 am (Wednesday)
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.21 am; 11 pm to 11.47 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
HILIRI CALENDAR
Muharram 27, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.25 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.00 pm
Maghrib: 6.35 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.09 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.55 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 3.32 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.33 PM

COUNTER POINT



We shouldn't have allowed even masks and sanitisers inside the House!

IN BRIEF

MoEF notice to Sravan Shipping

Visakhapatnam: Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF) has issued a show cause notice to Sravan Shipping and Services Pvt. Ltd. asking why its environment clearance certification should not be revoked for violating safety norms prescribed by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) under the Ammonium Nitrate Rules of 2012. Earlier, chairman of AP Pollution Control Board (APPCB) had on August 14 issued directions to chairman, Visakhapatnam Port Trust, not to engage Sravan Shipping Services.

■ Full report on Page 2

Bhushan seeks contempt review

New Delhi: Activist-lawyer Prashant Bhushan on Monday moved the Supreme Court seeking review of the order holding him guilty for contempt of court for his two derogatory tweets against the judiciary. After depositing with the Supreme Court registry rupee one, a "nominal fine" imposed by the court as punishment upon him, he filed the petition for review of the August 14 judgement holding him guilty for the contempt of court contending that it "suffers from multiple errors apparent on the face of the record of both law and of fact". — PTI

NATION | 4

PM 'busy with peacocks', says Rahul



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WORLD | 7

Suga secures party vote to be Japan PM



SPORTS | 8

Thiem wins US Open in historic comeback



Road access between many parts affected Rayalaseema crops inundated in rains

HOSKOTE NAGABHUSHANAM | DC ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 14

Heavy rains continued in Rayalaseema region causing massive damage to crops, inundating residential areas and blocking road access between many parts. Fire crews rescued a farming couple from Bachupalle tanda in Rudravaram mandal near Allagadda, Kurnool district, who were stranded at a water stream for the past three days. Kurnool district fire officer, Sreenivasa Reddy, said the farming couple went on farming work and were trapped as the Kondavagu river was flowing dangerously. "On receiving a rescue call, the fire unit of Allagadda reached them wearing lifebuoys and life

● Fire crews rescued a farming couple from Bachupalle tanda who were stranded at a water stream for the past three days. ● The home department postponed the POP (passing out parade) of trainee sub inspectors

jackets with the help of ropes. The rescue team brought the couple safely out of the Kondavagu," he said. The home department postponed the POP (passing out parade) of trainee sub inspectors following heavy rains, scheduled to be conducted at Anantapur Police Training centre on September 15. Incharge principal and

Anantapur range DIG, Kantirana Tata, said the passing out programme was postponed due to heavy rains and another date will be announced. About 273 trainee sub inspectors of civil, VR and APS got trained at Anantapur police training centre which is temporarily maintained as AP police academy. Nandyala and Allagadda areas in Kurnool district have been badly hit due to the heavy rains. Access was cut between Mahanandi and Nandyala towns and also other nearby villages after channels overflowed on to the roads. Allagadda MLA visited the rain-hit areas and distributed essentials to the people.

■ Page 2: Heavy inflows continue in Srisaillam

Rains continue to pound Kadapa

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA I DC KADAPA, SEPT. 14

It is still raining across Kadapa. Jammalamadugu, Proddatur, Duvvur and Kadapa received the highest rainfall. Kadapa received 117 mm rainfall till Sunday evening while 66.6 mm from Sunday night to Monday morning. In Kadapa division, 75 mm of rainfall was recorded in Khajipet, 90 mm in Pullampeta in Rajampeta division and 122 mm in Duvvur in Jammalamadugu division as on Monday. The Penna and Kundu rivers overflowed with the rains and the water released from the Gandikota reservoir. Hundreds of acres of crop fields were submerged. Water reached homes in the low level areas of Kadapa city. Deputy Chief Minister, Amjad Basha,

inspected the flood-submerged areas in Kadapa city limits on Monday evening. He ordered the municipal commissioner, Lavanna, and other officers to clear the encroachments on drains. The Kundu river is flooding heavily. Four feet of flood water covered the Nemaladinnebridge in Peddamudium Mandal. The village of Garishaluru was surrounded by flood waters. Traffic to Chinnamudiya, Balapanagudur, Uppaluru, J. Kottalpal, Jangalpal and Garishaluru villages in the mandal was disrupted. Hundreds of acres of crop fields in these villages were submerged. Traffic was also disrupted in several villages in Kamalapuram and Rajupalem mandals.

■ Page 2: Traffic stopped due to heavy floods

BRIDGE CAVES IN DUE TO HEAVY WATER DISCHARGE

VADREVI SRINIVAS I DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 14

The discharge of more than 13,000 cusecs of floodwaters from the Yeluru reservoir led to a bridge linked to Eleswaram and Appanapalli villages caving in on Monday. Officials stopped traffic movement and police personnel have been deployed to prevent travellers at the bridge. The bridge was constructed in 2001. Breaches developed in two places at Rajupalem near Mukkollu of Kirlampudi mandal and Pidindoddi village near the highway at Gollaprolu mandal. The waters overflowed on to the roads at Raparthi in Pithapuram mandal and several other places.

■ Page 2: 12,000 acres of paddy inundated

SC clears AP police probe into Swarna Palace fire

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN I DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 14

The Supreme Court has allowed the Andhra Pradesh police to resume its investigation into Swarna Palace hotel fire mishap after a hearing in New Delhi on Monday. The probe is to find out the lapses that led to the death of 10 patients. The SC bench compris-

ing Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman, Justice Navin Sinha and Justice India Banerjee heard the special leave petition (SLP) filed by the Andhra Pradesh government over AP High Court issuing a stay order in taking up investigation into the case on August 25.

The Supreme Court in its order stated that the para 20 of the AP High Court's impugned order be stayed

and the respondents in the SLP not to be taken for custodial interrogation if they cooperate with the police in their inquiry.

The SC observed that the Andhra Pradesh High Court may continue to pass orders as to whether the respondents ought to be continued to be let out on anticipatory bail.

■ Page 2: AP says hospital not cooperating in probe

Covid enters Parliament, 25 MPs, 56 staff positive

BJP has 12 Covid+ MPs, YSRC 2, Sena, DMK, RLP one each

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14

As the Monsoon Session of Parliament began on Monday amid the raging Coronavirus pandemic, which seems to have reached another peak in India, 25 members — 17 from the Lok Sabha and eight from the Rajya Sabha — tested positive for the deadly virus. Of the 17 Lok Sabha MPs, 12 are from the BJP, with prominent ones being Meenakshi Lekhi and Parvath Verma (both from Delhi) and controversial MP Anant Kumar Hegde. Two YSR Congress MPs were positive, while the Shiv Sena, DMK and RLP have one MP each affected by Covid-19. This worrying development comes as around 200 MPs are above 65, including some in the 85-90 age bracket, most prominent among them being former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who is 87 and a Rajya Sabha member.

Almost 80,000 deaths have been reported in India since the outbreak of the virus in January, while 92,000 positive cases were reported between September 13 and 14 alone. Incidentally, while briefing the Lok Sabha on the handling of the Covid situation by the Centre, health minister Harsh Vardhan said it had been managed "very well". Interestingly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing the media prior to the start of the ses-



Rajya Sabha MP Mary Kom dispensing hand-santiser on Parliament premises on the opening day of Monsoon Session in New Delhi on Monday. However, removal of masks raises questions on following Covid-19 safety protocols. — PTI

sion, acknowledged it was being held "under special circumstances as there is a Corona pandemic on one hand while our obligation towards fulfilling our duties on the other". He said several important decisions would be taken during the session, and "the more diverse the discussion is in the House, the more beneficial it is for the country". Elaborate arrangements have been made by the Lok Sabha secretariat as the session is being held while the pandemic seems to have peaked again across the country. It is estimated that 56 persons have tested posi-

tive within the entire Parliament House complex, which include MPs, personnel from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha secretariats and also mediapersons. Sources said these people tested positive during the RT-PCR tests which were conducted in the Parliament complex prior to the session's start. Earlier, at least seven Union ministers and around 25 MPs and MLAs had contracted the disease. Among them is home minister Amit Shah, who after undergoing the mandatory quarantine period last month, had to be admitted again to AIIMS a couple of days

ago. He had earlier been admitted there on August 18 for post-corona care but was discharged on August 30-31. In a first, all MPs marked their attendance through an app called the "Attendance Register" on the first day of the session, Lok Sabha secretariat sources said. Normally MPs sign the attendance register that is kept outside each House. Speaker Om Birla welcomed the MPs, saying it was an extraordinary occasion, and urged them to follow all arrangements and guidelines for safety during the Covid-19 pandemic.

BJD, YSRC back NDA in RS deputy chairman poll

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14

NDA candidate and Janata Dal (U) member Harivansh Narayan Singh was re-elected as the deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Harivansh defeated the RJD's Manoj Jha and the opposition candidate by voice vote after he was supported by the NDA's friendly parties, including the BJD and the YSRC.

Mr Harivansh, who was re-elected after he was renominated by the JD(U) to the Upper House of Parliament after his previous term ended in April, had defeated the Congress's B.K. Hariprasad, who was the joint candidate of the Opposition parties in 2018 for the post.

After the victory, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed him as an "outstanding umpire" and a "torchbearer of democracy" while mentioning that Mr Harivansh hails from Bihar, "a land known for



Harivansh Narayan Singh

its democratic ethos." Crucial Assembly polls are scheduled in Bihar in October-November.

The Prime Minister also referred to Harivansh's humble background and also about his journalistic days.

Earlier, BJP president and Rajya Sabha member J.P. Nadda had moved a motion seeking support for Harivansh's candidature, which was seconded by Union minister and leader of the House, Thaaavarchand Gehlot.

Similarly, the Leader of Opposition and Congress

member Ghulam Nabi Azad had moved a motion in support of Mr Jha, which was seconded by deputy leader of opposition Anand Sharma.

Congratulating his newly-elected deputy, Rajya Sabha chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu said the House will benefit from his vast experience as a journalist, social worker and legislator.

Many other leaders, including Azad, TMC's Derek O'Brien, SP's Ramgopal Yadav, BSP's Satish Chandra Mishra congratulated him.

Earlier in the day, 15 new members took oath in the Upper House, including the JMM's Shibu Soren, the BJP's Syed Jafar Islam, the DMK's T. Shiva, the TMC's Dinesh Trivedi, the TRS's K. Keshava Rao and the BJP's Jaiprakash Nishad.

The House also paid tributes to its former members and former president Pranab Mukherjee who passed away recently.

TOURISM MINISTER, SON TEST POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS

K.M.P. PATNAIK I DC VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 14

Minister for culture and tourism Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao and his son M. Venkatasai Sandeep tested Covid positive on Monday. Both are quarantined at home. The minister appealed to people not to visit him till further notice. Similarly Araku MP Gotteti Madhavi and former Anakapalle MLA peela Govinda Satyanarayana also tested positive

UMAR HELD FOR DELHI RIOTS, IN 10-DAY CUSTODY

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA I DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14

Former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student Umar Khalid has been arrested by the Delhi Police's special cell for his alleged role in the riots in north-east Delhi in February this year.

The FIR against Mr Khalid alleges that he made provocative speeches at two different places and appealed to citizens to come out on streets and block roads during Donald Trump's visit to India. The special cell arrested Mr Khalid on Sunday night, after 11 hours of interrogation. Earlier, police had also seized his mobile phone.

While seeking his custody, Delhi Police stated in the Karkadooma court that their computer team has extracted 40 GB of data from his mobile phone and want to question him about it. Police was granted 10 days' custody to interrogate him.

OPHTHALMOLOGISTS report 80% drop in consultations, rise in home remedy bids

Don't delay eye care due to Covid fear, say docs

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 14

With an 80 per cent drop in patients to eye hospitals, ophthalmologists warn that any neglect in getting proper eye care could lead to further deterioration in the condition of their eyes. According to doctors, those suffering from diabetes, glaucoma and chronic eye conditions must not stop their regular consultations in fear of contracting Covid-19. Diabetic patients and tho-

se suffering from glaucoma require regular consultations. Those with chronic conditions like uveitis and advised medications by the ophthalmologists need to visit as physical verification is important.

Dr Somasheila Murthy, head of cornea and anterior segment service at L V Prasad Eye Institute, explained, "In times of Covid-19, patients have been divided into two groups: one can be managed with tele-consultation and other requires a physi-



cal visit to the hospital. Those in the teleconsultation category have dry eyes, fatigue and discomfort due to prolonged use of digital media. The other category is patients suffer-

ing from a chronic medical condition and their physical consultation is important to assess their situation."

Emergency sections in all eye hospitals are working

yet patients are coming only in the last stages. Those who suffer from sudden loss of vision, continued redness of eyes, sensitivity to light and injuries are trying home remedies before approaching hospitals.

Dr Sreelakshmi Nimmagadda, managing director and cataract and refractive surgeon at Win Vision Eye hospitals says, "Most people with an eye condition are confused. It is with a lot of difficulty that they are approaching hospitals. It must be understood that

issues related to retinal disorders in children and adults, glaucoma and others related with loss of vision are conditions which need care on time. These must not be taken lightly and patients must follow up with their doctors. Elective procedures like cataract surgeries are decided in advance and they are often advised to wait. But if they find that there is a problem, they must not hesitate to visit the eye hospital and seek treatment."

IN BRIEF

HOSPITAL NOT COOPERATING IN PROBE: AP

FROM PAGE 1

As the AP government's senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi informed the SC that the management of Ramesh Hospitals was not cooperating in taking up investigation into the fire mishap and sought a stay order on AP HC's order staying inquiry, it allowed for taking up inquiry including the respondent in the case, managing director of Ramesh Hospitals Pothineni Ramesh Babu, and directed him to cooperate with the police.

Though the fire mishap in the Covid facility hired by Ramesh hospitals took place in the early hours on August 9, the police has arrested three hospital officials so far. They also came out on bail after serving judicial custody for a few days.

The police failed to make any further progress in the case as the top management of Ramesh hospitals including its managing director Dr Pothineni Ramesh Babu managed to get a stay order from AP HC on further inquiry and their arrest on August 25. Since then, the police was eagerly waiting for a court direction to further proceed in the case.

A top cop said, "The SC order will help us to go ahead with our inquiry in the Swarna Palace fire mishap as we were restrained in our probe in the last few days. As SC issued direction to the accused to cooperate in our inquiry, we expect the same and if not, we will appeal in HC seeking permission for arrest of the accused to expedite our inquiry."

MOEF NOTICE TO SRAVAN SHIPPING

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPTEMBER 14

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF) has issued a show cause notice to Sravan Shipping and Services Pvt. Ltd. asking why its environment clearance certification should not be revoked for violating safety norms prescribed by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) under the Ammonium Nitrate Rules of 2012.

Earlier, chairman of AP Pollution Control Board (APPCB) had on August 14 issued directions to chairman, Visakhapatnam Port Trust, not to engage Sravan Shipping Services in stevedoring activities associated with storage and handling of ammonium nitrate until further orders of the board. The board followed it up with letter dated August 17 to MoEF regarding violations of environmental clearance by the company.

APPCB also addressed letters to Chief Controller of Explosives on September 2 and September 4 asking whether Sravan Shipping Services is conforming and complying with conditions stipulated by PESO as per the license granted to them under Ammonium Nitrate Rules 2012 and whether the company has undertaken all safety measures adequately. The board also asked commissioner of police, Visakhapatnam, to review the adequacy of safety and security for stevedoring, storage and transportation of ammonium nitrate by Sravan Shipping.

Following initiatives of APPCB, the commissioner of police issued a show cause notice to Sravan Shipping Services for violation of Ammonium Nitrate Rules.

NAIDU FUNDING AMARAVATI STIR: ANIL

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 14

The minister for water resources P. Anil Kumar Yadav slammed the Telugu Desam supremo N. Chandrababu Naidu for funding the pro-Amaravati farmers to stage stir and create unrest in the state.

The minister, on Monday, said that the former chief minister Mr Naidu was taking up false propaganda against the state government by extending financial support to the farmers owing allegiance to the Telugu Desam to stage stir for retention of capital city Amaravati.

The minister said, "Only a few farmers loyal to Telugu Desam are saying that there is no insider trading in the development of Amaravati."

Unseemly controversy grips Srikalahasteeswara temple

A Shiva Lingam and a Nandi idol were smuggled into the temple

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 14

What appeared a minor incident of unauthorised installation of two Hindu idols at Srikalahasteeswara Temple in Chittoor district is turning into a major controversy with politicisation of the event.

A Shiva Lingam and a Nandi idol were smuggled into the temple on September 8 by two persons and installed on the raised platform, where idols of Parivara Devathalu Kashi and Rameswara Lingas are already located. Intriguingly, the new installations were noticed only three days later on September 11.

ISRO GEARING UP TO LAUNCH RISAT-2BR2

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, SEPT. 14

Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) is gearing up for the launch of RISAT-2BR2 on board PSLV-C49 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Shar, tentatively on November 6.

As part of the plan, Shar authorities directed the workforce to attend duties from Monday, except those infected with Covid-19 or are under quarantine.

A senior official said earlier restrictions on allowing only 50 per cent of the staff to attend duties have been lifted in view of relaxations given by the Centre. Reacting to reports over several staff members testing positive, the official claimed that there were only 20 to 30 cases at any point of time out of 2,150 employees in Shar and it hardly had any impact on the progress of works.

He said all the employees living in Isro colonies at Sriharikota and Sullurpeta have been screened and they are ready to attend duties. Pregnant women and people suffering from long term diseases are allowed to work from home. With regard to PSLV-C49 / RISAT-2BR2 Mission, the launch was originally scheduled for April but was postponed due to lockdown. The launch vehicle is on the first launch pad at Shar and the satellite will be mounted 10 days before the launch.

According to Shar engineers, the RISAT-2BR2 satellite is an advanced version of RISAT-2BRI. RISAT is a radar-imaging earth observation satellite designed to provide services in the field of agriculture, forestry and disaster management. The mission life of RISAT-2BR2 is five years. The applications of RISAT are also useful for armed forces.

Similar to other RISAT-2BRI, RISAT-2BR2 also can see through clouds even in the night and is capable of round-the-clock border surveillance besides checking infiltration.

Isro sources said that they have plans to launch a series of RISAT satellites for the benefit of security forces to keep a tab on activities in any area of their choice.

Tomatoes, locally being sold at ₹10-₹20 a kilo, are being sold at ₹57 at Azadpur market in New Delhi.

The huge demand for Anantapur fruits and vegetables in Delhi markets

Srikalahasti Temple executive officer (EO) C. Chandrasekhar Reddy told *Deccan Chronicle*, "On 11th of this month, I noticed the newly installed idols for which there was no official consent. I immediately called Pradhana Archaka, Sthanacharya and temple inspector. But they said they are unaware of the matter. We immediately took off the idols and performed Samprokshanam inside the temple," the EO maintained.

The controversy erupts in the wake of controversial gutting down of a wooden chariot at Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Antarvedi town in Sakshinipalle mandal of East Godavari district.

● The incident comes in the wake of controversial gutting down of a wooden chariot at Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Antarvedi town of East Godavari district.

The burning down of the chariot went on to acquire religious and political overtones.

Opposition parties have staged a series of protests in Srikalahasti and Tirupati raising questions over security at the temple. They wondered how two idols, each weighing seven kilograms each, could be smuggled into the temple and installed without anybody noticing them for three days.

The temple EO says an

inquiry committee has been appointed to probe the incident. "They have verified CCTV footage and found that two unidentified persons carrying bags entered through the south gate of the temple on 8th of this month. They quickly installed the idols without catching the attention of any temple officials. We are on the threshold of catching the perpetrators," the EO disclosed.

Asked how such a thing could happen without anybody taking notice, EO Chandrasekhar Reddy maintained that a police complaint has been lodged. Officials responsible for security have been suspended. The contract given to a private security agency to protect the temple has been terminated.

On-duty home guards have also been surrendered to the police department, he added.

Meanwhile, BJP activists led by party leaders Bhanu Prakash Reddy, Samanchi Srinivas and Kola Anand tried to storm Regional Joint Commissioner's office in Tirupati over the issue. They demanded a CBI inquiry to ferret out the truth.

Speaking to media, Kola Anand charged, "The YSRC government is disrespecting Hindu temples. Through such acts, the state government is indulging in minority vote bank politics. Though crimes are being perpetrated at Hindu shrines, no action has been taken against perpetrators till date," he alleged.



Madama Vanka between Vengalayapalle and Rajupalem villages received floodwater on Monday.

— DC

12,000 acres of paddy inundated

FROM PAGE 1

Markandeyapuram and SC Colony (Arundhathipet) were inundated with flood waters and the people of the villages are stranded.

According to officials, nearly 12,000 acres of paddy fields have been inundated and the paddy fields are looking like lakes. The farmers say that the transplantation for the paddy fields was just completed. They are afraid that if the rains continue for another three or four days, the paddy fields will be spoiled and it may have to be transplanted again. Many roads have been inundated and traffic has been adversely affected. The roads in many places like Gollaprolu, Eleswaram, Pithapuram and others have become impassable.

The executive Engineer of Yeleru reservoir, D.V.

TRAFFIC STOPPED DUE TO FLOODS

FROM PAGE 1

Due to the heavy floods in Isukavanka in Jammalamadugu, traffic was stopped from Kovela-kuntla and Allagadda. Tallaproddutur victims are worried that water has entered their homes and they have to co-exist with poisonous snakes. Residents of Thalaproddutur are begging authorities to reduce backwater until rehabilitation is possible. Victims continue to worry on the 12th day in the village.

Controller of examinations, Prof. Putta Padma, announced that the degree examinations to be held at 55 centres under Yogi Vemana university have been postponed due to rains.

HEAVY INFLOWS TO SRISAILAM

FROM PAGE 1

Srisailam reservoir continued to have heavy inflows and outflows due to the heavy rains. About 1.35 lakh inflows and 83 thousand cusecs outflows were recorded with 214.36 TMC ft storage and 884.80 ft as against 885 ft height on Monday. The Tungabhadra reservoir continued at full capacity, touching 100 TMC ft. Rain damaged crops in many parts of Anantapur district.

Roads were damaged between Jutur-Tadipatri. Heavy rains inundated crops at Uravakonda and Madakasira area. Thippeswamy farmers from Amarapuram said the groundnut crop was badly damaged.

● Nearly 12,000 acres of paddy fields have been inundated and the paddy fields are looking like lakes. The farmers say that the transplantation for the paddy fields was just completed. They are afraid that if the rains continue, the paddy fields will be spoiled

Ramgopal told *Deccan Chronicle* that at present 23.2 TMCs out of 24.11 TMCs is in the reservoir, but it has receded slightly compared to Sunday. He said that if the rains stopped, the flows may recede. Ramgopal said that at present, the breaches could not be plugged as the depth and flow of water is heavy at those spots. If the water levels come down to 6,000 cusecs, repairs for the breaches might be carried out.

AP to raise SCS in winter session

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 14

Andhra Pradesh has come up with a host of issues to be raised in the ongoing winter session of the Parliament apart from getting them approved.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy held a video conference with the YSR Congress MPs on Monday to chalk out a plan of action on how to raise the issues and draw the

attention of the nation apart from getting approvals for several projects and schemes. The MPs will also have to pursue in getting adequate Central funds to implement them.

Among the issues, party MPs will raise the long-pending issue of getting Special Category Status to the state, AP Disha Bill-Criminal Law (Andhra Pradesh Amendment) Bill-2019 as it requires Presidential consent,

release of funds towards reimbursement for execution of Polavaram project works to the tune of ₹3,232 crore and also ₹3,000 crore for implementation of R and R package for project-affected people, sanction of funds worth of ₹3,622 crore as state's share from GST and pending funds worth of ₹582 crore for development of urban local bodies sanctioned by the XIV Finance Commission.

The MPs will also seek sanction of permission for setting up 13 new medical colleges, relocation of setting up Central Tribal University to Saluru from Relli in Vizianagaram district, abolition of AP Legislative Council, inclusion of seven districts — Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Prakasam, Srikakulam, Anantapur, Kurnool and Chittoor — in the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan.

HC chides police for failure to protect people's rights

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 14

The High Court made critical observations on the police department for failing to protect fundamental rights of citizens in the state and even asked the DGP to quit his post if he was unable to protect rights of individuals.

The bench, comprising Justice Rakesh Kumar and Justice J. Uma Devi, while hearing a case pertaining to illegal detention of Venkata Raju hailing from Indupalli of Amalapuram mandal in East Godavari, observed that if the state police failed to discharge their duties promptly, it would bring disrepute to the state government.

The court observed that though the DGP was called to the High Court to appear before it and even after giving assurances of avoiding lapses in policing several times, such lapses were taking place.

It said the DGP should quit if he was unable to safeguard the fundamental rights of citizens.

The court further said that judicial inquiry ordered in three cases proved that the police was guilty and averred that it would be impossible to order CBI inquiry in all cases that were coming up before the courts.

It may be mentioned that a man eloped with the wife of another man in Visakhapatnam. Based on a complaint lodged by the woman's husband, the police took up the inquiry with the man, his brother Narayana Swamy and maternal uncle Venkata Raju from Indupalli of Amalapuram mandal.

However, as Venkata Raju was reportedly subject to illegal detention by the local police in the first week of September, his nephew Narayana Swamy filed a petition in the High Court.

Seers want endowments wing to be abolished

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, SEPT. 14

Several Hindu organisations and seers of various Peethams have demanded that the state government abolish Endowment Department and hand over all temples to Hindu people.

Nearly 14 seers and representatives of the Hindu community reached the Revenue Divisional Office at Amalapuram in East Godavari on Monday under the leadership of Hindu Dharma Raksha Samithi state president Ch. Gavaraiiah, Andhra Pradesh Sadhu Parishad p r e s i d e n t

Srinivasananda Saraswathi, seers Sri Paripoornanada Swamy and Mathaji Narayanamma and others.

They submitted a memorandum to Amalapuram sub-collector Himansu Koushik listing that the government remove encroachments over endowment lands and lift cases booked against Hindu activists who participated in the Antarvedi protests.

Gavaraiiah has urged the government to build a new chariot for Srilakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple at Antarvedi within two months in accordance with Agama Sastras.

BUDDHISTS SEEK PROTECTION OF THOTLAKONDA ON BEACH ROAD

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 14

Members of district Mahabodhi Society staged a dharna at the collector's office on Monday and submitted a memorandum to the collector requesting him to protect the lands at Buddhist shrine Thotlakonda on the beach road. They also submitted copies of memorandum

to the commissioner of GVMC and director of ASI.

General secretary of the society Bora Venugopal Gautam and president Gunapati Babulu asked the government to cancel the GO No. 1353 which was issued to felicitate construction of government guest house. They demanded protection of all Buddhist shrine lands and their development.

JAPAN CONSUL GENERAL VISITS SRI CITY

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 14

The Consul General of Japan in Chennai, Taga Masayuki, visited Sri City on Monday to inquire on the investment opportunities and the specific advantages of doing business in the

multi-product integrated business city.

Ravindra Sannareddy, founder managing director of Sri City, who extended his welcome to the foreign dignitary, briefed him on the investment opportunities and the specific advantages of doing business in Sri City.

BJP STANDS FOR AMARAVATHI AS CAPITAL, SAYS ADINARAYANA

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, SEPT. 13

The BJP leader and former minister Chadipiralla Adinarayana Reddy alleged that the state government is playing a dual role of supporting the Central government in some instances while interfering with it over the same issue in the state. Clarifying on his statement he said the YSR Congress government has supported CAA in Parliament but is deliberately denying it in the

state. Speaking to the media at Proddutur on Monday he clearly stated that the BJP in AP will not accept the division of capitals and it demands that the capital be in Amaravati.

He said it was unlikely that the Centre would legally withhold the state government's decision on the capital, but as leaders of the state they were totally opposed to the proposal. He questioned what would be the situation of the people of Rayalaseema if Visakhapatnam was made the capital.

FRUITS | OF LABOUR Railways fixed ₹5,100 a metric tonne and the MP asked to reduce charges by half

Kisan train provides attractive prices for AP farmers

HOSKOTE NAGABHUSHANAM | DC
ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 14

means that farmers got attractive prices for the produce with less wastage during transport. Melon varieties were sold at ₹37 a kg, while bananas were sold at ₹17.50 per kg in the market. A tonne of mangoes sold at ₹8,000. Sweet orange too got effective prices in Delhi markets.

Horticulture DD,

Padmalatha, observed farmers suffered losses during the lockdown period but the Kisan train helped to get good prices.

Farmer, G. Krishna, said the musk melon was normally transported through trucks travelling about four days to reach Delhi. "At least 15 per cent of fruits were wasted during

every trip, but the Kisan train helped to get good price." He expressed gratitude to the district administration for introducing the kisan train.

Further, Anantapur MP, Talari Rangaiah, who got sanction for the kisan train from Anantapur, represented the Centre and railways to reduce the transport charges of the train. The railways fixed ₹5,100 a metric tonne and the MP asked to reduce the charges by half as part of encouraging farmers from

● At least 500 metric tonnes would be transported in the second journey of the kisan train

drought-hit areas. The experience for first operation of the Kisan train built confidence in the district administration, traders and farmers of Anantapur district. Collector, Gandham Chandrudu, said at least 500 metric tonnes would be transported in the second journey of the kisan train

which will start on September 16 from Anantapur railway station. This time tomatoes will be transported to Delhi. "Farmers were transporting to Nagapur, but couldn't get a minimum support price. The train would help to transport directly to Delhi market," collector said.

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September 16 from Anantapur railway station. This time tomatoes will be transported to Delhi. "Farmers were transporting to Nagapur, but couldn't get a minimum support price. The train would help to transport directly to Delhi market," collector said.

IN BRIEF

Attempt to rob temple, 3 held

Visakhapatnam: The Vizag city police on Monday arrested one person and apprehended two juveniles for attempting to steal valuables from Sai Baba temple of Sri Sri Veera Brahmendra Swamy Temples Complex at MVP Colony area in the city. DCP (North Zone) Aishwarya Rastogi said that

Ch. Tarun, 19, a resident of Arilova area in Vizag city along with two juveniles of Arilova area, aged 17 and 15 years, gained entry into the temple complex at MVP Colony in the wee hours of Sunday and attempted to rob valuables by breaking the lock of the iron grill using an iron rod. Noticing the sound, the watchman of the temple complex, D. Ramu raised the alarm. Suspecting that they may land in trouble, Tarun and his associates fled from the spot by abandoning their bike near the temple.

Based on the complaint from P. Prakash, secretary of the temple complex, the police launched a search and nabbed the trio. The police seized the vehicle of the trio and a mobile phone.

3 employees die in car mishap

Kakinada/Tanuku: Three government employees of various departments died in an accident near Tanuku on Monday as the car in which they were travelling plunged into a canal. The employees were unable to come out of the closed doors in the flowing waters and instantly died.

According to the Tanuku police, S. Sekhar of Bhimavaram, working as C1 clerk in Tanuku Municipality, Katari Srinivasa Rao of Bhimavaram, working as a water boy in the transport department in Tanuku and N. Subhashini of Gollavanitippa village in Bhimavaram mandal of West Godavari district, working in Velugu project in Undrajavaram mandal, died in the mishap. The three employees used to go to Tanuku by train. However, due to Covid-19 scare, they began coming on their bikes every day. Due to heavy rain in Bhimavaram on Monday, Sekhar started off in his car and offered lift to the other two employees to go to Bhimavaram. When the car was reaching the Tanuku outskirts, it plunged into the canal. It is said that due to rains, the farmers or other agriculture labourers were not there at the time.

New commissioner for Nellore civic body

Nellore: Newly-appointed commissioner of Nellore Municipal Corporation, Kothamasu Dinesh Kumar IAS said that he would be available round-the-clock to sort out the public grievances related to the civic body. He was speaking to the media after taking charge as the Commissioner of Nellore Municipal Corporation on Monday. All India sixth ranker of IAS in 2016, Dinesh is a mechanical graduate from National Institute of Technology (NIT), Warangal and a native of Vijayawada City.

POOR QUALITY BISCUITS CLAIM 2 KIDS' LIVES

HOSKOTE NAGA BHUSHANAM | DC ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 14

In a tragic incident, two children died while another boy is battling for life after eating adulterated biscuits purchased from a shop at Chintakommudinne in Allagadda area in Kurnool district on Sunday night.

The police seized the biscuits sold by the shop which were manufactured by Hyderabad-based Mango biscuits manufacturing unit.

According to the Allagadda Rural sub-inspector Varaprasad, Hussain Bhasha and Dilshad had two children Hussain Bhasha, 6, and Hussain Bee, 4. The duo went along with uncle's daughter Jamal Bee and purchased biscuits from a nearby retail shop at Chintakommudinne village.

Soon after having the biscuits, the trio complained of stomach pain and informed the parents. The trio was immediately shifted to a private nursing home in Allagadda where Hussain Bhasha died while being treated. The family members moved Hussain Bee and Jamal Bee to the general hospital in Kurnool. Hussain Bee died at the Kurnool general hospital on Monday, while Jamal Bee is battling for life.

The authorities seized the shop that sold biscuits. The Allagadda sub-collector Kalpana Kumari said that a probe was ordered into the issue and a food inspector was sent to collect samples.

The medical officer Anjineyulu observed that the biscuits were poisonous even though the validity was till December 2020.

Overflowing woes



Commuters face a tough time wading through the overflowing sewage water at Sai Nagar in Guntur city following heavy rain on Monday.

— E. TEJO ROY

AP witnesses drop in cases, 7,596 registered

Toll nears 5K mark with 60 more succumbing to virus

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 14

Andhra Pradesh, on Monday, witnessed a downward trend of fresh Covid-19 cases registered daily, giving the much awaited relief to the state government, as only 7,956 new cases have been registered in the last few days in the state.

The state health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin here on Monday, which stated that out of the 61,529 samples tested, 7,956 individuals have been tested Covid-19 positive taking the tally to 5,75,079. The death toll has neared the 5,000-mark with 60 more people succumbing to the infection, in addition to the

4,972 patients who already died.

Out of 46,61,355 samples tested so far, 4,76,903 patients have been discharged after recovery while 93,204 patients are still active with the virus and are undergoing treatment at various hospitals.

Among the new confirmed Coronavirus infections, East Godavari continues to lead the state with 1,412 followed by 1,091 in West Godavari, 756 in Nellore, 748 in Chittoor, 666 in Guntur, 517 in Srikakulam, 490 in Visakhapatnam, 483 in Anantapur, 481 in Vizianagaram, 444 in Prakasam, 341 in Kurnool, 326 in Kadapa and 201 in Krishna.

East Godavari has been badly affected with cumula-

tive confirmed Coronavirus infections with the highest number of 78,220 followed by 51,966 in Kurnool, 51,565 in West Godavari, 50,146 in Chittoor, 49,789 in Anantapur, 46,004 in Guntur, 44,338 in Visakhapatnam, 44,130 in Nellore, 36,886 in Prakasam, 36,491 in Kadapa, 32,747 in Srikakulam, 28,427 in Vizianagaram, 21,475 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery among the Coronavirus infected patients has been good in East Godavari with 65,740 followed by 47,598 in Kurnool, 45,367 in Anantapur, 42,360 in West Godavari, 41,298 in Chittoor, 39,038 in Nellore,

38,300 in Guntur, 38,050 in Visakhapatnam, 30,685 in Kadapa, 26,254 in Srikakulam, 22,760 in Prakasam, 18,363 in Vizianagaram, 18,195 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Chittoor has registered the day's highest number of nine deaths of Covid-19 infected patients followed by seven in Anantapur, five each in Kurnool, Prakasam and Visakhapatnam, four each in East Godavari, Kadapa, Krishna, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and West Godavari, three in Nellore and two in Guntur.

The state health authorities have discharged 9,764 infected patients after recovery from various hospitals in the state in the last 24 hours.

3 IMPERSONATE RTA OFFICIALS, THEFT BID FOILED

AVINASH P SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, SEPT. 14

A robbery bid by three unidentified miscreants, who allegedly impersonated the regional transport authority officials, was foiled when the truck they stole hit a divider accidentally and toppled on the highway near Palamaner in Chittoor district on Monday.

According to the reports, Venu Gopal, a driver-cum-owner of the truck, hailing from Rompicherla, had on Monday early morning started in his truck, laden with a tomato load, from Punganur market to Koyambedu market in Chennai.

When he reached the Palamaner highway, three unidentified persons, who impersonated RTA officials, intercepted the truck and verified the documents. Citing some backlogs, they ordered Venu Gopal to move the truck to the local RTA office.

However, after travelling for some distance, the gang members threatened the truck driver with lethal weapons and forced him to get down from the vehicle. They fled away from the spot with the truck.

Unable to control the speeding truck, the miscreants hit a divider before it overturned on the Palamaner highway.

They fled away from the spot, leaving behind the stolen truck.

On a complaint from Venugopal, the police who launched a search operation to trace the stolen truck.

■ Citing some backlogs, they ordered Venu Gopal to move the truck to the local RTA office. After travelling for some distance, the gang threatened the truck driver with weapons and forced him to get down the vehicle

Rly engineers develop robot to treat patients

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 14

Engineers at the Diesel Loco Shed of Waltair Division fabricated a robot to assist hospital staff in serving Covid-19 patients.

The engineers named it as MeD Robot, to assist the management of medical wards in serving medicines, food to patients and towards patient care. Before being deployed for use in Divisional Railway Hospital, the MeD Robo underwent extensive trials and demonstrations. The robot is being used to provide medical accessories or equipment, medicines as well

as to serve food to patients in the hospital, without any need for physical contact.

With the help of this robot, doctors, nurses and other medical staff will be able to stay away from the risks of contracting the virus. The MeD ROBO is operated through a unique mobile app that has been developed as part of the innovation, supported by the WiFi facility. The robot supports sensor-based features, which are capable of reading patients' body temperature and transmitting the same for display on the mobile phone. In case of any abnormal high-temperature reading, the MeD

ROBO is capable of raising the alarm to alert the hospital staff attending to the patients.

A release on Monday said the Robo has a remote-controlled driving unit built-in stainless steel, rod, square bars and acrylic sheet for body and trays. It has a night vision camera with speaker facility for interactive purpose with data card facility to monitor from any place.

After inspection of the equipment, divisional railway manager Chetan Kumar handed over the equipment to Divisional Railway Hospital, Visakhapatnam.

Kadapa RTC aims ₹8.75 cr, runs more cargo vehicles

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC KADAPA, SEPT. 14

Road Transport Corporation (RTC), Kadapa division, is taking its cargo services to the doorsteps of the customers.

Presently, they are moving one special cargo container vehicle from Jammalamadugu to Guntur. The vehicle starts from Jammalamadugu daily by 4 pm and reaches Guntur by 5 am. They collect the cargo from Proddutur, Mydukur, Kadapa, Badvel, Udayagiri, Kavali, Ongole, Chilikaluri peta.

From Monday onwards, they are starting another container vehicle from Tirupati to Hyderabad (Medchal). The staff may collect the cargo from Rajampeta, Kadapa, Mydukur, Allagadda, Nandyala and Kurnool to Hyderabad. The RTC,

Kadapa division, got ₹4.72 crore income in the last financial year and they have fixed ₹8.75 crore as targeted income in the current year.

Special cargo vehicles were procured which would carry the vegetables, fruits and other commodities to the market places. The officers said they aim to procure two more open trucks and two containers for cargo transport. Besides the regular buses, RTC has procured special cargo vehicles also to provide better services to customers. The RTC provides free door delivery and pickup of goods with a minimum of three tonnes and up to a five kilometre radius. Presently, they have fixed ₹5 per tonne per kilometre as the rate.

Timanagari Jitendranath Reddy, regional manager, RTC, Kadapa division, speaking to Deccan Chronicle, said that appropriate

steps have been taken to deliver the goods within 24 hours to any part of the state. RTC has fixed a very competitive price for cargo, better than any private transporter, he said. "From Kadapa to Hyderabad, we are charging ₹3,740 per tonne," Reddy said. Similarly Kadapa to Vijayawada is ₹3,540, to Nellore, it is ₹1,750, to Bangalore, ₹2,600 and to Tirupati, ₹1,400 per tonne of cargo he said. A person moving his cargo via the RTC service more than three times in a month will get a discount of five per cent on the total charge.

A central monitoring cell has been arranged for the booking of cargo from anywhere in the state, Reddy said. The customers have to call 0866-2570006 for booking of their cargo. "Our people will collect the material within 3 hours of time and we will deliver the cargo within 24 hours,"

₹25 lakh spent on Covid patients food every day

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 14

The state government is spending ₹25 lakh per day alone on the food to the COVID-19 patients across the state. This amount is spent only through AP Tourism Development Corporation, which is now selectively supplying food in nine places in the state. In addition to the APTDC, private contractors are supplying the food, covering three-fourths of the active patients. The state has 93,204 active patients, and at least half of them are in various hospitals across the state.

Since August 19, the APTDC has been supplying daily food to 560 patients in Srikakulam, 1,495 in Eluru, 593 in JNTUC campus hospital Kakinada, 1,255 in Amalapuram, 854 in Vijaywada, 2,041 in Kurnool and 1,129 in Tirupati.

The supply in Visakhapatnam was

launched last Saturday with 400 food packets to doctors, nurses and other medical staff and few patients in CSR block in King George Hospital which was opened last Saturday with 500 beds.

"Presently, we are supplying 6,468 food packets that include morning liquid diet followed by breakfast, lunch, high tea and dinner. We hope to supply 10,000 from next week onwards when we get more hospitals and Covid care centres," said executive director of APTDC Y. Satyanarayana.

Talking to DC on Monday, Mr Satyanarayana said that unlike in the past, the food is now being supplied in disposable packets and ensuring high quality. The food cooked at APTDC restaurants is being checked by nodal officers in charge of the hospitals and Covid centres, doctors and patients. A sheet is being provided to each patient along with the food, which has to be filled and

sent back to the APTDC management as a feedback.

The price varies from ₹320 to ₹400, and on average, the government is spending ₹25.8 lakh per day. After reaching the target of 10,000 next week, the bill would be around ₹40 lakh per day.

It is non-profitable work for the corporation which incurs the expenditure, and medical and health department reimburses through district collectors, the ED added.

The menu includes Ragimalt at 6 am followed by breakfast of two south Indian varieties like Idli, Dosa, Uttapam, Upma and Pongal at 7 am, two chapathis, flavoured rice, plain rice, two vegetable curries, one cup of leafy dal, 100 gm of chicken, cup of curd, pickle, banana and a bottle of water. High tea with snacks is supplied at 4 pm, and dinner at 7 pm includes two chapathis, white rice, two boiled eggs, two vegetable curries, curd, banana and water bottle.

KOIL ALWAR TIRUMANJANAM IN TIRUMALA TODAY

Tirupati: In accordance with Agama traditions, the ritual of Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam—the holy cleansing festival, will be held at the hill temple of Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala on Tuesday, as a precursor for the annual brahmotsavams scheduled from September 19 till 27.

The novel Coronavirus pandemic has eclipsed the grand religious festivities this time at the hill shrine. The brahmotsavams will be held in ekantham (Solitude) within the temple premises for the first time ever in the history of TTD.

The annual brahmotsavam will commence from September 19, followed by Dwajavarahanam (Sept. 19), Garuda vahana seva (Sept. 23), Swarna Rathotsavam (Sept. 24), Rathotsavam (Sept. 26) and concludes with Chakrasnanam and Dwajavarahanam (Sept. 27).

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SHORT TAKES

VETERAN CONGRESS LEADER DIES OF COVID-19

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, SEPT. 14

Veteran tribal leader of Congress and former minister Chanes Ram Rathia on Monday died of Covid-19 in a hospital in Raigarh in Chhattisgarh.

Rathia, 78, served as minister in the Digvijay Singh as well as Ajit Jogi governments in undivided Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh respectively. He had been suffering from age-related ailments.

He had tested positive for Coronavirus last fortnight and was admitted to a Covid-19 hospital in Raigah. He breathed last on Monday morning, official reports said.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and three daughters.

He was first elected to undivided Madhya Pradesh Assembly in 1977 from Dharamjaigarh in Raigarh district and won the seat five times in a row in successive elections. His son Laljit Singh Rathia currently represents the constituency in Chhattisgarh Assembly.

Chhattisgarh has witnessed a sudden surge in Coronavirus positive cases and deaths in the last three months. The cases have crossed 64,000 on Monday, while the tally of toll mounted to 555.

The state has reported 49,500 Coronavirus cases and 261 deaths in the last one month alone. As many as 31,931 Covid-19 patients in the state have so far recovered.

KOLKATA METRO RESUMES SERVICES AFTER 5 MONTHS

Kolkata, Sept. 14: Metro rail services in Kolkata resumed on Monday after a gap of more than five months, a senior official said. The regular services were suspended on March 23 due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Special trains, however, were run for NEET aspirants and their guardians on Sunday.

"Services have resumed at 8 am and around 3,000 people have commuted in the first two hours," Kolkata Metro Railway General Manager Manoj Joshi said.

"The last trains from the originating stations on both sides will commence their journey at 7 pm and complete it by 8 pm," he said.

Joshi said all safety protocols including social distancing are being followed.

A train is halting at a station for 30 seconds instead of the previous duration of 20 seconds to avoid rush during boarding and disembarking, a Metro Railway spokesperson said. A total of 110 services are being run on the Noapara-Kavi Subhash line at an interval of 10 minutes during peak hours, she said.

The services will remain suspended on Sundays for the sanitisation of rakes and stations, the spokesperson said. Commuters can book their tickets online and download the e-passes or use smart cards, she said. The e-passes mention the departure and destination points along with time slots.

PM 'BUSY WITH PEACOCKS', SAYS RAHUL GANDHI

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14

As the Monsoon session of Parliament began amid rising number of Covid-19 cases, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying the government had asked people to become "aatmanirbhar" (self-dependent) which means they should save their lives themselves as the Prime Minister was "busy with peacocks".

Gandhi tweeted that the Coronavirus cases will cross 50-lakh this week and active cases hit the 10-lakh mark.

"Unplanned lockdown is the product of one person's ego and because of it Coronavirus has spread throughout the country," he said.

The Wayanad MP further said that the "Modi government said become 'aatmanirbhar' (self-sufficient) which means save your life yourself because the PM is busy with peacocks". He was referring to a recent video showing the Prime Minister feeding peacocks at his residence.

Notably, Gandhi who is accompanying his mother Sonia Gandhi during her travel to the US for a routine medical check-up, would not be attending the current Parliament session.



The three villages, located at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, have been hit hard economically due to the Covid-19.

Nepal offers ₹2 cr, house to villagers in Uttarakhand

Villagers told to hoist Nepal's flags atop their houses in return

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD SEPT. 14

Public representatives in the KP Sharma Oli government in Nepal are offering ₹2 crore and a house in Kathmandu to each family living in the three Indian villages along the Nepal border in Uttarakhand to switch their loyalties to the Himalayan country to enable them stake a claim over the three villages located in Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand. All that the villagers have been asked to do is hoist Nepal flags atop their houses.

After claiming Kalapani region as its territory, Nepal now has its eyes on Kuti, Nabhi and Gunji villages - located a few kilometres away from Kalapani in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand - whose people share a 'roti-

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

Kuti, Nabhi and Gunji villages are located a few kilometres away from Kalapani in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand

- A house in Kathmandu is also being promised along with funding education of children in the families
- They would also highlight their plight
- Due to poverty and unemployment, some villages may consider Nepal's offer which will hurt India
- People from Gunji, Nabhi and Kuti villages to write to Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat pleading their support to India

beti' relationship with people of Darchula in Nepal.

Besides, the Nepal government is also promising to fund the education of children and grant families Nepali citizenship.

The otherwise hardworking and peace loving people of the three villages, located at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, have been

hit hard economically due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The ongoing standoff with China, which led to massive build-up of forces along the Line of Actual Control, not far away from these villages, brought them some hope of getting jobs, at least temporarily.

"We have always stood

by the Army and ITBP, be it the 1962 war or now. But this time around, they have got porters and helpers from outside and have been completely ignoring us. When people are struggling to make ends meet, why will people hesitate to join hands with Nepal which is offering huge money and houses?" wondered a local, Yogesh Garbhal, who nevertheless added that 'by and large' all villagers have decided 'not to sell themselves' to Nepal and embarrass India.

Villagers will write to the Indian government pledging their full support in the wake of offers from Nepal. "While pledging our support, we will highlight our problems and put them before the administration," said Dinesh Gunjyal, Vice President of the Bharat-Cheen Seema Vyapar Sangh.

RAJNATH MAY SPEAK ON BORDER STAND-OFF TODAY

New Delhi, Sept 14: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is likely to make a statement in Parliament on Tuesday on the continuing standoff between Indian and Chinese troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, sources said.

The statement would assume significance in the backdrop of demands made by the Opposition for a debate on the issue.

Singh had met his Chinese counterpart Gen Wei Fenghe in Moscow recently. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi had also met in Moscow a few days ago. — PTI

Kerala CM suspects conspiracy to derail development projects

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT. 14

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday lashed out at the Opposition parties and a section of media for unleashing a propaganda to derail the LDF government's Life Mission project under which 2.26 lakh homeless and landless families have been provided homes.

The Chief Minister's outburst against the Opposition and section of media came in the wake of state wide agitation launched by Congress-led UDF and BJP demanding the resignation of two ministers in Pinarayi Cabinet.

The Life Mission project came under the scanner

CPM DEMANDS UNION MINISTER MURALEEDHARAN'S RESIGNATION

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT. 14

The ruling CPM in Kerala on Monday demanded the resignation of senior BJP leader and Union minister of state V. Muralaeeharan for allegedly attempting to derail the probe into gold smuggling case.

The CPM said the reply given by finance ministry in Parliament clearly stat-

ed that the gold smuggling in Thiruvananthapuram airport happened through diplomatic baggage. However, Muralaeeharan had earlier categorically stated that the smuggled gold was not found in diplomatic baggage. "The NIA, Customs and now finance ministry have said it was diplomatic baggage but the minister continues to contradict them publicly," the CPM said.

recently after one of the key accused in the gold smuggling case Swapna Suresh claimed that ₹1 crore found in her bank locker was part of the

commission that she received for a housing project being implemented in Wadakkancherry in Thrissur district. The ₹20 cr housing scheme is

funded by UAE-based Red Crescent for 140 families who lost their houses in floods.

The commission allegations came as a bolt from the blue for the LDF government which is all set to showcase the Life Mission project as one of its biggest achievements. The Mission which began in 2017 is aimed at making Kerala a "homeless families" free state by 2020.

"If some wrong has happened in one contract then that particular issue should be tackled. You cannot tarnish the entire Life Mission which is providing homes to the homeless," said the Chief Minister while inaugurating Konni medical college in Pathanamthitta district via video conferencing on Monday.

Leaders, activists rally behind Umar Khalid

Kolkata, Sept. 14: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday reacting to the arrest of Umar Khalid, JNU alumnus and rights activist in connection with the Delhi riots said those involved in movements against the Centre's citizenship policies are being "targeted".

Banerjee, who is also the Trinamool Congress supremo, said action should be taken only if there is evidence of wrongdoing.

Apparently hitting out at the BJP-led government at the Centre, Banerjee, who has been one of its most stringent critics, said, "Those involved in movements against NPR, NRC have been targeted".

"I have seen it (the news of Khalid's arrest) in newspapers. First they (the Centre) had named Sitaram Yechury in the chargesheet and now they have removed it. But they have put the names of Yogendra Yadav and others (in the chargesheet) This is not right in democracy. If someone has done something wrong and you have evidence of it then action should be taken as per law," Banerjee told reporters at the state secretariat.

Khalid was arrested by the special cell of Delhi Police late on Sunday night after 11 hours of interrogation for his alleged involvement in the February Delhi riots.

He has been charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Meanwhile, a section of academicians, politicians and social activists on Monday expressed solidarity with former JNU student leader Umar Khalid. Dr S.Q.R Ilyas, national president of Welfare Party of India, and Khalid's father, tweeted, "My son Umar Khalid has been arrested by Special Cell, Delhi Police under UAPA. Police was questioning him since 1:00 pm. He has been implicated in Delhi Riots. #StandWithUmarKhalid."

According to a statement by his party, Ilyas strongly condemned the arrest of his son and said that police are "falsely implicating him in Delhi Riots".

Soon after his arrest, #StandWithUmarKhalid started trending on Twitter.

Using the hashtag "Stand With Umar Khalid", senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor tweeted, "PM says he welcomes criticism, but forgets to mention the cost of criticism to be paid by those who who speak out." "Swaraj India chief Yogendra Yadav said Khalid is among the leaders that India deserves.

Lawyer Prashant Bhushan said Khalid's arrest exposes the "malafide nature of its investigation into Delhi riots". — PTI

New party starts work in Assam

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, SEPT. 14

Two leading students' organisations in Assam - the All Assam Students Union (Aasu) and the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chhatra Parishad (AJYCP) — here on Monday announced the name of their new political outfit as Assam Jatiya Parishad which will contest 80-100 seats in the Assembly polls likely to be held next year.

Announcing that the party will start its organisation work from Monday itself, the advisory committee of the students' bodies comprising Krishnagopal Bhat-tacharya, Basanta Deka, Raju Phukan, Jagdish Bhuyan and Haren Sutia, among others told reporters that the name for the party was decided after much consultation and deliberations among all the stakeholders.

Informing that the party will start organisation work in 25 districts, and that all tribes will have representation in the party, the advisory committee said that their slogan would be "Ghore Ghore Aami" (We are in every household).

Asserting that Assam Jatiya Parishad would

not be an ordinary political party but wanted to be people's party, the advisory committee said that the constitution of the party would be ready soon but new political outfit will stay away from communal politics and it is going to be incorporated in the constitution.

Asserting that inclusive politics would be the key to the formation of organisational structure of the party, the committee has appointed former AGP minister and leader Jagdish Bhuyan as the first state convener while H.M. Borbhuyan has been given responsibility of Barak Valley, Raju Phukan to oversee work in Golaghat, Sivasagar and Jorhat, and Haren Sutia will be in charge of Lakhimpur. Chittaranjan Basumatary will be in-charge of Jona, Dhemaji and Dibrugarh districts.

Stating that they have already started work at the state, district, constituency and booth level, the advisory committee that will be supervising the overall policy making and manifestos of the party said that all tribes of the state will have representation in the party.

TREASURE TROVE

The copy handwritten by Kashmiri artists, is one of the finest manuscripts Sotheby's sells 19th century Quran for ₹1.30cr

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, SEPT. 14

Sotheby's, the New York-based British-founded American multinational corporation, has sold a copy of the 19th century Quran handwritten by Kashmiri artists for £137,500 (approximately ₹1.30 crore).

"This Quran is one of the finest manuscripts produced in Kashmir in the first half of the 19th century," a note from the world's largest brokers of fine and decorative art, jewelry, real estate and collectibles had said before putting the manuscript for auction at Christie's London some time ago, a report appearing in a local news portal said.

Giving the description of the sold manuscript, the Sotheby's says on its offi-

cial website that it is Quran copied by Muhammad Hasan with a marginal commentary copied by Muhammad Isma'il in Kashmir and dates back to 1246 AH (the Hijri year of the Islamic lunar calendar) corresponding with 1831 AD.

"Arabic manuscript on paper, 544 leaves plus 3 fly-leaves, 24 lines to the page, written in naskh in black ink within clouds against a gold ground, the Persian interlinear in red nasta'liq, ruled in blue and gold, verses separated by gold roundels, surah headings in blue thuluth against a gold ground within a cartouche, the margins dense with commentaries in nasta'liq within clouds against a gold ground, f.1b and f.2a with an illuminated frontispiece, several illuminat-

ed pages throughout, in lacquer binding decorated with flowers and signed 'Abd al-Aziz Mugul,' reads the website.

According to it, though there are stains and rubbing, some losses to the illumination and the gold, minor tears, some crackle and scratches to the binding, as viewed, the manuscript was in good condition when put to auction.

"This Quran is one of the finest manuscripts produced in Kashmir in the first half of the nineteenth century. Not only does it bear the names of two scribes who have been involved in copying it, but also the names of the binder and the patron. Dated Qurans from Kashmir are rare, especially if decorated with such lavish illumination," it said.



The cover of the Quran

Hasan signs as the copyist of the Quran and Muhammad Isma'il as the copyist of the tafsir in the margins. "Each lacquer plate of the binding is finely decorated with a

central panel with interlacing flower scrolls and plants, among which there is the signature of Aziz Mughul. The name of the patron as well as the date 1246 AH/1831 AD are written in black along the outer border. It is interesting to note that along with his name, Muhammad Isma'il, the patron is named tajir al-Isfahani (a merchant from Isfahan)".

Muhammad M. Saleem Beg, Convenor of the J&K chapter of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage said, "I'm happy it got an attractive price at the auction. Someone who knew the value of, as we learn from the Sotheby's, a rare and beautifully handwritten Quran, bought it and I'm sure it must have gone into safe hands."

Victor Jacquemont, a French traveller who was

in Kashmir the same year this Quran was copied (1831) records that the Himalayan region was a big centre for the production of the manuscripts and there were between 700-800 copyists in the Valley. While Kashmiri Qurans are usually not signed and can be quite formulaic in their layout and decoration, this copy is extensively and finely illuminated, and must have been a commission by a Persian merchant who was resident in Kashmir in 1831, the Sotheby's said.

"Kashmir Life" portal quotes Hakim Sameer Hamadani, who has done his doctorate on Islamic architecture, as saying the copying seemingly has been commissioned by the Iranian merchant Muhammad Ismail.

In Loving Remembrance



Sri Tikkavarapu Chandrasekhar Reddy

July 13, 1932 - September 15, 1993

*"He whose Mind is not shaken by adversity,
Who does not hanker after pleasures,
Who is free from Attachment, Fear and Anger,
He is the Sage of Steady Wisdom."*

-Bhagavad Gita

It's his guiding spirit that has been and
will always be the source of inspiration for us

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DECCAN Chronicle

15 SEPTEMBER 2020

Mathematician who found formula to help rural poor

The life and work of former Union minister for rural development and leader of the Rashtriya Janata Dal Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, who passed away on Sunday in New Delhi due to Covid-19 related ailments, reflect how a visionary, grassroots level leader can impact the lives of millions of people, and still remain behind the curtain. One of the chief architects of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which ensured sustenance of millions of rural poor across the country for more than a decade, Dr Singh was the real champion of the cause of rural India.

Dr Singh, a PhD in mathematics and a former professor, had his political baptism in the Jayaprakash movement against the Congress government and the Emergency in the seventies and grew up along with Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar. Dr Singh was always part and parcel of the socialist bloc even as it went through several splits and metamorphosis until he sent a resignation letter two days before his death from his party, the RJD.

Dr Singh, who was a five-term Lok Sabha member and a minister in Bihar and Union governments several times, was the face of rural India in the corridors of power. He never left his rustic characteristics despite his professional and academic standing and being part of the power structure for most part of his political life. He steadfastly worked for the uplift of the rural poor, whose living conditions were very familiar to him. It took his persuasive skills as well as first-hand deep knowledge of the ground situation to get the MGNREGA through, even though it was part of the election manifesto of the first edition of the UPA as many had felt it would put an unnecessary hole in the exchequer without offering commensurate returns. Today, the scheme is the lifeline of rural India; it has been one of the most efficient routes to reach the people during the pandemic Covid-19. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the National Democratic Alliance were skeptical about it before they came to power. However, to their credit, they realised its merit and steadily increased budgetary allocations to strengthen it.

Dr Singh also represents the section of leaders with calibre and character who were catapulted to the political leadership while being part of democratic restoration movements. Oppression by the powers-that-be could recoil into mass movements as was seen in the Seventies across India. Such movements would also attract people who would have otherwise gone their way of professional or occupational route. As Karl Marx said, "philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it." Dr Singh belongs to the group of people who made a heroic attempt to change the course of history.

Struggles for restoration of democratic rights are bound to repeat themselves. The sterling legacy Dr Singh leaves behind will no doubt inspire many bright and brilliant boys and girls to follow in his path. That will be the best tribute to him.

Champions in all respects

In triggering positive societal changes as in non-discriminatory treatment of minorities like African Americans, sport may have gone way beyond just mirroring society. The US Open tennis not only presents equal opportunity but equal pay too, but a young champion, who won her second crown at Flushing Meadows, may have dared to take sport even further by being an agent of change. The flaws in American society may be obvious but sporting icons, with their greater public presence, must take a stand in pointing them out.

Naomi Osaka's bold statement for racial justice in wearing seven different masks naming seven prominent Black victims of trigger-happy police brutality in the USA invests her powerful tennis of booming serves and hard strokes from the baseline with an even greater aura. Born to a Haitian father and a Japanese mother who came to Florida at age three, Osaka's empathy for people being trampled upon is natural. She had hardly savoured the moment the first time when she won a battle of generations in downing a testy Serena Williams in 2018 as the crowd had booed her. In 2020, Naomi confirmed that she has come on much more in beating Victoria Azarenka of Belarus, who also should know a thing or two about the tumultuous politics of modern life.

Naomi is a champion in all respects. Joining her as the men's winner after a ding-dong, error-strewn battle, Dominic Thiem of Austria may have served notice that the young brigade is capable of challenging the monopoly of the above-30 Grand Slam champions Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic. Only the Serb was on court at the first no-spectators Grand Slam of the Covid-19 era but exited by default for poor behaviour. As Thiem hugged close friend Alexander Zverev of Germany, whom he had beaten in the first-ever fifth set tie-breaker at the US Open, it spoke eloquently of bonds that tough social distancing norms too could not break. In 2020, more than ever, it appeared tennis had won in turning the spotlight on two deserving winners.

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ADITYA SINHA
Editor

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DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930/4; Fax : 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234
Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285
Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208
Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904
Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalipally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325
Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552
Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph : 0422 2231255
Kochi: No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloorkadavanthara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408
Thiruvananthapuram: St.Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thycud (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014
Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax : 0495 4019 018
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Aakar Patel

Jaishankar's prescriptions are simplistic, just excuses

India's foreign minister comes from a family of scholars. His father K. Subrahmanyam was the founder of the famous IDS think tank in New Delhi and had advised Indira Gandhi. On the weaponising of India's nuclear programme and the military intervention in Bangladesh, Subrahmanyam had a hand.

Subrahmanyam's son Sanjay, Jaishankar's brother, is one of the world's most famous scholars of medieval India. He has written books on commerce in Surat (my hometown) and South India as well as on Vasco Da Gama.

My point is that Dr S. Jaishankar has a background which is not the same as our other ministers. Jaishankar has recent a book released a few days ago which said three things had negatively affected India's foreign policy. The first was Partition, which reduced the size of India and made China even more important than it was. The second was the delay in the economic reforms of 1991: if done earlier, they would have made India a wealthier nation earlier than it will become. And third, the delay in choosing to

Mere liberalisation does not mean economic growth. What Jaishankar says in his three points is reductive and simplistic.

make atomic weapons. He called them the three burdens.

What should we make of what he is saying? We need to examine two separate things, first to see to what extent what he says is true.

India's Partition did reduce the size of the country and if India had not been partitioned, the undivided nation would be larger geographically, stretching from Myanmar to Iran, and with a population of 1.7 billion people. It would not be particularly different in terms of its economy, per capita income, productivity or any other way. South Asia has developed together, none of the three countries which were once part of British India has either become a developed country and none on the other hand has not succeeded in developing at least a little. A visit to Pakistan and Bangladesh reveals them to be no different than most

parts of India.

The second issue is the delay in economic reforms. This is not Jaishankar's subject because he is not an economist. We must therefore be cautious when we accept what he says as true. The Indian economy of Jawaharlal Nehru's time had little capacity. State capital was needed as an element, especially in heavy industry. And without the State, the institutions we take for granted, for example in higher education, would not have come at all. Whatever bhajans we may sing to privatisation, there is no private equivalent of IIT or IIM even today in India. This is not to say that the licence raj of Indira Gandhi was a good thing. It was not. The best we can offer Jaishankar's statement on the delay in reforms is a qualified yes, not a full endorsement.

The third is the exercise of the nuclear option, which happened in May 1974. India makes a big deal of having an atom bomb. It is not such a big deal. Many nations in South America, Europe, Asia and Africa had the capacity to make one but chose not to. The other thing is that India violated its foreign commit-

ments to make the bomb. The reactors producing the material used in our bombs came from Canada, whom we had promised that we would only use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes (this is why Indira Gandhi made the claim that the 1974 test was a "peaceful explosion").

We have held these weapons for 45 years now. How have they helped us? We cannot use them against Pakistan, which for 30 years we have accused of terrorism. We cannot use them against China, which is today inside our borders. It is debatable that the early weaponising of our programme could have helped us in any way.

Jaishankar calls these three things "burdens" and he lays them at the Congress' door. Let us see what his party has done and is doing. India may have been partitioned, but Pakistan and Bangladesh are still next to us. They have not been relocated to Africa. What stops India from unifying the subcontinent through trade or travel? It is our nationalism. We have free movement (without visas) with Nepal, but not with Bangladesh. Why? We

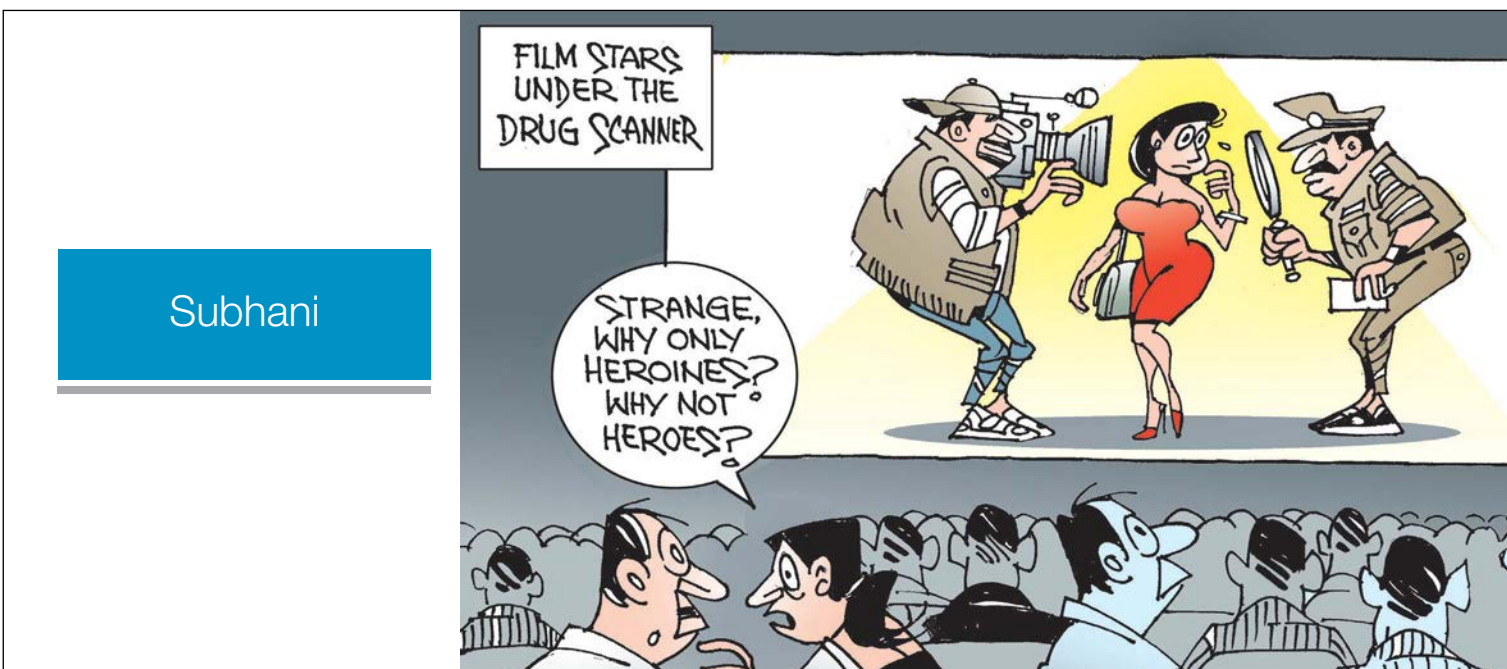
could unify South Asia with visa-free travel and trade if we chose to. The BJP does not want it.

The assumption Jaishankar makes about liberalisation automatically producing economic growth is false. Under the BJP, India's economic growth has been declining since January 2018, according to its own figures.

That is two and a half straight years of decline in six years of government. This did not happen during socialism or the licence raj.

This year we will see a contraction of the economy. Mere liberalisation does not mean economic growth. What Jaishankar says in his three points is reductive and simplistic. The past does not matter that much. If we think that it does, it is because we are not good enough at running the nation competently today and are searching for excuses why. If Jaishankar's diagnosis is correct, what stops him from correcting it today? His book does not say that. Perhaps that will come in a future book.

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist



Subhani

Mediation vital on LAC, Ladakh disengagement



Mohan Guruswamy

We have two outstanding issues between India and China: Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. These two territorial disputes aren't going to be resolved in the foreseeable long term.

The joint announcement by external affairs minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi in Moscow (no doubt helped along by Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov) is being clutched at like straws by desperate drowning men hoping for an end to the crisis. In case we have forgotten, the RIC (Russia India China) was a geopolitical group that was formed to balance growing American and Nato unilateralism. The operative part of the joint statement is that the military commander-level talks will continue. The audible sigh of relief in some circles may be premature, for talking doesn't mean a solution. For now, it only means a postponement of the armed conflict.

We have two outstanding issues between India and China. The larger one is about large tracts of territory in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. These two territorial disputes aren't going to be resolved in the foreseeable long term. Hence, Deng Xiaoping had sagaciously suggested to Rajiv Gandhi at their 1988 Beijing meeting that it is best left to history.

The pressing dispute on hand are the two overlapping Lines of Actual Control. The term LAC was first used by Zhou Enlai in November 1959 when he wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru defining it as "the so-called McMahon Line in the east and the line up to which each side exercises actual control in the west". The problem is that India and China never agreed on where the LAC was, as the perceptions of what each side "controlled" varied, by a few meters to tens of kilometers. For instance, in Sikkim where they vary at a few places, the actual overlap often is a few meters. This varia-

tion is because both sides are vying for better tactical positions to locate their bunkers and sangars (small built-up structures) on higher ground to observe the other side. In the Depsang Plains overlooking DBO, it is by as much as 20-30 km.

The DBO overlooks the Chip Chap river as it curls southward to its rendezvous with the Shyok. The entire Chip Chap river was accepted by China as Indian territory even in 1956, but by 1960 China advanced its LAC to about 4 km of DBO and built a garrison at Tianwendian, about 24 km away. The PLA launches patrols from here into the contested Depsang. They have done the same in Galwan valley. In 1962 the Indian post was at the source of the Galwan river at Samzungling and the LAC is now about 2 km upstream of the confluence of Galwan and Shyok rivers.

Despite having two often widely overlapping LACs, Indian and Chinese forces had arrived at a unique modus vivendi since 1962 which enabled each side to patrol up to its perception of the LAC without confrontation. The desire for peace made both sides cobble up agreements from time to time. The 1993 agreement made it incumbent for both sides to caution each other whenever their perceived LACs were crossed. Though the agreement stipulated that any dispute both sides would jointly check this and decide upon an alignment, it never happened. Then in 1996 both sides agreed to "exercise restraint when the patrols come face to face". This agreement also stipulated that both sides would not use firearms or explosives 2 km from their perceived LACs. Both sides

adhered to this, but now the patrols, while not confronting each other, began tailing each other maintaining a distance between them. This agreement also obliged both sides not to construct anything of a permanent nature in the LAC overlaps.

This worked till 2013, when the PLA objected to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police leaving behind reusable shelters at a place called Chumar. In May that year a tailed PLA patrol decided to dig in midway between the two LACs in Depsang at a place called Rakhi Nula. This forced an Indian Army unit to dig in nearby. This crisis was resolved by a meeting between the local military commanders, with the Indian side agreeing to dismantle the Chumar structures and the PLA pulling out. This led to the more complex 2013 agreement, once again aimed at conflict prevention and conflict resolution, but not fixing the cause of conflict.

This is where we were when the PLA, taking advantage of Indian Army tardiness in not mirroring the annual PLA exercises in the area, dug in positions in Galwan Valley, Hot Springs, Ghogra and between Fingers 4 and 8 on Pangong Tso's northern bank. In Galwan the new PLA position is now less than 2 km from the upgraded 230-km-long road from Darbuk to DBO.

The Indian Army has now positioned itself threateningly on the Chushul heights.

The timing of the crisis couldn't be worse. India was in the midst of a major economic meltdown brought about by the spread of the Covid-19 virus from Wuhan. The

electronic media, no doubt prodded by the Narendra Modi government, went into a fury over the "Chinese perfidy" and both Mr Modi and defence minister Rajnath Singh made fire and brimstone speeches ostensibly to the troops in Ladakh. The Indian military buildup was under the full glare of the embedded media and newly acquired military hardware were displayed. Like angry Bharatanatyam dancers, both sides are now semaphoring intentions to each other.

Simultaneously, Indian Army and PLA commanders have been in talks from June 16 seeking a disengagement. The question is who withdraws and to where? This requires the determination of a single LAC. This is beyond the ken of the military commanders of both sides. Military men are usually reluctant to withdraw to tactically disadvantageous positions. But the need now is to give and take. This therefore calls for mediation between the two militaries, and that is best done by a trusted third country's military. A neutral military mediator can understand the tactical security concerns of either side and can help in determining the optimal under the circumstances.

The three countries have invested big in the RIC and it is now time to make it pay. The stakes are big. Even a limited Sino-Indian war will mean the end of the Russia-India-China (RIC) and its promise of a multipolar world.

Russia is uniquely placed to play the role of a neutral mediator to help the two countries find an agreement on a single Line of Actual Control. It enjoys a good measure of trust in both countries. One hopes that both countries will find the good sense to accept mediation.

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

LETTERS

LOW COST PPE

At a time when Coronavirus is unrelenting, the launch of a low-cost equipment by NRDC is a shot-in-the-arm (DC, Sept. 14). It calls for an all out effort to make it available in the market as the road to commercialisation is long and arduous.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

CONGRESS DIE-NASTY

It will be a daydream to expect a vibrant and elected leadership of the Congress to hold the government accountable to Parliament and people (*It's status quo once again for Congress, DC, Sept. 14*). It is like selecting a team for test matches and fielding the same for T20s. Sick mother and truant son, on whom greatness was thrust since two decades, cannot salvage the party in anyway. Articulate, independent and smart youth have to stay in the wings always ready to applaud the dynasty.

Parthasarathy Mandati
Tirupati

It's quite incomprehensible that the Sonia-Rahul-Priyanka trio could not convince the CWC about their intentions of remaining aloof from heading the party. Both mother-son duo left for the US ahead of a crucial Parliament session leaving the party in the lurch to the idiosyncrasies of Adhir Ranjan. It also shows their lackadaisical attitude towards the temple of democracy.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Stay refused to ex-rulers on derecognition

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 14 The Supreme Court today refused to stay the operation of the Presidential Executive Order derecognising the former princes. The Counsel for former princes Mr. N.A. Palkhiwala, moving the petitions on behalf of the former rulers of Gwalior, Udaipur, Nabha, Nalagarh and Kutch, as "test case" asked for state of the derecognition order on the ground that the order was a case of "compound maladies."

He said thousands of persons' livelihood depended upon the former rulers. He said the order which could be later declared invalid, affected thousands of persons who were now dependent on the princes.

The Attorney-General, Mr Niren De on the other hand, contended that the question of recognition of princes by the President was "entirely a political power."

IN BRIEF

Gunmen kill 3, injure 6 in Pak

Peshawar: At least three persons were killed and six other injured when some unidentified assailants opened fire at them in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Sunday, police said. The accused ambushed the car in Peshawar's Michni road, killing Muhammad Ali and his two gunmen while six persons sustained injuries as they were caught in the firing. In another incident, the provincial vice president of the ruling Tehreek-e-Insaf party, Tahir Iqbal, was assassinated and his three friends wounded as their car was ambushed by unknown gunmen in Haripur district. Chief Minister of the province Mehmod Khan ordered an inquiry into the killing of the party leader and sought a report from the provincial police chief.

Pompeo: US envoy to China to leave

Beijing: The US ambassador to China appears to be leaving his post, based on tweets posted Monday by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. He thanked Ambassador Terry Branstad on Twitter for his more than three years of service. There was no immediate confirmation from the State Department. "Ambassador Branstad has contributed to rebalancing US-China relations so that it is results-oriented, reciprocal, and fair," he wrote in a follow-up tweet. China's foreign ministry said it was aware of Pompeo's tweet but had not received any notification that Branstad was leaving. Branstad was embroiled in a recent controversy when China's official *People's Daily* rejected an opinion column that he had written. It wasn't clear whether his apparent departure was related to the piece. Pompeo tweeted last week that China's ruling Communist Party refused to run Branstad's op-ed.

Lukashenko visits Russia

Sochi: Belarus' authoritarian president visited Russia Monday in a bid to secure more loans and political support, as demonstrations against the extension of his 26-year rule entered their sixth week. Alexander Lukashenko's talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Black Sea resort of Sochi come a day after an estimated 150,000 people flooded the streets of the Belarusian capital, demanding Lukashenko's resignation. The Interior Ministry said 774 people were arrested in Minsk and other cities of Belarus for holding unsanctioned rallies on Sunday. Protesters in Belarus have dismissed Lukashenko's reelection for a sixth term in the Aug. 9 vote as rigged. The United States and the European Union have criticised the election as neither free nor fair and urged the Belarusian leader to engage in talks with the opposition, a demand he rejected. In a bid to win Moscow's support, the 66-year-old former state farm director has tried to cast the protests as an effort by the West to isolate Russia.

ATWOOD WINS DAYTON PEACE PRIZE

Cincinnati (US), Sept. 14: Margaret Atwood, whose sweeping body of work includes "The Handmaid's Tale", a depiction of a nightmarish totalitarian future for the United States, is this year's winner of a lifetime achievement award that celebrates literature's power to foster peace, social justice and global understanding. The Canadian writer and teacher has earned the Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award, officials of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize officials announced Monday. The award is named for the late US diplomat who brokered the 1995 Bosnian peace accords reached in the Ohio city. Atwood — a prolific writer of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, essays, comic books and, as of late, tweets — in recent years has drawn a new round of acclaim for her bestselling 1985 novel of a dystopian future in which women are subjugated after an overthrow of the US government. Some readers of "The Handmaid's Tale" saw in the leaders of authoritarian Gilead similarities to the rise of Republican Donald Trump to president in the election of 2016. The television adaptation on Hulu starring Elisabeth Moss generated yet more commentary, and women dressed in red cloaks and white bonnets, as the handmaids were depicted in the book and TV series.

Georgia Dy punching PoC fired 10 dead in Chicago weekend violence

Clayton (US), Sept. 14: A sheriff's deputy in Georgia has been fired after being captured on video repeatedly punching a Black man during a traffic stop, authorities said Sunday.

The deputy was being let go for "excessive use of force", the Clayton County Sheriff's Office said in a statement. It did not identify the deputy, but said a criminal investigation has been turned over to the district attorney's office. Roderick Walker, 26, was arrested and beaten after Clayton County sheriff's deputies pulled over the vehicle he was riding in Friday with his girlfriend, their 5-month-old child and his stepson for an alleged broken taillight, his attorney, Shean Williams of The Cochran Firm in Atlanta said Sunday. The deputies asked for Walker's identification

and got upset and demanded he get out of the vehicle when he questioned why they needed it since he wasn't driving, Williams said.

The subsequent arrest, captured on video by a bystander and shared widely, shows two deputies on top of Walker, one of whom repeatedly punches him. Walker's girlfriend screams and tells the deputies Walker said he can't breathe. A child in the vehicle yells, "Daddy". As Walker is handcuffed, the deputy who punched him tells the bystander that Walker bit him. Williams said his client denies biting the deputy. Walker was trying to survive and lost consciousness at least twice during the beating, Williams said.

A photo of Walker taken later in jail shows a welt under his left eye.

— AP

3 dead, 3 injured in Tennessee rampage

Nashville (US), Sept. 14: A gunman killed two people and wounded three others in a series of shootings and carjackings that ended with a high-speed chase as he fled police. He ultimately wrecked the car he stole and killed himself, while his remaining hostage survived, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation said.

The string of crimes began Sunday morning along Interstate 24 near Beechgrove when Dangelo Dorsey, 29, opened fire inside a moving vehicle, killing one person and wounding another, TBI Director David Rausch said.

— AP



US President Donald Trump speaks during a campaign event at Xtreme Manufacturing in Henderson, Nevada on Sunday. Trumps visit comes after Nevada Republicans blamed Democratic Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak for blocking other events he had planned in the state.

— AFP

Israel to renew curbs, daily cases see spurt

Jerusalem, Sept. 14: Israel said it will reimpose a national lockdown to battle a coronavirus surge, as the number of daily infections around the world reached a record high.

Britain, France, Austria and the Czech Republic also reported spikes, as global cases rapidly approached 29 million with more than 921,000 Covid-19 deaths, according to an AFP tally.

The Israel lockdown will last three weeks starting Friday, keeping people to within 500 metres (yards) of their homes. It is the first developed economy to take such drastic steps to contain a second wave of infections. "I know these measures will exact a heavy price from all of us," said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The World Health Organization reported 307,930 new cases worldwide on Sunday, the highest daily figure in its database since the beginning of the pandemic.

The surge has sparked concern in Europe, where Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz warned that his country was facing "the beginning of the second wave". The Czech Republic has also faced a surge, with one epidemiologist saying over the weekend that at the current rate, cases could overwhelm hospitals.

New restrictions are set to come into force across

UK trials antibody cocktail treatment

London, Sept. 14: The UK on Monday began human trials of a new antibody treatment for patients hospitalised with Covid-19. As part of the government-backed Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 tHERapY (RECOVERY) Trials, monoclonal antibodies, or potent laboratory-made antibodies, will be given to about 2,000 patients in the coming weeks to see if they are effective against Coronavirus.

The Phase 3 open-label trial in patients hospitalised with Covid-19 will compare the effects of adding REGN-COV2 to the

— PTI

usual standard-of-care versus standard-of-care on its own. "REGN-COV2 was specifically designed by Regeneron scientists to target the virus that causes Covid-19. RECOVERY will be the fourth late-stage randomised clinical trial evaluating REGN-COV2 and will add to our knowledge about how this novel antibody cocktail may help hospitalised patients in need," said George D. Yancopoulos, President and Chief Scientific Officer of Regeneron, the biotech firm collaborating on the project.

— PTI

England on Monday, with social gatherings limited to no more than six people. Other parts of the world are still battling their first Coronavirus waves, including some populous nations such as Indonesia, where new restrictions came into effect on Monday.

— AFP

Europe to see more deaths in Oct, Nov: WHO
Copenhagen, Sept. 14: The World Health Organisation expects Europe to see a rise in the daily number of Covid-19 deaths in October and November,

— AFP

TRUMP DEFIES GOV, HOLDS INDOOR RALLY

Las Vegas, Sept. 14: In open defiance of state regulations and his own administration's pandemic health guidelines, President Donald Trump on Sunday hosted his first indoor rally since June with a packed, mask-less Nevada crowd. Eager to project a sense of normalcy in imagery, Trump soaked up the raucous cheers inside a warehouse. Not since a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that was blamed for a surge of Coronavirus infections has he gathered supporters indoors. There was no early mention from the President that the pandemic had killed nearly 200,000 Americans and was claiming 1,000 lives a day.

Few in the crowd wore masks, with one clear exception: Those in the stands directly behind Trump, whose images would end up on TV, were mandated to wear face coverings. The rally in Tulsa, his first in three months after the Coronavirus reached American shores, was a disaster for the campaign, a debacle that featured a sea of empty seats and a rise in Covid-19 cases.

— AP

British MPs resume feuding over Brexit

Johnson's disputed plan that will break EU divorce treaty faces rebellion, resignations

London, Sept. 14: Britain's parliament on Monday finds itself in familiar territory — arguing about Brexit — with threats of rebellion and resignations over Prime Minister Boris Johnson's controversial plan for a new law that will break his EU divorce treaty.

The House of Commons holds its first debate and vote over the bombshell new bill from late afternoon, despite a call from Brussels for it to be withdrawn by the end of the month.

The contentious legislation, unveiled last week, would override the divorce deal the UK struck with the EU last year in several key areas related to Northern Ireland.

It would see London unilaterally regulate UK trade and state aid within the British province, ignoring the EU treaty which gives Brussels a continuing say over Northern Ireland's trading relationship.

If the law passes in the coming weeks, Brussels has warned it could scupper ongoing trade deal talks and threatened counter action, leaving the prospects of an orderly Brexit in tatters.

Even some Brexiteer lawmakers were aghast that Britain would wilfully

● **THE HOUSE** of Commons holds its first debate and vote over the bombshell new bill from late afternoon, despite a call from Brussels for it to be withdrawn by the end of the month.

Former prime ministers John Major and Tony Blair this weekend openly criticised the action, while David Cameron said Monday he had "misgivings" about the approach.

Johnson's pro-Brexit former attorney general Geoffrey Cox said it would be "unconscionable" to override an international treaty. "I think it is wrong that the British government or our parliament should renege on an agreement on which we gave our solemn word," he told *Times Radio*.

The latest row revives the bitter wrangling over how to implement British voters' shock decision in 2016 to quit the bloc, which led to parliamentary deadlock and repeat

BORIS DEFENDS LAW, SAYS EU 'UNREASONABLE'

London, Sept 14: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says his plan to unilaterally rewrite Britain's divorce deal with the European Union is an insurance policy against the bloc's unreasonable behaviour, comments that came as his former attorney general joined a growing number of once-loyal lawmakers condemning the contentious move.

Johnson said Monday that a planned law designed to override portions of the Brexit withdrawal agreement was needed because the European Union might "go to extreme and unreasonable lengths" in its treatment of former member Britain.

— AP

postponements.

The impasse was broken after Johnson sealed a divorce deal with Brussels and used it to win a thumping victory in a December general election which gave his Conservatives an 80-seat majority in the House of Commons.

— AFP

Suga secures party vote for Japan PM

Tokyo, Sept. 14: Yoshihide Suga was elected as the new head of Japan's ruling party on Monday, virtually guaranteeing him parliamentary election as the country's next prime minister. Suga received 377 votes in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party election to pick a successor to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who announced last month that he would resign due to health problems. The other two contenders received a combined 157 votes — former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida got 89 and former Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba had 68.

The expected victory in the party vote by Suga, currently the chief Cabinet secretary of Abe's government, all but guarantees his election in a parliamentary vote Wednesday because of the majority held by the Liberal De-

mocrats' ruling coalition. Suga gained the support of party heavyweights and their wing members early in the campaign on expectations that he would continue Abe policies.

That his victory appeared to be a done deal has raised criticism from inside and outside the party that the process is undemocratic and murky.

The closed-door politics also apparently led lawmakers to support Suga in hopes of getting favourable party and Cabinet posts in the new administration. Suga has said his top priorities are fighting the Coronavirus and turning around an economy battered by the pandemic. He is known for his iron-fist approach to getting jobs done as a policy coordinator and influencing bureaucrats by using the centralised power of the PM's office.

— AP

FOREIGN LABS: NAVALNY WAS POISONED

Berlin, Sept 14: Specialist labs in France and Sweden have confirmed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was poisoned with the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok, the German government said Monday. A German military laboratory previously confirmed the substance in his samples. German government spokesman Steffen Seibert said that the Hague-based Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has also received samples and is taking steps to have those tested at its reference laboratories.

"Independently of the ongoing examinations by the OPCW, three laboratories have now confirmed the proof of a nerve agent of the Novichok group as the cause of Navalny's poisoning," Seibert said.

— AP

Afghan government mounts pressure on Taliban for truce

Doha, Sept. 14: The Afghan government ratcheted up pressure for a truce with the Taliban on Monday, reiterating calls for a long-term ceasefire at talks in Qatar.

The two sides are in the early stages of meetings in the capital Doha in an effort to hammer out a deal bringing to a close 19 years of bloodshed in Afghanistan. A slick opening ceremony on Saturday saw the Afghan government and allies, including the US, call for a ceasefire.

But the Taliban, who fought a years-long guerrilla campaign against American and Afghan forces after they were forced

KHALILZAD MEETS PAK ARMY CHIEF, DISCUSSES AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS

Islamabad, Sept. 14: US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad on Monday met Pakistan Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and discussed the Afghan peace process among other issues.

Pakistan military's media wing — the Inter-Services Public Relations — said that "matters of mutual interest, regional security, and the ongoing Afghan Reconciliation Process were discussed during the meeting".

— PTI

from power in a 2001 US-led invasion, did not mention a truce as they came to the negotiating table.

Afghan presidential spokesman Sediq Seddiqi tweeted Monday that the pr-

esence of government negotiators at the talks "is aimed at achieving a ceasefire, ending the violence and ensuring lasting peace and stability in the country".

— AFP

FILM | FEST **Mr Jones is set in 1993 during what has come to be known as the Holodomor: to kill by starvation**

The mendacity of Duranty and the truth of Mr Jones

SUPARNA SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14

It's true that history is written by victors. But its first inconvenient draft is written by journalists, by men and women often labelled as liars, insane and anti-national by authoritarian regimes and their toadies.

Despite that, you won't find them screaming on TV screens. You'll find them repeating the truth, calmly, with facts. The acclaimed, 71-year-old Polish writer-director Agnieszka Holland's English language feature film, *Mr Jones*, tells the story of two foreign journal-

ists in Stalin's Russia — Gareth Jones (James Norton), a freelance Welsh journalist, and Pulitzer award winning Walter Duranty (Peter Sarsgaard), who was the *New York Times*' bureau chief in Moscow.

The film is set in 1993, during what has since come to be known as the Holodomor (to kill by starvation), or the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine. Jones arrives in a Moscow that is simultaneously welcoming and hostile. He's chasing a suspicion. Russia's claims of a successful revolution, of happy factories and prospering farms don't feel right because

the numbers — of the country's economy, investment — don't add up.

Duranty dismisses it as a conspiracy theory against the revolution. Mr Jones is gorgeous to behold and is made with impressive technical prowess. Its scenes are shot and edited beautifully, often adding tension and energy. But the Communist Moscow that it creates is the sort we often see in Hollywood films — shadowy men lurk in dark corners, and all Russians speak English in an accent we have come to identify with duplicity and evil since the first James Bond film.

tiff

All the warmth in Ms Holland's film comes from her respect for Jones and the art director's love for Russian interiors — large, plush rooms with red walls, gorgeous carpets and lamps. But, the Russians drink too much and they eat all the time. Except in Ukraine, where Jones' story takes him.

A thick, gruesome coat of snow covers Ukraine, as if trying to hide how Stalin's policies were leading to the starvation and death of six million people.

We stand next to Jones as he travels through ghost villages, walks into a house where dead bodies lie next to wood sliced into bite-size pieces. He watches all the grain being taken to Moscow and listens to kids sing of hunger and eating their dead. We are ready to throw up when a tiny piece of protein is offered to him.

In between, George Orwell and his *Animal Farm* make brief appearances.

But central in all this is Jones, the first journalist to report about the famine and deaths, and his very public clash with Duranty, who NYT then called "our man in Moscow" though he was Stalin's own Goebbels.

James Norton is a big, gorgeous man with the air of upper class elegance and decency. He brings good boy-piety to the character of the earnest Mr Jones, but carefully saves it from descending into self-righteousness. Jones returns to England to tell the story of famine and deaths, and a government determined to hide it.

Duranty immediately debunks it in *NYT*, painting the famine with government propaganda. He calls it "widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition".

Jones was killed a year later. He was 29.

Duranty died aged 73, in Florida, in 1957.

Holland's Mr Jones carries an urgent message: Two people may tell the same story differently. But there is only, always, one truth. You'll know you've spotted it when authoritarian regimes, their cohorts and apologists scream, "It's not true."

SHORT TAKES

Hari meets Carlsen in online chess

Chennai: Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna will compete against the likes of world champion Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura in an elite field in the St. Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament beginning on Tuesday. The India number No. 2 faces a stiff challenge in the tournament. With an Elo rating of 2714, he is the second lowest rated player in the field and would be up against Carlsen, who has been near unbeatable in recent times, and the highly-rated American Nakamura. The others in the fray are American Wesley So, Russians Ian Nepomniachtchi and Alexander Grischuk, experienced Armenian Levon Aronian, Iran's teen prodigy Alireza Firouzja and Americans Leinier Dominguez and Jeffery Xiong, the lowest rated player in the tournament. The ten players will be competing for a \$250,000 prize fund in nine rapid and 18 blitz games. — PTI

Defeating Anand was special: Vidy

New Delhi: India's chess Olympiad gold-winning team captain Vidy Gujrathi says the experience of playing against and defeating iconic Viswanathan Anand was the most special moment of his career. The 25-year-old Gujrathi, who became a Grandmaster in 2013, beat the five-time world champion Anand in 2019. "It was a really nice feeling to play against a player to whom you look up to. I was in the Indian Top-5 but never got a chance to play against him, so I was thinking that I'm missing out on that experience," the youngster said during the show, *In the Sportlight*. Gujrathi had the honour to captain the likes of Anand and the women's Grandmaster Koneru Humpy during India's gold winning campaign in the online Chess Olympiad recently. — PTI

Hyderabad FC sign Lalawmpuia

Hyderabad: Indian Super League side Hyderabad FC on Monday signed long-term deals with attackers Lalawmpuia and Sweden Fernandes ahead of the new season. Both the 20-year-olds, who were a part of fellow ISL side FC Goa for the last three years, have each penned a three-year deal till the end of the 2022-23 season. Lalawmpuia, fondly known as Opi, came through the ranks at Pune FC and DSK Shivajians before being promoted to the senior side with the latter. The Mizo striker was signed by FC Goa for their developmental side in 2017, and has since regularly featured in local and national competitions for the Gaurs including the Goa Pro League, Durand Cup and the second Division League. Fernandes, meanwhile, has been involved in Goan youth football. — PTI

Bernal fails in France, Tadej wins

Culoz, France: Egan Bernal's defence of the Tour de France was reduced to cinders on Sunday as the Colombian suffered a meltdown on the first major mountain of the race, while the overall leader Primoz Roglic denied any suggestions he was doping. With three massive mountains, the stage itself was won by 21-year-old rookie Tadej Pogacar, but the extent of the 2019 champion's astonishing collapse on the final climb is the story of the Tour so far. "I lost three years of my life on that climb, I gave it everything. But I just couldn't keep up," said Bernal. — AFP

Live on TV

TENNIS

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

BASKETBALL

NBA Eastern Conference Finals (Game 1 of best-of-7): Boston Celtics vs Miami Heat from 4 am (Wednesday); **NBA Western Conference Semifinals (Game 7, decider):** Los Angeles Clippers vs Denver Nuggets from 6.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six, HD

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TENACIOUS THIEM

Wrests US Open title after a historic comeback

New York, Sept. 14: Dominic Thiem produced a historic comeback to beat Alexander Zverev in a nervy five-setter and win the US Open on Sunday for his first Grand Slam title. The second seeded Austrian beat the fifth seed 2-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) in 4 hours and two minutes in a near-empty Arthur Ashe Stadium.

It marked the first time in the US Open's Open era history that a player had recovered from losing the opening two sets to win the title.

Pancho Gonzalez did it against Ted Schroeder in 1949 at an event then known as the US Championships and held in Forest Hills.

It was also the first time the final had been settled by a tie-break.

"I wish we could have two winners today. I think we both deserved it," said Thiem.

The title is the 27-year-old Thiem's maiden Grand Slam trophy after three previous defeats in finals of tennis majors.

Thiem was runner-up at the Australian Open earlier this year and also lost in the last-two showdowns at the French Open in 2018 and 2019.

He also becomes the first new Grand Slam champion since Croatian Marin Cilic won at Flushing Meadows in 2014. Thiem is also the first Grand Slam champion other than Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal or Roger Federer since Stan Wawrinka won the third of his majors at the 2016 US Open.

"I achieved a life goal, a dream of myself, which I had for many, many years," the winner added.

Zverev, 23, smashed four aces and 16 winners in the first set as he displayed an impressive serve and volley game to take a 1-0 lead in just 30 minutes.

The German was helped by some sloppy serving from Thiem, who hit three double faults as he was broken twice, in games three and seven.

In set two, Zverev wasted three set points while 5-1 up but held on to take a 2-0 lead on his fifth set point.

The tide was beginning to turn though as Zverev's



Dominic Thiem of Austria celebrates with US Open championship trophy after defeating Alexander Zverev in the men's singles final at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in the Queens borough of New York City on Sunday. Thiem won 2-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (8/6). — AFP

play became increasingly cagey as his suspect second serve got slower and his forehand, another weakness, became more defensive.

After Thiem took set four, Zverev found himself serving for the championship at 5-3 in the fifth set. But he could not hold and soon Thiem found

himself 6-5 ahead. He took a medical timeout before it was his turn to serve for the championship.

However, like Zverev moments earlier, Thiem failed to clinch the match and it went to a tie-break.

He found himself 5-3 up after two double faults by Zverev but Thiem, by now exhausted and limping,

blew two championship points. He won the title and the winner's cheque of \$3 million on his third after Zverev hit a backhand wide.

Thiem collapsed to the ground with his head in his hands before the pair, who are close friends, embraced on the court. Zverev smashed 15 aces

I'LL BE GRAND SLAM CHAMP, SAYS ZVEREV

New York, Sept. 14: Alexander Zverev pledged to bounce back from his bitterly disappointing loss in the final of the US Open on Sunday to capture a Grand Slam one day.

The 23-year-old German went two sets and a break up in his first Grand Slam final before losing in five sets to Austria's Dominic Thiem.

"I was super close to being a Grand Slam champion. I was a few games away, maybe a few points away," a dejected Zverev told reporters.

"For me what upset me the most is not the third set, it's the fifth set.

"I had a lot of chances in the fifth set and didn't use them," he added.

The second seeded Thiem beat the fifth seed Zverev 2-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) in 4hr 2min.

It was the first time in the US Open's Open era history that a player had recovered from losing the opening two sets to win the title.

It was also the first time the final had been settled by a tie-break.

Zverev said it hurt to lose in the manner he did.

"Obviously being two sets to love and a break up in a Grand Slam final then losing is not easy," he told reporters.

Zverev's debut appearance in the last-two of a tennis major came after he reached the semifinals of the Australian Open earlier this year.

"I'm 23 years old. I don't think it's my last chance. I do believe that I will be a Grand Slam champion at some point," Zverev further added. — AFP

compared to Thiem's two. But the German also hit 15 double faults, with Thiem hitting eight.

The match was watched by just a few dozen people, mostly officials, journalists and event staff after the Coronavirus pandemic forced the tournament to be held behind closed doors. — AFP



England fast bowler Chris Woakes (left) celebrates the dismissal of Australia's captain Aaron Finch during the second ODI cricket match at Old Trafford in Manchester, England, on Sunday. — AP

England hit Oz hard, pull level

Manchester, Sept. 14: Australia batted itself into a winning position before dramatically collapsing as England won the second one-day cricket international by 24 runs to stay alive in the series.

England's decision to bat first at Old Trafford had appeared to backfire with the world champions limited to 231-9 and Australia reaching 143-2 with 20 overs left on Sunday.

Australia was making the run chase look easy thanks to a 107-run stand for the third wicket between captain Aaron Finch (73) and Marnus Labuschagne (48). But the tourists then collapsed to 147-6, and 166-8, in Manchester before finishing 207 all out in 48.4 overs.

A trio of England pacers did the damage: Chris Woakes (3-32), Jofra Archer (3-34) and Sam Curran 3-35. In what has become an unwanted tour tradition for Australia, Archer again claimed opener David Warner (6).

England captain Eoin Morgan said bringing Woakes and Archer back into the attack dramatically swung the game in the home team's favor.

Earlier, no England batsman reached 50, with Morgan (42) and Joe Root (39) leading the scoring. Both men were dismissed by Adam Zampa.

Australia was aiming to wrap up a series victory after beating England by 19 runs in the first ODI last Friday, also in Manchester.

The series finale is at the same venue on Wednesday, when England will be hoping to avoid its first ODI series defeat at home since 2015. Australian batsman Steve Smith could be in consideration for a recall for the series decider after missing the first two games because of concussion. — AP

Brief scores: England 231/9 in 50 overs (Eoin Morgan 42; Adam Zampa 3/36) **bt Australia 207** in 48.4 overs (Aaron Finch 73; Chris Woakes 3/32).

AUSTRALIA EYE CROWDS FOR BOXING-DAY MATCH

Melbourne, Sept. 14: Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews on Monday said his government is negotiating with Cricket Australia and Tennis Australia to have crowd attendance for the city's iconic sports events — Boxing Day Test involving India and the Australian Open.

There is speculation that MCG may miss out on hosting the Boxing Day Test, an annual highlight on the calendar, since Victoria is reeling under pandemic.

"We just have to work out what a safe crowd would be. It is too hard to say now what that number is," Andrews said in a daily news briefing.

With Melbourne looking a dicey venue, Adelaide is seen as the front-runner for the Boxing Day Test against India. — PTI



Royal Challengers Bangalore's captain Virat Kohli (right) and AB de Villiers in this file photo.

Kohli, AB look to turn RCB around

New Delhi, Sept. 14: South African veteran AB de Villiers said captain Virat Kohli is "leading from the front" as Royal Challengers Bangalore look to shed their wooden-spooners tag in the Indian Premier League.

De Villiers said India skipper Kohli was inspiring much hard work in the build-up to the IPL's start in the UAE on Saturday.

"I think everyone has bought into this hard-working environment and a lot of credit should go to Virat for that," De Villiers said in an interview posted on his team's YouTube channel on Monday.

"He leads by example, he sets the standards and it is pretty easy to follow when you have a captain leading from the front," he added.

Bangalore begin their campaign against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Dubai next Monday.

Kohli, who took over as captain of the Bangalore team in 2013, has said he has "never felt so calm" entering an IPL season.

"It's a tricky one because we say that (we'll improve) every season. (But) I promise you, 'it's different', that's all I can tell you," said de Villiers. — AFP

PSG lose amid racism scuffle

Paris, Sept. 14: Neymar insisted he had been the victim of racism as he was one of five players sent off in a mass brawl at the end of Marseille's 1-0 win over French league champions Paris Saint-Germain on Sunday.

PSG's Brazilian star appeared to accuse Alvaro Gonzalez of calling him a "monkey" in a series of furious tweets after he was sent off in injury time for slapping the Marseille defender on the back of the head.

"Look at the racism. That's why I hit him," Neymar, who was returning from Coronavirus quarantine, said as he left the pitch. Gonzalez later denied making a racist comment.

"The only regret I have is not hitting this idiot in the face," Neymar, the world's most expensive player, tweeted.

Neymar was red-carded after a VAR review, while teammates Layvin Kurzawa and Leandro Paredes were also sent off. Marseille striker Dario Benedetto and defender Jordan Amavi were also expelled.

"It's easy for VAR to show my 'aggression'. 'Now I'd like them to show the image of the racist who called me a 'MONKEY SON OF A BITCH'. I'd really like that!" Neymar tweeted.

Florian Thauvin's close-range volley on 31 minutes earned Marseille a first victory over their bitter rivals since November 2011 but the ugly scenes overshadowed the game at Parc des Princes.

PSG's last goal came in the 3-0 win over RB Leipzig in the Champions League semifinal on August 18. — AFP



PSG and Marseille players scuffle at the end of their French league football match at the Parc de Princes stadium in Paris on Sunday. Marseille won 1-0. — AFP

Everton ride on Calvert's goal, tear up Tottenham

London, Sept. 14: Everton signalled their intent for Carlo Ancelotti's first full season in charge as Dominic Calvert-Lewin's towering header earned their first win over Tottenham since 2012 in a 1-0 victory on Sunday.

Ancelotti has been heavily backed with the signings of James Rodriguez, Abdoulaye Doucoure and Allan, and the Toffees looked a much-improved side on the one that finished 12th last season as they were thoroughly deserving winners at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Spurs are also hoping for an upturn in Jose Mourinho's first full season as boss, but the hosts looked short on ideas as they slipped to a damaging home defeat for their aspirations of mounting a challenge to get back into the top four this season.

Everton settled the quicker with their new midfield trio helping to control possession, but it was on the counter-attack they wasted by far the best chance of the game.

Richardson intercepted Ben Davies's wayward pass and accelerated past Toby Alderweireld and Hugo Lloris before skewing high and wide with an open goal to aim at and Calvert-Lewin begging for a cut-back.

Everton surrendered meekly to a 1-0 defeat

when they visited the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in July without mustering a meaningful shot on goal.

BETIS EASE PAST ALAVES

Madrid: It was a thrilling return to the Spanish league for Manuel Pellegrini. And a disappointing one for Unai Emery.

Back in the league on Sunday after long absences, Pellegrini's Real Betis won 1-0 at Alaves thanks to a stoppage-time goal from substitute Cristian Tello, while Emery's Villarreal couldn't get more than a 1-1 draw at home against promoted Huesca. — AP