

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | 4 SEPTEMBER 2020

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Min: 24.3°C
RH: 56%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Rain likely. Max/Min
temp. 33/24 °C

**COVID-19
COUNT**

CASES	DEATHS
(+79,255)	(+1,083)
39,26,791	68,559
covid19india.org	

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,817)	(+10)
TS: 1,33,406	856
(+10,199)	(+75)
AP: 4,65,730	4,200

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,63,46,736	DEATHS
8,70,150	
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	213
worldometers.info/ coronavirus	

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Bahula Dwitiya
till 2.25 pm
Star: Uttarabhadra till 11.28 pm
Varjyam: 7.30 am to 9.17 am
Durmuhamurt: 8.34 am to
9.23 am; 12.40 pm to 1.29 pm
Rahuukalama: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HJRI CALENDAR
Muhamarr 15, 1442 AH
PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.01 am
Zohar: 12.25 pm
Asar: 4.36 pm
Magrib: 6.33 pm
Isha: 7.42 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.27 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.02 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 8.02 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.05 AM

COUNTER POINT

You can't even question the cancellation of Question Hour!

IN BRIEF**Modi's personal
twitter hacked**

New Delhi: Twitter on Thursday said the account linked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal website was hacked, and it has now been restored. After hacking the @narendramodi_in Twitter account, which is the PM's personal website, the cybercriminal reportedly sent out posts seeking donations in crypto currency. — PTI

**Macca Masjid to
open for public**

Hyderabad: Prayers in the historic Macca Masjid and Shahi Masjid at Public Garden will resume from Saturday. They had remained closed for the public due to pandemic. This decision was taken at a meeting chaired by home minister Mahmood Ali with public representatives and minority welfare department officials on Wednesday. — DC

Fire on the high seas

A fully loaded oil tanker *New Diamond*, a very large crude carrier (VLCC) chartered by Indian Oil Corp (IOC), catches fire off the east coast of Sri Lanka while on its way to port of Paradip. The carrier was carrying crude oil from Kuwait to India. According to Sri Lankan media reports, the fire started in the engine room of the oil tanker and then spread further. The Indian Coast Guard pressed into action three of its ships and a Dornier aircraft after the Sri Lankan Navy sought assistance to control the fire onboard. ■ Report on Page 10

— PTI

State's Covid strategy failed**Government and people to be blamed for rise in Covid cases****1 in every 6 cases in TS is from GHMC**DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Though just six months ago, March 2, the date on which the first Covid-19 case was discovered in Telangana state, appears to have slipped into the recesses of memory. It was on that day that a young man from Mahendra Hills area of the city was diagnosed coronavirus-positive.

Exactly six months later, on September 2, Telangana reported that 1.33 lakh people were infected with Covid-19 in the state in this period. In these six months, the state also watched 856 people die of Covid-19. In these six months, the state has witnessed, and the people have watched, as the disease spread rapidly across the state, with Hyderabad emerging as the biggest spot for infections.

While the state government says it had done everything it could to contain the disease and save lives, the fact remains that

Corporation area, the largest urban centre in the state, continued to see the highest number of daily cases. The GHMC areas recorded 452 more cases, which is one in every six cases reported on Wednesday from GHMC limits.

■ Full report on Page 2

it did not. The High Court, responding to several petitions from citizens, repeatedly had to intervene to keep the government on track on Covid-19 management.

The state repeatedly messed up its data, deliberately or otherwise, in its daily Covid-19 bulletins, strengthening the public perception that the truth about the disease was being hidden. It continues to under-test at its own

peril. Along the way, the state authorities also came under scrutiny of Governor, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, a medical professional herself, who repeatedly pointed out lacunae in disease management in the state and urged the government to do much more.

These six months also saw several predictions and promises made by the government the end of Covid-19 is near fall by the

lessons, which Covid-19 is teaching Telangana as has been the case with the rest of India and the world, are harsh, to say the least.

■ Page 2: Govt. focused on image management

by AP government and issues related to other irrigation matters are placed before the House during the session.

He stressed on the need for

discussing in the House the injustice being meted out to Telangana while implementing GST and the economic loss being caused to the state due to financial policies of the Central government.

■ Page 2: Govt. ready to discuss any issue: CM

TRS to target Centre in AssemblyS.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Monsoon session of the State Legislative Assembly, scheduled to begin from Monday, September 7, will mainly discuss measures taken by the state government to contain Covid-19 pandemic, treatment being provided to Coronavirus positive patients and the fire mishap at Srisailam Left Bank Power House. Chief Minister K. Chand-

raselkar Rao held a meeting with ministers and whips at Pragathi Bhavan on Thursday to discuss the strategy of the ruling party in the ensuing session.

The CM asked ministers to ensure that the illegal construction of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme

is stopped. He asked legislative affairs minister V. Prashanth Reddy to place before the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), issues related to Covid-19 pandemic, expansion of medical services, crop loss due to heavy rains, New Revenue Act, regulated farming, and P.V. Narasimha Rao Centenary Celebrations.

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SHORT TAKES



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao receives the Balapur laddu from the members of the Balapur Ganesh Utsav Committee at Pragathi Bhavan on Thursday. The laddu was not auctioned this year.

TS REPORTS 2,817 NEW COVID-19 CASES, 15 DEATHS

BALU PULIPAKA | DC

HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

There is no let-up in the spread of Covid-19 disease in the state health department reporting 2,817 more infections and 19 more deaths in the state.

The latest additions for the 24-hour period between 8 pm Tuesday and 8 pm Wednesday, takes the number of deaths to 856 in the state while the total cases so far is at 1,33,406.

The Covid-19 bulletin on Thursday said that there are 32,537 active Covid-19 cases as on Wednesday evening. It said 2,611 persons have recovered taking the number of people who recovered to 1,00,013 so far.

Even as Covid-19 appeared to have a firm grip over Telangana, the greater Hyderabad municipal corporation (GHMC) area, the largest urban centre in the state, continued to see the highest number of daily cases.

On Wednesday, the city of Hyderabad and other areas that fall under the GHMC limits, recorded 452 more cases, more than twice of the next highest number of new cases 216 in Ranga Reddy district. The other districts with a high number of daily cases were Karimnagar with 164, Khammam and Nalgonda with 157 each, Medchal-Malkajgiri with 129, Siddipet with 120, Suryapet with 116, Warangal urban with 114, and Nizamabad with 97.

The department said that of the 1,33,406 cases so far in the state, 41,356 were found to be symptomatic, with 92,050 asymptomatic. Males continue to be the major victims of the disease at 85,926 and 47,480 of Covid-19 victims are women.

MAOIST KILLED IN GUNDALA FOREST ENCOUNTER

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC

KOTHAGUDEM, SEPT. 3

An unidentified Maoist was killed in an encounter at Devalagudem under Gundala mandal in the wee hours of Thursday. According to police, a special party, led by Gundala Circle Inspector Srinivas, has been conducting surprise checks after receiving reliable information about the presence of Maoists in the area.

Two persons on a bike were asked by the police to stop at Devalagudem but one of them suddenly opened fire and tried to escape from the spot.

The special police asked them to surrender but they did not heed. The police opened fire, which killed one of them while the other managed to escape. Search operations to nab him have been intensified, said police personnel.

Police recovered a weapon and the two-wheeler at the spot. This is the third such incident in the last six months in the Gundala forest area. There was an exchange of fire between police and members of CPI-Maoist in the forests located near Karakagudem in Bhadrak-Kothagudem district on June 15. Constable Narasimha Rao sustained bullet injuries in the incident.

Since then, greyhounds and special party police have been conducting combing operations in the forest areas of Gundala, Allapalli and Karakagudem in Bhadrak district and Tadwai forest area in Bhupalapalli district.

The forest is dense and it is suspected that Maoist dalangs coming from Chhattisgarh are hiding there.

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Bureaucratic tangles hit biomed waste

Officials told to increase survey; ensure waste is collected at the earliest from hospitals

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Bureaucratic tangles and fights between agencies has led to issues in the collection of biomedical waste in Telangana, leading to its accumulating in hospitals.

The Telangana pollution control board (TPCB), which handles waste via its agencies, states that they have been issued guidelines but they are not being fol-

lowed and each officer and agency is pushing the blame on others.

In Karimnagar, one agency has complained against another for overloading it as the biomedical waste is very high and the other agency has refused to take up the extra work citing diesel prices.

A senior health official of TS explained, "Earlier, hospitals would manage their own waste but there were complaints that small and medium-size

hospitals cannot handle it. Due to this reason, it was handed over to the TPCB. In normal times, it was managed by them but they require extra train-

ing and also adequate machines and systems to handle waste during the pandemic. Agencies have to invest in new machines to burn different biomedical waste separately. Instead, protocols have been sent to them but no training or no extra infrastructure has been put in place. This is leading to problems at the ground level, apart from the operational costs and person-power challenges faced by them."

Each district has two agencies who have been allotted hospitals, public health centres and small nursing homes.

These are placed in different corners and require a good amount of travel, involving diesel and person-power costs.

Due to Covid-19 and the rising cases in district government hospitals and PHCs, generation of waste has doubled. In private hospitals it is lesser but still requires safe

disposal.

The agencies are getting only 50 per cent of the amount from the government due to cost cutting and private hospitals are not willing to pay which is creating problems in collection and safe disposal.

The TPCB has asked all its officers to increase surveillance and ensure that biomedical waste is collected at the earliest, without much delay.

OPERATION THEATRES AT OGH TO BE MOVED INTO PATIENT BLOCK

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Operation theatres of Osmania General Hospital (OGH) which were closed due to the heritage building closed will be accommodated in the in-patient block. The director of health and medical education has asked the OGH administration to accommodate it in the cardio-thoracic surgery operation theatre on a temporary basis.

AMAZON EMPLOYEE FROM HYDERABAD DROWNS IN US

Hyderabad, Sept. 3: A 23-year-old Amazon employee from Hyderabad drowned in a lake in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, on August 24.

Khaja Imran was swimming with two of his mates at the time of the incident. Eye-witnesses said that he swam too far from the shore and began to panic. His friends were unable to rescue him, and he drowned.

Later, the family got an emergency visa to visit the USA for the last rites. The family will travel on the first available flight. — INN

Flouting norms



An autorickshaw trolley carries steel rods ignoring safety measures on the busy Secunderabad road on Thursday. Autorickshaws and trucks carrying dangerous goods are on the rise in the city with the police turning the other way instead of stopping them and seizing them.

SC: RTE prefers mother tongue

From Page 1

He said that the students will also have an option to pursue their education in the Telugu medium as the bilingual textbooks are ready.

Dwelling on the importance of imparting education in English, Viswanathan said many parents may not be able to afford to send their children to private schools.

However, Justice Chandrachud pointed at the conflict between the government policy of imparting education in English and the provisions of the Right to Education Act that say that the medium of instruction should ordinarily be the mother tongue of the child.

According to Section 29(2)(f) of the Right to Education Act, Justice Chandrachud said, the "medium of instruction shall, as far as practicable, be in the child's mother tongue", and he further said that it seems the High Court has taken this into account.

He described as "absurd" the situation where minority schools and private schools can teach in both the languages, but government schools will be teaching in English only.

Asking the parents organizations to file an affidavit, the court said that the application for the vacation of stay issued by the High Court will be considered after the caveators

have a chance to file the affidavit within two weeks.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. SG-664-04-SIG-2020-21, Dhanbad, dt-01.09.2020. E-TENDER IS INVITED ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA FOR THE UNDER MENTIONED WORKS. SI. No. 1.

Tender No. & Name of work: SG-664-04-Sig-2020-21. Improvement of Reliability and Automatic change over facility of media used for BPAC & UFSB. Appox. Cost of the work, &

Earliest Money: 20743432.39 (Approx) 253700.00 Date & time for closing of tender: 21.09.2020 16.00 Hrs. Sl. No. 2. Tender No. & Name of work: SG-664-05-Sig-2020-21 Provision of ELD (Earth Leakage Detector) and other reliability improvement measures at 96 Stations of Dhanbad Division. Appox. Cost of the work, & Earliest Money: 12984629.09 (Approx) 214900.00 Date & time for closing of tender: 18.09.2020 16.00 Hrs. Sl. No. 3. Tender No. & Name of work: SG-664-06-Sig-2020-21 Phusro Provision of Shunt Signal at Dhori siding of Phusro Station. Appox. Cost of the work, & Earliest Money: 5278163.09 (Approx) 105600.00 Date & time for closing of tender: 18.09.2020 16.00 Hrs. Sl. No. 4. Tender No. & Name of work: SG-664-07-Sig-2020-21 Provision of Self restoring/ Auto change over fuse alarm system in GC & CIC section of DHN Division. Appox. Cost of the work, & Earliest Money: 21481457.59 (Approx) 257400.00 Date & time for closing of tender: 18.09.2020 16.00 Hrs. Sl. No. 5. Tender No. & Name of work: SG-664-08-Sig-2020-21 Provision of Shunt signals at GJD & interlocking of cross over DLW. Appox. Cost of the work, & Earliest Money: 3814688.24 (Approx) 76300.00 Date & time for closing of tender: 18.09.2020 16.00 Hrs. Sl. No. 6. Tender No. & Name of work: SG-664-09-Sig-2020-21 Reliability improvement of the signaling gear for the UFSB (21 set) for HASSDAC (60 Nos.) in CIC section. Appox. Cost of the work, & Earliest Money: 20482864.95 (Approx) 252400.00 Date & time for closing of tender: 18.09.2020 16.00 Hrs. • Any E-Tenders which is sent by Post/Courier/ FAX or self, Manual proposals although the letter is on firm's letter pad or received in time will not be accepted. • The above E-Tenders, E-Tendering document alongwith full information is available on website i.e. <http://www.irps.gov.in>. Note :- Tenderers are requested to visit the website <http://www.irps.gov.in> atleast 10 days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum / corrections etc. in response to this E-tender.

Urban Development & Housing Department

Vikas Bhawan, New Secretariat, Patna – 800 001, Bihar, INDIA.

(Tel: 0612- 2215405, Fax: 2217059 Email: tcpbihar@gmail.com)

11 नवंदिमात्रको-01 / 2020

1. Special Secretary, UD & HD, Government of Bihar, invites Proposals from eligible Agency for Consultancy Services for Urban Design Master Plan for Special Development Area in Rajbir Regional Planning Area."

2. Proposals are invited to conduct the assignment and submit the deliverables from Indian Consultancy Firms / International Consultancy firms / Consortium that have requisite experience and infrastructure.

1. Interested Agency may download the complete Request for Proposal (RFP) Document, from tender section on the website eproc2.bihar.gov.in from the date 07.09.2020 from 05:00 PM.2. Pre-proposal Queries/ Suggestions should be submitted by perspective bidders till the date 15.09.2020 by 12:30 PM to Special Secretary, Urban Development & Housing Department, Vikas Bhawan, New Secretariat, Patna through email totpbihar@gmail.com and ardurbansec@nic.in3. Bidders may submit their completed proposals online at eproc2.bihar.gov.in.

4. Last date of submission of proposal will be 29.09.2020 till 03:00 PM online.

5. The RFP Document Fees Rs. 5000 (Five Thousand) to be submitted online by Internet Payment Gateway (IPG) or Challan.

6. Bid Security fee is in the form of EMD online (by Internet Payment Gateway/IPG or Challan) or offline through (BGin favor of DIRECTOR-BUDA) of Rs. 2,00,000 (Two Lakhs) as mentioned in RFP.

7. Above fee and completed proposals shall be submitted in separate sealed envelopes, which will be received at the address mentioned below up to 03:00 PM on 30.09.2020 at following address:

Special Secretary
Urban Development & Housing Department,
Vikas Bhawan, New Secretariat, Patna – 800 001, Bihar, INDIA.(Tel: 0612- 2215405, Fax: 2217059 Email: tcpbihar@gmail.com)

8. UD&HD, GoB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals without assigning any (Jai Prakash Mandal)

Special Secretary
Urban Development & Housing
Department, Govt. of Bihar

PR No. 0006087(Urban) 2020-21

नोवल कोरोना के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहयोग हेतु 2020

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किसी भी तरह आपदा की जानकारी यथा सुझाव देने आपका पर्याप्त के टेलप्लाइन नं. 1070 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।

STAY | FIT British study finds micronutrients, probiotics important

Virus hits malnourished, obese

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Malnutrition, obesity and undernourishment are also driving forces for higher viral load of the Covid-19 virus as imbalanced nutritional status is causing damage to the body compounded by co-morbid conditions and age.

A study published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* has noted that a diversified diet of micronutrients, bioactive compounds and probiotics is important to fight Covid-19.

Due to the infection, they suffered from appetite loss, alteration in intestinal absorptions, further aggravating their malnourished state. This caused the gut barrier function to be further compromised leading to problems in regulating the inflammatory response of the body. The same was noted in undernourished cases with more diverse alterations in the immune system, leading to increased

susceptibility to infections. The need for a balanced diet with a good combination of fruits, vegetables and protein is required to fight infections and ensure that the immune system functions properly. Dr Tulasi P, consultant dietitian at KIMS hospital, explained, "Foods rich in antioxidants help to reduce oxidative stress. Protein plays a major role as antibodies and hormones are made of them. Protein rich foods like milk, pulses, soya, eggs, fish must be included in the diet in these times. This will help to deal with the malnourished and under-nourished statuses."

The other worrying factor is obesity. Abdominal obesity is very high in India and that leads to complications in the respiratory system. The volume of lung tissues

are affected due to obesity and it allows for replication of the virus and progression of respiratory problems.

For this reason, exercise must not be missed even during the pandemic. Home exercise schedules have been recommended and people have been advised to continue to maintain their fitness levels at home which will help them check weight issues.

Western diets which are more of soft and highly processed foods must be avoided, urged nutritionists. National institute of nutrition has stated that the diet must have legumes, whole grains, pulses, raw salads, like beetroot, carrot, radish, fermented foods like curd, idli and multi-cereal foods like ragi, sorgum and other millets.

POWER | SHUTDOWN

10 am to 12 noon
Sub-station: Saroornagar
11KV Feeder: Siris
Central Bank Colony,
Suryodaya Colony and
surrounding areas.
2 pm to 4 pm
Sub-station: Saroornagar
11KV Feeder: V Guard Colony.

IN BRIEF**PM to interact with IPS probationers**

Hyderabad: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be interacting, through a video-conference, with IPS Probationers during the Dikshant Parade at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy on Friday. A total of 131 IPS probationers including 28 lady probationers have completed 42 weeks of basic course Phase-I training at the Academy, it was announced on Thursday.

NEW FTCCI FACILITATION CENTRE AT RGIA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

The new Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) business facilitation centre came up at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) terminal on Thursday. According to officials, the Federation lends its support to the industry and government in promoting economic growth and cross-border trade through various programmes and initiatives.

As part of this, the new centre would significantly benefit exporters and cargo agents from south India in multiple ways. They include obtaining certificate of origin right at the airport's cargo terminal, VISA recommendation letters for those travelling overseas for business promotion and time-saving documentation for export shipments especially for perishable commodities.

TMREIS CLAIMS ITS ONLINE CLASSES ARE SUCCESSFUL

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

The Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society (TMREIS) on Thursday stated that online classes for all subjects, including Urdu, are being successfully conducted in 204 TMR schools in the state in English Medium for the last two months.

The society is conducting classes via Zoom app and also using other modes like WhatsApp, YouTube, TV and T-SAT services for students in remote areas or those with no access to smartphones.

According to a plan of action devised by the authorities, a combination of strategies for students with the support of parents is being worked out. For classes 6th to 10th, daily syllabus worksheets with content and questions or activities are sent by teachers, the official communication added.

THE SOCIETY IS
conducting classes via
Zoom app and also using
other modes like
WhatsApp, YouTube, TV
and T-SAT services for
students in remote areas or
those with no access to
smartphones.

Students want NEET put off

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Alarmed at the violations of Covid-19 standard operating procedure (SoP) on Wednesday at the JEE examination centres in Telangana, students and many others on Thursday took to Twitter and other social media platforms reiterating their demand for postponing the NEET 2020 exam scheduled for next week. Many also expressed horror and shared their own experiences at the exam centres.

On Thursday, Deccan Chronicle reported on the violation of SOPs during the first two days of the JEE Mains in the state. The report was widely shared, with more than 8,000 shares on Twitter. The Supreme Court also shared the report.

Students from across the country blamed the union education minister for lying to the country in saying that the exams were being conducted smoothly and demand that after the failures of SoP during the JEE Mains exams, the NEET should be postponed so that no more lives are risked.

A Twitter user, Anupama Parmeshwaran, wrote 'Absolutely worst condit-

Metro Rail to restart with Miyapur-LB Nagar service

HMRL to run trains at 5-minute frequency under Covid protocol

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Hyderabad Metro Rail services (HMRL) will restart its operations in the city in three phases starting on September 7 with resumption of services on corridor 1, between Miyapur and LB Nagar, with train services offered from 7 am to noon and then again from 4 pm to 9 pm. In the second phase of operations, the HMRL will restart its services in corridor 3, between Nagole and Raidurg, on September 8 that will follow the 7 am to noon, and 4 pm to 9 pm schedule, while the third phase services will begin on September 9 with resumption of services on corridor 2, between Jubilee and Mahatma Gandhi bus stations.

NEW METRO RAIL GUIDELINES

- Trains to run at 5-minute intervals, frequency to be reviewed based on passenger traffic
- Social distancing markings to be in place in stations and inside trains for standing passengers. Seating capacity will be restricted with one seat between two being marked with an 'X' that must be left unoccupied.
- Wearing of face mask mandatory for all passengers and staff. Metro Rail will make arrangements for supply of masks on payment basis to the persons arriving without mask. Suitable penalty as per regulation shall be imposed for any violation.
- Pedal type sanitiser will be kept at entry into the stations for use by passengers. People should also carry their own small bottles of sanitiser.
- PPE kits and sanitizers to be provided to employees/security personnel.
- Passenger frisking to continue as per Covid-19 safety protocols.

In a release, the HMRL said beginning September 9, services on all three corridors will begin at 7 am and run continuously till 9 pm.

The frequency of trains will be around five minutes and it will be improved or decreased based on passenger traffic

and to avoid crowding, the HMRL said.

It also said that the Gandhi Hospital, Bharatnagar; Moosapet, Musheerabad and Yusufguda Metro stations in Covid-19 containment zones will remain closed until further notice.

These decisions were

announced after a meeting chaired by HMRL managing director N.V.S. Reddy, attended by L&TMRHL managing director, K.V.B. Reddy and senior officials of the two companies here on Thursday.

The meeting discussed the preparedness and safety measures for the resumption of the services. The meeting was also attended by L&TMRHL chief operating officer, Anil Kumar Saini, senior HMRL officers, D.V.S. Raju, S.K.Das, Ananda Mohan, Vishnu Vardhan Reddy and B.N. Rajeswar among others.

STATE TO GET MORE RAINS IN SEPTEMBER

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

The state will witness bouts of moderate rainfall between September 3 and September 6, say meteorologists from Skymet.

The monsoon for the month of August 2020 has been the rainiest in the last four decades. The monsoon tally till date stands at 110 per cent.

In a report published by the private weather forecasting agency, it said that the monsoon is racing to record above-normal rains for the season of 2020.

In the upcoming days, Telangana, Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra Pradesh will also receive a fair amount of rain.

Road too far



As the monsoon rain took a breather in Hyderabad over the past one week, the poor quality of roads was exposed at many places in the city. Motorists are seen struggling here to drive at King Koti crossroads on Thursday.

— R. PAVAN

Cybercriminals 'preying' on bizmen

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Of late, the cybercrime police station had been receiving complaints of cheating in the guise of 'Online Oil Business' opportunities. Businesses, especially those relying on social media platforms for the latest trade offers, need to be

careful about such fraudsters, who had recently cheated an innocent person of lakhs of rupees.

This comes after the cybercrime police station received a complaint from one Sopan Shintre, a resident of Miyapur, against Mukesh Enterprises from Mumbai and Pol Pharma Poland, who had raised a virtual request for

demand and supply for export of Terrapleura oil extract.

The accused connected online with Sopan through a company, Universal Catalyst LLP-based at Hyderabad. When the police cross-checked the company's registration details they found no issues as the online sites were showing correct information as

that of Invoice details.

Police officials cautioned that fraudsters are approaching gullible persons through online platforms like LinkedIn, Justdial, India Mart, Facebook, Instagram. "They lure you by offering best business deals. After inducing you to make a fast buck, they compel you to transfer money into

their accounts. These days, the tricksters are sending emails to people who are into business. They claim that they were from a reputed pharma industry. The cheats state that their previous agents had died or their services were removed," ACP Cyber Crimes, Cyberabad, Shamy Babu told Deccan Chronicle.

Macca Masjid to open tomorrow

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Prayers in the historic Mecca Masjid and Shahi Masjid at Public Garden will resume from Saturday. They had remained closed for the general public due to Corona virus pandemic. This decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Home Minister Mahmood Ali, with public representatives and officials of Minority Welfare Department here on Wednesday.

Officials informed that construction work is

underway at Mecca Masjid, which will be completed soon. It was decided to allow 50 worshippers in two mosques in tune with norms framed by the Centre.

The Home Minister appealed to people to maintain social distance by using masks during prayers. He said that according to the rules issued by the Union Government, those below the age of 10 and above the age of 65 are prohibited from offering prayers in the two mosques. He said that the spread of the

virus could be prevented only through precautionary measures and people should abide by the Covid protocol.

MLAs Mumtaz Ahmed Khan and Ahmed Pasha Qadri, adviser to the government on Minority Welfare AK Khan, Secretary Minorities Welfare Ahmed Nadeem, Director Minorities Welfare Shah Nawaz Qasim, District Minority Welfare Officer and CEO Wakf Board Mohammad Khasim and others participated in the high-level meeting.

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW IN CRPF FOR APPOINTMENT OF SPECIALIST MEDICAL OFFICERS

Suitable and willing Male & Female Candidates may attend WALK-IN-INTERVIEW for engagement as Specialists Medical Officers in CRPF Hospitals on Contractual Basis, on 15-09-2020 to 16-09-2020 at 0900 hrs.

Sl. No.	Date and time of interview	Venue/ Interview to be held	Vacancies	Remuneration	Age	Qualifications
01	15-9-20 & 16-9-20 at 0900 hrs	Composite Hospital CRPF, GC Hyderabad	CH Nagpur Pathology 01 Medicine 01 Radiology 01 Total 03	Rs. 85,000/-	Below 70 years as on date of Walk-in interview	➤ Post Graduate Degree/ Diploma in concerned speciality. ➤ One and Half years experience after obtaining PG Degree. ➤ Two and half years experience after obtaining PG Diploma
			CH Pallipuram Ophthalmology 01 Pathology 01 Medicine 01 Total 03			
			CH Hyderabad Radiology 01 Total 01			
			CH Pune Anaesthesia 01 Medicine 01 Radiology 01 Surgeon 01 Total 04			
			CH Gandhinagar Surgeon 01 Total 01			
			CH Neemuch Pathology 01 Total 01			

- While appearing for Walk-in-Interview, the candidates should bring documents in original & photocopies of all relevant documents (Degree, Age Proof & Experience Certificate etc.), application in plain paper superscripting the name of post applied for & five passport size recent photographs. Interview will be followed by Medical Examination.
- Interested candidates may refer to our website www.crpff.gov.in for terms and conditions/full details as applicable for contractual appointment of GDMOs and specialist MOs.
- Appointment is purely on contract basis and the initial period of appointment will be for three years which may be extended for further 02 years on year to year basis subject to the maximum age of 70 years. On completion of tenure, the contract shall lapse automatically. However the appointment can be terminated at any time (on either side) by giving one months notice or by paying one month's salary without assigning any reasons or failure to complete three months service to the satisfaction of the competent authority.
- The appointee shall not be entitled to any benefits like provident fund, pension, gratuity, medical attendance treatment, seniority, promotion etc or any other benefit available to the Govt. servant appointed on regular basis. The appointee carried the liability to serve in any part of the country. No TA/DA and boarding/lodging will be provided during walk-in-interview.

davp 19140/11/0007/2021

MANUU POSTPONES ENTRANCE TEST

Hyderabad, Sept. 3: Maulana Azad National Urdu University has postponed the entrance test for admissions into various regular courses.

According to Prof. Siddiqui Mohammad, Registrar in-charge, in view of the prevalent situation of Covid-19 the entrance test scheduled on September 19 and 20 has been postponed. New online schedule will be notified on the university website manuu.edu.in at the earliest.

— INN

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Marketing Division Telangana & Andhra Pradesh State Office
NOTICE FOR ENGAGEMENT OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ITS CORPORATION OWNED AND CORPORATION OPERATED RETAIL OUTLETS (COCOS)

Indian Oil Corporation Limited proposes to engage Service Providers for providing manpower and various services at its Corporation owned Corporation Operated Retail Outlets at various locations in the States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The detailed advertisement, guidelines / brochure and application form are available in our website, "www.iocl.com" and the same can also be downloaded. Completed application forms should reach the office as indicated in the detailed advertisement latest by **05.10.2020, 17:00 hrs.**


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SHORT TAKES

ALL-PARTY MEET:
TRS GOVT IGNORES
SOUTH TELANGANADC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

A round table conference of all parties and people's organisations held here on Thursday resolved to launch another people's movement for completion of pending irrigation projects on Krishna River in Telangana.

The conference was attended by leaders of Congress, BJP, Telugu Desam, Telangana Jana Samithi, Telangana Inti Party, CPI, CPM and Telangana Rashtra Lok Dal, apart from representatives of Telangana Vidyavanthula Vedika, Telangana Engineers Forum, Telangana Lecturers Forum, Fluorosis Vimochana Vedika, poets, writers, artists, journalists, and organisations of unemployed youth.

The conference was organised by the Telangana Journalist Forum on the topic Krishna River - Pending Projects.

Those who spoke at the conference included A. Revanth Reddy, Vamshichand Reddy, A. P. Jitender Reddy, G. Vivek, L. Ramana, Professor Kodandaram, Cheruku Sudhakar, retired engineers Shyamprasad Reddy and Laxminarayana, among others. They expressed concern that south Telangana will turn into a desert in the coming days if the state government failed in preventing the Andhra Pradesh government from diverting Krishna waters from the Srisailam Project.

The speakers accused the TRS government of being step motherly towards south Telangana. They charged that the state government is misleading people by stating that Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project will irrigate 40 lakh acres of land, when water will actually be supplied to only 10 lakh acres in the state.

The round table conference, presided over by Telangana Journalist Forum president Palle Ravikumar, resolved to launch a joint movement without reference to politics for completion of pending projects on Krishna River.

GOVT DOCTORS
SKIPPING WORK,
SAYS BHATTIDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, SEPT. 3

Senior Congress leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka visited the Jangaon Government Hospital on Thursday and inspected the health services provided to the patients.

Speaking to the media after visiting the hospital, the Congress leader said that of the 70 medical posts at the Jangaon Government Hospital, only 30 to 40 positions are filled, of these only two or three attend duties. About 30 to 40 Covid-19 cases get reported, but most are availing treatment at private hospitals in Hyderabad.

"Due to the lack of doctors and facilities, people do not trust the government hospital. The emergency, outpatient and casualty wards do not have a single emergency medicine kit," he said.

"During my visit, I came to know that only one doctor is available in the hospital during the day shift and one during the night shift. The other remaining doctors have private clinics where they practice mostly."

He alleged that even the MLA is backing them and has gone to the extent of asking the government doctors to refer the Covid-19 positive patients to the Yashoda hospital in Hyderabad.

Congress protests against demolition of Sectt shrines

Demands timeframe for reconstruction of two mosques and temple

IREDDY SRINIVA S
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Taking their agitation against demolition of two mosques and a temple in Secretariat to the next level, Congress leaders staged a symbolic dharna at the Haj House.

Later, they lodged a complaint with Abids Police Station seeking action against Wakf Board chairman Mohammed Saleem and board members Syed Akber Nizamuddin Hussain, other board members.

Led by Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Minorities Department chairman Shaik Abdullah Sohail, senior party leaders, including Hyderabad City Congress president M. Anjan Kumar Yadav, staged dharna at the Haj House.

Malik Motasim Khan, Dr. Syed Nisar Hussain, advocate Waheed Ahmed and others.

Secretariat mosques had been notified under the Gazette of Andhra

Pradesh on 01-07-1982 at Sl. No.158.

Thereby, the Telangana State Wakf Board represented by its chairman Mohammed Saleem is custodian of these mosques. Therefore, the board chairman and other members are collectively responsible for demolition of mosques. This amounts to criminal negligence, criminal conspiracy, hurting religious feelings and inciting communal hatred and violence against Muslim community,"

Abdullah Sohail said in the complaint lodged with police.

He underlined that demolition of mosques and temple violates the Places of Worship Act. He pointed out that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao had issued a statement on 10-07-2020 confirming demolition of the places of worship and assuring that they would be reconstructed. But he did not specify where the two mosques and temple would be re-constructed.

Take us back



356 employees of Osmania University protest in front of the varsity hostel complex demanding that they be taken them back in jobs after the government terminated them from September 1 due to shortage of funds.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Facebook bans BJP
MLA for hate speech

New Delhi, Sept. 3: Under pressure from Opposition parties for alleged political bias and handling of hate speech content, social media giant Facebook on Thursday said it has banned BJP's Telangana legislator T. Raja Singh from its platform and Instagram for violating its policy on content promoting violence and hate.

However, the MLA claimed that he had no account with the social networking site for over a year. In a separate communication, Facebook also told the Congress that the company was non-partisan, denounces hate and bigotry in all forms, and strives to ensure that its platforms remain a space where people can express themselves freely.

It was responding to the Opposition party's allegation that it was soft on members of the ruling BJP while applying its hate speech rules. "We have banned Raja Singh from Facebook for violating our policy prohibiting those that promote or engage in violence and hate from having a presence on

our platform. The process for evaluating potential violators is extensive and it is what led us to this decision," a Facebook company spokesperson said in a statement.

Facebook — which counts India among its largest markets with over 300 million users — has been in the eye of a storm after a Wall Street Journal (WSJ) report alleged that the social media platform's content policies favoured the ruling party in India. The report had accused Facebook of ignoring posts containing hate speech by BJP MLA Raja Singh. Since then, the ruling BJP and Congress have been trading barbs over the social media giant's alleged political bias.

Meanwhile, responding to Congress' allegations, Facebook's Public Policy, Trust and Safety Director Neil Potts has said it has taken the party's charge of bias very seriously and will ensure that it remains non-partisan and is committed to maintaining the highest levels of integrity.

The Congress accused Facebook of interfering in India's democratic process and social harmony and being soft on members of the ruling BJP while applying its hate-speech rules. — PTI

BANDI DEMANDS
WHITE PAPER ON
PROJECTS IN STATEDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, SEPT. 3

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) state president and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar has demanded that the State government release a white paper on the Prime Minister Awas Yojana, 2BHK housing and all the irrigation projects in the state.

Mr Bandi Sanjay visited Yellandu, Kamepalli and Khammam on Thursday and slammed the TRS government for its failure in the 2BHK housing project. He demanded that the cases filed on the two youths for exposing defects in DBR housing be lifted.

The two youth had uploaded a video highlighting the flaws in the 2BHK houses. Mr Sanjay said, "Instead of correcting the quality of material used, the government is filing cases against the youths." He met the two youth at Harichandrapuram and enquired about the case.

He alleged that the government is not giving importance to the quality of materials used in the projects in TS. 2BHK housing is the worst as many houses have developed leakages. The Centre released funds under the PMAY to TS. The CM should issue a white paper on housing and other schemes in the state.

ian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA).

The minister explained that the tribal population in Telangana after bifurcation was 9.08 per cent of the total population, but the percentage of reservation for them was only 6.5. This resulted in many talented young men and women losing opportunities in employment and education.

She sought help from the centre to ensure that 100 percent local youth secure jobs in the scheduled areas of Telangana ensures.

Stating that the state government is implementing all the centrally

sponsored schemes, Satyavathi thanked Union tribal affairs minister Arjun Munda for his guidance during Coronavirus-induced lockdown. She also urged the Union minister to grant permission to start academic work at the Tribal University in Telangana at the earliest.

She pointed out that Telangana government has completed all the spade work as per UGC norms and allocated 350 acres of land for establishment of the Tribal University. But while Andhra Pradesh has started the university, Telangana is still waiting.

Minister Satyavathi for hike in ST reservations

S. A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Tribal and women welfare minister Satyavathi Rathod on Thursday stressed on the need to increase ST reservations in proportion to their percentage of population. She sought the Union government's support in restoring G. O. 3 that facilitates cent per cent reservation for Scheduled Tribe (ST) teachers in scheduled areas of Telangana.

She was speaking at a two-day National Tribal Research Conclave organised by the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry and Indi-

an Institute of Public Administration (IIPA). The minister explained that the tribal population in Telangana after bifurcation was 9.08 per cent of the total population, but the percentage of reservation for them was only 6.5. This resulted in many talented young men and women losing opportunities in employment and education.

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acres of land for establish-

ment of the Tribal University. But while Andhra Pradesh has started the university, Telangana is still waiting.

Those we love don't go away, we walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near; still loved, still missed and very dear." In laughter & in sorrow, in sunshine & through rain, we know you are watching over us, until we meet again.

Love you Pappa.
Mamma, Shweta and Smita

WATER LEVEL IN SRSP HITS 1,089.8 FEET

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, SEPT. 3

tioned that the reservoir may soon get filled.

The water level in the Sriramsagar project reached 1,089.8 feet on Thursday as against its full reservoir level of 90.31 tmc.

The project is receiving around 3,000 cusecs of water inflows from upstream areas and releasing 75,130 cusecs of water into canals.

SRSP officials have cau-

7th ANNIVERSARY

Late SARDAR HARMAHENDER SINGH BAGGA
Left on 4.9.2013

A Guiding force, Your principles and values continue to guide and inspire us always. Forever you live in our thought and hearts. We love and miss you beyond words.
IN FOND LOVING MEMORY
Sdn Inderjeet Kaur Bagga
Sdn Gurleen Kaur Bagga &
Sdn Satpal Singh Bagga,
Sdn Chanjeet Kaur Bagga &
Sdn Gurpreet Singh Bagga,
Sdn Amritpal Kaur Bagga &
Sdn Balvinder Singh Bagga,
Sdn Asdeep Kaur Bagga &
Sdn Arman Singh Bagga,
Sdn Karman Singh Bagga &
Sdn Saisha Kaur Bagga,
Sdn Karanjit Singh Bagga &
Sdn Jaskaran Singh Bagga.

OBITUARY
"The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance." Psalm 112:6

Mrs. AUGUSTINE PULLAGURA
W/o Mr. Palukuri Prabhakar
DOB: 31-08-1951 DOD: 03-09-2020
Funeral: 04-09-2020 at 10 AM at Bandlaguda Cemetery, Keesara Road.
Inserted by: Palukuri & Pullagura Family
Ph: 9642518090 Samuel
9642484866 Prabhakar
(S/2021/D00544)

OBITUARY

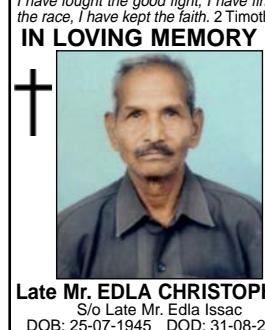
MR. ASGHAR HUSSAIN
son of Late. Mohsin Ali Mulla Fida Ali, Petrol dealer Mohsin Motor Needs, Irammanzi, Hyderabad passed away on this day 3rd September 2020, Thursday at this residence at Red hills, Hyderabad
For details contact:
9848078040
Mr. Noonuddin Youssuf Ali
(S/2021/D00544)

10th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Late T.E. VINOD KUMAR
DOB: 08-01-1970 DOD: 04-09-2020
Inserted by:
Wife: T. Mutiyam
Son: T.V. Jatin Chandra
(S/2021/D00544)

20th ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. M.V. MADHAVI
DOB: 16-04-1954 DOD: 04-09-2000
W/o M.P. Venkat Rao (Retd. Officer, SBH)
**M.V. Hemant (Son),
M.H. Priyanka (Daughter-in-law),
M.H. Samarth & M.H. Vanika (Grand Children)**
Sangeetha Kondevita (Daughter),
Sridhar K. (Son-in-law),
Ritvik & Reyna (Grand Children)
9849203726 / 9849742591
(S/2021/D00541)

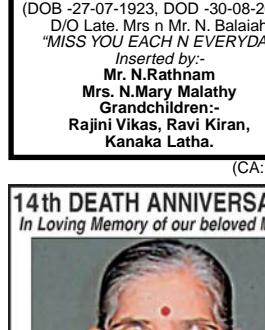
REMEMBERING YOU EVERYDAY

Late Mr. EDLA CHRISTOPHER
S/o Late Mr. Edla Issac
DOB: 27-07-1945 DOD: 30-08-2020
Memorial Service will be held on 04-09-2020 at 12 noon in CSI Garrison Wesley Church, Trimulgherry.
Inserted by: Son, Daughters & Their Families
Contact No. 9490119924, 9885230045
(S/2021/D00542)

OBITUARY

RITA MATHEWS
(Retd. Head Nurse, Gandhi Hospital)
Passed away on 2nd Sept. 2020
May her soul rest in peace.
Inserted by:
LOVING FAMILY MEMBERS
(CA-3439)

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

Late Miss. NERICA KANAKA BALAIYAH
(DOB: 27-07-1923, DOD: 30-08-2009)
D/o Late. Mrs n Mr. N. Balaiyah
"MISS YOU EACH N DAY"
Inserted by:-
Mr. N.Rathnam
Mrs. N.Mary Malathy
Grandchildren:-
Rajini Vikaas, Ravi Kiran,
Kanaka Latha.
(CA-3400)

14th Death Anniversary
In Loving Memory of our beloved Mother

Dr. SHIVRAJ DASARI
"Those we love don't go away, we walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near; still loved, still missed and very dear." In laughter & in sorrow, in sunshine & through rain, we know you are watching over us, until we meet again.
Love you Pappa.
Mamma, Shweta and Smita
(S/2021/D00527)

OBITUARY

Smt. DARSHAN KUMARI
Your presence was always a pleasure. Today your memories are our treasure. You were our pillar of strength.
Colonel Sanjay Kumar (Son)
Akul & Akash (Grandsons)
Mob: 9492101014
A good friend to all
Helped and served needy.
(True Follower of Gandhian Principles in India and abroad)
May God Bless Him
R. Ram Reddy, B.Sc (Ag), Osmania & Friends

SHORT TAKES

PADDY FARMERS
AFFECTED BY
UREA SHORTAGENAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, SEPT. 3

Urea shortage is plaguing farmers across Kadapa district. They are running to fertilizer shops but in vain.

Falling good rains over the past week, water was released through KC canal making it perfect to sow paddy. The government has affiliated Rythu Bharosa Kendram (RBK) to each village secretariat in order to provide farmers with fertilizers, pesticides and seeds. In practice, however, it is not being implemented properly. Farmers will need urea at an average rate of two bags per acre.

More than 40,000 hectares of paddy are cultivated in the district during the current Kharif. With the timely release of irrigation water to the KC canal, all strategic farmers are in the process of irrigating 25,000 hectares of extent for only paddy under KC canal. At the commencement of the Kharif season, farmers were jubilant as urea was delivered at their doorstep under RBKs. They never expected such a shortage.

In the past, only land passbook, mobile number and Aadhar number were asked for procuring urea. This time they are collecting voter ID as per the directions of the Union Government. RBKs are offering urea from Nagarjuna and Coromandel companies at Rs 266.50 whereas private dealers said that diesel prices and labour charges had gone up because of which they were selling a bag of urea for ₹300.

AP CROSSES 10K
MARK AGAIN, 75
DIE OF COVID-19DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 3

In the last 24 hours, Andhra Pradesh has recorded 10,199 new Covid-19 cases taking its tally to 4,65,739. 75 deaths took the death toll to 4,200.

The state health authorities in their Covid-19 bulletin on Thursday reported that out of 62,225 samples tested, 10,199 individuals have been tested Covid-19 positive. Out of total number of 39,05,775 samples tested so far, 3,57,829 patients have been discharged after recovery while 1,03,701 patients are still active with the virus and are undergoing treatment in various hospitals in the state.

Among new confirmed coronavirus infections, East Godavari tops the state with 1,090, followed by 982 in Nellore, 926 in Prakasam, 898 in Kadapa, 885 in Chittoor, 854 in Anantapur, 836 in West Godavari, 805 in Guntur, 717 in Srikakulam, 695 in Visakhapatnam, 616 in Kurnool, 577 in Vizianagaram and 318 in Krishna.

In terms of cumulative Covid-19 positive cases, East Godavari has been the worst hit with 62,900, followed by 46,871 in Kurnool, 43,248 in Anantapur, 39,775 in West Godavari, 39,726 in Chittoor, 38,889 in Visakhapatnam, 38,083 in Guntur, 33,663 in Nellore, 28,811 in Kadapa, 26,027 in Srikakulam, 25,444 in Prakasam, 22,088 in Vizianagaram, 17,310 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Power bill amount to be credited into bank a/cs

CM announces electricity provided to farmers will always be free, not a single connection will be removed

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
AMARAVATI, SEPT. 3

cash transfer mode, where the money will be directly credited to farmers' bank accounts for the power consumed by them in their fields and they, in turn, shall pay the power bills to Discoms. This gives a sense of feeling that the farmers have been paying for the power consumed and the Discoms will not go into the red.

"The Chief Minister is particular about free power to farmers and that no burden should fall on them," the minister said.

He said the government shall implement the scheme, through direct

power supply during daytime should be ensured, and the cost of smart metres should be borne by Discoms and State. A 10,000 MW solar power plant and power reforms will not affect the farmers.

Smart metres will be installed and dedicated bank accounts will be created solely for the purpose of paying the subsidy amount. The government is spending ₹1,700 crore for strengthening electricity feeders and ₹8,300 crore per annum towards this scheme.

While it was the YSR government that introduced

free power to farmers' schemes, TDP watered it down and only 40 percent of feeders were working.

Now it has been brought to 89 percent and the remaining gap will be filed by Rabti. All the existing 18 lakh power connections will be regularized, he said.

The Cabinet also gave in-principle approval for construction of two barrages downstream to Prakasam barrage, each with a holding capacity of three TMC. The first one will be constructed between Penamaluru and Mangalagiri with an estimated budget of ₹1,215 crore and the sec-

ond between Mopidevi and Repalle at a cost of ₹1,273 crore.

Also approved were irrigation projects like Babu Jagjivan Ram Utharandhra Sujala Sravanti for irrigating eight lakh acres in North Andhra region, with a budget of ₹15,389.80 crore, the minister said.

The cabinet gave its nod for constructing Varikupudisila lift irrigation project in Palanadu region with a budget of ₹1,273 crore. As part of Rayalaseema Drought Mitigation Project, the cabinet approved works of 14 reservoirs and lift irrigation projects.

AP GOVT TO BAN ONLINE GAMBLING

DC CORRESPONDENT
AMARAVATI, SEPT. 3

government has decided to ban online gambling due to the harm it was causing to people. Amendments will be carried out accordingly to the State Gaming Act, 1974.

Organisers of online gambling will get a jail term of one year along with a fine for the first offence. Jail term will go up to two years with fine for repeat offenders.

Those playing online games will also be sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

TTD wants CAG to audit accounts

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEP. 3

report from 2014-15 to 2019-20 has already been completed by the state audit department, the board also asked the government to request CAG to take up a special audit of the same period and furnish its report within six months.

The move comes at a time when a petition filed by Swamy, seeking liberation of Tirumala and 11 other temples from government control, is pending in the AP High Court. The PIL also seeks a direction to the state to place the audit report for the past five years before CAG. The TTD in its resolution also stated that the board had reviewed the accounting and audit systems.

This was disclosed by BJP Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy in a tweet on Wednesday. He posted the resolution copy along with his tweet.

The trust board, which had met on August 28 under the chairmanship of Y.V. Subba Reddy, passed a resolution to this effect. Since the audit

Liquor price hike rolled back

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 3

To curb smuggling of popular brands of liquor and beer from other states like Telangana due to the vast price difference, the state government has reduced their price and hiked prices of top brands to compensate for the loss of revenue.

The government issued GO MS No. 256 on Thursday fixing rates on IMFL, foreign liquor, beer, wine and ready-to-drink varieties supplied by wholesale IMFL depots to retail licensees. The revised rates will come into effect on Friday.

In comparison to the existing prices that were fixed on May 3, beer measuring 355/350 ml and 500/650 ml and ready-to-drink varieties of 250/275/330 ml will now be ₹30 cheaper.

Among popular IMFL and FL brands, 50/60/90 ml will be less by ₹10, while 180/200 ml will be cheaper by

₹39 and that of 350/360/375 ml by ₹60 and there will be ₹120 slash of 700/750 ml brands.

However, there will be no change in prices of IMFL and FL varieties priced between ₹150 and ₹190. Those priced in the ₹190-210 range will now cost more by ₹40 for 50/60/90 ml and by ₹300 for 1,000 ml. There will be an increase of ₹40 for those sold in the ₹210-290 range for 50/60/90 ml and ₹340 for 1,000 ml.

Those in the ₹290-360 category will now be dearer by ₹60 for 50/60/90 ml and by ₹470 for 1,000 ml. For varieties priced above ₹360 up to ₹530, the cost will be up by ₹80 for 50/60/90 ml and ₹740 for 1,000 ml. For products priced in the ₹530-600 range there is a cost escalation of ₹120 for 50/60/90 ml and ₹1,110 for 1,000 ml. Brands priced above ₹600 to cost more by ₹140 for 50/60/90 ml and by ₹1,320 for 1,000 ml.

Note --> 1. The complete information of above E-Procurement tenders is available on website "www.treps.gov.in". The persons who desire to participate against E-Tenders, are advised to electrically register themselves on the above website for which they would be required to have a digital certificate from certifying agency authorized under IT Act 2000, by Govt. of India. Manual offers against E-Tenders will not be accepted. Tender notice No. 219-S/H/TM/052020-Dated 03.09.2020 1918/2020

CORRIGENDUM NO. 1

The following changes have been made against E-Tender Notice No. : AP-Mech-03-2020, Dated: 25-08-2020, SN. 1; Item Page no. 70 of TDC, Schedule-I item no. 3, Estimated Rate now to be read as ₹ 389.83 instead of ₹ 389.84; Other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

Sr. DME, Alipurdur Jn., NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

EE-DIV.15, SEC'D BAD ZONE, GHMC

'E' Procurement Nit No: 23/EE-DIV.15/SBZ/GHMC/2020-21 Dt: 02-09-2020

Name of the Work: Maintenance of various types of toilets in various areas of Circle-15, Sec'd Bad Zone, GHMC (EO). Events 1 Start Date: 03-09-2020 from 3.00 p.m. Last Date & Time of Bid: 09-09-2020 at 3.00 p.m. Sri. K. Ramesh Babu, Secy, Sec Bad Zone, GHMC, Cell: 9709374055. Address of the Concerned: Executive Engineer, Div-15, SBZ, GHMC Abids, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Further details can be seen at E-Procurement: www.tender.telangana.gov.in.

R.O. No: 4572-PP/CL/Adv1/1/2020-21 Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, DIV.15, SBZ, GHMC

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF T.S. LIMITED

OPERATION : NAGARKURNOL CIRCLE,
Short Tender Notification No. 01/20-21

Bids are invited through Open-Tendering from eligible Bidders for 8 Nos works (SP No. 01 to 07) pertains Divisional Engineer, Op. NGKL will be processed as Divisional Engineer, Operation Nagarkurnol and 1 no work (Sp No. 01) pertains Superintending Engineer, Operation, Nagarkurnol. NGKL will be processed as Superintending Engineer, Operation, Nagarkurnol. (Sales from 05.09.2020 to 15.09.2020 submission and opening on 16/09/2020)

Phone No.: 08540-225392

SE/OP/NGKL Housing Board Colony, Nagarkurnool

Government of India
Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)
Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)

4th Floor, Bangla Sahib Road, Behind Kal Mandir, Gole Market, New Delhi-110001

Vacancy circular for filling up various posts on deputation
(Foreign Service term) basis at UIDAI Regional Office, Hyderabad.

UIDAI invites applications for filling up the posts of (i) Deputy Director (Pay Matrix Level-11), (ii) Section Officer (Pay Matrix Level-08), (iii) Assistant Section Officer (Pay Matrix Level-06) and (iv) Assistant Accounts Officer (Pay Matrix Level-08) on deputation basis (Foreign Service terms) in UIDAI at Regional Office, Hyderabad.

The application may be furnished in the prescribed proforma and forwarded to ADG (HR), Unique Identification Authority of India, Regional Office, 6th Floor, East Block, Swarna Jayanthi Complex, Beside Matrivanam, Ameerpet Hyderabad-500038, Telangana State. The last date for receipt of application complete in all respects is 15.09.2020. Since these vacancies are to be filled up on deputation basis, private candidates are not eligible.

Application received after the last date or otherwise found incomplete shall not be considered. Further details may be obtained from the website www.uidai.gov.in.

Assistant Director General (HR)

Now Aadhaar Enrollment & Updation Facilities can also be availed at Aadhaar Seva Kendra (ASK). To locate one near you, visit UIDAI.GOV.IN or Call 1947.

KARNATAKA STATE NURSING COUNCIL

BENGALURU, KARNATAKA, INDIA

(Constituted under the Karnataka Nurses, Midwives & Health Visitors Act, 1961)

No.71, Nightingale Towers, A-Street, 6th Cross, A.R. Extn.,

Gandhinagar, Bengaluru - 560 009, Phone: 080-22383230 Fax: 080-41516486

E-mail: karnatakastatenursingcouncil@gmail.com Website: www.ksnc.karnataka.gov.in

No: KSNC/230/2020-21

Dated: 01-09-2020

Sub: Recognition of Nursing Schools / Colleges affiliated to KSNC
Ref: (1) Writ Petition Nos. 25355-25357/2017 (EDN-RES) in the High Court of Karnataka.
(The Karnataka State Association of the Management of Nursing and Allied Health Science Institutions & others Vs. The Indian Nursing Council)
(2) Civil Appeal Nos. 12759-12761 of 2017 in the Supreme Court of India.
(3) Civil Appeal No: 658 Of 2019 S.L.P (C) No.32603 Of 2017 (The Karnataka State Association of the Management of Nursing and Allied Health Science Institutions & others Vs. The Indian Nursing Council)
(4) GOK Order No. HFW 212 RGU 2016 Dtd: 15-12-2016 & 17-05-2017

The List of Nursing Schools / Colleges affiliated to Karnataka State Nursing Council for the academic year 2019-20 is hosted on KSNC Website: www.ksnc.karnataka.gov.in. The continuation of affiliation for the academic year 2020-21 is under process. As per the Court orders issued (ref. 1, 2 & 3) and clarification issued by Government of Karnataka vide letter Dated: 14-12-2016 & 17-05-2017 (Ref. 3) "Recognition of Nursing Schools / Colleges by Government of Karnataka, Karnataka State Nursing Council and Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences are only mandatory requirements for running of Nursing Schools / Colleges in the State of Karnataka" This is for information to all aspiring Students willing to obtain admissions in the Schools / Colleges affiliated to KSNC / RGUHS for GN, BSc(N) PBLSc(N), M.Sc Nursing Courses & etc., in the State of Karnataka. For more information log on to www.ksnc.karnataka.gov.in. The Reciprocal registration of the nursing candidates will be undertaken by Karnataka State Nursing Council. The nurses are entitled to practice anywhere in India as supreme court order No: Civil Appeal No: 958 of 2019 S.L.P(C) No. 32603 Of 2017.

Sd/- REGISTRAR
Karnataka State Nursing Council

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice

Chief Engineer/TMC, Northern Railway, Headquarters office, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites tenders through E-Procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S. E-Tender No.	Description of item	Qty	Due Date Time
1. A09P90STM2020	PORTABLE D.C. WELDING GENERATOR (AS PER RDSO SPECIFICATION NO. TM/SM/20 DT. 19.11.1992)	18 Nos	25.09.2020 at 11:30 hours
2. A10P90STM2020	WELD TRIMMER POWER PACK VERSION FOR A.T. WELDING AS PER RDSO SPECIFICATION NO. TM/SM/20 Rev.01 OF 07/2007	32 Nos	25.09.2020 at 11:30 hours
3. A11P90STM2020	Rail Cutting Wheel Abrasive Disc RDSO Specification no. TM/SM/2 (Rev.01 OF 07/2007)	3805 Nos	25.09.2020 at 11:30 hours
4. A12P90TM2020	ABRASIVE RAIL CUTTER AS PER RDSO SPECIFICATION NO. TM/SM/1 REV/01 OF 2012	31 Nos	25.09.2020 at 11:30 hours
5. A09P90TM2020	LUB OIL VALVOLINE CUMMINS PLUS PREMIUM BLUE 7800 PLUS 1/210 LTR CUMMINS PART NO. 504626	1050 Ltr	25.09.2020 at 11:30 hours

Note --> 1. The complete information of above E-Proc

DECCAN Chronicle

4 SEPTEMBER 2020

Axing Question Hour lets govt avoid accountability

The Narendra Modi government's move to use the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic as an excuse to scrap Question Hour in Parliament's coming Monsoon Session, starting September 14, should cause little surprise: in the past six years it has always tried to avoid being held accountable for its actions before the House, despite overwhelming numbers in the Lok Sabha. It seems Shashi Tharoor's prediction four months ago that "strongmen leaders will use the pandemic excuse to stifle democracy and dissent" was not far off the mark. In our parliamentary system, where the executive is responsible to the legislature, the device MPs can most effectively employ is to put questions to ministers, and if not satisfied with the minister's reply, by asking follow-up questions on the floor of the House. If a minister fails to answer these properly, the government's prevarication will be visible to all in the House, and since the telecast of parliamentary proceedings from the 1990s, to the country. This is what the government was so desperate to avert, as there are many questions out there — on its tackling of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns, its economic mismanagement, the Chinese aggression in Ladakh and its occupation of Indian territory — which it is reluctant to answer.

What, really, is Parliament's main function? For the government, the answer is to pass the legislation the Cabinet recommends, rubber stamp ordinances promulgated in between sessions, and not stop the executive doing whatever it wants. But for most people, or constitutional experts, it is to hold the government accountable to those who put it in power. Cancelling Question Hour deprives MPs of the lone device they have to exercise some control over the executive.

The government says as Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha sessions will be in shifts, to allow "distancing" in MPs' seating, there is no time for Question Hour. The fact is while a "normal" session sits 30 hours a week, six hours daily, the coming session will have 28 hours: four hours a day, but sitting all days of the week, including Saturdays and Sundays. Of this, half an hour will be saved daily as Zero Hour is cut to 30 minutes, and there will be no private members' business on Fridays. Trinamul Raja Sabha MP Derek O'Brien calculated that due to the cuts, the coming session has an extra 30 minutes, more than enough time for Question Hour. Then the Centre argued officials would have to visit Parliament to assist ministers, increasing visitors in pandemic times, but the solution is simple: to allow ministers and officials to communicate via phone or video conferencing.

While the government claims some Opposition leaders were consulted, MPs asked why an all-party meeting wasn't called, as this will be the first time in India's history that a regular parliamentary session will be held without Question Hour. Several MPs said this would make Parliament a "notice board", saying questioning the government was the "oxygen of parliamentary democracy". Others likened it to the general climate of intolerance, with Trinamul MP Mahua Moitra tweeting: "Asking questions in court is contempt. Asking questions outside Parliament is sedition. And now asking questions inside Parliament is forbidden."

The government says Zero Hour, where MPs raise vital issues, will continue, though curtailed. But there's a critical difference. Ministers, even if present in the House, need not respond there, unlike in Question Hour, when they must.

Banning apps will achieve little

India has fired the second round of its soft ammunition on China by banning 118 mobile apps, including the very popular gaming app PUBG even as India-China border skirmishes take a hard turn and India preemptively occupies strategic peaks and ridges on the southern side of Pangong Tso. India had banned a batch of 59 mobile apps, including TikTok, as the border tension showed signs of escalation in June this year.

The government has stated that these apps were "prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order", mostly the grounds for putting reasonable restrictions on the right to freedom and expression under Article 19 (2) of the Constitution.

The governmental move could offer people the satisfaction that India is getting even with China but the hard fact is that it is not. China casts its net wider and deeper. Latest reports say Chinese exports have ballooned during the pandemic and matched those in the pre-Christmas season which saw the highest numbers; the US's tough talks and tax barriers could little dent its business. China is the only major economy in the world that has recorded a GDP growth in the last quarter when every other economy, including the United States and India, contracted to historic levels. The latest on the defence front is a report of the US department of defence that says the Chinese Navy with 350 vessels is the largest in the world, dwarfing even the US Navy that has 293 of them. The way India's eastern neighbour occupies key infrastructure projects in our neighbourhood and how it invests in strategic assets, including in lithium mines around the world, are an indicator of its future plans. Mobile apps are hardly the tools to contain it, should we aim at that?

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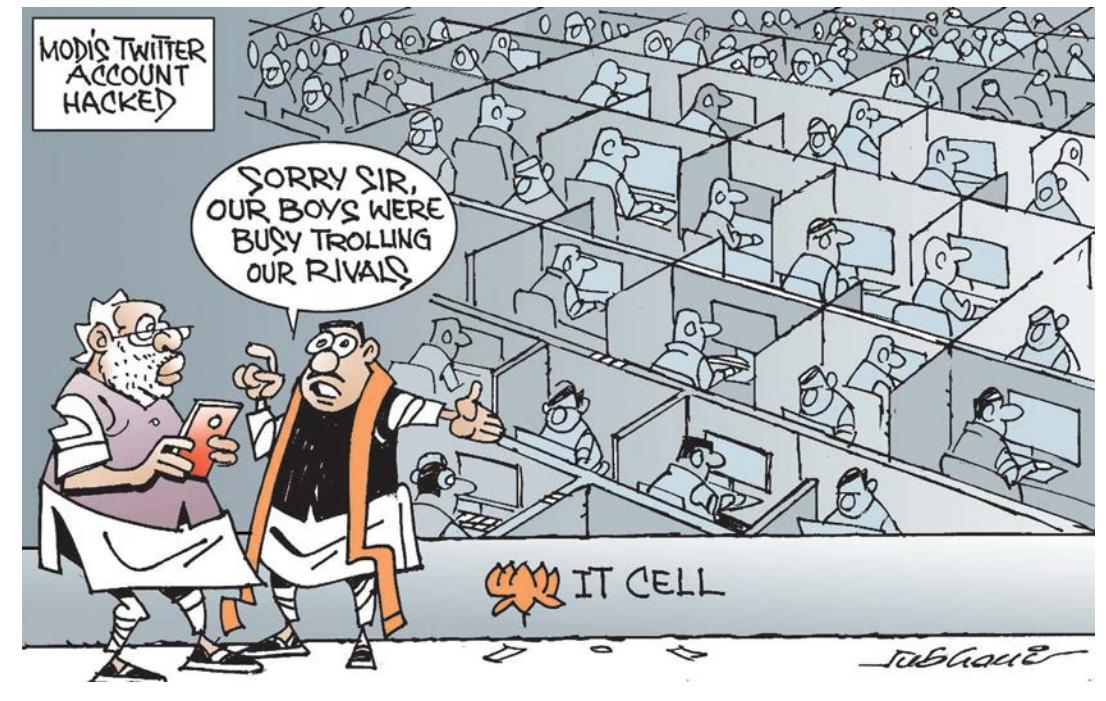
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Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thiycaud (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014

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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Subhani



In any crisis, take care of the most vulnerable



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

Is geography destiny? Those who inhabit placeless utopias like global citizens with much sought-after skills tend to argue that digital technologies and virtual communications have now erased the inconvenient boundaries of the physical world.

But the Covid-19 pandemic has sledgehammered the brutal lesson that geography's death has been hugely exaggerated. Surroundings matter. Where we are affects what happens to us. Mostly.

One area where this has been most visible is education.

Covid-19 has not only revealed vulnerabilities and inequalities in the education systems across the world, it has also made the situation worse.

Students living in areas reeling from floodwaters or where the roads got washed away or where there is no public transport and private transport is beyond what their family could afford trying to reach examination centres far away were not in the same place, literally and figuratively, as those in the big cities. The South Delhi or South Mumbai student who reached the test centre in a private vehicle was not in the same situation as someone else who had to use multiple modes of transport, negotiating difficult terrain, and great uncertainty, even if both were equally well-prepared or at par academically.

What happens to those who don't "make it" to the exam hall, for no fault of theirs?

And it is not just about the JEE and NEET. There are many other competitive tests like National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) — which millions of young Indians aspire to crack because they see it as the only way out of their social and geographical limitations.

"The education crisis during Covid-19 was fuelled by deep pre-existing inequalities," says a recent report by Unesco. "Education systems responded with distance learning solutions, all of which offered less or more imperfect substitutes for classroom instruction," said the report, noting that while many poorer countries opted for radio and televi-

son lessons, 55 per cent of low-income, 73 per cent of lower-middle-income and 93 per cent of upper-middle-income countries adopted online learning platforms for primary and secondary education.

The Covid-19 lockdown has exposed the all-too obvious fact that Digital India does not completely miss out on learning. They have been using a variety of different approaches simultaneously, along

side online classes. In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, for example, the department of education has also taken steps to telecast the pre-recorded digital classes through the local cable TV networks for the students of Class 8 to Class 12. These telecasts started on local cable TV channels from April. An alternative learning method was also started for primary and upper primary classes through audio classes on All India Radio, Port Blair.

In Bihar, during the lockdown, classes for students of Class I to Class 12 are being run on Doordarshan. Classes on television are run in the same way as in the normal classroom.

These may seem minor details in the broader narrative of the pandemic, but they impact millions of lives. They also show there are local resourceful adaptations to deal with the education crisis, worsened by Covid-19. This is especially true of school education.

These are not perfect solutions, but they graphically with exclusion, which remains a stark reality even in developed and socially progressive states. A Class 9 student set herself ablaze in Kerala's Malappuram district because she missed online classes. The family had no television or smartphone at home.

The key lesson — policy-makers have to factor in the needs of the most vulnerable. Those on top of the food chain will, and do manage better, even during a crisis. It is those at the bottom who need to be at the top of our policy priorities.

The Covid-19 lockdown has exposed the all-too obvious fact that Digital India does not quite mean the same thing for every Indian

lems on the ground. Even though school education has gone online, states are using parallel methods to try and ensure that geographically or financially disadvantaged students don't completely miss out on learning. They have been using a variety of different approaches simultaneously, along

side online classes. In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, for example, the department of education has also taken steps to telecast the pre-recorded digital classes through the local cable TV networks for the students of Class 8 to Class 12. These telecasts started on local cable TV channels from April. An alternative learning method was also started for primary and upper primary classes through audio classes on All India Radio, Port Blair.

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The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com.

LETTERS

GHMC ELECTIONS

Even though the TRS is banking on 2BHK houses to win GHMC polls, it won't be that easy (*TRS banking on 2BHK houses to win GHMC polls, DC, Sept. 3*). The TRS has not solved numerous problems, especially in health-care.

Ajay Kranthi Reddy
Hyderabad

Food, clothing and shelter are the prime requirements of an individual. Therefore, a leader must check if the citizens are being provided with them or not. If these are provided without any hurdles, then definitely that party will win.

Chandra Kantha Awasthi
Hyderabad

FINANCE MINISTER

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman blamed God for the economic mess and evaded questions. During the onion crisis she said she doesn't eat onion. In all probability she is not aware of the price of petrol as her convoy of cars is taken care of with the taxpayers' money. Even rent, food and medical emergencies are taken care of with the taxpayers' money. She must take expert advice.

Lal Melwani
Hyderabad

HALT COVID TONE

For the last five months a recorded message on Covid-19 is heard on our mobiles when we make calls. By now everyone must be aware of the precautions to protect themselves. Hence, this recorded message can be stopped.

Chandrasekhar
Secunderabad

250 MPs back new move on Telangana

NEW DELHI, Sept. 3 Two hundred and fifty members of Parliament have subscribed to a new proposal for an executive set-up designed to meet the aspirations of the people of Telangana region without breaking up the Telugu-speaking Andhra Pradesh.

A memorandum incorporating the proposal was submitted to the Prime Minister

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle India Gandhi, this afternoon. The proposal is for statutorily making a committee of Andhra Pradesh Cabinet (comprising of all its Telangana Ministers) responsible to the Telangana Regional Committee for the implementation of the committee's decisions on matters affecting economic development, planning and education in the Telangana. — PTI & UNI.

Congress members to deliberate at present on teamwork and possible alliances advantageous to them in the coming Assembly elections. Besides, they need to start planning for the 2024 parliamentary polls from right now and not leave crucial decisions till the last minute. This refers to the formal induction of Priyanka in the party as general secretary of Uttar Pradesh's east wing when just a few months were left for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

The political drama that followed the letter has certainly helped the letter writers garner attention. Their simple message apparently is that their roles in party politics must not be sidelined. They have made a point, democratically speaking. The party needs to give greater importance to functioning as a team. A united Congress has a chance to strengthen its ranking, divided, the futures of all party members are at stake!

The writer is a journalist with specialisation in communication studies and nuclear diplomacy. She is also the author of several books.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

ADITYA SINHA
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Nilofar Suhrawardy



The storm created over a letter demanding change in the Congress Party's leadership has certainly dominated newspaper headlines for a while now. Given that no basic change is expected in the party's leadership, what can be inferred from this political drama? One can call it nothing but, considering the nature of the letter, the political stature of its writers and subsequent developments ending in Sonia Gandhi continuing as interim president. Ms Gandhi has held this post since Rahul Gandhi's resignation as president following the dismal performance of the Congress in the 2019 parliamentary polls.

Now let us consider this issue from another angle. The letter writers certainly don't seem to have any inclination either to quit the party or be considered for heading it. Also, neither of their names are as strongly associated with the Congress nationwide as are those of the members of the Gandhi family. Their political reach is limited to their regional domain, while others are known more for their professional and intellectual

SHORT TAKES

MAN KILLS MOTHER FOR CRITICISING HIM

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 3

A man allegedly stabbed his mother to death with a knife at Chandapur village in Jagatsinghpur district late on Wednesday night.

According to reports, accused Nityananda Das was being questioned by police at his house over attacking a person in the locality when his mother Kalyani (65) criticised his action and reprimanded him.

In a fit of rage, Nityananda thrust a knife into the woman leaving her grievously injured. She was rushed to Raghunathpur Hospital, where the doctors declared her dead.

On the other hand, police with the help of fire personnel managed to apprehend the accused who went onto the roof holding the weapon of crime and threatened that he would kill himself if any attempts are made to arrest him.

In another gruesome act, a man allegedly attacked and slit the throats of his father and elder brother over property dispute at Ganesh Bazaar in Daspalla here in Nayagarh district on Wednesday night.

The victims were identified as Harilal Sahoo and his elder son Laxmidhara Sahoo while the one who attacked the duo is named Santosh Sahoo.

BSF SEIZES 1,000 COUGH SYRUP BOTTLES

Malda, Sept. 3: Border Security Force (BSF) personnel have seized 1,000 codeine-based cough syrup bottles while they were being smuggled into Bangladesh through Ganga in West Bengal's Malda district, an officer of the paramilitary force said on Thursday.

Acting on a tip-off, BSF personnel posted at Shobhapur border outpost increased vigil and found a package floating in the river and drifting towards Bangladesh on Wednesday, he said, adding a team set out on a speed boat and seized it.

A total of 1,000 cough syrup bottles, worth ₹1.69 lakh, and a mobile phone were found in the package, which was kept afloat with the help of thermocol, the officer said.

India-based smugglers float such packages in Ganga by strategically placing a mobile phone on top and as it drifts closer to Bangladesh, they start calling the number, causing the mobile phone's light to flash, thus alerting their counterparts waiting for the goods in the neighbouring country, he said.

Codeine-based cough syrups are used as intoxicants in Bangladesh, where consumption of liquor is banned.

SC TO CONSIDER REVIEW PLEA ON NEET, JEE EXAMS

New Delhi, Sept. 3: The Supreme Court is scheduled to consider on Friday a plea of ministers of six Opposition-ruled states seeking review of its August 17 order allowing holding of NEET and JEE exams physically.

The ministers had claimed that the top court order failed to secure students' "right to life" and ignored "teething logistical difficulties" to be faced in conducting the exams during the Covid-19 pandemic.

National Testing Agency (NTA) which conducts both the exams is holding JEE Main exams from September 1 to September 6, while NEET exams will be held on September 13.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, B.R. Gavai and Krishna Murari will consider the review plea in chambers.

The review matters in the top court are usually considered 'in-chambers' through circulation of the petition among all the judges of the bench. The judges then decide 'in-chambers' whether there is any merit in the review petition to re-examine the case in the open court hearing.

The apex court's August 17 order, which allowed the exams to be held has become a political battle as the ministers of six states — ruled by parties like Congress, TMC, JMM, NCP and Shiv Sena — sought postponement of the exams "in a manner that achieves the twin objectives of ensuring that the academic year of the students is not wasted and their health and safety is not compromised."



Guest workers wait to board a bus and reach their workplace at Babughat bus stand, during Unlock 4, in Kolkata on Thursday.

5 states account for 70% of total Covid-19 deaths

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3

per worldometers.info and 61.15 lakh according to Johns Hopkins followed by Brazil – 40 lakh as per worldometers.info and 39.97 lakh according to Johns Hopkins.

Officials said India has 49 deaths per million population compared to the global average which is 111 per million population. The highest is in the UK, 611 per million population followed by Brazil 582 and the US 573.

However, officials said 87 per cent of the deaths in India have been in the age group of 45 years and above while 50 per cent of the deaths have been in the age group of 60 years and above.

According to the health ministry five states — Maharashtra (24.77%), Andhra Pradesh (12.64%), Karnataka (11.58%), Uttar Pradesh (6.92%), and Tamil Nadu (6.42%) — account for 62% of the total cases in the country.

These five states also account for 70% of total deaths due to COVID-19 India.

However, despite rising number of cases in these states, officials said, there has been 6.8% decline in Maharashtra's daily active cases this week compared to August 13-19.

Kerala junior docs threaten to resign over non-payment

Pinarayi Vijayan says government will not reconsider salary cut decision

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPT. 3

With more than half of the 900 plus junior doctors deployed in Covid First Line Treatment Centres (CFLTC) in Kerala yet to receive their monthly salary, they have threatened to resign from their duty from September 10.

The doctors have sent notice along with resignation letters to the government. The doctors were appointed in Covid centres for a period of three months, in the wake of a spike in cases of Covid-19 in the state.

When asked about the junior doctors' decision to submit resignation letters due to nonpayment of salaries and salary cut, the chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said

"they may be doing it for their personal interests."

To another question whether the government will reconsider the salary cut, the chief minister replied in the negative.

The directorate of health services included the junior doctors in the government's salary challenge campaign under which six days' salary has to be contributed to the chief minister's distress relief fund every month.

A section of junior doctors claimed that only 400-odd doctors had received salary so far and that too after facing salary challenge cut and tax deduction.

"Some of us who received the salary faced a cut of ₹8,200 on account of salaries and salary cut, the chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said

₹27,000," said a doctor posted in a CFLTC in Ernakulam district.

The mistreatment of junior doctors comes at a time when Covid-19 situation in the state is getting worse by the day.

According to the government's own estimates the state might witness a daily spike of 10,000 to 15,000 cases during September and early October.

"In many CFLTCs more than 100 patients are being managed by just two doctors. Many work continuously for 12 to 16 hours a day," said a doctor in Alappuzha district.

Even the one week leave that was promised after 10 days continuous duty is not being given at many places. There have been instances of doctors being recalled after two days of leave. With the rise in

patients the workload of the doctors too has increased. Apart from the regular monitoring and treatment of patients, they have to do swab collection of asymptomatic patients and even discharge external duties like random testing among communities.

The junior doctors are demanding that they be treated on par with doctors deployed by NHM.

"Doctors deputed from NHM for CFLTC duties are being paid ₹52,000 including 20 per cent risk allowance and insurance coverage," said a doctor.

Kerala on Thursday recorded 1,553 cases of Covid-19 even as 1,950 persons were cured of the disease. Of the new cases, 1,391 contracted the disease through contact, the source of 156 persons is

yet to be ascertained, 40 health workers are also infected. The state recorded 10 deaths on Thursday.

At a press conference here the Chief Minister said that the increase of cases anticipated by the government has not happened so far. However, the next two weeks would be crucial, he said.

During Onam festival there was a huge rush of people in markets and public places. Many restrictions were lifted keeping in view the need to allow social life to move smoothly."

"However, its impact will be known only after 14 days. We need to be prepared for a possible surge in cases," he said and added that the slight fall in cases was because of less number of testing in the state."

MP records 30 deaths in a day

RABINDRA NATH CHOWDHURY | DC
Bhopal, SEPT. 3

Madhya Pradesh has reported a record 30 deaths due to coronavirus in the state in 24 hours, the highest single day toll witnessed so far.

The state has also recorded the biggest single day spike in cases in the last 24 hours at 1,672.

Of the 23,722 samples tested in the last 24 hours, 1,672 tested positive.

Bhopal reported 259 fresh cases on Thursday while Indore recorded 320 cases. Barring Guna dis-

trict, all other 51 districts in the state have recorded deaths due to coronavirus. The state has reported 68,086 coronavirus positive cases and 1,483 deaths as on Thursday. The coronavirus positive cases in the state have almost doubled in August.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reviewed the pandemic situation at a meeting here where several decisions were taken to revive economic activities, particularly in agriculture and commercial sectors.

FACEBOOK WRITES TO CONG, SAYS IT IS NON-PARTISAN

SREEPARNA CHAKRABORTY | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3

Having faced a barrage of criticism from the Congress over allegations of political bias, social media giant Facebook on Thursday informed the party that it was "non-partisan" and denounced "hate speech" in any form.

The Congress on its part said it would wait for "further concrete" action.

In a letter to Congress General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal, Facebook Trust and Safety Director, Public Policy Neil Potts said: "First and foremost, we want to take this opportunity to state that we are non-partisan and strive to ensure that our platforms remain a space where people can express themselves freely".

"We take allegations of bias seriously and want to make clear that we denounce hate and bigotry in all forms. On the question of hateful content by public figures, we want to assure you that our Community Standards prohibit attacks against people based on their protected characteristics, including religion, caste, ethnicity and national origin. In line with our hate speech policy, we have removed and will continue to remove hateful content by public figures in India on our platforms," Mr Potts said in the letter.

He was replying to a letter written by Mr Venugopal on August 18.

Anger as police thwart PDP leaders' bid to meet in Srinagar after 13 months

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 3

The Jammu and Kashmir authorities on Thursday thwarted People's Democratic Party (PDP) leaders' attempt, the first in past 13 months, to meet up at the party headquarters here to discuss the prevailing political situation in the erstwhile state and other "important issues".

Mr. Hajura when contacted over the phone asked why PDP leaders alone are not being allowed to meet, continue to be under house arrest and the detention under J&K's stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) of its president and former chief minister, Mehbooba Mufti, was extended for another three months recently.

"Evidently, the government is afraid of us and it's all claims that there are no curbs on people's liberty and political parties are free to exercise their political rights including freedom of

Srinagar's Residency Road from their respective residences.

Mr. Hanjura and another former minister and senior party leader Naeem Akhtar released videos through social media showing them being prevented from leaving their homes by the policemen.

assembly are farce."

PDP spokesman Syed Suhail Bukhari while speaking to reporters inside the party headquarters added, "Our leaders who were invited to this meeting continue to be under illegal house detention. They tried to leave their respective homes for this place in the morning but were stopped by the police. This unravels the truth...it exposes the government and tells the world what it has been saying was a lie devoid of any foundation. It misled even the Supreme Court by saying no (mainstream) leader is under detention

in J&K and can go anywhere and meet anyone."

The spokesman said that such "curbs and zulm (tyranny) unleashed on the PDP leadership will not deter it from pursuing its agenda which is to find a practical roadmap for the people of Jammu and Kashmir who are suffering enormously for the past over seven decades and will continue to ask for holding talks among all stakeholders to find a solution to the issue."

He added, "The party will also continue to explore all available democratic means in its fight against the constitutional fraud that was committed by the government on August 5 last year."

Earlier Mr. Akhtar while sharing a video in which the policemen could be seen stopping him from leaving his residence wrote on Twitter, "Despite being free on paper and in

government submissions in the High Court and Supreme Court, PDP leadership continues to be under illegal detention, without any official orders. Video from today – I wasn't allowed to attend the PDP meeting nor were any of my colleagues."

In a similar tweet Mr. Hanjura said, "Shameful that the J&K administration along with police physically prevented PDP leaders from leaving their homes in Srinagar. They shamelessly lie to courts that these people are free to move & then have the audacity to detain them illegally at home."

People's Conference chairman and former minister Sajad Gani Lone, while reacting to the police's disallowing the PDP leaders' meeting tweeted, "Government should come clean on whether someone is detained or not."

Having faced a barrage of criticism from the Congress over allegations of political bias, social media giant Facebook on Thursday informed the party that it was "non-partisan" and denounced "hate speech" in any form.

"We take allegations of bias seriously and want to make clear that we denounce hate and bigotry in all forms. On the question of hateful content by public figures, we want to assure you that our Community Standards prohibit attacks against people based on their protected characteristics, including religion, caste, ethnicity and national origin. In line with our hate speech policy, we have removed and will continue to remove hateful content by public figures in India on our platforms," Mr Potts said in the letter.

He was replying to a letter written by Mr Venugopal on August 18.

DOUBLE WHAMMY

Textbooks washed away in floods, power supply hit affecting online classes

Floods in Odisha leave students high and dry

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 3

to the complete disruption in virtual learning by the students.

"Although we live in a pucca house, the floods did not spare us. The high floods in the Baitarani and Kali rivers entered our houses and damaged everything. My son Subham's textbooks have got completely soaked and are very unlikely to be restored to readable conditions. He will now be not able to continue his studies," said Satyasekhar Nayak of Jagannathpur in Jajpur district.

Besides, complete breakdown of power supplies and collapse of telecom-communication in the affected areas has also contributed

Saibalini Samal, a resident of Jajpur district, said her daughter's virtual classes have been affected as the power supplies to the area was snapped following floods in the Baitarani, Birupa and Brahmani rivers.

"The power supplies in Jajpur and Kendrapara districts have been seriously affected due to the floods in major rivers. My daughter's virtual classes have been discontinued as we fail to charge the mobile phones," said Saibalini.

In Puri, another district which has borne the brunt of high floods in the Mahanadi river system, children in the flood-hit villages have almost left the hope of resuming their studies in near future.

"Several villages under Puri Sadar block area have remained marooned for nearly seven days now. Hit by the high floods in the Mahanadi river system, the villagers of Talajanga, Uttarkana, Kerandipur, Poldakeria, Sabarsahi, Mathasahi, Balipata and Chalisbata are completely

have lost their all household articles, including study materials of their children. They are now surviving on food supplied by government agencies and voluntary organisations and studies resume their studies as early as possible. Power restoration work is going on as war-footing and I hope things will be normalized soon," the minister said.

Responding to a query by this newspaper, state school and mass education minister Samit Ranjan Dash said the government has asked the district authorities to evaluate the requirements of the students in the flood-hit areas and accordingly provide them all supports.

"We'll ensure that the students in the flood-hit areas resume their studies as early as possible. Power restoration work is going on as war-footing and I hope things will be normalized soon," the minister said.

In another development, the Odisha government on Thursday swung into action and sent water tankers for roadside villages and deployed a large number of country-boats to have better access to the marooned pockets.

SHORT TAKES
**LION CUB
 SEPARATED FROM
 ITS PRIDE DIES**

Ahmedabad, Sept. 3: A lion cub separated from its pride died shortly after being rescued by forest personnel near Gir forest in Gujarat's Amreli district, a senior official said on Thursday.

The male cub, around two to three months old, was found by Shetrunjee forest division staff at Vandal village in Jafraabat taluka on Wednesday evening, Chief Conservator of Forest, Junagadh wildlife circle, D.T. Vasavada said.

"The cub was very weak when it was found by our staff. Primary investigation revealed the cub got separated from its pride. Thus, the animal was rescued and kept at a rescue centre under a doctor's observation," Vasavada said.

Despite best efforts to save the feline, it died early Thursday morning, the official said.

As per latest estimates, there are over 600 lions in the state's Gir forest and its surrounding areas. The Gir Forest National Park is the only abode of Asiatic lions.

**INTERNET
 SNAPPED IN
 IIT HOSTELS**

Kolkata, Sept. 3: Amid charges that IIT Kharagpur authorities snapped internet connection in hostels of students and research scholars so that they are forced to vacate rooms, the management on Thursday said that they were repeatedly asked to leave since the end of June.

While over 10,000 students had left the campus since the Covid-19 pandemic struck, about 100 are not vacating their rooms, Registrar Prof. B.N. Singh said.

An institute source said that net connection in five hostels lodging 65 research scholars and several BTech, MTech students was discontinued on September 1 after the inmates informed the authorities they cannot leave the campus till the situation normalises.

One of these students said that the move of the institute was aimed at forcing them to vacate hostels, but they cannot leave the campus due to lack of adequate transport facility.

"Initially they had sought a little more time citing lack of travel options and to make necessary arrangements. But two months have passed since June. There is no possibility of campus activities starting this month," Singh said.

The institute has started online classes as the new semester began in September.

"We had considered their request earlier as they are our children. But this cannot go on indefinitely. The director himself had also requested them to leave. They must be aware of the pandemic situation," Singh said.

He said that 12-13 people including five students staying in the campus have been tested positive for Covid-19 in less than two weeks. "We cannot risk the health of our students, the registrar said.

IIT Kharagpur had asked all students, who got stranded because of lockdown, to leave the campus by June 30, but a few of them remained there.

**MAN IN MP
 BEHEADS WIFE TO
 APPEASE DEITY**

Singrauli, Sept. 3: In a suspected case of human sacrifice, a 50-year-old man allegedly beheaded his wife to please a deity and buried the body in his house in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place on Wednesday in Basuda village, located about 25 km from the district headquarters.

The accused was arrested on Thursday after his two sons alerted the police, district Additional Superintendent of Police Pradeep Shende said.

The man allegedly beheaded his 45-year-old wife in the early hours of Wednesday. He then buried the head and torso separately in the puja room of their house and later fled, the official said. According to his children, the accused killed his wife to please some deity. He also killed a goat some days ago and buried the carcass in the puja room to appease the deity, the official said.

After being alerted, the police formed teams and nabbed the accused on Thursday, he said. "I am myself interrogating the accused to get to the bottom of the case. According to the statements of his two sons, it appears the man killed his wife out of superstition," Shende added.

Tibetans upset, say didn't get due credit from India

Indian Army's handling of the death of a Tibetan soldier angers Tibetans

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC
 HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

Tibetans are upset with the Centre and Indian Army's handling of the death of Tibetan soldier, Tenzin Nyima, of the special frontier force SFF, who died while fighting the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China, during the ongoing stand-off in Ladakh.

Over the last 24 hours, Tibetans have been expressing anger. Nyima, 53, died in a mine blast while he and his team were capturing Chinese posts along the Line of Actual Control.

"When a soldier of Indian Army attains martyrdom in the line of duty, the body is sent home with full honours and the entire country talks about it. Why this discrimination against Tibetans who also fight for India?" asked Tibetan poet and activist, Tenzin Tsundue, as the body was quietly sent home with no state recognition.

Another Tibetan, in his early 30s, says ever since many of them landed in India after fleeing Tibet, they joined the SFF and even the Indian Army. "One of my relatives who served in the Indian Army did not even get pension after retirement despite multiple representations. Those in SFF get married in older age so that they can dedicate their youth to India. The treatment meted out to Nyima after his death while fighting for the nation is highly unfair. The country wants to use Tibetans as soldiers but do not want to give them due credit," he said.

In fact, many Tibetans this newspaper spoke to expressed their anger but did not wish to go on record. "We could not fight for our country (Tibet) but we continue to fight for the country that gave us shelter (India). We bravely fought against Pakistan and China since 1962 which benefited India. But yet, we do not get the respect for making supreme sacrifices. I have grown listening to tales of bravery of our people, whether the 1971 war, Kargil or Bangladesh. But still no one knows about our contribution," said another youngster.

"Initially they had sought a little more time citing lack of travel options and to make necessary arrangements. But two months have passed since June. There is no possibility of campus activities starting this month," Singh said.

The institute has started online classes as the new semester began in September.

"We had considered their request earlier as they are our children. But this cannot go on indefinitely. The director himself had also requested them to leave. They must be aware of the pandemic situation," Singh said.

He said that 12-13 people including five students staying in the campus have been tested positive for Covid-19 in less than two weeks. "We cannot risk the health of our students, the registrar said.

IIT Kharagpur had asked all students, who got stranded because of lockdown, to leave the campus by June 30, but a few of them remained there.



Indian Air Force (IAF) Chinook helicopter flies amid the prolonged India-China stand off in the Ladakh region in Leh on Thursday. — PTI

India has edge over China in surveillance

From Page 1

Several points on the northern and southern banks of Pangong Tso, like the ridgeline in Spanggur Tso, Kalatop, Helmet, Camelback among other areas — many of which were earlier manned by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) — are now in complete control of the Indian troops, who have moved lock, stock and barrel to these points.

New posts with two or three bunkers have also come up at the vantage points, giving the Indian Army a strategic advantage over the PLA.

"From Rechin La and Rezang La, the Army has a clear view of the Chinese territory up to several kilometres. Before we took over the strategic heights, the PLA had a view of about 30 km

inside our territory which is no more the case now. The Advanced Landing Ground at Nyoma too is out of sight for the Chinese. Observation of our movement by the Chinese has come down drastically which is a major advantage for us," sources said, adding that the tables have been turned against China and the neighbouring country is no position to be on the offensive.

It is, however, learnt that the Chinese troops are still holding on to a few ridges in Finger 4 area. Not willing to go into much details about the specific roles played by the SFF soldiers, which consists of Tibetans, sources said that since Tibetans are good mountain climbers and highly-trained in overt and covert operations, they

played an important role in capturing the heights.

"Unfortunately, one of them died in a mine blast while capturing a Chinese post. Earlier, mines were not laid across posts on either sides but now, with the LAC hotting up, areas around the posts are heavily mined. For the Indian Army, this is not new as mines have been laid all along the Line of Control with Pakistan since decades," they said, adding that there was no question of fresh incursions from the Chinese.

"This has led to frustration among the People's Liberation Army troops and skirmishes can be expected in the days to come. Massive deployments are still going on both sides," they added.

ARMY CHIEF REVIEWS OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

PAWAN BALI | DC
 NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3

As tensions with China flared up, Army Chief Gen. M.M. Naravane on Thursday landed in Leh to review the operational preparedness of the forces deployed in Ladakh.

Earlier, the Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria, on Wednesday visited front-line airbases in the eastern sector to take stock. The IAF is on high alert in Ladakh.

Gen. Naravane, on a two-day visit to Ladakh, will visit forward areas to assess the emerging situation with China on the ground. Gen. Naravane's Leh visit at this juncture is crucial as the Chinese have not taken well to India's moves to pre-empt them and occupy over two dozen strategic peaks on the southern banks of Pangong Tso. Some of these were taken by the Indian Army for the first time after the 1962 war and allows Indian forces to overlook Chinese garrisons.

Another round of brigadier-level India-China talks on Thursday again failed to reach any breakthrough. This was the fourth meeting in the last four days on de-escalation in southern Pangong Tso.

India is now well prepared to face the Chinese threat after it has built up forces that are well acclimated, brought in tanks, artillery and stocked up supplies in the past few months after being initially surprised by the Chinese intrusions in May.

Gen. Naravane will meet top commanders in Leh to strategise on how to counter any aggressive move by the PLA.

'Prolonged impasse can lead to high economic costs'

BHADAURIA VISITS EASTERN COMMAND

New Delhi, Sept. 3: Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria reviewed the IAF's operational preparedness along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim in view of the escalating border tensions with China, officials said on Thursday.

The comments came amid the Ministry of External Affairs saying on Thursday that the situation witnessed in the border areas in eastern Ladakh over the past four months is a "direct result" of actions taken by China aimed at effecting unilateral change in the status quo of the region.

In an interview with Karan Thapar for news website *The Wire*, Saran said, "The Chinese have suggested that the process of disengagement is complete — as if nothing more needs to be done. There does not seem to be any intention, for example, to vacate some of the additional areas which they have occupied in the Pangong lake area."

Saran also said, "My sense is, if this, for example, continues during the winter — which would be very difficult because this area is very inhospitable during winter it would require a considerable investment in setting up heated dwelling units, making certain you have enough equipment for use during very very severe winters."

"If that is going to happen then I imagine that there will be a fairly prolonged impasse between them," he added.

Saran also said he believes India needs to focus on the station personnel towards maintaining proficiency in all roles envisaged and urged them to continue performing their duty with due diligence," the official said.

military and diplomatic talks in the last two-and-a-half months amid a border stand-off in the eastern Ladakh area. — PTI

India must keep a close watch: Pawar

Mumbai, Sept. 3: NCP president Sharad Pawar on Thursday said the Chinese are "surprisingly" encircling the Indian sub-continent, and India must keep a close watch on developments in Sri Lanka and Nepal.

He had invited former foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale and Air Marshal Bhushan Gokhale (Retd) for interaction with NCP MPs Supriya Sule, Praful Patel, Amol Kolhe and Vandana Chavan against the background of the stand-off in eastern Ladakh, Pawar tweeted.

The former defence minister said that during the meeting he expressed his concerns over a larger strategic and political thinking in China that aims to halt India's economic growth.

"I highlighted the fact that the Chinese are surprisingly encircling the Indian Sub-Continent from all directions and also expressed my concern over their presence in the South China Sea," Pawar said in another tweet.

"I hinted at the need to keep a close watch on affairs of Sri Lanka and Nepal and also the Chinese interventions in general," he added.

Vijay Gokhale spoke about the history of Indo-China relationship, especially the border disputes.

The former foreign secretary shared his views on the current situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Pawar said.

Air Marshal Gokhale emphasized that India must take into consideration the new era of parallel warfare that includes cyber war, information war, perception creation and war on economic fronts, the NCP president added.

Government are always available. "Even though the monsoon session of Parliament will not have a Question Hour, it is important to understand why it is so," Raut said.

"This is an emergency situation. We need to understand and not criticise," he said, adding that even in Maharashtra the monsoon session of the state assembly will be held for two days only.

— PTI

Only China can answer why its troops are on Indian border: EAM

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
 NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3

It is up to China to answer why there are thousands of its troops on the border with India, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday evening, adding that he is convinced that the "way out is through diplomacy".

This comes ahead of a virtual meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the multilateral BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) forum scheduled for Friday in which both Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi are expected to participate.

Meanwhile, the Chinese

Embassy in a late evening statement issued to sharply criticise the recent utterances of a senior US official, said "China and India have the ability to resolve their border disputes bilaterally" and so "don't accept countries outside the region pointing fingers, let alone meddling or making instigation, which will only endanger the regional peace and stability".

This comes amid fresh Sino-Indian military tensions in the Ladakh sector as well as in 1962, 1975 and 1976 for various reasons.

A research conducted by the Rajya Sabha also revealed that 60 per cent of Question Hour time was not availed during the last five years with only 40 per cent utilisation.

The Question Hour was first done away with during the Emergency in 1975 and 1976, when everything was functioning normally except opposition leaders, who were put behind bars, and the media, which was censored.

Unlike then, the government has argued that it is a real health emergency in the country due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the session is being held under extraordinary circumstances even as there is a paucity of time.

The presiding officers of both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have received a letter from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, informing them that the government has consulted different political parties and that there is a broad consensus, barring one political party, on doing away with the Question Hour.

It is based on this consensus among the opposition parties that the government has requested the presiding officers to do away with the Question Hour and Private Members' Business for this session, the sources said.

Congress' Randeep Surjewala alleged that Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahla Joshi had not consulted all the opposition leaders.

He said doing away with the Question Hour, not holding the government accountable to the questions of public interest raised in Parliament in the "starred" category "is an assault on India's democracy and a sinister design to undermine the Parliament of the country and Parliamentary practices."

He said in the "starred" question category, the minister concerned has to answer supplementary questions. The idea is to hold the government accountable to ensure that public welfare steps are taken and fix accountability of the government to Parliament and through it, to the 130 crore people of India, Surjewala said.

— PTI

Only 40% of Question Hour time used in last 5 years

SENA SUPPORTS GOVT'S MOVE

Mumbai, Sept. 3: The Shiv Sena on Thursday came out in support of the Centre's move to drop Question Hour from the upcoming monsoon session of Parliament, and said the decision was taken due to an "emergency situation" caused by the pandemic, which everyone needs to understand.

Talking to reporters, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut said that other platforms to question the government are always available. "Even though the monsoon session of Parliament will not have a Question Hour, it is important to understand why it is so," Raut said.

"This is an emergency situation. We need to understand and not criticise," he said, adding that even in Maharashtra the monsoon session of the state assembly will be held for two days only.

— PTI

IN BRIEF

Eight gunned down in Mexico

Cuernavaca, Mexico: Gunmen killed eight people, including two minors, and wounded more than a dozen others in an attack on a wake in central Mexico, prosecutors said. The assailants opened fire at a house in the city of Cuernavaca using military-type rifles, the state prosecutor's office reported. Initial indications suggested the attack was the result of a fight between criminal gangs in Cuernavaca, a picturesque colonial city popular with tourists just south of the capital, the authorities said. Four bodies were found outside the wake, which was held for a young man killed in a motorcycle accident, while the remaining victims died after being taken to hospital. Another 14 people were wounded, according to prosecutors, who noted that high-calibre firearms had been used in recent gang-related crimes.

Jihadists kill 9 Nigerian troops

Kano, Nigeria: At least nine Nigerian troops were killed in an offensive by jihadists in northeast Borno state, two security sources said. Fighters from the so-called Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in 10 trucks fitted with machine guns overran a military position in the town of Magumeri late on Tuesday, killing nine troops, they said. "The terrorists took over the (military) post around 4:00 pm (1500 GMT) and dispersed the troops, killing nine," the first source said. The militants burnt three vehicles at the base, including an armoured tank and an excavator used in digging fortifications to stave off jihadist incursions, said the second source who gave the same toll. A military reinforcement from the regional capital Maiduguri engaged the retreating attackers in a fight and killed 20 insurgents.

Pacific War: China marks 75th anniv

Beijing: China on Thursday commemorated the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific, during which it endured a brutal invasion and occupation of much of its territory by Japan. Communist Party leader and head of state Xi Jinping led government officials in a minute of silence and presentation of floral wreaths at a memorial hall dedicated to soldiers and civilians who participated in the struggle. Japan launched a full-on invasion of China in 1937, marked by urban warfare and atrocities such as the notorious Rape of Nanking. While armies under Nationalist Party leader Chiang Kai-shek fought most of the major battles, Communist Party guerrillas under Mao Zedong forced Japan to divert soldiers and resources from battlefields elsewhere with low-level engagements.

PAK: CONSULAR ACCESS TO JADHAV VALID

SHAFQAT ALI | DC
ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 3

Pakistan Thursday said that the offer of third consular access to Indian prisoner Kulbhushan Jadav was still valid. "India should move forward and cooperate with the courts of Pakistan," Foreign Office spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri during his weekly media briefing.

Speaking on the issue of Indian prisoner, the Foreign Office spokesperson said that Pakistan was committed to implementing the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). India should move forward and cooperate with the courts of Pakistan.

During the second consular visit, Indian diplomats left the meeting. However, Pakistan's offer of a third consular access was still valid. He said that Pakistan was aware of its responsibilities, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) issue should be resolved on technical rather than political grounds.

Foreign Office spokesman regrets that some members of the Security Council Sections Committee blocked the ban on two Indian nationals. "Pakistan has always insisted on depoliticizing the issue of UN sections. Angara Appaji and Gobind Patnaik are wanted by Pakistan for terrorism," he added.

He said that Pakistan has provided documentary evidence to the UN sections committee and will continue to expose Indian-sponsored terrorism.

Another PoC shot dead by cops in US

18-year-old was shot as officers were following up on a tip about guns allegedly stashed in a vehicle

IN KENOSHA, BIDEN TO TEST HIS VOW TO UNIFY THE NATION

Wilmington, Sept. 3: Campaigning for more than a year as a calming, unifying figure, Joe Biden and his core pitch for the presidency face the most intense test yet when he travels to Kenosha, Wisconsin, a city wracked by police and protest violence that makes it a microcosm of the nation's election-year reckoning with systemic racism.

The 77-year-old former vice president, travelling two days after President Donald Trump visited the same city, plans to meet Thursday with family of Jacob Blake, who remains hospitalised after being shot seven times in the back by a white police officer as authorities attempted to arrest him. Biden also plans a community discussion.

— AP

protests against police brutality across the country, and just two days after officers in Los Angeles shot dead an African-

American man who was riding his bike when police tried to stop him.

A local council member

Trayon White told news

VIDEO IN NEW YORK MAN'S SUCCOCATION SHOWS GROUP OF POLICE OFFICERS PUT HOOD ON HIM

Rochester, Sept. 3: A man who had run naked through the streets of a western New York city died of asphyxiation after a group of police officers put a hood over his head, then pressed his face into the pavement for two minutes, according to video and records released Wednesday by the man's family.

Daniel Prude died March 30 after he was taken off life support, seven days after the encounter with police in Rochester. His death received no public attention until Wednesday, when his family held a news conference and released police body camera video.

— AP

Video grab of cops putting hood on the man who died of asphyxiation. — Agencies

— AP

FOOTAGE SHOWS EXCESSIVE FORCE, HENCE DEPUTY FIRED

Columbia, Sept. 3: A deputy in South Carolina has been fired and charged with assault after body camera footage showed he yanked a woman to the ground by her hair, a sheriff said. Kyle Oliver (29), reported using force on January 7, but what he wrote in his report did not match the footage from another officer's body camera, Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said at a news conference. Lott said he reviewed the camera footage on Monday after receiving a tip. He said the woman never reported the excessive force. Lott decided to fire Oliver and after prosecutors reviewed the footage, they charged him with misdemeanor third-degree assault. "His actions are unacceptable, and I will not have it from any of my deputies," Sheriff Lott said.

— AP

people say he was shot in the back," White, who identified the man as African American, told the news site DCist.

— AFP

Prez wants voters to cast two ballots in Nov. election

Don trumpets US strength, scoffs at Biden

FB TO TARGET MISINFORMATION BEFORE POLL

Washington, Sept. 3: As thunderstorms threatened, President Donald Trump sped through a V-J Day speech on Wednesday, trumpeting American strength and managing to squeeze in a swipe at Democratic rival Joe Biden. Trump stood before an iconic World War II-era battlefield to declare the port city of Wilmington, North Carolina, a World War II "Heritage City". He pointed to a bolt of lightning and said it was God saluting the event. He honoured war veterans, including 97-year-old Hershel "Woody" Williams, the sole surviving Marine from the war to receive the Medal of Honour. The West Virginia native fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima in the Pacific. "He's 100 percent sharp," Trump said of Williams, who travelled to the key battleground state with the president aboard Air Force One.

"I know a 78-year-old who's not so sharp," Trump added, a clear allusion to Biden. White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany had insisted earlier this week that there was no "political purpose" to Trump's visit to North Carolina. But when the president landed in Wilmington, Trump lost no time in criticising Biden.

"This is the most important election in the history of our country. I really believe that, because we're running against people that have got some big issues," he told supporters on the airport tarmac. "They have got some big, big problems. They're stone cold crazy."

Trump also encouraged those who cast votes by mail to cast two ballots in November's election, one by mail and another in person as a check to see if the mailed vote was counted.

"They'll go out and they'll vote and they're going to have to go and

— AP

check their vote by going to the poll and voting that way because if it's tabulated then they won't be able to do that. So, let them send it in and let them go vote," Trump said in an interview with WECT-TV at the Wilmington airport.

"And if their system's as good as they say it is, then obviously they won't be able to vote. If it isn't tabulated, they'll be able to vote. So that's the way it is, and that's what they should do."

— AP

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— AP

Within a month, the mice had developed antibodies against the SARS-

CoV-2 virus, according to the study published on Wednesday in the journal *Advanced Materials*. The technique involves altering specific sequences of messenger RNA, molecules that translate genetic information into functional proteins, the researchers said.

While these sequences are not translated to proteins, the researchers changed their structures to promote higher-than-usual levels of proteins.

The sequences are known as untranslated regions, or UTRs.

times in America, and now it's hitting home," he said. "I talked to his mom about 15 minutes ago and we want to figure out what's

on the body camera footage, to figure out if he was running away why he was shot." "Some people say he was shot in the front, some

people say he was shot in the back," White, who identified the man as African American, told the news site DCist.

— AFP



Protesters clash with police during an anti-government demonstration in Sofia. Bulgarians gathered in downtown Sofia for another anti-government protest Thursday after a demonstration the night before led to violence, injuries and arrests. Several thousands faced off against riot police in front of the parliament building while demanding the resignations of Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and chief prosecutor Ivan Stoimenov Geshev late Wednesday. A small group began hurling explosives and firecrackers at officers. Police put a water cannon between parliament, and the offices of the government and the president and cordoned off the area. Violent clashes erupted. — AFP

Covid-19 vaccine shows promise

UK working on a test that gives results in 20 minutes

London, Sept. 3: The British government says it is investing in a coronavirus test that gives results in as little as 20 minutes, as critics say

It's also running a trial on the benefits of repeat testing of people without symptoms. Britain has hugely expanded its testing capacity since the start of the pandemic.

Anyone with symptoms is eligible for a test, but the BBC reported that people who enter their postcode into the government's website are sometimes being directed to drive-through centres hundreds of miles away. — AP

on the benefits of repeat testing of people without symptoms. Britain has hugely expanded its testing capacity since the start of the pandemic.

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tests for the virus are being rationed because the system can't cope with demand. Health Secretary Matt Hancock says the government is expanding trials of two new tests — a no-swab saliva test and another that gives results in minutes.

— PTI

NBW issued against ex-Pak PM Nawaz

Lahore, Sept. 3: A Pakistani court on Thursday directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to execute a non-bailable arrest warrant against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a 34-year land allotment case, according to media reports. During the plot

known addresses of the three-time prime minister, who is currently in London for medical treatment. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ata Tarar confirmed to the court on Thursday that the 70-year-old party chief Sharif had

been abroad for six months, the *Express Tribune* newspaper reported.

Responding to this, Special Prosecutor Harris Qureshi, appearing on behalf of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), asked the court to issue a non-bailable arrest

(NBA) warrant against Sharif. The court issued the NBA warrant and directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to execute the arrest through the Pakistan High Commission in London, the report added.

— PTI

NEW | DATA 87 per cent of the world's extreme poor live in Central and Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa

Female poverty rate in S. Asia to rise due to Covid: UN

United Nations, Sept. 3: The female poverty rate in South Asia will increase in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and more women than men in the 25-34 age group will be poorer in the next decade, according to new data released by the UN. The UN Women and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) said that the Covid-19 pandemic will disproportionately affect women and push 47 million more women and girls into extreme poverty by 2021, reversing decades of progress to lift this demographic above the poverty line as a result of the pandemic.

"The expected rise of poverty in South Asia as a result of the economic fallout of the pandemic figure at 18.6 per cent," the report, 'From

Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the wake of Covid-19', said that the gender poverty gap will worsen further still in South Asia.

Central and Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, home to 87 per cent of the world's extreme poor, will see the largest increases in extreme poverty, with an additional 54 million and 24 million people, respectively, living below the international poverty line as a result of the pandemic. "The expected rise of poverty in South Asia as a result of the economic fallout of the pandemic

report said.

The report pointed out that the resurgence of poverty due to the pandemic threatens to deepen gender poverty gaps, especially for people aged 25 to 34, which is a key productive and family formation period for both women and men. In 2021, it is expected there will be 118 women in poverty for every 100 poor men globally, and this ratio could rise to 121 poor women for every 100 poor men by 2030.

While sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia will be the most impacted, "significantly more women than

men in South Asia will be affected. In the 25-34 age group, there will be 118 poor women for every 100 poor men in South Asia, and that ratio will increase to 129 women for every 100 men by 2030. Globally, the poverty rate for women was expected to decrease by 2.7 per cent between 2019 and 2021, but projections now point to an increase of 9.1 per cent due to the pandemic and its fallout. The "pandemic will push 96 million people into extreme poverty by 2021, 47 million of whom are women and girls. This will increase the total

number of women and girls living in extreme poverty to 435 million, with projections showing that this number will not revert to pre-pandemic levels until 2030," the UN agencies said.

"The increases in women's extreme poverty are a stark indictment of deep flaws in the ways we have constructed our societies and economies," UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said. "We know that women take most of the responsibility for caring for the family; they earn less, save less and hold much

less secure jobs — in fact, overall, women's employment is 19 per cent more at risk than men's."

Mlambo-Ngcuka said that the evidence of multiple inequalities is critical to drive swift, restorative policy action that puts women at the heart of pandemic recovery. While the pandemic has posed a serious threat to the prospects of eradicating extreme poverty by the end of this decade, the reality is even grimmer as these projections of increased poverty rates for women and girls only account for the downward revision of GDP. — PTI

IN BRIEF

Pak landslides, floods kill 30

Peshawar: Landslides and flash floods triggered by torrential rains in northwest Pakistan for the last one week have killed 30 people, injured 38 others and damaged over 100 houses, officials said on Thursday. Heavy rains have wreaked havoc in Swat, Buner, Shangla, Upper Kohistan and Chitral districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Closed roads are being opened for traffic in the affected areas and tourists are shifted to the safer places. Relief goods have been dispatched to the affected districts. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said that 30 people have been killed and 38 others injured in the flooding in the last one week. Over 100 houses have been damaged due to flooding.

Oil tanker fire: Warships join fight

Colombo: Russian and Indian warships on Thursday joined the battle to put out a fire on a massive oil tanker off Sri Lanka's eastern coast, the island nation's navy said. The New Diamond, with a cargo of 270,000 tonnes of crude and 1,700 tonnes of diesel, issued a distress call earlier Thursday, navy spokesman Captain Indika de Silva said. The vessel had a crew of 23 – 18 Filipinos and five Greeks. One was missing, another was injured, and the rest were rescued from the Panama-flagged vessel, according to the navy. "An Indian coast guard vessel and one of our ships are now in the process of dousing the flames that have spread to the deck of the tanker's service area," de Silva said. There was no immediate danger of a leak from the stricken vessel, he added, which was 60 kilometres (38 miles) from the coastal town of Sangamankandi Point. The navy spokesman said the missing crew member was a Filipino.

Mexico enviro minister quits

Mexico City: Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced the resignation of his environment minister Wednesday, nearly a month after a leaked recording showed that cabinet member criticising the president's administration. López Obrador said Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Víctor Manuel Toledo had been considering quitting even before the leaked recording, which clearly showed he was unhappy with the administration's direction on environmental issues. "Public service produces stress" and "not all of us are made to support the pressure," Obrador said. In the audio recording that circulated on social media last month, a person who appears to be Toledo complained that other Cabinet secretaries have blocked efforts to protect the environment and were promoting the interests of farming and mining industries. "We're trying but we are not in a government that is totally on our side," he said.

U.S. AIMS TO END WOLF PROTECTIONS

Traverse City (US), Sept. 3: The Trump administration plans to lift endangered species protections for gray wolves across most of the nation by the end of the year, the director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service said. "We're working hard to have this done by the end of the year and I'd say it's very imminent," Aurelia Skipwith said.

The administration also is pushing ahead with a rollback of protections for migratory birds despite a recent setback in federal court, she said. The Fish and Wildlife Service last year proposed dropping the wolf from the endangered list in the lower 48 states, exempting a small population of Mexican wolves in the Southwest.

It was the latest of numerous attempts to return management authority to the states — moves that courts have repeatedly rejected after opponents filed lawsuits.

Shot, trapped and poisoned to near extinction in the last century, wolves in recent decades rebounded in the western Great Lakes region and portions of the West, the total population exceeding 6,000. They have been removed from the endangered list in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and portions of Oregon, Utah and Washington state. Federal protections remain elsewhere.

Livestock ship with 42 crew said to have sunk in seas

Vessel was carrying 5,800 cows, had sent distress call before going down

TYPHOON HITS SOUTH KOREA WITH FLOODING

Seoul, Sept. 3: Japanese rescuers were searching Thursday for a livestock ship with 42 crew members on board that a survivor said sank during rough weather a day earlier off a southern Japanese island, the coast guard said.

The Filipino crew member was rescued late Wednesday after Japanese navy P-3C surveillance aircraft spotted him wearing a life vest and waving while he was bobbing in the water.

The man, who is in good health, told rescuers the ship capsized before sinking, said spokesman Yuichiro Higashi at the Japanese coast guard's regional headquarters conducting the search.

The 11,947-ton Gulf Livestock 1 ship was carrying 5,800 cows west of the western coast of Amami Oshima in the East China Sea when it sent a distress call early Wednesday.

The cause of the distress was not immediately known, but the weather was rough in the area due to Typhoon Maysak.

The typhoon has since passed the area and the weather during the ongoing search is fine, Higashi said. The ship's other crew included 38 from the Philippines, two from New Zealand and another two from Australia.

The ship, owned by Gulf Navigation Holding based in the United Arab Emirates, left the port of Napier in northeastern New Zealand in mid-August and was on its way to the port of Tangshan on China's eastern coast.

— AP



A damaged car is seen under a wall broken by Typhoon Maysak in the southeastern port city of Ulsan on Thursday. At least one person was killed and more than 2,000 people evacuated to temporary shelters in South Korea.

— AFP

C. American nations brace for Nana

Guatemala City, Sept. 3: Central American countries were preparing for the onslaught of Hurricane Nana, which hit the coast of Belize during Thursday's early hours.

Nana, recently upgraded from a tropical storm, had made landfall between Dangriga and Placencia, towards the middle of Belize's coastline, about 60

kilometers south of Belize City, the US National Hurricane Center said just after midnight Belize time (0600 GMT).

It was travelling west at 25 kilometres (16 miles) per hour, with maximum sustained winds of 120 kph (75 mph), according to the centre. The strong wind and rains had already furiously shaken the

Honduran tourist attraction of Islas de la Bahia, causing floods there and elsewhere in the country.

The storm also threatened to cause severe damage in Guatemala, El Salvador and the rest of Honduras, according to civil protection organizations, which initiated precautionary measures.

The Permanent Conting-

ency Commission of Honduras (Copetco), which had declared a "green alert" in seven of the 18 departments of the country, extended the list to 11 regions on Wednesday afternoon, including Francisco Morazan, where the capital Tegucigalpa is located.

In Belize, the National Emergency Management

Organization (NEMO) warned that the storm "could also produce rainfall of 4-8 inches with isolated amounts of 10 inches over southern and central Belize which could lead to flash flooding and possible landslides." It pointed out that strong winds could damage homes, fell trees and power lines, or lead to blackouts.

— AFP

Amazon fires worst in 10 years

Brasilia, Sept. 3: The official August data on the number of fires in Brazil's Amazon needs to be corrected and will likely show an increase over last year, meaning that blazes surged to a decade high, a scientist responsible for the figures told Reuters on Wednesday.

Brazilian media has reported that fires in Brazil's section of the Amazon rainforest fell by 5% in August, citing data currently on the website of government space research agency Inpe that has not been corrected.

Alberto Setzer, a senior scientist at Inpe who is involved in producing the official fire data, said that the reporting of finalized data had been delayed by an error with a NASA satellite.

Noll said that, decades into the future, these present-day records might be more like average winters for the country and that would have impacts across many sectors of society.

Seventeen locations around the country had record breaking-mean winter temperatures, and 53 other locations ranked within their top four warmest winters.

The highest recorded winter 2020 temperature was 25.1°C on 30 August in Timaru.

It was the highest temperature recorded there during winter since records began in 1885. It was also the equal-fourth warmest winter temperature on record for the whole of New Zealand.

The lowest temperature was -12.3°C, observed at Middlemarch, in the South Island's Otago region, on 14 June.



A fire site in Apui, Amazonas state, Brazil.

— Agencies

spate of fires for the month since August 2010.

"It's going to be up. The number of fires, fire pixels, will increase. Maybe up to 1 or 2%, I would guess," Setzer said, referring to spots of heat registered on satellite images.

Inpe's press office directed a request for comment to Setzer, who gave more details on his calculations and cautioned that a shift of 1 to 2% is within the margin of error.

The science and technol-

ogy ministry, which over-

saw the space research agency, did not immediately respond to request for comment. The press office for President Jair Bolsonaro declined to comment, directing questions to the office of VP Hamilton Mourao.

— Reuters

cording to a separate analysis by Bullseye Interactive Media conducted on behalf of Reuters. Meanwhile, API has spent an estimated \$3.1 million on TV ads between Jan. 1 and Aug. 16, according to data from analytics firm iSpot, an increase of 51% over the same period in 2019. The TV ads are part of API's "Energy for Progress" campaign, launched in January. For at least six months, the campaign's website cast natu-

ral gas as a "clean" fuel before that description was revised to "cleaner" on the site sometime in the last two months. Climate scientists say that natural gas is not clean and is emerging as a major threat to the climate due to the sheer scale of carbon dioxide (CO2) the industry emits.

In addition, they say, a significant amount of methane, a far more potent short-term warming agent, leaks during production of natural gas. API

points out on its website that when burned, natural gas produces about half as much planet-warming CO2 as coal and less air pollution, and has helped the United States reduce emissions by replacing coal in power plants. API President Mike Sommers said that his group's advertising ahead of the election seeks "to inform people of all generations of the importance of American energy leadership".

— Agencies

Winter ice in Bering Sea at lowest levels

London, Sept. 3: The Bering Sea ice cover during the winters of 2018 and 2019 hit new lows not seen in thousands of years, scientists reported on Wednesday, adding to concerns about the accelerating impact of climate change in the Arctic.

Satellite data provides a clear picture of how sea ice has changed over the last four decades in the region between the Arctic and northern Pacific oceans. Beyond that, the only ice records available were those recorded in ship logs and other observations. So scientists turned to peat land, which holds organic compounds from plants dating back millennia, on the remote St. Matthew island off Alaska.

The loss of sea ice is already impacting Arctic wildlife, including walruses, polar bears and seals, with consequences for indigenous communities that rely on hunting for their livelihoods.

Shrinking sea ice also exacerbates warming in the region, as ice is replaced by patches of dark water that absorb solar radiation rather than reflecting it back out of the atmosphere.

"Obviously, if we lose sea ice you are completely changing the temperatures of the Arctic," said Julienne Stroeve, a climatologist with National Snow and Ice Data Center at the University of Boulder Colorado.

— Reuters

Uganda: Gorilla baby boom

Kampala, Sept. 3: Uganda says it has recorded a baby boom among gorillas in a national park that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the East African country's most prized tourist attractions.

Five babies have been born in just six weeks in the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, according to the state-run Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). The park is located near Uganda's southwestern border with Democratic Republic of Congo. The latest, born last weekend, brings the total born this year to seven. In comparison only three were born last year.

All the babies were born in same gorilla group or family — the Rushegura — and the rash of births has increased members of the group, one of more than 20 in the park, to 18.

"This is highly unusual, it's an incredible blessing," said Bashir Hangi, Tourists are mostly drawn to the park by its estimated 400 mountain gorillas — roughly half the world's population.

Hangi said the boom in births was testimony the country's conservation efforts were succeeding to an extent despite frequent cases of poaching and other threats. — Agencies

Norway revives risk breed species bid

Oslo, Sept. 3: Norway is relaunching cod farms in Europe's ice-cold northern waters after mass escapes and failure to thrive condemned its earlier attempt to become the first country to try large-scale breeding of a species declining in the wild.

The handful of companies raising Atlantic cod in pens in Norwegian fjords say they have learned lessons from a wave of bankruptcies of cod farms earlier in the millennium as well as the success of Norway's multi-billion-dollar salmon business. They are hoping to emulate that success with

cod at a time when wild Atlantic cod are seeing mixed fortunes.

While stocks off Iceland and in the Barents Sea are sustainable, those off Canada, the US, Ireland and Britain are low, as are those in the Baltic Sea and the non-British part of the North Sea. Norcod, the biggest of the new farms, is raising 1.8 million fish along the craggy Norwegian seacoast and plans to begin sales in the second quarter of 2021.

"We are targeting northern and western Europe first," said Christian Riber, Norcod's commercial director.

— Reuters

Drilling lobby promotes natural gas as 'clean'

Washington/London, Sept. 3: America's biggest oil and gas lobby group is ramping up its advertising spending ahead of the November election to persuade voters that natural gas is a climate-friendly fuel, according to ad buying data. The campaign by the American Petroleum Institute (API), targeted at younger voters and some tight congressional races, is part of a global battle by the drilling industry to assuage growing fears

over the role of natural gas in driving climate change. US Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden last month unveiled a \$2 trillion plan to transition the American economy away from fossil fuels, including natural gas, if he beats incumbent Donald Trump, who is a drilling advocate.

Biden's plan would support climate litigation against polluters who conceal information about environmental and health risks.

In the three weeks following Biden's climate announcement on July 14, API increased its spending on Facebook ads to an estimated average of \$24,000 a day. That's about six times its average daily spending in the preceding six months, according to an analysis by InfluenceMap, a non-profit group whose data on lobbying is used by institutional investors. Those ads mainly target a younger audience, including 25-to-34-year-olds, according to a separate analysis by Bully Pulpit Interactive Media conducted on behalf of Reuters. Meanwhile, API has spent an estimated \$3.1 million on TV ads between Jan. 1 and Aug. 16, according to data from analytics firm iSpot, an increase of 51% over the same period in 2019. The TV ads are part of API's "Energy for Progress" campaign, launched in January. For at least six months, the campaign's website cast natural

gas as a "clean" fuel before that description was revised to "cleaner" on the site sometime in the last two months. Climate scientists say that natural gas is not clean and is emerging as a major threat to the climate due to the sheer scale of carbon dioxide (CO2) the industry emits.

In addition, they say, a significant amount of methane, a far more potent short-term warming agent, leaks during production of natural gas. API

— Agencies

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	38,990.94 -0.24
Nifty 50	11,527.45 -0.07
S&P 500*	3,475.64 -2.94
Dollar (₹)	73.48 0.60
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.68 0.21
Euro (₹)	86.86 0.25
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,755▼774 0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.93 -0.50
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.896 -0.024
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.636 -0.015

* As of 9:30 PM IST

FASTag must for pre-Dec 2017 vehicles from Jan.

The central government has proposed to make FASTag mandatory for vehicles sold before December 1, 2017, the road transport ministry said. It said a notification has been issued in this regard and post amendment to rules, FASTag will be mandatory for old vehicles from January 1, 2021. It is also "proposed to make a valid FASTag mandatory while getting a new third party insurance."

Ramakrishnan to be MD & CEO of South Indian Bank



South Indian Bank said the Reserve Bank of India has approved appointment of Murali Ramakrishnan as its MD and CEO with effect from October 1. Ramakrishnan had retired from ICICI Bank as senior general manager at strategic project group on May 30, 2020, and joined the South Indian Bank as an advisor on July 1. Ramakrishnan was heading a business transformation project of SME business at ICICI Bank.

UP's August revenue higher by ₹600 cr YoY

The Uttar Pradesh government it has collected Rs 600 crore more revenue in August as compared to the year-ago period. "Due to the Covid-19 lockdown, there was a significant decline in the state's revenue in April, May and June. But economic activities gained momentum from July. In August, the state collected about Rs 600 crore more revenue than the same month (August) last year," state finance minister Suresh Khanna said.

April-August NH construction surpasses target

The government said it constructed 3,181 km of national highways in April-August, surpassing the construction target of 2,771 km. The length of national highway works awarded during this fiscal also more than doubled compared to last fiscal. The figure includes 2,104 km constructed by state PWDs, 879 km by the NHAI and 198 km by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd.

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Lenders asked to roll out scheme by 15th FM sets deadline for debt recast scheme

FC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3

In order to help borrowers hurt by the pandemic, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday asked banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) to roll out loan restructuring schemes for Covid-19-related stress by September 15. She also asked lenders to identify eligible borrowers, reach out to them and quickly implement resolution plans for the revival of every viable business.

While urging lenders to support distressed borrowers, Sitharaman also reminded them that loan restructuring should not impact the lenders' assessment of their creditworthiness.

The government move comes three days after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lifted a moratorium on loan repayments on August 31. The central bank offered the moratorium as the coronavirus lockdown, effective March 25, shuttered businesses and left millions jobless, pushing India's economy toward a full-year contraction in more than four decades.

In a video conference with heads of scheduled commercial banks and NBFCs, the finance minister urged lenders to immediately put in place a board-approved policy for resolution. "There should be a quick implementation of a sustained resolution plan by lenders for the



KEEPING BANKERS ON THEIR TOES

Sitharaman also asked lenders to identify eligible borrowers, reach out to them and quickly implement resolution plans for the revival of every viable business

revival of every viable business," she said.

Banks are in the process of getting a restructuring framework in line with the RBI's framework and eligibility defined by the central bank in its notification on August 6. In the meeting, bankers assured the finance minister that they are ready with their resolution policies and have started the process of identifying and reaching out to borrowers and that they will comply with the timelines stipulated by the RBI.

An official statement said Sitharaman advised lenders to ensure that regularly updated FAQs on the resolution framework are uploaded on their websites in Hindi, English and regional languages, and also circulated to their offices and branches. Besides, the minister also reviewed the schemes announced under Aatmanirbhar Bharat—the Rs 20-lakh crore post-pandemic financial rescue package.

The RBI last month permitted one-time restructuring of both corporate and retail loans without them getting classified as a non-performing asset (NPA). Restructuring benefit is available for accounts that are standard on March 1, with default of less than 30 days. Besides, K.V. Kamath committee is working on recommendations on financial parameters like debt service coverage ratio, debt-equity ratio post-resolution and interest coverage ratio for recasting corporate loans.

Dubai seeks to attract wealthy retirees

ABBAS AL LAWATI
SEPT. 3

Dubai started a programme to attract wealthy retirees from the Middle East business hub faces a flight of expatriates amidst an economic downturn.

Foreigners over the age of 55 will be eligible for a five-year renewable visa if they meet certain criteria, according to the Dubai Media Office. In its initial phase, the programme will focus on UAE residents working in Dubai.

Candidates should meet one of the following requirements: Monthly income of 20,000 dirhams (\$5,445); savings of 1 mn dirhams; or own property in Dubai worth 2 mn dirhams.

The United Arab Emirates passed a law in 2018 allowing expatriates to stay beyond retirement age. Foreigners form about 90 per cent of Dubai's population, but their residency is tied to employment, discouraging many from settling roots in the city.

The programme "will contribute toward our tourism economy by facilitating frequent visits from families and friends of the retirees and increasing visitation from markets with a high retiree population," said Mohammed Ahmed Al Marri, D-G of the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs.—Bloomberg

Services pick up, but still in contraction zone

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

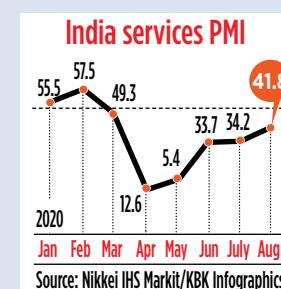
Despite showing a rise over July, services Purchasing Managers' Index continued in the contraction zone in August. Pandemic restrictions and job losses have been weighing heavily on services PMI.

The Services Business Activity Index of IHS Markit rose sharply from 34.2 in July to 41.8 in August, the highest since March. Nevertheless, the latest reading, by coming in below the 50 neutral value, indicated continued decline in business activity.

The ongoing pandemic restrictions continued to adversely impact client demand and business operations. New business and output continued to contract at marked rates, albeit slower than the records seen in April and May. Restrictions also contributed to a record increase in outstanding business.

Reduced business activity saw the Indian service sector operating below capacity. Ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and temporary business closures meant that firms were unable to process previously placed orders, which led to incomplete work increasing for a third month running.

Meanwhile, sustained revenue losses through the second quarter and increasing cost burdens led companies to raise charges for the first time since March. The rate of input price inflation was slightly faster than seen



in July, but marginal overall. Higher fuel costs were cited as the key reason behind higher input prices. In line with rising cost burdens, output charges grew at a margin-

al pace. Firms mentioned the passing on of higher costs to customers.

"August highlights another month of challenging operating conditions in the Indian services sector... Output and new work continue to fall at solid rates, while restrictions meant that firms were often unable to complete projects. Backlogs of work accumulated to the greatest extent in almost 15 years of data collection. That said, the survey showed signs of a potential recovery," said Shreya Patel, economist at IHS Markit.

RURAL JOBS DROP, URBAN RISE IN AUG.

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

Rising unemployment in rural India brought down overall employment in the country by 0.2 million in August from July levels. What hurt rural unemployment was lower farm and MGNREGA jobs.

The unemployment rate, which has been falling after April, increased from 7.4 per cent in July to 8.4 per cent in August. As a result, the employment rate fell from 37.6 per cent to 37.5 per cent in the same period, finds think-tank CMIE.

This deterioration in labour market conditions in August was essentially located in rural India. While in urban India 3.4 million got jobs, employment

declined by 3.6 million in rural India, thus, accounting for the 0.2 million overall decline.

Rural India, that led the recovery story till July has pulled back hard. Rural India faced a double whammy in August. It saw a fall in MGNREGA employment, which is non-farming related employment, and kharif sowing and planting-related employment.

As per the initial data available, compared to July, person-days generated in August were down by 55 per cent. August person-days were also 72 per cent lower than that in June. The fall in MGNREGA employment coincided with a fall in farming activities in August. By July-end, 83 per cent of the kharif sowing was complete.

Apparel exporters pin hopes on medical textiles

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3

and thereby resulting into disruptions in margin collections and reporting though the margins were sufficiently complied before the onset of the new system, Anmi said.

Deven Choksey, managing director, K.R. Choksey Shares & Securities, said, "New margin system introduced since Sept. 1, 2020 has derailed the entire settlement cycle of stock exchanges and clearing corporations. Investors are badly affected too, as regular pay-in and pay-out of funds and shares isn't happening since the last two days."

"Finger pointing is hap-

pening now, blaming forced implementation of a new system. The flaw is in the ecosystem which isn't ready! This isn't the first time that new systems are introduced without readiness! Past experiences reveal that under preparedness and knee-jerk implementations has been a regular method whenever new systems are introduced. And it has always caused so much stress on the entire market," Choksey said.

There are multiple technical glitches with regards to release of securities, OTPs, pledge and re-pledge issues, delay in pay-in and pay-out process

Notwithstanding the year-on-year decline in exports till now, apparel exporters are confident of clocking a positive growth at the end of the fiscal. They are banking on the increased demand for medical textiles across the globe.

Apparel exports have been down by 54 per cent between April and July. Compared to \$5,500 million exports during the period last year, shipments are down at \$2,500 million during the four-month period this year.

However, on a month-on-month basis, apparel exports have been seeing some recovery. In July, apparel clocked exports of \$163 million against \$136 million in the same month last year—down by 22 per cent. This gap was 90 per cent in April.

The industry is banking on the fact that it is the second largest producer of medical textiles.

"In a span of few months, we have become the second largest producer of medical textiles, including masks and personal protective equipment (PPE)," said Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) chairman A. Sakthivel. Going ahead, the AEPC expects medical textiles to be a key component in the export basket.

"On a month-on-month basis, by September we hope to return to last year's level of exports," he added.

Apart from medical textiles, AEPC also hopes to see growth in man-made fibre products. The government had recently lifted the anti-dumping duty on polyester staple fibre and this is expected to boost production of MMF products.

"The council has already requested the government for a Free Trade Agreement with the US," said Shaktivel.

Besides, the AEPC has sought a review of the trade pacts with the EU, UK, US, Australia and Canada to remove the disadvantages.

Vodafone Idea plans \$1.5 bn fundraising

BAIJU KALESH, ANTO
ANTONY & P. R. SANJAI
SEPT. 3

Vodafone Group Plc's India unit is planning to raise about \$1.5 billion as it seeks to turn around its fortunes in the country's fiercely competitive wireless market, people familiar with the matter said.

Vodafone Idea Ltd is discussing a funding plan that could include a share sale, according to the people, who asked not to be identified because the information is private. It is working with advisers, including New York-based investment bank PJT Partners Inc, as it seeks potential strategic partners to buy stakes, the people said.

The telecom operator is working to identify potential investors in the US, the people said. It could also raise part of the funds through other methods such as an offering of equity-linked securities, one of the people said.

Vodafone Idea plans to discuss the options at a board meeting on Friday. Details of the plan are still being finalised, and the size and structure of the fundraising could change, according to the people.

Vodafone Idea's extended gains in Mumbai trading, rising as much as 30 per cent. The stock closed at Rs 12.56 on the BSE, up 26.74 per cent. Shares of Vodafone Idea have fallen about 85 per cent since 2016, the launch of Reliance Jio Infocomm.

Vodafone Idea's fundraising plan comes after the firm won some legal relief earlier this week in a near two-decade payment dispute with the government.

The venture between Vodafone and billionaire Kumar Mangalam Birla's conglomerate has been weighed down by a \$7.8 billion bill from the government for short margining in all the segments till September 15, due to severe challenges in streamlining processes. "Forced implementation of a new margin system has derailed the entire settlement cycle of stock exchanges and clearing corporations," said Anmi.

The fine print of a Supreme Court judgment published late on Tuesday showed Vodafone Idea doesn't need to make any immediate payments as a three-judge panel allowed phone operators 10 years to pay a combined \$19 billion in back fees. —Bloomberg



Shutting down old coal plants and freezing under-construction plants can save over Rs 1,45,000 crore for the country, finds a report. This will also improve the financial health of the power distribution companies, or discoms.

After looking at 11 major coal power states which account for over 50 per cent of discom overdues, Bengaluru-based Climate Risk Horizons has identified possible areas for savings and cost rationalisation, starting with the retirement of coal plants that are over 20 years old and are less efficient than newer plants.

Shutting down 36.5 GW of old coal plants will avoid 18,000 crore worth of capital expenditure that needs to be incurred on retrofits to bring the plants in compliance with the 2015 emission norms. Replacing scheduled generation from these old plants with cheaper electricity, either from new renewables or from the

market, would save another Rs 7,000 crore annually and Rs 35,000 crore over a five-year tariff period, as electricity from most of these plants is relatively more expensive.

"Our analysis shows that it is far more efficient and cost-effective to shut down these old plants by 2022, rather than spend thousands of crores to retrofit them... Given state governments' precarious finances and the level of

stress on assets in the banking sector incurring debt for additional capex is difficult. These costs would also have to eventually be recovered from discoms and consumers via higher tariffs," said Ashish Fernandes, CEO and lead analyst of Climate Risk Horizons, in the report.

The report also identifies 14 GW of state-owned plants in the early stages of construction in Bihar, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh. Freezing expenditure on these projects would save over Rs 92,000 crore.

Given the country's power surplus situation and the cost advantages now enjoyed by renewable energy, there is no requirement for these new plants, and they could in fact end up worsening state finances if construction were to proceed.

According to Praveer Sinha, CEO and MD of Tata Power, around 60,000 MW of old coal-based power plants can be closed down quickly.

An internal study by Tata Power had found that there were about 280 coal-fired plants of a total capacity of 35,000 MW, which were over 25 years old.

Further, there are another 200 of a capacity of about 25,000 MW.

<p

SHORT TAKES

Punia, two more wrestlers +ve

New Delhi: Three senior male wrestlers, including world championship silver-medallist Deepak Punia, have tested positive for Covid-19, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Thursday.

Besides the Olympic-bound Punia (86kg), the other two wrestlers who have tested positive for the virus are Navin (65kg) and Krishan (125kg). All three are part of a national camp at the SAI Centre in Sonipat ahead of which the wrestlers are in quarantine. "Three senior men's wrestlers, who had reported to the National Wrestling Camp at SAI Centre in Sonipat, have tested positive for Covid-19 virus," the nodal sports body said in a statement.

With his silver at the worlds, Punia had secured a place for himself at the Tokyo Olympics.

Their have been moved to a SAI empanelled hospital as a precautionary measure for further monitoring.

All wrestlers were tested, upon arrival, as per the SAI SOP for resumption of sports activities. — PTI

Justice Verma is HCA Ombudsman

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 3

The Hyderabad Cricket Association has appointed Justice Deepak Verma, former judge of the Supreme Court, as its Ombudsman and Ethics Officer for a period of one year. A letter to Justice Verma dated September 2, 2020 and signed by president Mohammad Azharuddin says the decision was taken in the sixth Apex Council meeting held on June 6 this year. Justice Verma will be paid an honorarium of ₹2 lakh per month and TA & DA will be paid extra for each of the two expected visits and a possible third every month, the letter states.

HCA members are miffed though, and say as per the registered constitution as approved by Supreme Court, this power of appointment is delegated to the General Body.

Wagar for one ball brand for Tests

Karachi: Pakistan pace great Waqar Younis on Thursday said the ICC should consider using only one brand of ball in Test cricket as fast bowlers find it difficult to adjust while playing in different conditions across the world.

Pakistan played with the Dukes ball during their recent tour of England, where the visitors lost 0-2 a three-Test series. "I have been a big advocate of the Dukes ball for many years but I feel that only one brand of ball should be used around the world for Test cricket," Younis wrote in a column for the Pakistan Cricket Board.

"It doesn't matter which brand but the ICC should make that decision. It's hard for bowlers to adjust," he added. — PTI

English take on Aussies in T20s

London: One of England's most extraordinary seasons will end with them facing arch-rivals Australia as both sides try to strike a balance between playing their strongest limited-overs teams and keeping an eye on the future.

The Coronavirus pandemic threatened to wipe out England's entire home season yet they are now set to complete all 18 scheduled men's internationals, albeit the fixtures have been played behind closed doors.

They face Australia in three Twenty20s in Southampton starting on Friday before taking them on in a further three One-Dayers in Manchester later this month. — AFP

Live on TV
FORMULA ONE

Italian Grand Prix First Practice One from 2.25 pm; Second Practice from 6.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

CRICKET

England vs Australia 1st T20 From 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

US OPEN

Matches from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 2 HD

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

Lithuania vs Kazakhstan from 9.30 pm; Italy vs Bosnia-Herzegovina from 12.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2, HD; The Netherlands vs Poland from 12.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD



Caroline Garcia of France celebrates her 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) win over Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic in their women's singles second round match at the US Open tennis championships in New York on Wednesday. — AP

OH! KAROLINA

Garcia shocks top seed Pliskova at US Open

New York, Sept. 3: France's Caroline Garcia produced the biggest upset of the US Open on Wednesday, sending top seed Karolina Pliskova tumbling out of the tournament.

Garcia, the world number 50, scored one of the biggest wins of her career with a 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) second-round victory at Louis Armstrong Stadium.

The 26-year-old's 1hr 33min victory sends her into a third round meeting on Friday with American 28th seed Jennifer Brady.

If she can reproduce Wednesday's polished performance, Garcia will fancy her chances of extending her run at Flushing Meadows.

Garcia — whose talent propelled her to fourth in the world rankings in September 2018 before a protracted slump sent her sliding down the standings in 2019 — attacked Pliskova from the outset.

Garcia raced into a 5-0 lead after scoring two early service breaks before taking the first set.

Although Pliskova improved in the second, she was unable to find the crucial service break when it mattered, and was unable to convert a set point in the second to level the match.

In the tie break, Garcia raced into a 6-2 lead and then completed victory when Pliskova hit a return into the net.

It was a disappointing exit for Pliskova, who had been elevated to No.1 seed after a slew of high-ranking player withdrawals due to the coronavirus.

Men's singles second round (number in brackets denotes seeding): Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Kyle Edmund (GBR) 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-4, 6-2; Jan-Lennard Struff (GER x28) bt Michael Mmoh (USA) 6-2, 6-2, 7-5; Pablo Carreno-Busta (ESP x20) bt Mitchell Krueger (USA) 6-1, 6-2, 6-2; Ricardas Berankis (LTU) bt Steve Johnson (USA) 7-5, 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 (7/1); Denis Shapovalov (CAN x12) bt Kwon Soon-woo (KOR) 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-2; Taylor Fritz (USA x19) bt Gilles Simon (FRA) 7-5, 6-3, 6-2; Filip Krajinovic (SRB x26) bt Marcos Giron (USA) 6-4, 6-1, 6-3; David Goffin (BEL x7) bt Lloyd Harris (USA) 7-6 (8/6), 4-6, 6-1, 6-4; Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x4) bt Maxime Cressy (USA) 7-6 (7/2), 6-3, 6-4; Borna Coric (CRO x27) bt Juan Ignacio Londero (ARG) 7-5, 4-6, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-3; Alexander Zverev (GER x5) bt Brandon Nakashima (USA) 7-5, 6-7 (8/10), 6-3, 6-1.

Women's singles second round (number in brackets denotes seeding): Caroline Garcia (FRA) bt Karolina Pliskova (CZE x1) 6-1, 7-6 (7/2); Jennifer Brady (USA x28) bt Catherine Bellis (USA) 6-1, 6-2; Angelique Kerber (GER x17) bt Anna-Lena Friedsam (GER) 6-3, 7-6 (8/6); Ann Li (USA) bt Alison Riske (USA x13) 6-0, 6-3; Aliaksandra Sasnovich (BLR) bt Marketa Vondrousova (CZE x12) 6-1, 6-2; Yulia Putintseva (KAZ x23) bt Vera Lapko (BLR) 6-3, 6-3; Varvara Gracheva (RUS) bt Kristina Mladenovic (FRA x30) 1-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-0; Petra Martic (CRO x8) bt Kateryna Bondarenko (UKR) 6-3, 6-4; Naomi Osaka (JPN x4) bt Camila Giorgi (ITA) 6-1, 6-2; Marta Kosťuk (UKR) bt Anastasia Sevastova (LAT x31) 6-3, 7-6 (7/5); Anett Kontaveit (EST x14) bt Kaja Juvan (SLO) 6-4, 6-1; Shelby Rogers (USA) bt Elena Rybakina (KAZ x11) 7-5, 6-1; Petra Kvitová (CZE x6) bt Kateryna Kozlova (UKR) 7-6 (7/3), 6-2.

While Pliskova fell by the wayside, there were no such problems for fourth seed Naomi Osaka of Japan, the 2018 champion. The 22-year-old dominated hard-hitting Italian opponent Camila Giorgi in a 6-1, 6-2 victory.

Elsewhere on Wednesday, Petra Kvitová advanced to the third round with a straight sets defeat of Kateryna Kozlova of Ukraine, winning 7-6 (7/3), 6-2.

Kvitová, chasing a third Grand Slam crown after wins at Wimbledon in 2011

and 2014, needed 1hr 40min to claim her place in the last 32.

Gracheva, ranked 102nd in the world, upset France's 30th-seeded Kristina Mladenovic 1-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-0.

Mladenovic suffered a meltdown for the ages as she slid to defeat, collapsing from a 6-1, 5-1 lead and blowing four match points along the way.

Another seed to tumble was the Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova. The out-of-sorts 12th seed was beaten 6-1, 6-2 in little

more than an hour by Belarus' Aliaksandra Sasnovich.

Germany's Angelique Kerber, the 2016 US Open champion, booked her place in the third round with a straight sets win over compatriot Anna-Lena Friedsam.

The 17th seed progressed with a 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) victory in 1hr 40min, and will now face Ann Li, who knocked out 13th seed Alison Riske 6-0, 6-3.

SHARAN-CACIC BOW OUT IN OPENING ROUND

India's Divij Sharan and his Serbian partner Nikola Cacic fought hard before going down in three sets to eighth seeds Nikola Mektić and Wesley Koolhof in the first round of the US Open men's doubles event here.

Sharan and Cacic lost 4-6, 3-6 against Croatia's Mektić and Koolhof of the Netherlands in a tough contest that lasted one hour and 46 minutes on Wednesday. The winners will next play Simone Bolelli and Maximo Gonzalez. — Agencies

Messi vs Barca still a stalemate

Barcelona, Sept. 3: Lionel Messi's future at Barcelona looked no closer to being resolved after the first meeting between the player's father and club officials ended without an agreement, a person with knowledge of the situation confirmed, on the condition of anonymity.

The person said club president Josep Bartomeu and Jorge Messi, Lionel's father-cum-agent, there was no clear picture on whether the Argentine would leave the Catalans this season or not.

Jorge Messi said the player wants to leave and Barcelona said it will not accept his transfer request.

No other meeting was immediately scheduled, and the next steps were unclear. Barcelona has said it still hopes Lionel could change his mind.

In addition to meeting with Messi's father, Barcelona said it also wanted to meet personally with the player to try to change his mind about leaving. The club said it has been doing everything to try to convince Messi to finish his career at the club where he started nearly 20 years ago. Lionel Messi hasn't met with club officials since announcing his decision to leave. — AP

CITY FIND JAMES HARD TO GET PAST IN PLAY-OFFS

Miami, Sept. 3: James Harden's shooting touch deserted him, but the Houston star came up big on the defensive end in the Rockets' 104-102 series-clinching win over Oklahoma City in the NBA playoffs on Wednesday.

Harden leapt to block a potential game-winning three-point attempt by Thunder rookie Luguentz Dort with 4.8 seconds remaining as the Rockets held on through a frantic finish to win the best-of-seven Western Conference series four games to three and book a second-round showdown with LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers.

In a closely contested game, Houston took the lead for good, 103-102, on PJ Tucker's driving basket with 1:25 remaining.

The ball changed hands several times before the Thunder got it into the hands of Dort, whose dream night was ended by Harden's big block.

Houston's Robert Covington drained a free throw with 1.4 seconds left to make it 104-102.

Then Harden was called for a foul on Danilo Gallinari before the ball was inbounded, giving the Thunder a free throw and the ball. Gallinari missed from the foul line and the Thunder turned the ball over on the final inbounds pass.

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Harbhajan pulls out of IPL

**C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 3**

Even as the buzz and speculation around the surprise exit of Suresh Raina refuse to die down, the Indian Premier League has witnessed another high-profile pull-out. Veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh has decided to not join the Chennai Super Kings camp in Dubai, a team source confirmed on Thursday.

Harbhajan, who had earlier skipped the team's pre-departure camp in Chennai, is reportedly worried about his mother, who is not keeping well. Harbhajan was expected to reach the UAE this weekend.

"He made it clear that he is not in the right frame of mind and won't be able to give his best even if he drags himself to the UAE to play. He has always given his best, so there is no question about his commitment. We have to respect his decision," said a team source.

A crucial meeting will be take place on Friday with the team management will decide if the team needs a replacement for Raina and Harbhajan. "Captain M.S. Dhoni and coaches Stephen Fleming and Michael Hussey will take the call," the source said.

Going by his recent interviews, Raina has shown interest in going back to the IPL bubble. But it is "highly unlikely" that Raina will be allowed to return. "The team has moved on," the source said.



Harbhajan Singh of the Chennai Super Kings in this file photo.

CSK TO TRAIN FROM TODAY

The Super Kings squad, except the 13 Coronavirus-infected members, underwent another round of tests on Thursday. The results will be out on Friday morning and if they return negative, the players will begin training.

BCCI MEDICAL TEAM MEMBER TESTS POSITIVE

Meanwhile, a member of the BCCI medical team tested positive in the UAE. "It is true, but there is no issue as he (senior medical officer) is asymptomatic and has been kept in isolation. He has not been in contact with anyone and possibly contracted it during his travel to the UAE. He is being monitored and should hopefully be fine in the next round of testing. We also have two people at the NCA who have tested positive and have been kept in isolation," Wadia said.

"The CSK incident has taught us that it can happen to anyone even when the best of precautions are taken and therefore we must be more compliant and rigid on the bio-bubble protocols. We need to ensure only those who are really required to be with the players are part of the bubble," Wadia said.

The franchisee's non-player and non-coaching

staff includes team operations manager, and social media specialists. The cricketers are also required to spend time with the marketing staff during photo shoots throughout the league.

"The number of staff outside of the teams and their support staff and the match officials should be limited to the absolute minimum," this is what is stated in the BCCI SOP.

When asked if he would be travelling for the tournament, Wadia said: "I have not finalised my plans but I normally don't interact a lot with the players. I have spoken to Anil Kumble (head coach) twice so far just to check what is going on."

— PTI

"He made it clear that he is not in the right frame of mind and won't be able to give his best even if he drags himself to the UAE to play. He has always given his best, so there is no question about his commitment. We have to respect his decision," said a team source.

RAINAS RETURN HIGHLY UNLIKELY

— PTI

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