


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VIJAYAWADA | WEDNESDAY | 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 31.0°C
Min: 24°C
RH: 32%
Rainfall: 3mm
Forecast: Cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
31/24 9C

COVID-19

COUNT

CASES

(+81,515)

56,39,088

DEATHS

(+2,110)

90,006

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,166)

TS: 1,74,774

(+7,553)

AP: 6,39,302

(+10)

1,052

(+51)

5,461

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,16,33,652

DEATHS

9,71,879

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana

Tithi: Adhika Ashwayuja Shuddha Saptami till 8.02 pm

Star: Jyeshtha till 6.29 pm

Variyam: Nil

Durmuhurtam: 11.44 am to 12.32 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Safar ul Muzaffar 5, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.30 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 4.45 pm

Maghrib: 6.12 pm

Isha: 8.15 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.56 AM

SUNSET TODAY 6.02 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 11.44 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 12.06 PM

COUNTER POINT



No need to rush... all your party MPs have been suspended!

IN BRIEF

More than a crore workers walked

New Delhi: More than one crore guest workers returned to their home states on foot during March-June 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic-induced lockdown, the government said on Tuesday. "Covid-19 has resulted in migration of a large number of workers from destination states to the home states," minister of state for road transport and highways V.K. Singh told Lok Sabha. However, he said that the ministry does not maintain a separate data on those who died. — PTI



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If Biden wins, China wins: Trump



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Ambani plans ₹4,000 smartphone

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SRH allrounder Marsh hurt, could be out of IPL



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Jagan apprises Shah on stay orders by HC

CM seeks more Central support to implement of three capitals decision, to meet FM today

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy met Union home minister Amit Shah for an hour on Tuesday and discussed key issues pertaining to the state. The meeting comes against the backdrop of the government's confrontation with the judiciary and controversies over certain incidents at temples.

According to sources, the CM said to have briefed Amit Shah on the certain recent orders given by the courts. With regard to the status quo on the three capitals Act, the CM is believed to have explained about the encroachment on executive powers.

The affidavits filed by the Union government in the AP High Court supporting the state on taking decisions on the capitals and affirming that the Centre had no role in the matter figured in the dis-

● **ACCORDING TO** sources, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is said to have briefed home minister Amit Shah on the certain recent orders given by the courts. With regard to the status quo on the three capitals Act, the CM is believed to have explained about the encroachment on executive powers.

cussion. The Chief Minister reportedly sought further support for the implementation of the government's three capitals decision. Reddy explained the Amaravati land scam and insider trading and the government ordering a full-fledged inquiry.

Reddy brought up the issue of Central funding for the Polavaram project and financial help for the state. The CM also discussed the political sce-

nario in the state with Amit Shah.

The CM is likely to meet with Union finance minister Nirmala Sitaraman and seek financial help for the state. He will Union health minister Harsha Vardhan for support in the Covid-19 initiatives.

The Chief Minister will stay overnight in Delhi, per information from official sources. He will head to Tirumala at 1 pm from Delhi and present silk robes to Lord Balaji during the ongoing Brahmotsavams. He will take part in the famous Garuda Seva and will stay in Tirumala on Wednesday night.

He will join Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Thursday morning to take part in the foundation stone laying ceremony for the proposed Karnataka guest house on Tirumala. He will have another darshan of Lord Balaji and will attend the Sundarakanda recitation programme.

ENGINEER FALLS WHILE ESCAPING BEE ATTACK, DIES

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI I DC KURNOOL SEPTEMBER 22

A deputy executive engineer of the irrigation department died while escaping a swarm of bees that officials while they were checking an irrigation project on Tuesday.

The victim was Bhanu Prakash, 45, posted at the SRBC under Nandyal division 3. Three officials, including two in the junior engineer cadre, were injured.

The officials went to the Banakacherla cross-regulator and climbed it to check the functioning of crest gates to release water to the SRBC canal from the main channel.

A swarm of bees attacked them while they were checking the gates. They scrambled to get down from the project and escape but Prakash fell down the steps and was injured in addition to being savagely stung by the bees.

Officials shifted Prakash to the Atmakur government hospital where the doctors said he was dead. A case was registered and an investigation initiated, Pamulapadu sub-inspector A. Raja Kumar said.

Collector G. Veera Pandian expressed shock at the death of Prakash and sent his condolences to the bereaved family.

Officials try to save contractor

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS I DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

Efforts are being made at the highest levels of the Andhra Pradesh irrigation department to protect a contractor involved in submitting fake bank guarantee for ₹11 crore from facing the severe punishment of being blacklisted from executing any government work in future.

While junior officials recommended that the contractor's earnest money deposit (EMD) of ₹5 crore be forfeited, the contract terminated and the contractor blacklisted, those in the higher echelons of the department seem to be dodging action. Inquiries by Deccan Chronicle revealed that the decision of Aditya Nath Das, special chief secretary, irrigation, to order a fresh inquiry would further delay the punishment. Even the terms of reference given by him for the inquiry would scope for the erring contractor to escape punishment, sources said.

Special class contractor R. Subbaraju's firm RSR Infra Works (India) Pvt Ltd was awarded about ₹500 crore of work relating to the formation of flood banks on the Vamsadhara in May 2018.

A letter submitted by the superintending engineer

(SE), Srikakulam irrigation circle, to the Chief Engineer, North Coast, clearly listed out the alleged fraud, breach of agreement and unlawful practices of RSR Infra. The SE expressed his anguish over the delay in taking action against the contractor by more than a year.

"The bank guarantee submitted by the contractor to avail mobilisation advance of ₹11 crore was purported to have been issued by a bank located in a far-off village of West Bengal. An irrigation official went to the place and found that the bank guarantee was fake," sources said.

The SE in his letter pointed out that RSR Infra had subcontracted the work to a third party without obtaining permission from the department. When the irregularity was exposed, the contractor tried to escape punishment by blaming the unauthorised subcontractor for the fake bank guarantee, the SE said.

Ironically, Das directed the inquiry officer to verify the claims of RSR Infra on subcontracting the work and whether or not the subcontractor had submitted the bank guarantee.

■ **Page 2: Terms of reference 'surprising'**

Oppn to boycott House till MPs' suspension is lifted

Centre adamant, says suspended MPs must apologise first

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, SEPT. 22

A number of Opposition parties on Tuesday staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha and decided to boycott proceedings of the House till the suspension of eight members is revoked, even as the government insisted on an apology from the "unruly" MPs.

Among the parties that boycotted the proceedings of the House included the Congress, which was among the first to walk out, followed by members of the CPM, CPI, Trinamul, NCP, SP, Shiv Sena, RJD, DMK, TRS and the AAP.

Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad, said they would boycott the proceedings till the suspension of members is revoked and also demanded that the government bring another Bill to ensure that no private player should buy food grains from farmers below the MSP fixed by the government.

Joining their colleagues in the Upper House, Opposition parties in the Lok Sabha also boycotted House proceedings later.

After Opposition parties boycotted proceedings, Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed seven Bills, including the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020, which is one of the three farm sector related Bills which Opposition parties and farmers' organisations have been protesting against, saying they are "anti-farmers" while the Modi government asserts that they are "revolutionary."

"We will consider withdrawal of suspension only after suspended members apologise for their behaviour in Rajya Sabha," the BJP's Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters outside Parliament.



Security personnel stop Congress workers from crossing a barricade during a protest against the Centre over farm bills, in New Delhi, on Tuesday.

— PTI

Harivansh goes on fast against attack

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 22

Invoking his humble origins in Bihar, a state which will soon be witnessing crucial Assembly polls, Rajya Sabha deputy chairperson Harivansh on Tuesday penned an emotional letter to the President Ram Nath Kovind over the Sunday's incident that took place in the Upper House of Parliament, when House was taking up two farm sector related bills.

He announced his 24-hour fast, while mentioning his anguish over the Sunday's ruckus in the House. Eight Opposition parties members have been suspended for their "unruly behaviour" over the incident. Opposition parties had moved a no-confidence motion against

Harivansh for the manner in which the bills were passed amid din but the motion was rejected by Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu.

He wrote that the sight of disrobing of democracy jolted his mind and heart and he could not sleep for the whole night.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the letter, saying it "reaffirms faith in democracy," "is inspiring and praiseworthy," "contains truth and sensitivity" and urged citizens to read it. Modi also appreciated Harivansh's gesture to serve tea to the suspended MPs who have been camping in Parliament premises since Monday.

However, the members refused the deputy chairman's gesture, the Prime Minister added.

PAWAR SLAMS HARIVANSH, GOES ON A DAY'S FAST

SONU SHRIVASTAVA I DC MUMBAI, SEPT. 22

NCP chief and former Union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar on Tuesday criticised Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh for his conduct during the passage of two farm bills on Sunday and said he is holding a day-long fast in solidarity with eight members of the House suspended for protesting against it. He said that the role of the deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha is a big degradation of the House and its position.

The 79-year-old NCP patriarch said that two-three farm related bills of the country was expected to be tabled in Rajya Sabha but they did not know that the bills would be tabled so quickly.

20 pvt tech colleges may shut

HOSKOTE NAGABHUSHANAM I DC ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 22

At least 20 private engineering colleges in Rayalaseema and Nellore affiliated with the JNTU-A are on the verge of closure due to poor admissions. Further, the varsity has been unable to collect dues from these colleges.

The colleges have to pay a maximum of ₹2,000 towards the university fund and other fees for each student.

Most of the engineering colleges are allegedly running by political pressures

over dues. Sources in the university say political intervention has been coming in the way of collecting dues.

The spectre of excess fees in many colleges has reared its head again with students accusing their institutions of demanding additional fees under various heads. "They collect huge amounts from the students, the break-up is not specified in any college. Though managements charge extra from the students, money is not remitted to the university," a senior professor from JNTUA observed.

According to JNTUA officials, around ₹150 crore is due from the affiliated colleges. They are being issued notices.

As tuition fee is different for each college, 0.5 per cent has become the basis for the affiliation fee instead of the earlier ₹175, in addition to the common services fee collected from each student and paid to the varsity. While in the first year it is ₹2,000, from the second year it is ₹1,500.

A warning on the website directing college managements to clear the dues seems to have no effect. Colleges which do not

clear dues by the deadline will not be considered for grant of affiliation.

More than 10 colleges have been closed but neither the University, AICTE nor APSCHE, were informed. Three colleges have changed managements. Some engineering colleges have removed their name boards.

The required staff strength is 480 while the university is running with 85 permanent faculty and 21 M.Tech programmes were introduced without recruiting enough staff.

Bizarrely, JNTUA got the 34th place in rankings.

Lifestyle changes add to cancers in women

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 22

Lifestyle changes are increasing the burden of cancers of the cervix and breast, but they are diagnosed late due to the fear of testing, neglect and social taboo attached to the disease, doctors have observed in their evaluations of gynaecological cancers.

Late diagnosis in Stage 2 and Stage 3 is observed in women in both government and private sectors. Breast, cervical, ovarian and uterine cancers account for more than 70 per cent of the cancers in India.

Cervical cancers are curable and the pre-cancerous stage lasts 8 to 10 years but due to fear of testing and social taboo many women do not go to doctors.

This is observed in urban areas too where, despite awareness, testing is the last option.

Dr Geeta Narsagee, surgical oncologist, said, "In urban areas too, we have found women coming late because they do not want to burden the family with their health problems. This is one of the most common reasons we hear.

■ **Report on Page 3**

DELICACY | UNDER THREAT

Migratory Hilsa travels through sea from Bangladesh, enters Godavari

Pulasa fish on red list has no saviour

VADREVVU SRINIVAS I DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 22

Hilsa fish — known in Andhra Pradesh as Pulasa and consumed with great relish in the Godavari districts, is on the Red List of International Union for Conservation of Nature. Neither the Centre nor the state government is taking any steps to conserve this migratory fish, which travels all the way through the sea from Bangladesh and Myanmar to breed in the rivers of AP, Odisha and West Bengal.

The migration starts during the monsoon with the

Hilsa swimming against the current from the sea into the Godavari's muddy waters. It is called Vilasa in the sea and Pulasa once it reaches the Godavari river for breeding. The fish has good fat content, is high in protein and very tasty. At the same time, it is also highly expensive.

Experts say most of Hilsa fish is in Bangladesh, 4-5 per cent in Myanmar and 5-6 per cent in India, mostly in West Bengal, Odisha and AP. Bangladesh observes a two-month fishing holiday for multiplication of this fish on which lakhs of fishermen depend

for their livelihood. In India, however, state governments are not paying any attention to the conservation. The fisheries department has no statistics regarding the Pulasa in the Godavari districts.

Fisheries additional director P. Koteswara Rao said Hilsa is among the most endangered species on the IUCN Red List, as 95 per cent of the fish is unable to return post breeding because it gets caught in fishing nets. He conceded that taste-wise the Pulasa fish available in the Godavari districts is unmatched.

2 PULASA FISH WEIGHING 2.5 KG SOLD FOR ₹33K IN YANAM

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, SEPT. 22

Due to the intensity of floods in the Godavari river this year, it was being expected that the Pulasa fish will be widely available this season. However, it has been netted only at three places — Yanam, Pasarlapudi and Bodasakurru shores. The size of the fish is double than in previous years.

Last year the average fish used to weigh 1.5 kg and it is up to 2.5 kg now.

At Yanam, two fish, each weighing one kg and 1.5 kg were sold for ₹33,000.

At Pasarlapudi, YSRC leader and Nagaram agriculture market chairman Kommula Kondala Rao bought 2.5 kg of fish for ₹21,000. He said previously, fishermen used to sell the fish openly and anybody could buy it. Last year, a 1.5 kg fish cost ₹4,000 to ₹₹6,000. This year, fishermen are not selling them in open, as many people have booked in advance. Kondala Rao

said the fish soup that he had prepared from the Pulasas has been distributed among 12 families.

Malladi Ganga Bhavani, a fishing community woman, said few were fortunate to catch the fish.

Women who are experts in cooking the fish, say they prepare Pulasa soup and keep it in a pot overnight. It tastes best the next day. People serve the soup to higher officials and political leaders and others to be in their good books.

SHORT TAKES

Terms of reference 'surprising'

From page 1

"The terms of reference are surprising. The subcontractor is non-existent as far as the department is concerned because the very process of subletting the work was without permission and illegal," sources pointed out.

RSR Infra has also been lobbying for termination of contract under the guise that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy wanted all contracts to be terminated if the value of the work executed is below 25 per cent of the total value. However, the SE recommended that the contract should be terminated on charges of submitting a fake bank guarantee and violating contract norms.

YSRC WELCOMES EPIDEMIC ACT AMENDMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

YSR Congress MP Lavu Srikrishnadevarayalu on Tuesday welcome ordinance issued by the Centre amending the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897.

Mr Srikrishnadevarayalu said that Andhra Pradesh had the highest per capita testing and recoveries. "By decentralising strategy, be it door-to-door surveys, contact tracing, district specific control rooms and hotlines, Andhra Pradesh has taken the fight against Covid to the grassroots with 6,846 Primary Health Centres and Anganwadis serving as the nodal points. The Centre and states can take a leaf out of AP to effectively deal with the disease," the MP said.

"The ordinance redefines healthcare personnel and provides for greater protection to them. Hence, YSRC welcomed the Union government's move."

EXPORT MARKETING ONLINE LESSONS FROM TOMORROW

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

The Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FAPCCI) is organising a special online session "Export Marketing – Procedures & Documentation" from September 24 to 26.

Eminent speakers and senior officials from Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), banks, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) and Customs will participate in the sessions. The programme is designed for the entrepreneurs/individuals, exporters, manufacturers, service providers, etc.

The session will be held from 3 pm to 6 pm. For further information and registration, people can contact on 8309306291.

CHEM FIRM MISSES NOC DEADLINE, CLOSES PREMISES

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC SRIKAKULAM, SEPT. 22

Smartchem Technologies located at Ponnada village of Srikakulam district shutdown its premises.

An inspection team comprising district fire officer, deputy chief inspector of factories, deputy director of industries and other officials visited the factory premises on Monday, after the deadline ended for safety compliance.

"We found the factory shut down and the management showed us the purchase bills of fire safety equipment that was being transported from New Delhi. After installation of the equipment only, they will be able to submit an application for NoC from the fire department and resume its production after obtaining the certificate," the fire officer said.

Notice under Form 14 of AP Fire Safety Rules of 1989, was issued to the company last month.

Deputy chief inspector of factories G.V.V. Satynarayana said there was no stock in the godown which has the capacity to store 1,550 tonnes of ammonium nitrate. He said the factory has permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and chief control of explosives of Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation.

The factory, however, did not apply for NoC ever since they took over the factory from VBC Group.

Meanwhile, the commissioner of police Visakhapatnam cancelled the NoC of Sravan Shipping Services for not complying with safety norms.



Floodwaters enter Raghavendra Swamy Brindavan at Bichali village in the Raichur taluk of Raichur district in Karnataka.

— DC

Floodwaters enter Hampi and Mantralayam temples

NAGABHUSHANAM HOSKOTE | DC ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 22

Heavy floods for Tungabhadra again hit downstream areas affecting historic structures and also temples of Hampi till Mantralayam in Kurnool district. There is no access following heavy floods in upstream areas of the Tungabhadra dam.

The Tungabhadra reservoir recorded full storage capacity of 100 TMC ft of water, following constant heavy inflows from upstream. More than 46,000 cusecs of inflows from upstream areas were followed by similar quantity of outflows into the river towards Hampi and Mantralayam.

The Kodandarama swamy temple at Hampi was submerged due to heavy flows in the river near Chakratheertha. Further, the historic St. Purandaradasa mantap was totally submerged.

Tourist K. Prahlada Rao from Anantapur observed there was no access to visit the temples of Kodanda Ramaswamy and Hanuman at Hampi.

The heavy flows in the river submerged all structures, including the brindavan of Guru Raghavendra Swamy at Bichale in Raichur district and located closer to Mantralayam in Kurnool district. The

CENTRE STILL OWES ₹58 CRORE UNDER COVID-19 PACKAGE

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

Andhra Pradesh has received ₹200 crore from the central government under the Covid-19 package and is still to get ₹58.4 crore on this account. Minister of state for health and family welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey disclosed this in the Rajya Sabha on Sunday, while replying to a question raised by Parimal Nathwani, who represents AP in RS.

The minister stated that the Centre had released ₹3,000 crore in phase-1 and ₹1,256.81 crore in phase-2 to the states and Union Territories under the Covid-19 package. He explained that AP had been given ₹141.46 crore in phase-I and ₹58.41 crore of the ₹116.82 crore in phase-II.

Mr Nathwani wanted to know the steps that were taken by the Centre to help the states fight the Covid-19 pandemic, with particular reference to Andhra Pradesh.

The Union minister said that the Centre had also provided equipment worth ₹3,10,16,300, including one CFX-96 Touch Real Time PCR Detection System worth ₹14,86,800 and seven Automated RNA Extraction machines worth ₹42,18,500 each. AP also received 1,70,722 RNA kits worth ₹1,87,04,408 from the Centre as of September 11 as well as 1,22,040 VTMs worth ₹1,68,60,579 and 2,46,567 RT-PCR kits worth ₹13,06,21,730. The Centre sent 14.63 lakh N95 masks to AP as on September 18 besides 2.79 lakh PPE kits, 31.5 lakh HCQ tablets and 3,960 ventilators.

Srisailem almost full to its capacity

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL SEPT. 22

With incessant rains in catchment areas, both Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers are in spate.

Sunkesula barrage on the Tungabhadra discharged 98,780 cusecs into the Srisailem while the Jurala project contributed 2,29,660 cusecs. The outflow from Srisailem spillway into Nagarjunasagar was 317460 cusecs.

The Srisailem dam reservoir level on Tuesday evening was 884.40 feet against the total height of 885 feet. The storage in the reservoir is measured at 211.9572 TMC against its total capacity of 215 TMC. Total discharge alone was measured at 3,49,502 cusecs while the remaining outflow was from AP Power House, Pothireddy padu head regulator and

Malyal HNSS.

Sunkesula barrage on Tungabhadra river alone contributed 100 TMC of water during the past one and half months, said an irrigation official.

With so much of water going straight into the Bay of Bengal, farmers on the ungabhadra riverfront demand the immediate construction of the Gundrevula reservoir. "It is the lifeline of western part of Kurnool, comprising Mantralayam, Adoni, Yemmiganur and Pathikonda," said Venkata Subba Reddy, convener of the Gundrevula Sadhana Samiti.

Rayalaseema districts are silent witnesses to copious water passing through their rivers. But successive governments just allowed small capacity reservoirs of less than 5 TMCs, Mr Subba Reddy said.

Bichale temple has a three-centuries long history where saint Raghavendra Swamy spent 12 years before he settled at Mantralayam.

Tungabhadra Board officials expect constant heavy inflows may continue for a few more days because of heavy rains in upstream parts along with the overflowing of reservoirs.

Atchannaidu likely to be appointed TD state chief

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

Telugu Desam Legislature Party deputy leader and former minister K. Atchannaidu is likely to be appointed party state president.

According to the party sources, TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu has finalised Atchannaidu's name as the new TD state president after consulting the opinion of senior party leaders.

It is learnt that the leadership is hoping to rejuvenate the party with the name and fame of Atchannaidu's family, his aggressive attitude and mass appeal.

According to party sources, Mr Naidu is likely to announce the appointment of Mr Atchannaidu and a new state executive committee on September



K. Atchannaidu

27. The BCs were strong supporters of the TD for decades and the party used to win majority seats with their support. But things changed in 2019 elections as BCs rallied

24-YEAR-OLD RESCUED FROM FLOODWATERS

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, SEPT. 22

A 24-year-old youth Eerothula Rama Durga Murali of Polamuru village in Anaparti mandal of East Godavari district was rescued from overflowing canal waters near Singampalli village of Rangampet mandal.

According to information reaching here, Murali was going to Katravulapalli village in Jaggampet mandal by bike during earlier hours of Tuesday when he found himself within the floodwaters of overflowing tanks nearby. Local people saw him stranded and called 100.

Rangampet sub-inspector Ch. Sudhakar, head constable Kalyan and constable Seshagiri found the youth holding onto some bushes in the gushing waters and screaming for help. With the help of ropes, the sub-inspector and a local person waded and swam to the youth. They put him into a life jacket and all of them reached to safety. By that time, the motorcycle and cellphone of the youth had got washed away.

BJP decides to go aggressive in AP

Chariot fire incident comes in handy for BJP

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

The AP unit of Bharatiya Janata Party has decided to go aggressive for coming to power in the state. A prelude to this was appointment of hardcore saffron leader Somu Veerajulu as the state's BJP president.

Since assuming office, Mr Veerajulu has been attacking both the ruling YSRC and Opposition Telugu Desam in no uncertain terms. Antarvedi chariot burning incident and proposed relaxation in signing of declaration form by people of other religions to enter Lord Venkateswara Temple in Tirupati are coming in handy for the BJP.

Addressing a meeting of BJP state office-bearers and district party presidents on Tuesday, Mr Veerajulu trained his guns on both YSRC and TD. He pointed out that no one attributed religion to TD and YSRC when they sent people to Mecca and Jerusalem at government's expense. But they are now harking to religion when BJP leaders are questioning the series of attacks on temples and Hindu religious institutions.

The state BJP president affirmed that the BJP will continue its fight against the state government on Antarvedi issue and comments of minister Kodali Nani that there is no need to sign the declaration form at Tirumala before



having darshan of Sri Venkateswara.

BJP general secretary Vishnuvardhan Reddy expressed suspicions about a conspiracy to suppress Hindu religion through a series of attacks on temples.

Objecting to the comments of Kodali Nani, he demanded that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy sack Mr Nani from the state Cabinet immediately for hurting the sentiments of Hindus.

Since his appointment as AP BJP president, Mr Veerajulu has affected a lot of changes in the saffron party. He has issued show-cause notices to several leaders who crossed lines in currying favour from either YSRC or Telugu Desam.

Antarvedi chariot burning incident has given an opportunity to BJP to take the party into Hindu masses and garner their support. Advocacy that non-Hindus need not sign the declaration form for dar-

shan at Tirumala is also coming in handy to highlight that the interests of Hindus are being undermined.

Mr Veerajulu recalled that Atal Bihari Vajpayee had developed India under a Samruddh Bharat strategy. He said the BJP would now adopt Samruddh Andhra slogan to acquire power in the state in the coming days.

Mr Veerajulu asked BJP leaders to take BJP's national-level schemes and development activities to the masses in every nook and corner of the state. In this regard, he said village and mandal committees will be appointed by the party to take BJP into the public.

BJP MLC P.V.N. Madhav, Mahila Morcha national in-charge Daggubati Purandeswari, BJP national joint secretary (organisation) V. Satish, former BJP state president Kannan Lakshminarayana and others participated in the meeting.

3 held for installing idols at Srikalahasti

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, SEPT. 22

Tirupati Urban police have cracked the sensational case related to illegal installation of idols at the famed Srikalahasteeswara Swamy Temple in Chittoor district, which sparked a major political controversy throughout the state.

Police on Tuesday arrested three brothers – Pindi Sula Vardhan (32), Pindi Thirumalaiah (30) and Pindi Muni Sekhar (28), belonging to Harijanawada in Puttur mandal of Chittoor district.

They are accused of allegedly installing two idols of Lord Shiva and Nandi inside the temple on September 6 without consent from officials. Temple authorities were unaware of the development until some devotees brought the instance to their notice on September 11.

Based on a complaint lodged by temple executive officer (EO) C. Chandrasekhar Reddy, Tirupati Urban superintendent of police Avula Ramesh Reddy formed special teams led by inspectors D. Nagarajuna Reddy and Chiranjeevi, apart from sub-inspector A. Sanjeeva Kumar to fast track the investigation.

Disclosing details to mediapersons, the SP said on credible information, police teams arrested the three brothers from near a petrol bunk at Srikalahasti on Monday. "Police teams analysed footage collected from over 100 CCTV cameras inside and outside the

● The accused were reportedly facing financial troubles. They said to have installed the idols at Srikalahasti temple to get rid of the 'Doshas' in their 'Jatakam'.

temple to trace the accused. While analysing the footage, our teams found three persons moving around suspiciously outside the temple on bikes. The same persons were also seen carrying bags on their shoulders in the queue line," Ramesh Reddy said. The idols installed illegally had been carried in those bags.

Explaining how they zeroed in on the accused, the SP said, "Based on registration number of motorcycles, our teams started a search operation. We hit a roadblock after finding that the addresses linked to the registration numbers had been changed. We then retrieved phone numbers linked to the vehicle registration numbers. Each and every lead was examined after that to finally corner the accused".

Questioned about the motive of the accused, Ramesh Reddy said, "As per the confession of accused, they have been facing financial troubles since the past few years. Some fortune teller asked them to install the idols at Srikalahasti temple to get rid of the 'Doshas' in their 'Jatakam'.

Following this, the three brothers had surreptitiously installed the idols."

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday criticised Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for not condemning the ongoing attacks on temples, Dalits, BCs and minorities with an ulterior plan to use vote bank politics.

He said that for the last 100 days, many untoward incidents had occurred in different temples. The CM did not visit even one temple and failed to give a strong warning to the perpetrators of these crimes, Mr Naidu said.

Addressing a party meeting with senior leaders and candidates of all 175 Assembly constituencies, Mr Naidu recalled how Mr Reddy had "enacted a drama of having converted to Hinduism" prior to the 2019 election but after coming to power had taken his oath with the Bible by his side. He claimed that these "theatrics" were only aimed at preserving his vote bank while the fact was that the CM had no faith in religion.

He said a CM should treat devotees of all religions with equality and justice as it is the sole duty of the government to protect all places of worship. Mr Naidu termed it a matter of shame on the part of YSRC MPs to hold dharanas in Parliament premises with the sole purpose to politically target TD and not for the interests of the people of AP.

PREMIER | UNIT State yet to transfer land, offer other incentives for construction of the centre

Classical Telugu institute awaits government nod

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, SEPT. 22

Though the Union government has sanctioned some prestigious institutes in the state, delay on the part of the state government in offering land and other incentives are impacting their grounding.

For instance, The Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu (CESCT), functioning under HRD ministry, has been waiting for the state government's nod to shift operations to a colony built by Centre's Building Material Technical Prom-

otion Council (BMTPC) at Venkatachalam near Nellore. In fact, the Centre would have started construction of its own campus on five acres of land identified for it near Venkatachalam six months back but the state government is yet to give possession of the land.

At the outset, credit goes to Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu for shifting CESCT to AP in January from Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore. The Vice-President was also instrumental in offering a building at Deendayal Upadhyaya An-

● THE CENTRE has plans to shift Telugu scriptures, inscriptions and palm leaf manuscripts from Tanjore, Chennai and other parts of the country to Nellore.

thyodaya Bhavan at Venkatachalam, belonging to Swarna Bharat Trust, to the Centre free of cost till CESCT has its own premises. However, the plans to construct the campus or shift the operations to BMTPC colony are on hold due to delay on the part of the state government to

clear the proposals.

CESCT wants to use BMTPC's 36 demonstration houses and a demonstration community building for conducting workshops and ensuring residential accommodation for the staff and training programme participants.

BMTPC wrote to the state municipal administration department in May for allotment of the colony to CESCT against a nominal rent but the department is yet to act on the letter.

Project director of CESCT Prof. D. Munirathnam said they are keen on using the

BMTPC facility to impart experimental training and workshops on manuscripts. He said they will establish a museum and a library in the proposed campus to preserve important and valuable information on Telugu land history, inscriptions, culture, language and literature.

According to Prof. Munirathnam, the centre has plans to shift Telugu scriptures, inscriptions and palm leaf manuscripts from Tanjore, Chennai and other parts of Tamil Nadu and the country to Nellore. They will be digitised and uploaded on a website

to ensure their reach to everyone.

To a question, Prof. Munirathnam said that revenue authorities have sent the proposal to allot five acres of land to the state government and they are awaiting approval.

He said they are obtaining photocopies of 60 odd ancient manuscripts kept under the protection of the Archaeology Survey of India at Mysore. Some of them are in 'Brahma Lipi' from the Emperor Ashoka period dating back to the second Century and some others are from the sixth Century, he added.

SHORT TAKES

35,117 STUDENTS
APPEAR FOR
EAMCETDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, SEPT. 22

As many as 35,117 students out of 41,457 attended the fourth day AP Eamcet-2020 examination on Tuesday in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states with 84.69 per cent in attendance. The AP Eamcet 2020 chairman M. Ramalinga Raju said that 17,000 students out of 20,232 attended the morning session and 3,232 students were absent. In the evening session, 18,117 students out of 21,225 attended and 3108 students were absent.

12,000 LIQUOR
BOTTLES SEIZED,
SIX ARRESTEDDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, SEPT. 22

The police led by the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) arrested six people and seized 12,000 non-duty paid liquor bottles of 180 ml each worth ₹24 lakh. The SEB additional superintendent of police Mr Sumit Garud said that this is the single biggest catch ever since the formation of SEB in the state. He said that the culprits were shifting the NDPL bottle cases from a lorry to two cars in Biluwaka village in Rowhtulapudi mandal.

HIGH TENSION
PREVAILS IN
VIZAG AGENCYDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 22

Tension gripped in the agency areas of the Andhra-Odisha border after the Maoists swung into action to celebrate the party formation week in various strong pockets. As usual, the police intensified checks and combing operation in the agency pockets. However, there are no incidents that took place on Tuesday. For the first time, the police are also checking the houses in the remote tribal hamlets to identify the arrival of new people.

Though the police intensified the checks and combining operations in the agency, the Maoists have pasted posters and banners against the police raids and fake encounters. All the senior officers in the agency have been on high alert and were advised not to give in to the Maoist traps.

So far, there are no incidents. Given the Maoists party week-long celebrations, the police intensified the combing operations and checks. There is no confirmed information about the action teams entered into the Andhra-Odisha Border. However, the police are on the job to safeguard the peace and security of the tribals in the agency, said Superintendent of Police, Visakhapatnam Rural District B. Krishna Rao

EIGHT HELD FOR
PROPERTY THEFT
IN 3 INCIDENTSDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 22

The Visakhapatnam city police arrested eight people in three separate incidents for their involvement of petty offences in the city limits on Tuesday.

In the first case, Gajuwaka police arrested four persons and apprehended one juvenile for their involvement in a house break-in incident at BC Colony area. The arrested were identified as N. Naveen, E. Sai Krishna, P. Madhu and K. Sai Teja. The police recovered the stolen property worth ₹80,000 from them.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crimes) V. Suresh Babu said that Naveen and the juvenile committed the property offence and the remaining three others were the receivers of stolen property. Both Naveen and the youngster were addicted to liquor and ganja and committed the crime for supporting their habit.

In another incident, the PM Palem police arrested two persons, including an auto-rickshaw driver for assaulting and robbing ₹15,000 from a passenger who was travelling in their rickshaw. The detained were S. Lakshmi Narasimha Murthy, 27, and G. Durga Sairam, 24, both residents of Arilova area. The police have recovered ₹10,000 from them.

In the third incident, two persons N. Chandra Sekhar, 20, D. Rohit, 20, were arrested for picking pockets near the railway station in Vizag. The police recovered ₹5,000 from them.

AP registers 7,553 +ve cases
10,555 patients have recovered from virus, 51 die in the past 24 hoursMD. ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

Coronavirus cases are continuing to decrease since the past one week, with registration of just 7,553 cases during the past 24 hours. Further, the recovery rate has also increased with 10,555 patients having been discharged during the same period.

The total positive cases have reached 6,39,302 on Tuesday in which 5,62,376 persons have recovered, 71,465 are in hospitals and 5,461 patients have died.

East Godavari district is continuing to top the state in registration of Covid-19 cases. The single day highest number of 1,166 cases has been registered in East Godavari district on Tuesday.

AP has registered 51 new Corona deaths in the

past 24 hours. The highest number of eight deaths has been registered in Chittoor district, followed by six each in Anantapur and Visakhapatnam, five each in Prakasam and Krishna, four each in Kurnool and East Godavari districts, three each in Kadapa, West Godavari, Nellore and Guntur, and one death in Srikakulam district.

As many as 68,829 Covid-19 tests have been conducted in the past 24-hours in which 7,553 have been diagnosed as Covid-19 positive cases. AP has tested a total 52,29,529 samples for Corona till date and is in top place in the country in conducting Covid-19 tests.

As many as 10,555 patients have recovered from the virus in the past 24 hours and discharged from various hospitals in the state.

The single day highest number of 1,166 Covid-19 cases has been registered in East Godavari district in the past 24 hours, increasing the total to 88,935 in which 11,862 are active cases.

The second highest number of 989 Corona positive cases has been registered in West Godavari district, increasing the total to 59,697 in which 5,948 are active cases.

Chittoor district is in the third place with 902 new positive cases, increasing the total positive cases to 56,117 in which 5,774 are active cases.

In Prakasam district, 672 new Corona positive cases have been registered in the past 24 hours, increasing the total positive cases to 43,208 in which 10,856 are active

cases. In Guntur district, 606 new Corona positive cases have been registered, increasing the total positive cases to 50,584 in which 6,453 are active cases.

In Kadapa district, 589 new Corona positive cases have been registered, increasing the total positive cases to 40,339 in which 3,430 are active cases.

In Nellore district, 556 new Corona positive cases have been registered in the past 24 hours, increasing the total positive cases to 48,684 in which 2,690 are active cases.

In Visakhapatnam district, 410 new cases have been registered taking the total positive cases to 47,410 in which 4,222 are active cases.

In Vizianagaram district, 391 new Corona positive cases have been regis-

tered, increasing the total positive cases to 32,210 in which 6,302 are active cases.

In Srikakulam district, 347 new cases have been registered in the past 24 hours, taking the total positive cases to 36,574 in which 4,927 are active cases. 344 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Krishna district, increasing the total positive cases to 24,507 in which 2,793 are active cases.

309 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Anantapur district, increasing the total positive cases to 53,651 in which 2561 are active cases.

The least number of 272 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Kurnool district, increasing the total positive cases to 54,491 in which 2,647 are active cases.

Man in ₹40L debt, hires
killer to murder financierDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 22

Two persons including one from Madhya Pradesh was arrested in connection with the murder of a financier at Guntur on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference at Guntur on Tuesday, SP R.N. Ammi Reddy said that Dandotiya Sonu of Mahavirpura of Morena in Madhya Pradesh had murdered a financier Ganapathi Naga Venkata Pradeep Kumar with the help of hired killer Vemula Srinivas on July 31. Sonu who runs a business in Guntur reportedly borrowed ₹40

lakh from the financier and was unable to repay it.

The accused had paid ₹10,000 to Srinivas as advance and agreed to pay ₹10 lakh after killing Pradeep Kumar. The duo forcibly took Pradeep Kumar to a secluded place and killed him with iron rods and boulders. The duo snatched two gold rings and ₹4,000 from the victim's pocket and threw the body into the drainage.

Sonu vacated the house at Guntur and shifted his family to his native place in Madhya Pradesh after the murder. The police during investigation suspected Sonu's involve-

ment in the murder of Pradeep Kumar.

A special team headed by Old Guntur circle inspector R. Suresh Babu and comprising CI Suresh Babu, sub inspectors T. Nagaraju, Sk Md Meeraj, head constable Johnny, constables Kiran and Vinod Kumar investigated the case. The team camped in Morena for more than 10 days and finally nabbed Sonu, while Vemula Srinivas was arrested in Guntur. SP Ammi Reddy appreciated the team of officers along with DSP B. Sitaramaiah who arrested the accused in the murder case.

Late diagnosis
of cervix, breast
cancer is riskyKANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 22

Lifestyle changes are increasing the burden of cancers of the cervix and breast, but they are diagnosed late due to the fear of testing, neglect and social taboo attached to the disease, doctors have observed in their evaluations of gynaecological cancers.

Late diagnosis in Stage 2 and Stage 3 is observed in women in both government and private sectors. Breast, cervical, ovarian and uterine cancers account for more than 70 per cent of the cancers in India.

Cervical cancers are curable and the pre-cancerous stage lasts 8 to 10 years but due to fear of testing and social taboo many women do not go to doctors. This is observed in urban areas too where, despite awareness, testing is the last option.

Dr Geeta Narsagee, surgical oncologist, said "In urban areas too, we have found women coming late because they do not want to burden the family with their health problems. This is one of the most common reasons we hear. Apart from that, the changing lifestyle has led to an increase in obesity, high blood pressure, smoking, alcohol consumption, late

menopause and others are increasing the burden of the disease." It has been noted that use of birth control pills, estrogen, hormone replacement therapy and family history of cancers are also the reasons. Those who have a family history

have been recommended to opt for tests between the ages of 35 and 65.

The Indian Council of Medical Research in its study has pointed out that lack of awareness along with fear of disease are some of the reasons for women to not come go to the doctor.

A study carried out by National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research found that the average age of a breast cancer patient in India is a decade lower than in the West. For this reason, those in the age group of 30-65 years are asked to be alert. Dr Priyamvada Reddy, senior consultant gynecologist and obstetrician at Apollo Cradle and Children Hospital, said, "We find women coming to us with issues in the reproductive system but when advised for a test they are not willing to take it. They consider it a taboo. There is a sense of shame attached to it and there are bizarre perceptions which makes it difficult for women to seek help and support for treatment. These perceptions are the biggest hurdle in treatment of cancer which are more than the disease."

This is one of the reasons for late diagnosis of the disease in India. Gynaecologists are the first point of contact for reproductive health and they find that post childbirth issues are often treated with neglect and also a sense of wrongness rather than understanding and confronting the actual problem.

1/4th of village sectt
applicants absentDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 22

On the third day of the written tests for the recruitment of the Village/Ward Secretariat posts, a large number of candidates disappeared from the examination centres. The government expected a massive response from the youth for the Village/Ward Secretariat posts.

Although several youngsters applied, during the past three days, large number of aspirants did not turn up for the examinations.

In Visakhapatnam, as many as 13,374 candidates are supposed to attend the

examination. However, 10,186 aspirants only took the test.

In the Vizianagaram district also a significant number of candidates disappeared from the recruitment. According to the official information, as many as 2,482 candidates were supposed to attend, but only 1,811 took the examinations.

One Covid-19 positive aspirant took the test in an isolated room.

In Srikakulam district, 28 per cent of the aspirants did not attend the examination. According to the Collector, J. Nivas 1,879 candidates attended against the total 2,610 registered candidates in the district.

Chittoor beats drought

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 22

The face of perennially drought-prone Chittoor district has now changed, as majority of the reservoirs and tanks, main source of drinking and irrigation water, are brimming over following abundant rains in the past three months.

After a harsh summer, there was a desperate wait for monsoon as water level in almost all the reservoirs and tanks had touched rock bottom. Authorities also foresaw a severe water crisis if the monsoon didn't pick up. Timely and incessant rains during the past three months, however, came as a blessing for people and rekindled the hopes of farmers.

According to official sources, as against normal 78.7 mm rainfall in June every year the district this year recorded 108.4 mm, an excess of 37.7mm.

Similarly, in July and August, the normal rainfall is 109.9 mm and 117.4 mm

respectively, but this time it recorded 309.1 mm and 136.9 mm -- 207.2 and 19.5 mm excess respectively. In September till date, the district received 140.4 mm of rainfall as against the normal 141.4 mm.

With the district receiving abundant rain, majority of tanks and reservoirs have filled up earlier than usual. There are 7,749 tanks in the district with ayacut of 3,06,675 acres and storage capacity of 32,163 tmc. In all, 505 tanks have filled up to its capacity, while 917 have received water up to 75 percent of their capacity. Around 1,296 tanks have 50-75 percent of water, while 1,927 tanks have 25-50 percent and 3007 tanks have water less than 25 percent of their capacity.

The water level in Aranian reservoir is 575 Mcft (million cubic feet) as against its full capacity of 1800 Mcft. Pedderu, Krishnapuram and NTR Jalasayam projects currently have 560, 195, 52.1 Mcft respectively, as against their full capacity.

INDIA, AUSTRALIA
NAVAL EXERCISE
FROM TODAYDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 22

The Indian Navy is scheduled to undertake a two-day Passage Exercise with the Royal Australian Navy in the East Indian Ocean Region from Wednesday.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE
OBTAINED NOTICE

M/s Ramsay Laboratories located at Plot No: 8(B) Industrial Park, Nadikudi (V), Dacheppally (M), Guntur Dist, Andhra Pradesh has got environmental clearance from SEIAA - AP (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change wide File No: APPCB/6/2020-TEC-EC-APPCB Dated 22nd Aug 2020 for details visit www.env.for.nic.in.

Proprietor
For Ramsay Laboratories

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED
Head Office: 10-152/1, Ashoknagar, Bandar Road, Vijayawada-520007
Tender No: Mktg./M2/1928(3)/KMS-2019-20 Dated: 22.09.2020

TENDER NOTICE (3rd Call)
APPOINTMENT OF MANUFACTURERS/ DISTRIBUTORS/ DEALERS FOR SUPPLY OF 4625 UNITS OF UNIVERSAL MOISTURE METERS TO RHYTHU BHAROSA KENDRAS IN ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FOR STRENGTHENING OF PADDY PROCUREMENT OPERATIONS AT VILLAGE LEVEL THROUGH AP e-PROCUREMENT PLATFORM.
Andhra Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd invites Tenders for Appointment of Manufacturers/ Distributors/ Dealers for Supply of Universal Moisture Meters.
Interested Manufacturers/ Distributors/ Dealers from all over India may visit www.apscsl.in or www.approcurement.gov.in to view and download tender documents at free of cost.
Interested tenderers to submit bids should be registered in the website www.approcurement.gov.in and should obtain digital Signature Certificates from any Certifying Authority in India. The details and procedure for obtaining Digital Signature certificates are mentioned in the website www.approcurement.gov.in or contact the helpdesk of procurement portal. Phone numbers: 08645-246370 / 71/ 72/ 73/ 74.
Last date for online registration and completion of formalities for e-auction shall be up to 4.30 PM of 28.09.2020 and tentative date for online e-auction through e-procurement platform would be on 30.09.2020.
Sd/- VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR

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TECHNICAL

WALK-IN INTERVIEWS For MIG Welders (S.S.C./T.I) With Minimum 2years Experience in Relevant Field. Contact With Original Testimonials On 23rd,24th &25th -September-2020. Between 10AM To 5PM @EPE Process Filters & Accumulators Private Limited, 59A, 59A1,C.I.E.(EXPN) Gandhinagar,Balanagar,Hyderabad-537. 040-23085750 / 040-23085937. (HYMM/2021/C02395)

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, VETCHANA SAILAJA W/o VETCHA RAMA RAO, D.No. 6-264, RTC Colony, Peddathanda, Khammam (Rural), Khammam, Telangana - 507003, have changed my name to DANNARAPU SAILAJA KUMARI D/o. D.Seshiah. Hereafter my name known as DANNARAPU SAILAJA KUMARI.

SHORT TAKES

CENTRE SPENT ₹393 CR ON BETI PADHAO SCHEME

New Delhi, Sept. 22: The Centre has spent ₹393 crore since 2014 for advertising the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme that aims to improve child sex ratio, the Ministry of Women and Child Development told Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

According to data provided by Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani in the Upper House in reply to a query, ₹96.71 lakh has been spent till September 17 in the financial year 2020-21 on advertisement or media advocacy of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme.

In 2019-20 fiscal, ₹23.67 crore has been spent for the purpose. The government spent ₹18.91 crore in 2014-15, ₹24.54 crore in 2015-16, ₹29.79 crore in 2016-17 and ₹135.71 crore in 2017-18 and ₹160 crore in 2018-19, according to the data.

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme addresses issues relating to declining child sex ratio and aims to change the mindset of people to make them appreciate the value of girl child, Irani said.

It is a tri-ministerial, convergent effort of the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, and Education, she added.

NIA TAKES OVER PROBE INTO B'LURU VIOLENCE

New Delhi, Sept. 22: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over the probe in the August violence in Bengaluru, which was triggered by a derogatory Facebook post on Prophet Muhammad allegedly by the nephew of a Congress MLA, officials said on Tuesday.

The central agency has re-registered two separate first information reports under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Indian Penal Code sections related to arson, violence and destruction of public property. The case was earlier being probed by the Bengaluru Police, they said.

The Union Home Ministry has handed over the case to the NIA, the officials said.

The agency has dispatched a team under an inspector general-rank officer to probe the violence case and it is in Bengaluru.

An NIA spokesperson said, "A brief background of the incidents is that on August 11, 2020, around 8:00 pm, more than 1,000 people gathered in front of the house of Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivas Murthy (Pulakeshi Nagar constituency) at Kaval-byrasandra, Bengaluru city."

"The mob was protesting against the derogatory social media (Facebook) post about Prophet Muhammad made on August 11, 2020, around 4 pm by Naveen, the nephew of the MLA, allegedly insulting the religious sentiments of Muslims," the official said.

The spokesperson said it is alleged that the state secretary of the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), Muzammil Pasha, had earlier called a meeting and directed members of the Popular Front of India (PFI) and the SDPI to instigate the mob and incite violence.

INS VIRAAT ARRIVES AT ALANG FOR DISMANTLING

Ahmedabad, Sept. 22: INS Viraat, the world's longest serving warship that was decommissioned by the Indian Navy three years ago, has arrived off the Alang coast in Gujarat for dismantling, an official said on Tuesday.

The aircraft carrier began its final journey from the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai on Saturday and reached the waters at Alang in Bhavnagar district on Monday evening.

It will be dismantled at the ship breaking yard in Alang and then sold as scrap.

The warship, which was inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987, was purchased by Shree Ram Group for a sum of ₹38.54 crore at an auction in July this year. Government officials are on board the ship to carry out formalities as per the ship breaking code, Shree Ram Chairman Mukesh Patel said.

"After all the formalities are completed, subject to weather conditions and tide, we are scheduling its beaching at our yard for dismantling during high tide at 1 pm on September 28," he said. INS Viraat holds the record for being the world's longest serving warship.



Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh Narayan Singh offers tea to suspended MPs at the premises of Parliament, as they stage a protest over their suspension from the remaining Monsoon Session of Parliament over the ruckus created in Rajya Sabha in New Delhi on Tuesday.

— PTI

Govt loves us, says Pawar after getting I-T notice

The I-T notice is in reference to the affidavit submitted in 2020

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, SEPT. 22

The Income Tax Department has issued a notice to NCP chief Sharad Pawar seeking clarification on his poll affidavits submitted to the Election Commission. He took a dig at the Centre saying the notice was sent to him because the government "loves us".

The veteran Maharashtra leader on Tuesday confirmed that he has received a notice from the Centre asking for 'clarification and explanation' on his election affidavits. "I got the notice yesterday. We are happy that they (the Centre) have a special love for us (Pawar family) among all the members. The notice was served by Income Tax after the Election Commission asked (it) to...We will reply to the notice," he said.

The notice was in reference to the affidavit submitted in 2020 and 2014 and 2009-10. They are asking for some information and clarification and similarly they have asked this to Supriya also for the last three elections, Mr Pawar said.

The NCP chief's daughter and Lok Sabha MP Supriya Sule, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and his son and state environment minister Aaditya Thackeray have also received similar notices from the IT department.

The Election Commission is learnt to have reminded the Central Board of Direct Taxes of its request to probe allegations of false affidavits filed by Uddhav, Aaditya and Supriya.

Mr Pawar has also refuted the possibility of imposition of President's Rule in Maharashtra saying that Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA coalition government has a clear majority in Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha. "Is there any reason for (imposing the President's rule)? Is the President's rule some joke?" he said.

Union minister of state for social justice Ramdas Athawale has demanded that the President's Rule should be imposed in Maharashtra alleging that the MVA government has failed to handle the law and order situation in the state. Saying that the coronavirus pandemic in Maharashtra has gone out of control, independent MP Navneet Kaur-Rana has also asked for President's Rule in the state.

Dhankhar asks Didi not to shed 'crocodile tears'

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, SEPT. 22

West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday compared chief minister Mamata Banerjee's cry against the two key Bills, passed in the Parliament, on the farmers with "crocodile tears" after the Trinamul Congress supremo called all other Opposition parties for a united fight against the BJP at the Centre.

"Why deny @MamataOfficial benefit Rs 8,400 crores to 70 lac WB farmers by failure to participation in PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi! So far every farmer has lost Rs. 12,000/- that would have come to his bank account. Urge CM -Crocodile Tears will not relieve pain of farmers," he tweeted, posting a copy of his fresh

letter to her. (sic)

Mr Dhankhar wrote, "If timely and due steps had been taken by the State Government, over 70 lakh farmers in the state of West Bengal would have been benefited so far over Rs 8,400 crores. Each of the over 70 lakh farmers would have so far got Rs. 12,000/- direct in the bank account, without any intermediary." (sic)

The Governor argued, "There is no rationale to deny this benefit to our farmers as there is 100% contribution from the Govt of India. State Government does not incur any financial burden or liability. State Government has only to impart details, which it has unfortunately not done, with no explicable premise or rational approach. All over the Country, except state of

West Bengal, farmers have enormously benefited from PM-Kisan scheme and so far more than Rs. 92,000 crores have been defrayed to them."

Mr Dhankhar added, "In this ongoing scheme — PM-Kisan, all over the country, each farmer, except the ones in our state, has so far got Rs. 12,000. Due to inaction of the State Government, our farmers are also deprived from reaping the benefit of the package of Rs. 3.5 lakh crore unfolded by the Central Government during the COVID pandemic. There would have been accrual of benefit to our farmers by over Rs.30,000 crores if the State Government had taken affirmative stance as regards PM-Kisan. Confrontational stance at the cost of farmers' suffering is indeed worrisome."

Five new IIITs accorded national importance tag

New Delhi, Sept. 22: Parliament on Tuesday passed a legislation to declare the five new IIITs in Surat, Bhopal, Bhagalpur, Agartala and Raichur as institutes of national importance, enabling them to award degrees.

The Indian Institutes of Information Technology Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020, was introduced in Rajya Sabha by Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on Monday. The Bill was passed by Lok Sabha in March.

Nishank said there are 25 IIITs in the country, of which five are run by the Union government and 15 operate under the public-private partnership model. "We have brought the proposal before this House to bring five new operational institutes, which are located and have started operations in Surat (Gujarat), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Bhagalpur (Bihar), Agartala (Tripura) and Raichur (Karnataka), under this legislation," Nishank said.

Bringing the five new IIITs under this law will

● THE BILL will also enable the institutes to attract enough students to develop a strong research base in the field of information technology. The five IIITs can now use the nomenclature B.Tech, M.Tech and PhD.

make them institutes of national importance and they will have the legal right to grant diplomas, degrees, and PhDs, he said. The institutes were hitherto registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and did not have the power to award degrees or diplomas.

The Bill will also enable the institutes to attract enough students to develop a strong research base in the field of information technology. The five IIITs, set up on the PPP model, can now use the nomenclature B.Tech, M.Tech and PhD. During a debate on the bill in Rajya Sabha, BJP lawmaker Kamakhya Prasad Tasa thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Education Minister Nishank for including the institute in Agartala in the Bill.

BJD's Sasmit Patra too supported the Bill. V. Vijayasai Reddy of YSRCP said including more institutes in the new law will help students in getting jobs. He urged the government to make India a global education hub and also asked it to consider setting up another IIIT in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

RCP Singh of JD(U) suggested standardisation of all IIITs and creating a faculty pool for all such institutes. However, raising concerns over the fee structure, K Ravindra Kumar of TDP said all new IIITs are under PPP model and students have to bear all expenses. He said he wondered how the meritorious but poor students would afford it.

He also raised the issue of quality in higher technical education and asked whether there is any provision of quality assessment. The education minister said technology is one of the high priority areas for this government and it is enhancing the adoption of technology across the sector to raise productivity and standards. — PTI

RS PASSES 7 KEY BILLS IN THREE AND HALF HOURS

New Delhi, Sept. 22: In one of the most productive days in its history, Rajya Sabha on Tuesday in a matter of three and half hours passed seven key Bills including one that removes cereals, pulses and onion from the essential commodities list and another that abolishes penalty for certain offences by companies.

This after most of the Opposition including the Congress, Left parties, the TMC, the Samajwadi Party and the NCP decided to boycott House proceedings in protest against the suspension of eight MPs for the remainder of the session for unruly behaviour.

Only members from the ruling BJP and its ally JD-U and those of parties such as AIADMK, BJD, YSR-Congress and TDP, which have been extending support to the Modi government on various issues, participated in the debates on the Bills.

The Upper House took up government legislative business after nearly an hour of discussion over the conduct of opposition MPs during the passage of two agriculture reform Bills on Sunday.

First, it passed a Bill to declare five newly-established Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) as institutions of national importance.

The crucial Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, which removes cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential commodities and removes stockholding limits on them, was passed next.

Rajya Sabha also passed amendments to the Bank Regulation Act to bring cooperative banks under the supervision of the RBI in a bid to protect the interest of depositors. Thereafter the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2020, which removes the penalty for certain offences, was passed.

The National Forensic Sciences University Bill, 2020 and the Rashtriya Raksha University Bill were passed in quick succession. Thereafter the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment) of Certain Provisions Bill, 2020 to relax time limit on compliance with tax laws, GST payment and filing in view of the pandemic. — PTI

India, China not to send more troops to frontline

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 22

India and China in a joint statement on Tuesday said that during the sixth round of Corps Commanders meeting, both sides agreed to stop sending more troops to the frontline, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground, and avoid taking any actions that may complicate the situation.

"They agreed to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, strengthen communication on the ground, avoid misunderstandings," said the joint statement.

It said that the two sides had candid and in-depth exchanges of views on stabilizing the situation along the LAC in the India — China border areas.

"The two sides also agreed to hold the 7th round of Military Commanders' Level Meeting as soon as possible, take practical measures to properly solve problems on the ground, and jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in the border area," said the statement.

The sixth round of Corps Commanders meeting was held after the foreign affairs ministers from two countries met in Moscow and agreed on a

five-point agenda.

However, sources said that during the sixth round of the Corps Commander meeting between India and China, no breakthrough could be achieved on the disengagement.

This means despite the joint statement 30,000-40,000 additional troops which India rushed to Ladakh after Chinese transgression in early May will remain at forward posts during winters when subzero temperatures and bone-chilling winds at such extreme heights make survival difficult and maintaining the logistic supply to these points is a nightmare.

The Corps Commanders meeting which started around 9:30 am at Moldo on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) went on till 11 pm.

Indian delegation was headed by 14 Corps Commander Lt. Gen. Harinder Singh. Lt Gen P.G.K. Menon, who is likely to replace Lt Gen Singh next month, was also present during the meeting. For the first time the representative from the ministry of external affairs joint secretary (East Asia) Naveen Srivastava took part in the Corps Commanders meeting. The Indian officials who attended the meeting debriefed their senior officials.

Nepal puts on hold textbook with new map

Kathmandu, Sept. 22: Nepal has stopped the distribution of a new textbook that includes the country's revised political map showing three strategically-important Indian areas as part of its territory, saying there were a number of factual errors in it, according to a media report on Tuesday.

India has already termed as untenable the "artificial enlargement" of the territorial claims by Nepal after its Parliament unanimously approved the new political map of the country featuring Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura areas which India maintains belongs to it.

A Cabinet meeting on Tuesday instructed the Ministry of Education not to distribute and print any more copies of the text book meant for class IXth to XIIth as there were some reservations from the Ministry of Land Management and Cooperatives and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Kathmandu Post* reported.

The Ministry of Education does not have the authority to change Nepal's geographical area and there are faults in the book, said spokesperson for the Ministry of Land Reform and Cooperatives Janak Raj Joshi.

There are errors in the book prepared by the Ministry of Education on a subject it has no expertise, he said, adding that the higher authorities have been asked to take corrective measures.

The body concerned of the Nepal government is yet to officially declare the revised geographical area of the country.

The Department of Survey, which is the official agency that declares the total area of the country, however, hasn't made any decision on the area, Joshi said. Education Minister Giriraj Mani Pokharel on September 15 released the 110-page book titled, *Self Study Material on Nepal's Territory and Border* which dwells around historical facts about the country's territory and its border dispute mainly with India.

The book states Nepal's new area to be 147,641.28 square kilometers including the 460.28 sq km area

● INDIA HAS ALREADY termed as untenable the "artificial enlargement" of the territorial claims by Nepal after its Parliament unanimously approved the new political map of the country featuring Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura areas which India maintains belongs to it.

of the Kalapani area which was included in Nepal's political map on May 20 by the Cabinet.

Minister for Education Pokharel has written a six-page preface for the book in which he has mentioned about Nepal's border disputes and other related issues.

He said that he had launched a campaign to protect the Nepalese territory, including the areas of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura.

However, Pokharel told *The Kathmandu Post* that the distribution of the book has been halted for now.

After Nepal's Parliament approved the revised political map comprising Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura areas, the Cabinet had endorsed the new map and decided to use it in government offices and print school text books with the new map.

Nepal in May released the revised political and administrative map of the country laying claim over the three strategically important areas in Uttarakhand, more than six months after India published a new map in November 2019.

Following the endorsement of the new map by the Nepal Cabinet, then government spokesperson and Finance Minister Yuvaraj Khattiwada told the media that the government had decided to update the schedule of the Constitution and school curriculum incorporating the new political map. India in its response said that it had already made its position clear on it.

"This artificial enlargement of claims is not based on historical fact or evidence and is not tenable. It is also violative of our current understanding to hold talks on outstanding boundary issues," the MEA said.

IN BRIEF

John Lennon killer says sorry

New York: Mark Chapman, the man who killed John Lennon, has apologised to the late Beatle's widow, Yoko Ono, 40 years after his death. Chapman shot Lennon four times outside his New York Manhattan apartment as Ono looked on, in 1980. He was denied parole for the eleventh time following a hearing last month. During the hearing, Chapman said he killed the 40-year-old rock star for "glory" and that he deserved the death penalty. He added that he thinks about the "despicable act" all the time, and accepts he may spend the rest of his life in prison. "I just want to reiterate that I'm sorry for my crime," Chapman told the parole board at the Wende Correctional Facility in New York.

Finland bans neo-Nazi group

Helsinki: Finland's Supreme Court on Tuesday banned a neo-Nazi group on the grounds that its activities are "significantly contrary to law." Finland's national police had sought to dissolve the right-wing Nordic Resistance Movement, known for being violent and openly racist, and two lower courts of law confirmed the ruling. Finland's highest court ruled that the group's activities "did not enjoy freedom of expression or freedom of association, as the association's activities by their nature entailed an abuse of these rights." National Police Chief Inspector Heikki Lausmaa told Finnish broadcaster YLE that the Supreme Court ruling is "a clear statement that an organisation that is violent and uses speech deemed racist or otherwise violating human dignity should not have a place in Finnish society."

Nasa moon return to cost \$28b

Washington: Nasa on Monday revealed its latest plan to return astronauts to the Moon in 2024, and estimated the cost of meeting that deadline at \$28 billion, \$16 billion of which would be spent on the lunar landing module. Congress, which faces elections on November 3, will have to sign off on the financing for a project that has been set by President Donald Trump as a top priority. The \$28 billion would cover the budgetary years of 2021-25. In a phone briefing with journalists on Monday on the Artemis mission to return human beings to the Moon, Nasa administrator Jim Bridenstine noted that "political risks" were often the biggest threat to Nasa's work, especially before such a crucial election. Barack Obama cancelled plans for a manned Mars mission, after his predecessor spent billions of dollars on the project.

MET ARMY CHIEF BEFORE APC: SHEHBAZ

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 22

Pakistan Muslim League (Nazaw) President Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday confirmed meeting Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa ahead of All Parties Conference (APC) on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters outside the Lahore High Court (LHC), the PML-N leader said discussion on Gilgit Baltistan matters was held during the meeting with the army chief. All the parliamentary leaders were also present, he added.

Shehbaz, the Opposition Leader in National Assembly, said the incumbent government led by the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) was trying to oppress PML-N. The decisions taken during APC will be implemented at any cost, he said.

On September 20, 2020, the 11-party opposition's APC hosted by Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had demanded resignation of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The 26-point resolution passed by the APC stated that the opposition had decided to form a national alliance in the name of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM).

The APC had also decided to hold a long march against the government in January 2021.

The government, it said, had ruined the common man's life with rising inflation, unemployment, and taxes, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said in joint news conference after the APC.

The "selected" government was responsible for the fall of Kashmir, the APC members stated.

Spanish medics stage protest

Medical Residents protest against their working conditions on the second day of a strike called by the collective in Barcelona, on September Tuesday, amid a Covid surge in the country. Spain is struggling to contain a second wave of the virus, which has infected over 670,000 people and claimed over 30,000 lives, one of Europe's highest. — AFP

Sikh taxi driver assaulted, called 'Taliban' in Britain

London, Sept. 22: An India-born Sikh taxi driver was subjected to verbal and physical abuse by passengers he drove from a casino in the city of Reading in south-east England, prompting a United Kingdom police force to launch an investigation.

Vaneet Singh, 41, said that a group of four men slapped and shoved him, and asked "are you Taliban" after he received them from the Grosvenor Casino in Reading, Berkshire, in the early hours of Sunday.

One of the four also tried to remove his turban. "It was horrible, really frightening, I will never work the nightshift again. I'm

still very scared," he said. Thames Valley Police are appealing for witnesses as they investigate the report of an assault.

Singh, who worked as a music teacher at a school in Slough, Berkshire, turned to taxi driving after his teaching job was stalled during the Coronavirus pandemic. The musician, who lives in Tilehurst with his wife and three children, said he has been left shaken up by the assault and will be avoiding night shifts.

"It's very bad experience. It's my religion so I respect my turban," he said. One of the four passengers, all described as white, pulled at his turban as he was driving and

slapped him on the head, while others kicked and punched the back of the driver's seat.

He says he tried to explain the religious significance of the turban to them and asked them not to touch it.

He recalled the passengers being well behaved at the start of the journey but "totally changed" as it went on. Singh, who is suffering from aches and pains since the incident, is convinced the attack was of a racist nature and believes he was a victim of hate crime.

Thames Valley Police are yet to confirm their line of inquiry in the assault case. — PTI

STOP PLAYING BREXIT 'GAMES', EU TELLS UK

Brussels, Sept. 22: The European Union is pleading with Britain to stop playing "games" as time is running out to clinch a free trade deal over the next month.

The sides committed to a new meeting to discuss Britain's plans to disregard part of the withdrawal agreement it had signed with the 27-nation EU amid acrimony that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson would even contemplate to break an agreement he himself signed.

EU countries' ministers for European affairs met in Brussels on Tuesday and German chairman Michael Roth said the British plan was "extremely" worrisome since it "violates the guiding principle of the withdrawal agreement," which officially allowed the United Kingdom to leave the bloc last Jan. 31.

A transition period now runs until Dec 31, during which time both sides are negotiating a trade agreement to replace the open and unfettered economic relations that are currently in place.

The EU has repeatedly expressed its exasperation at what it sees as British stubbornness and refusal to compromise on some key points. Without a deal on future trade relations, chaos is expected at the borders on Jan. 1. — AP

Charlie Hebdo HR manager moved from home in the wake of threats

Paris, Sept. 22: Police have moved the head of human resources at French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* from her home following death threats received last week, she told a French magazine.

Marika Bret, who has been living under police protection for nearly five years in the aftermath of the deadly assault on Charlie Hebdo in January 2015, said the threats were "sufficiently concrete to be taken seriously".

Bret said she would not

Taiwan: China must back off

Taipei, Sept. 22: Taiwan on Tuesday demanded that China "back off" and accused it of threatening peace, after a Beijing official rejected a largely respected marine boundary following recent incursions.

Foreign minister Joseph Wu urged Beijing to "return to the civilised international standards" after a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said there was no so-called median line in the Taiwan Strait "as Taiwan is an inseparable part of Chinese territory".

Wu told reporters: "The median line has been a symbol of preventing military conflicts and maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait for many years. The Chinese foreign ministry's comment is equivalent of destroying the status quo." "I call on the international community to condemn the CCP for its dangerous and provocative words and deeds threatening peace... China must back off," he added in a tweet.

China considers Taiwan part of its territory, to be absorbed into the mainland, by force if necessary, even though it has been self-ruled for more than seven decades.

Beijing has ratcheted up pressure on the democratic island since the 2016 election of President Tsai Ing-wen, who rejects its view that Taiwan is part of "one China".

Last year, Taiwan accused China of violating a long-held tacit agreement after its fighter jets — for the first time in years — crossed the median line of the waters that separate the two sides.

Washington's increased

Spying allegations against NYC cop fiction, says Beijing

Beijing, Sept. 22: China on Tuesday said allegations against a New York City police officer charged with being an "intelligence asset" for the Chinese government are a "pure fabrication" and part of a US plot to smear Chinese diplomats in the United States.

Baimadajie Angwang, a naturalised US citizen from Tibet, allegedly agreed to spy on US supporters of the Tibetan independence movement since 2018 as an agent for China in its effort to suppress the movement, according to a criminal complaint filed in Brooklyn federal court.

It says he secretly worked for unnamed handlers from the Chinese Consulate in New York. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin on Tuesday said the indictment against Angwang was full of hedging terms such as "seems" and "possibly" giving the appearance that prosecutors were straining to make their case.

"The relevant accusations made by the US side

JINPING CRITIC GETS 18 YEARS IN GRAFT CASE

Beijing, Sept. 22: The former chairman of a Chinese state-owned real estate company who publicly criticised President Xi Jinping's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic was sentenced to 18 years in prison on Tuesday in a corruption case, the government announced. Ren Zhigang, who had become known for speaking up about censorship and other sensitive topics, disappeared from public view in March after publishing an essay online that accused Xi of mishandling the outbreak. — AP

are pure fabrication," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

"The US plot to discredit the Chinese Consulate and personnel in the United States will not succeed." — AP

outreach to Taiwan under President Donald Trump has become yet another flashpoint with Beijing, as the United States and China clash over a range of trade and security issues, as well as the

Coronavirus pandemic. In recent months Taiwan has reported a sharp rise in incursions by Chinese warplanes into its air defence identification zone (ADIZ). — AFP

If Biden wins, China wins: Don

Washington, Sept. 22:

Former US vice president Joe Biden has enormously harmed the US economy in his five decades as a politician, President Donald Trump has said, adding that if the Democratic leader wins the November 3 polls it would be a win for China. Biden, 77, and his running mate Kamala Harris are challenging incumbents President Trump, 74, and Vice President Mike Pence in the presidential election.

"Joe Biden spent the last 47 years shipping your jobs to China and foreign countries. You know that. I've spent the last four years bringing the jobs back to our country and back to Ohio," Trump said at a rally in Dayton, Ohio

on Monday.

The Republican leader described the November 3 polls as the most important in recent memory. "On November 3rd, Americans will decide whether we lift our nation to soaring new heights of prosperity or whether we will allow Joe Biden — Sleepy Joe — to shut down our economy, impose a \$4 trillion tax hike, abolish Ohio clean coal, oil, natural gas, and ship your jobs in factories overseas to China and countries that you never even heard of," he said.

The democratic tax plans for the 2020 election lists a gradual increase in proposed taxes by \$4 trillion in the next decade, placing a greater burden

on the super-rich category. "Put simply: If Biden wins, China wins. If we win, Ohio wins and most importantly, in all fairness, America wins. Because you finally have the president who puts America first, and I do put America first," Trump said to applause from the audience. Trump has held election rallies in the last two weeks, notwithstanding the risks posed by the coronavirus. Thousands attend the events without masks and breaking social-distancing norms.

Trump has called the rallies "protest against stupidity". "You know this is really not a rally. This has to do with workers, programmes, all the things we love," he said. — PTI

Police release footage after officers shoot 13-year-old boy

Salt Lake City, Sept. 22: A 13-year-old Utah boy with autism was shot by police after his mother asked for help getting him hospital mental-health treatment and officers agreed to talk with him, police footage released Monday showed.

The videos show Salt Lake City officers chasing him down an alley after they arrive at his home, then yelling at him to get on the ground. The boy collapses after a series of shots ring out, moaning, "I don't feel good. I don't feel good."

He survived but suffered broken bones and pierced organs, the family's attorney has said. His mother, Golda Barton, had warned police that her son said earlier that day, September 4, that he had a gun and had threatened to shoot her male coworker and break windows in the house, the video showed. But she told officers she thought it was a BB gun or pellet gun.

There were no indications he was armed. She wanted him to be hospitalised for help with his mental health issues. Officers said they would have to proceed as though the boy did have access to a real gun, the videos show.

Barton told officers the boy was "triggered" by se-

Kansas shooting: Child killed, 2 hurt

Kansas City, Sept. 22: A boy under the age of 5 died and two adults were injured when someone opened fire on their vehicle Monday afternoon, Kansas City police said. After the shooting that was reported just before 3 pm, the driver of the car pulled up to a local fire station to ask for help, according to authorities. Fire and EMS personnel tended to the unidentified man, woman and child, police said, adding that they were taken to a hospital where the boy later died.

The preliminary investigation shows that the vehicle was stopped in front of a home when someone fired numerous shots into the vehicle from outside, striking three people,

according to authorities.

A police spokesman on the scene said there was another adult in car who was not struck by gunfire.

In a tweet, the city's police department said they were "stunned at this callousness and violence" and that they would not rest until finding out who was responsible for the shooting.

The child's death is the 148th homicide this year in Kansas City. At this time last year, 114 homicides had been recorded. "My heart breaks again," said Mayor Quinton Lucas, who was also present at the scene. Both the mayor and police officials asked for anyone with any information on the shooting to contact detectives. — AP

eing police.

"He sees the badge and he automatically thinks you are going to kill him or he has to defend himself in some way," she said. "He freaks out."

The video was made public under a Salt Lake City ordinance requiring the

release of video from police shootings within 10 business days. The shooting has raised new questions about how police deal with people with mental health issues amid nationwide calls for police reform. — AP

SEA OF JOY

Filipino primary school teacher happy to give it back after social media alerts the owner**Surfboard drifts 8,000 km from Hawaii to Philippines**

Manila, Sept. 22: When big wave surfer Doug Falter lost his board in a wipeout in Hawaii, his best hope was for a local fisherman to pick it up. He never imagined it would be found more than 8,000 kilometres (5,000 miles) away in the southern Philippines.

More than two years after watching his pale blue custom-shaped board disappear in the huge swell of Waimea Bay, Falter was alerted via social media that it had been found near the remote island of Sarangani. And the new owner — local primary school teacher and

aspiring surfer Giovanne Branzuela — was happy to give it back to him.

"When I saw the picture of it, I couldn't believe it, I thought it was a joke almost," Falter, 35, said via Zoom. "I was certain that the board would never be found again." Branzuela, who bought the badly weathered surfboard from his neighbour a couple of months ago for 2,000 pesos (\$40), said fishermen had found it floating in the sea in August 2018 — six months after Falter lost sight of it.

They thought it may have

fallen off a passing yacht and sold it to Branzuela's neighbour for a few dollars. Despite months drifting across the Pacific Ocean, the name of the board's shaper, Hawaii-based Lyle Carlson, was still visible on the now-yellowish surface.

Curious, Branzuela looked him up on Facebook and sent him a photo of the board. Carlson shared the picture on Instagram, tagging Falter. "It turned out it's a surfboard from Hawaii. I couldn't believe it myself," Branzuela, 38, said via telephone. "It's been my dream to learn to surf and ride the

big waves here," he added. "For now I can use his surfboard. I told him I will take good care of it."

The pair have been chatting on Facebook and Falter plans to visit the small island to retrieve his board after Coronavirus travel restrictions are lifted.

"That board meant so much to me because of my accomplishments on it," said Falter, a commercial photographer who took up surfing about 15 years ago in Florida before moving to Hawaii.

"It was my first big wave surfboard custom shaped

for myself. I surfed it on the biggest days I've ever surfed in my life", he said, including the 2016 Eddie Aikau big wave surf contest in Waimea Bay when the swell was 20 metres (60 feet) high.

Falter said he wants to give Branzuela a beginners surfboard in exchange for his and show him how to catch waves around Sarangani and neighbouring Balut island.

In the meantime, Falter shares short YouTube videos on surfing basics and is raising money to send supplies to Branzuela's school. — AFP



This undated handout photo shows Filipino teacher Giovanne Branzuela (L) posing with his surfboard, once owned by big wave surfer Doug Falter who lost it while surfing in Hawaii, along with his villagers on Sarangani island in the Philippines. — AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

23 SEPTEMBER 2020

As India reopens, we need more tests, infra

As coronavirus figures skyrocket in India amid reports of a second wave sweeping much of mainland Europe, comes renewed confirmation of bad news that SARS-CoV-2 reinfections are real. The official caseload, meanwhile, has surpassed the 5.5 million mark. A vaccine, while it is only going to be seasonal, is still several months away and, by all estimates, will take longer to reach every ordinary citizen.

But the economy, which has taken the worst hit in recorded history, must now be opened at all costs. It will take a minimum of two months to restore it to its pre-Covid health, a report by a committee headed by former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor C. Rangarajan, advising the Tamil Nadu government on medium-term measures, has suggested, and the Centre is certainly seen implementing what it has somewhat cheekily dubbed Unlock 4.0 with older students returning to school in parts of the country, international flights beginning to operate in air bubble arrangements and Taj Mahal accepting visitors.

The ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament, however, has been unfortunately curtailed by several days, jeopardising important legislative decisions.

Autumn's lower temperatures plus the reopening will undoubtedly bring on the second wave of coronavirus in India. The crisis seems to be unfolding here in a worse manner than we could have imagined, with the virus having reached the rural heartlands.

Experts suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic will peak at different rates in different regions of the country. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh currently have the most infections; of these the last three states experienced late surges. Hence, a renewed urgency for health infrastructure, doctors, drugs, ventilators and a prompter and more localised administrative response coordinated by state governments and effectively bolstered by central funds and support is the absolute need of the hour. Of these, drug manufacture is our area of strength and we have done some good work on the count of expanding laboratory and testing infrastructure.

The Delhi high court on Tuesday stayed the Delhi government's September 13 order making it mandatory for 33 private hospitals in the city to reserve 80 per cent of their Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds as prima facie violative of fundamental rights. It is a welcome ruling. Most coronavirus patients improve with administration of palliatives and home isolation is sufficient to contain the disease. That is indeed a silver lining. India has topped the world both in the daily infection rate as well as number of recoveries. Health workers have put their shoulder to the wheel and are working heroically against odds.

If only these odds were fewer in number. The governments — state and Centre — have no choice but to perform or face electoral ire.

Regulate, don't strangle NGOs

There are certain hallmarks for most of the doings of the Narendra Modi government: a popular, presentable reason that can be easily sold to the public to achieve certain motives outside and a half-boiled, unworkable plan that will put a lot of people to inconvenience inside. Demonetisation, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the bills to rework the functioning of Indian farming are the classic examples. The latest to join the league is the amendment to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020, that Parliament has passed now.

The government is sure the piece of legislation is a must to control the waywardness of non-governmental organisations, including the religious ones. The main feature of the new bill is that it makes it mandatory for all the key people of the organisations to present their Aadhaar numbers to the authorities for getting the registration. The government, which got the Aadhaar Act passed in Parliament as money bill, had assured the Supreme Court that Aadhaar numbers will be made mandatory only when a person receives government largesse. It will be interesting to note how the government will defend this provision in the bill, should it be challenged in court. It defies logic when the government mandates the recipient organisation to open an account at a particular bank in the national capital at a time when banking has become a mobile application and the regulators get real time information on any transaction of agencies on their watch if they wanted. The bill empowers the government to make the organisations use the fund after a summary inquiry, whereas the existing law allows such an action only if the organisation concerned is found guilty of violating the law. The bill has many such crippling provisions. Regulating a sector is part of governance, but strangulating it is not. The government must realise it.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

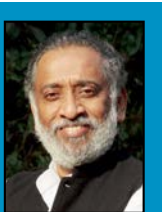
ADITYA SINHA
Editor

K. SUBHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

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



Restructuring of Railways: Most officers are unhappy

Modi sarkar is pushing ahead with restructuring of the Indian Railways board and services. The Cabinet recently green-lit the revamping of the powerful railway board that governs the railways. The board will now have five members. The present chairman of the board, V.K. Yadav, will be the first CEO of the Board.

The board will also have independent members in non-executive roles. The Cabinet also decided to merge all central railway service cadres into a single Indian Railways Management Service (IRMS).

While Mr Yadav is now chairman and CEO, Pradeep Kumar has been appointed member, infrastructure, P.C. Sharma has been appointed member, traction and rolling stock, P.S. Mishra has been made member, operations and business development. Manjula Rangarajan has been appointed member, finance. In the

new structure, the chairman shall be the cadre controlling officer responsible for human resources (HR) with assistance from a director general level officer. Three apex level posts shall be surrendered from railway board, and all the remaining posts of the railway board shall be open to all officers regardless of the service to which they belonged.

The government says that the reform will end "inter-departmental rivalries" that, many say, have been hampering growth and efficiency of the railways for decades. But not all railway babus are pleased with the decision. Their first objection is to the proposed merger of cadres, which they claim is "unscientific and against established norms" since the government is proposing to merge "fundamentally dissimilar" entities.

Instead, they argue for two distinct services instead of one - separating the civil services and the engineering wings.

NEW HEFT TO PMO

The appointment of three IAS officers to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) will add heft to the already most powerful PMO ever. The officers are Raghuraj Rajendran of the Madhya Pradesh cadre as director, Amrapali Kata of the Andhra Pradesh cadre as deputy secretary and Mangesh Ghildiyal of the Uttarakhand cadre as under-secretary.

Mr Rajendran was earlier serving as private secretary to the minister for steel and petroleum and natural gas Dharmendra Pradhan. Amrapali Kata is an officer of the 2010 batch was deputy secretary in the cabinet secretariat (intelligence).

Mr Ghildiyal was working with the Uttarakhand government.

The appointments make these three officers seem like "high-fliers" in babudom. They have clearly been chosen for their track record. In the presidential-style Modi PMO they are now expected to be team players who must focus

on tough decisions and showing results.

UP'S DUBIOUS CRACKDOWN

Though public perception belies it, the Uttar Pradesh government claims it has a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption. And it backs it up with data. According to sources, since coming to power three years ago, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has cracked the whip on around 800 state government officials. Just recently the state government suspended two IPS officers, Abhishek Dikshit, SSP of Prayagraj, and Manil Patidar, SP of Mahoba, for their involvement in corrupt practices and "lax policing".

The state data claims that it has acted against more than 775 officials so far, including some retired officials who were found complicit in malpractices. The government has forcibly retired 325 officials and suspended and demoted over 450 babus.

But, sources say, despite the Yogi government's crackdown on

corrupt babus, some suspended officers seem to have wiggled back into the administration on plum postings. J.B. Singh, the Gonda DM, was suspended in June 2018, along with Kumar Prashant, the DM of Fatehpur, and faced disciplinary action over irregularities in the procurement of wheat. But Mr Singh's bureaucratic wilderness was short-lived. In 2019 he was appointed the DM of Etawah. Kumar Prashant, too, found himself back in favour. Last year he became the DM of Badaun, a more important district than Fatehpur. There are other instances, say sources, where after a brief period of lying low, suspended officials find themselves back in the saddle.

According to sources, murmurs of protest are rising, and railway unions are planning a series of protests against the move.

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

Subhani



To rule India, history of our geography vital tool



Abhijit Bhattacharyya

Does geography have a history? Yes, it does. It's political geography: of maps and atlases, covering the globe. Political geography maps, accurately drawn in meticulous detail, depicts the world we live in. Naming and numbering all countries, islands, oceans, seas, mountains, the physical topography, and the rulers and the ruled in each of those pages, along with economic figures. It shows the evolution of geography of demography through the ages. Hence, it's important for aspiring, or established, leaders to have fair idea of the history of the geography that they represent, rule or reign.

In the context of the vast demography of South Asia, the learning process is all the more important for potential leaders because India has always been volatile, susceptible to internal discord and violence, thereby resulting in frequent changes of political geography maps. So much so that it's a reality of the history of South Asian geography that the Indian ruling class traditionally proved utterly myopic, being unable to see beyond their noses, thus resulting in their chronic failure to unite the vast, diverse elements of the countryside.

The history of Indian geography thus, as seen from the changed / changing maps, stands as a mute, yet profound, testimony to this sordid scenario. The ruling class has always liked to fight among its own spectrum and colour.

Little wonder that this collective band of the disparate ruling class inevitably ended up facing, and invariably fading, before foreign invaders. The tradition

goes on, as can be found from the 21st century aggression by the Communist Party of China (CPC), on whom some Indians still seem to have abiding trust, faith and confidence to mutually turn the "Line of Actual Control" into a "border area" resolution, from foreign soil, as was catastrophically done, at the behest of a third party arbiter, in 1966 at the high table of Tashkent.

One would like to suggest that the reader go through the 376 pages of "A Historical Atlas of South Asia", published in 1978!

To understand better; as to how fragile and fractious has been the map or geography of India, through the vicissitudes of history. Should it not, therefore, be obligatory for each and every aspiring Indian ruler, from all corners of the country, irrespective of his or her political colour, to learn a lesson or two, and study the atlas of the history of India's geography along with the Constitution of India? Today, for example, Delhi's geography is at the crossroads. Isn't the ominous signature on the horizon visible?

Indeed, five critical geographical areas, which this writer perceives as the "red zones" of India, are fast emerging under the Chinese Communist Party's active short to mid-term action plan. All indications point to its deep thought, firm belief and definite action plan. From the Belt and Road Initiative, to the CPEC, through Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. The CPC think tanks are focused on breaking/destroying India through the creation of a new geography of "Greater" countries, cutting through India's topography.

To reiterate what I

have written earlier in these columns, I firmly believe that India's entire political class and its diplomats cannot match the cunning, deception and deceit of the Han Chinese in the international arena. Hence, the Chinese have managed to go rogue globally, undoubtedly helped by the lack of ideology of the post-Mao People's Republic. Given the congenital blunders made by New Delhi and its failure to tackle the Dragon for the past 70-plus years; there is nothing to indicate that the contemporary mandarins of Lutyens' Delhi will be able to out-match or reverse the evil designs of the Dragon any better than their predecessors or anytime soon. I sincerely hope that I am proved wrong about this.

To start with, India needs to start preparing to face the worst, with an ultra-defensive mechanism: first identify the areas which the CPC is targeting, and study and analyse its past record of action. As they say, to be "forewarned is fore-armed".

There are five "Greater" geographical zones where the Chinese are planning to target India - and the action on the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh is just the start. The five emerging areas are: Greater Pakistan; Greater Nepal; Greater Burma; Greater Bangladesh and "Greater China": with Beijing hoping to turn Bhutan into another Xinjiang owing to its tiny size and dearth of demography! These five might become reality mainly through indirect, invisible and divisive CPC machinations. Not necessarily through the visible CPC-controlled PLA militia, but through unethical operations undertaken, at times reluctantly or under duress, by some of India's neighbours.

The tell-tale signs are already visible. Can't most of India see the Dragon-inspired defiance by Nepal, making bizarre claim over India's territory? Has anyone gone through some of the claims being

articulated by mass-circulating Nepalese media, with Dehradun and Nainital being openly claimed by some elements in Kathmandu. The "Greater Nepal" campaign is already on. What will be claimed next - from Himachal Pradesh to Sikkim?

Nepal is neither a Muslim-majority nor a Christian-majority country. It's an overwhelmingly Hindu nation, which earlier used to be the world's only Hindu kingdom, before the monarchy was abolished. Now Beijing has managed to turn this landlocked nation against Hindu-majority India.

Look at India's West Bengal state. The Communist influence there was once all-pervasive, with China's Chairman Mao an icon to many.

The first salvo was fired on May 24, 1967 across three police stations - Naxalbari, Kharibari, Phansideoa? It took an Indira Gandhi to tackle the CPC's "malevolence and perfidy", douse the Naxalite fire and save India. The CPC learnt its lesson, and didn't mess around with India's iron lady, more so after her triumph in the 1971 Bangladesh war.

"Greater" Pakistan has taken shape, with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir already in place, and "Greater" Bangladesh and "Greater" Myanmar will automatically follow if the "Greater" Nepal movement turns into a hydra-headed monster that will impact Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Geography will automatically navigate the foreign demography to cut down India's topography. Make no mistake, most of India's Northeast will be targeted by a "Greater" China, with some adjacent irredentist areas marked for Dhaka and Rangoon. Will India wake up in time to see through the Dragon's designs?

The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College. Views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

BREACH OF NORMS

The way the Bills of farm reforms were passed in the Rajya Sabha could not bring laurels to the prestigious institution. Both the ruling and Opposition benches seem to be unmindful of the means in their race to their respective goal posts. In case of the said farm reforms Bills there was no clear majority to the treasury benches. Still the division had been denied on the grounds of disorder in the House, which amounted a breach of procedure.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

POLICE SERVICE APP

The AP Police service app, launched by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy appears to be quite useful to the common man. But its implementation and the follow up of complaints received online may require quite a lot of manpower. Its constant monitoring is also important otherwise the purpose of app will be defeated.

Kasthuri S.N.
Visakhapatnam

INTERNET SPEED

I am working from home since April and from a village where we don't have proper internet connectivity. It's becoming hard to complete daily routines and attend to client calls every day due to internet speed and signal strength. It would be very helpful if the government can provide AP Fibernet connections to villages.

M. Sai Chandrasekhar
Thurimerla, Nellore

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Delhi-Moscow direct Telex opened

NEW DELHI, Sept. 22. New Delhi-Moscow direct Telex service was inaugurated here today by formal exchange of greetings between Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Communication Satya Narayan Sinha and the Soviet Minister of Posts and Telecommunications N. Psurzev. The new facility will assist the India and the Soviet Union to exchange messages with minimum delay and without any constraint on available time for use.

In his message, Mr. Sinha noted that President V.V. Giri would be reaching Moscow within a few hours and hoped the direct link would further promote mutual interests.

quick BITES

| INDICATORS | | % |
|------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Sensex | 37,734.08 | -0.79 |
| Nifty 50 | 11,153.70 | -0.86 |
| S&P 500* | 3,275.25 | -0.18 |
| Dollar (₹) | 73.58 | -0.25 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 94.33 | 0.06 |
| Euro (₹) | 86.39 | 0.39 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 50,570▲99 | 0.20 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 41.65 | 0.21 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 6.010 | -0.005 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 0.666 | -0.005 |

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Amazon to come in four southern languages

In a major move to break the language barrier for online shopping and expand e-commerce access to the next 30 crore customers, ahead of the festive season, Amazon is launching amazon.in in shopping experience in four new Indian languages - Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu. With this, Amazon.in customers can now discover great deals and discounts, and read detailed product information.

Ducati launches new Scrambler 1100 Pro in India



Italian superbike maker Ducati on Tuesday said it has launched all-new Scrambler 1100 Pro and the 1100 Sport Pro in India, priced at ₹11.95 lakh and ₹13.74 lakh, respectively (ex-showroom). The bikes come with an 1100-cc engine mated to a six speed gearbox. "The new Scrambler 1100 Pro range takes those qualities a notch higher, said Ducati India Managing Director Bipul Chandra.

Global cues pull down gold price further in India

Gold prices tumbled ₹672 to ₹51,328 per 10 gram in the national capital on Tuesday on a weak global trend. The yellow metal had closed at ₹52,000 per 10 gram in the previous trading session. Silver also witnessed massive selloff with prices tanking ₹5,781 to ₹61,606 per kg from ₹67,387 per kg in the previous trade. "Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi plunged ₹672, reflecting selloff in international prices despite rupee fall.

Bayer gets DCGI nod for injection to treat DME

New Delhi: Bayer in India on Tuesday said it has received approval from the Drugs Controller General of India for its intravitreal injection Aflibercept, for the treatment of a new indication Diabetic Macular Edema (DME). The approval of Aflibercept injection for intravitreal use presents a new and alternative treatment option to currently available therapies, for patients with DME, Bayer said.



Ambani plans ₹4K phone

Jio asked local handset makers to ramp up their capacities

BOOST TO MAKE IN INDIA

- Reliance's target of selling 15 crore to 20 crore phones over two years would represent a massive boost for local factories.
- India assembled an estimated 16.5 crore smartphones in the year ended March, and about an equal number of basic feature phones.



much like he did in wireless services, where his aggressive prices and simple plans quickly made him the dominant force. The billionaire is also aligning himself with India's plans to build more domestic manufacturing, a possible boost for local assemblers like Dixon Technologies India, Lava International and Karbonn Mobiles. "We are of course trying

to build our domestic companies. We have a sweet spot in entry level phones," said Pankaj Mohindroo, chairman of the India Cellular & Electronic Association, during an interview on Bloomberg Television. "The world has realised that India is a great place to do business and a great place to do manufacturing also." Representatives for

Reliance declined to comment.

Reliance's target of selling 15 crore to 20 crore phones over two years would represent a massive boost for local factories. India assembled an estimated 16.5 crore smartphones in the year ended March, and about an equal number of basic feature phones, according to Mohindroo's association. About a fifth of the smartphones cost less than ₹7,000, or about \$100.

Reliance rival Bharti Airtel is also in talks with assemblers to build its own 4G device, local media has reported.

Reliance in July struck a broad alliance with Google, in which the Alphabet Inc. unit would invest \$4.5 billion and cooperate on technology initiatives. The partnership is still under regulatory review so Reliance is proceeding with the mobile phone initiative on its own for now.

— Bloomberg

LIC plans Covid policy, awaits IRDA's approval

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, SEPT. 22

We have already filed a Covid-specific product with IRDA and are waiting for its approval. However, the new product will be of a short-term duration

MUKESH GUPTA, MD, LIC

With the rising numbers of deaths in India due to Covid-19 disease, the country's life insurance behemoth, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), is all set to come out with a Covid-specific cover. The new Covid product is under consideration and awaiting a 'green signal' from the insurance regulator Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai).

"We have already filed a Covid-specific product with IRDA and are waiting for its approval. However, the forthcoming new product will be of a short-term duration for the customers," Mukesh Gupta, managing director of LIC, told Financial Chronicle.

Covid-19 related deaths in the country have already reached 88,935, while the Coronavirus case tally has crossed over 55 lakh mark. However, the insurer feels that the idea behind launching a Covid-specific product is

to bring more and more people under the life insurance cover during the pandemic.

While refusing to divulge more details about benefits and premium of the new product, Gupta said, "It is still in the works. After the approval from the regulator, we will make it public."

Though the insurer has also been providing the life cover for all its 28.92 crore LIC policyholders against the pandemic, the new cover is expected to charge a different premium as well as offer different benefits for its customers.

Gupta, however, feels

that the number of death claims for the corporation is still low. LIC has so far, he said, settled a total Covid claims worth ₹42.48 crore against 956 policies, covering 430 lives.

"In case of the death of any policyholder due to Covid-19, we are paying the death claim immediately after getting the required documents. We have even relaxed our norms for receiving the required documents physically and accepting the online submission via Whatsapp," he said.

"LIC has settled more claims than all other insurance companies if put together. Due to the killer pandemic, more people are buying insurance and I hope the trend would continue with people buying adequate life coverage for themselves and their families as well. LIC is currently running its month-long awareness drive for the revival of existing policies to increase its renewal premium by 5-6 per cent," he said.

RBI SAYS NO PLAN TO REVIVE PMC BANK YET

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEPT. 22

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday said that it is yet to come up with a workable plan to revive fraud hit Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank, and appointed a new administrator for the bank as the present administrator is stepping down.

While it has been exploring various options for resolution of PMC Bank along with the administrator, the RBI said several factors such as huge losses incurred by the bank resulting in its entire net worth getting wiped out, steep erosion in deposits, among others continue to pose serious challenges in finding a workable plan for revival of the bank.

"The bank has also been making efforts for recovery of NPAs although the progress has been constrained because of the pandemic and legal complexities. Nevertheless, in the interest of the depositors, PMC Bank and RBI are continuing to engage with the stakeholders to explore the possibility of finding a viable and workable solution for the resolution of the bank," said RBI in a statement.

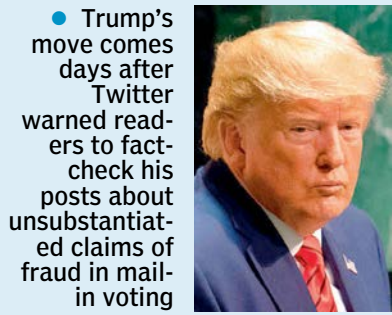
The RBI appointed former Union Bank of India executive A K Dixit as the new administrator of PMC Bank.

Trump seeks to end social media shield

To consult state attorneys to make social media companies liable for user content

LETHAL ATTACK

- US President Donald Trump plans to revise a key law that shields social media companies from liability for content posted by their users, but gives them right to remove objectionable posts



● Trump's move comes days after Twitter warned readers to fact-check his posts about unsubstantiated claims of fraud in mail-in voting

● A group representing major internet companies urged US communication body FCC to reject Trump's petition to limit protections

or weaken the law, Section 230.

He directed the commerce department to file the petition asking the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to limit protections under Section 230 after Twitter Inc warned readers in May to fact-check his posts about unsubstantiated claims of fraud in mail-in voting.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai opened the petition to a 45-day public comment.

Earlier this month, the Republican state attorneys general of Texas, Louisiana, Indiana and

Missouri backed Trump's push, arguing social media platforms cannot be truly free "unless the participants understand the rules of the forum, and competition is able to provide alternatives when speech restrictions go too far."

A group representing major internet companies including Facebook Inc, Amazon.com Inc and Alphabet Inc's Google urged the FCC to reject the petition, calling it "misguided, lacks grounding in law, and poses serious public policy concerns." — Reuters

Mistry family may exit Tata group

Mumbai, Sept. 22: The billionaire Mistry family, the largest minority shareholder of the Tata Group, said that it needs to separate its interests after India's biggest conglomerate took steps to block the family's attempt to borrow money against Tata shares.

Tata Sons informed the Supreme Court Tuesday that it's open to buying out the 18 per cent stake owned by the Mistry family's cash-strapped Shapoorji Pallonji Group

Today, it is with a heavy heart that the Mistry family believes that a separation of interests would best serve all stakeholder groups

SHAPOORJI PALLONJI GROUP STATEMENT

if the latter needed to raise money for paying maturing debt. The SP Group instead wanted to borrow funds using the shares as collateral, a

move that the Tata Group considers as potentially risky because the securities may end up falling in the hands of unfriendly investors.

"The action by Tata Sons to block this crucial fund raise, without any heed for the collateral consequences, is the latest demonstration of their vindictive mind-set," the SP Group said in a statement late Tuesday.

"The SP-Tata relationship spanning over 70 years, was forged on

mutual trust, good faith, and friendship. Today, it is with a heavy heart that the Mistry family believes that a separation of interests would best serve all stakeholder groups."

It didn't specify what any separation would entail. A representative for Tata Sons declined to comment. Feud between the Tata Group and the Mistry family began after Cyrus Mistry was dismissed from the post of Tata Sons chairman a few years back. — Bloomberg

COVID | IMPACT

Lay-offs in Gulf countries force migrant workers to send all money home before flying back

Spurt in remittance hints at workers' final return

Karachi/Manila, Sept. 22: Migrant workers from Asia's developing countries have managed to send home record amounts of money in recent months, defying pandemic expectations and propping up home economies at a critical time.

Remittance doomsayers see something else in the bigger-than-usual transfers: a coming crash, triggered by a bleak job market, particularly in the Middle East. As they see opportunity drying up along with demand for oil,

workers are sending money home in advance of their own return.

The Philippines government, for example, expects almost three lakh overseas Filipinos to come home this year, with potentially severe consequences: Remittances make up about 10 per cent of the economy and have pushed the peso to a three-year high against the dollar.

"People are returning home," said Thomas Isaac, the finance minister for Indian state of Kerala,

which accounts for the country's largest share of remittances. "Therefore, they bring back all their savings."

India is the world's top recipient of transfers and a leading supplier of labour to the Gulf; it took in \$83 billion last year, exceeding the \$51 billion it took in as foreign direct investment.

Overall, remittances to the Asia-Pacific region will drop 12 per cent in the second half of 2020 compared with the same period last year, Fitch Ratings

said this month. "That will drive a decline in remittances as the temporary supporting factors fade," said Jeremy Zook, a director at Fitch Ratings based in Hong Kong.

Unlike Latin American countries, which continue to benefit from a tentative US recovery, Asian countries are vulnerable to economic austerity in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Middle East.

More than 60 per cent of remittances to India, Bangladesh and Pakistan come from Gulf

Cooperation Council countries, said Khurram Schehzad, chief executive officer at Karachi-based advisory Alpha Beta Core Solutions.

The region is also the top destination for workers from the Philippines, one of the world's largest suppliers of overseas labour.

Saudi Arabia has already raised taxes and import fees to make up for falling oil revenue. Job cuts in the kingdom appear to target foreigners first, with Riyadh-based Jadwa Investment esti-

mating more than a million foreign workers will leave the labour market this year.

After eight years of sending money to family in Karachi, Abdul Hanan Abro is one of the workers who will follow his money home. He was laid off from his accounting job in Dubai in May and hasn't found a new gig — and he's not the only one.

"No one is getting anything," said Abro. "Two to three of my friends have already moved back to Lahore. People are selling

their cars and stuff, doing their final settlements."

For Abro, coming home means starting over. He wants to use the savings he accumulated overseas to start a business. "It's high time to just focus on what I was planning for two to three years now," Abro said. "It's better than wasting more time in finding a job in this market."

In April, the World Bank predicted overseas workers would send home 20 per cent less this year, the biggest drop since at least 1980. — Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Roma rapped for ineligible player

Rome: Roma was issued a 3-0 loss to Hellas Verona by the Italian league's disciplinary judge on Tuesday for using an ineligible player. The match — the league opener for both teams — had ended 0-0 on Saturday.

Midfielder Amadou Diawara started the match but was not listed on Roma's 25-man team list. Diawara, who turned 23 in July, was no longer eligible for Roma Under-22s like last season. The game was Roma's first under new owners, after the Texas-based Friedkin Group took control of the club from fellow American James Pallotta last month. Also, Verona coach Ivan Juric was fined 5,000 euros (nearly \$6,000) for having "inferred directions to his team on multiple occasions" even though he was suspended for the match. — AP

Suarez in Italian language test row

Rome: Authorities are investigating whether Barcelona striker Luis Suarez was illegally helped to pass an Italian language exam last week in order to receive a European passport that could help him transfer to a new club. While Suarez is not under investigation, the director and general director of the Perugia university where the Uruguay forward took the exam are being investigated for allegedly helping him pass the test, Italian reports said.

Suarez had been linked with a possible move to Italian champion Juventus. Suarez's test grade was allegedly fixed before he took the test. Suarez is from Uruguay but has Italian ancestors. If he can obtain Italian citizenship, he wouldn't have to occupy a non-EU spot with a new club. — AP

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ROYAL HIGHNESS

Both teams score 200 but Rajasthan beat Super Kings

Sharjah, Sept. 22: Rajasthan Royals beat Chennai Super Kings by 16 runs in an IPL game on Tuesday riding on brilliant performances from Sanju Samson (74 off 32 balls), Steve Smith (69 off 47 balls) and Jofra Archer (27 off 8 balls, 1/26).

Batting first Royals scored 216/7 with the help of 17 sixes hit by their batsmen and nine by Samson alone.

In reply, CSK could manage 200/6 with Faf du Plessis scoring 72 off 37 ball with the help of seven sixes. Mahendra Singh Dhoni scored 29 off 17 balls but it was Rahul Tewatia's leg breaks that caused a lot of damage to top order. Tewatia took 3/37 in his four overs while Archer bowled a brilliant 19th over to seal the match.

Sent into bat, Rajasthan lost young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal (6) in the third over but then Samson joined hands with Smith as the duo played sensibly initially before the Kerala wicket-keeper batsman went hammer and tongs at opposition spinners.

Samson (74 off 32) looked in great nick, while Smith, returning to competitive cricket after recovering from concussion suffered before the ODI series against England, made 67 off 49 balls to lay the base for Rajasthan's total.

In the final over, Jofra Archer (27 off 8 balls) hit four sixes off Lungi Ngidi as Royals got 30 runs to take the score past 215.

In all, Royals hit 17 sixes with Samson accounting for nine of them and Smith and Archer having four each in their kitties.

While Smith played the second fiddle initially, Samson took the Super Kings spin duo of Ravindra Jadeja and Piyush Chawla to task tak-



Steve Smith of the Rajasthan Royals plays a shot on way to his half-century against Chennai Super Kings in their IPL match at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Rajasthan Royals: Yashasvi Jaiswal c & b Chahar 6, Steve Smith c Jadhav b Curran 69, Sanju Samson c Chahar b Ngidi 74, David Miller run out (Gaikwad/ Jadhav) 0, Robin Uthappa c du Plessis b Chawla 5, Rahul Tewatia lbw b Curran 10, Riyan Parag c Dhoni b Curran 6, Tom Curran not out 10, Jofra Archer not out 27. **Extras: (b-1, nb-3, w-5) 9. Total: (for 7 wkts, in 20 overs) 216.** **FoW:** 1-11, 2-132, 3-134, 4-149, 5-167, 6-173, 7-178

Bowling: Deepak Chahar 4-0-31-1, Sam Curran 4-0-33-3, Lungi Ngidi 4-0-56-1, Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-40-0, Piyush Chawla 4-0-55-1.

Chennai Super Kings: Murali Vijay c Tom Curran b Shreyas Gopal 21, Shane Watson b Rahul Tewatia 33, Faf du Plessis c Sanju Samson b Jofra Archer 72, Sam Curran st Sanju Samson b Rahul Tewatia 17, Ruturaj Gaikwad st Sanju Samson b Rahul Tewatia 0, Kedar Jadhav c Sanju Samson b Curran 22, Mahendra Singh Dhoni not out 29, Ravindra Jadeja not out 1. **Extras: (lb-1, nb-1, w-3) 5. Total: (in 20 overs) 200/6.** **FoW:** 1-56, 2-58, 3-77, 4-77, 5-114, 6-179.

Bowling: Jaydev Unadkat 4-0-44-0, Jofra Archer 4-0-26-1, Shreyas Gopal 4-0-38-1, Tom Curran 4-0-54-1, Rahul Tewatia 4-0-37-3.

Mumbai look to bounce back

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 22: Grace and strength will be on one side while poise and killer instinct on the other when a revamped Kolkata Knight Riders take on Mumbai Indians, who have once again faltered in the beginning of the IPL, on Wednesday.

Since 2013, MI have never won an opening game and the script didn't change against Chennai Super Kings, who took control of the match during the last 10 overs of the first innings.

They will be keen to bounce back while KKR would look for a perfect beginning as it will be a battle between big hitters on both sides on a sluggish Abu Dhabi track.

It will be Shubman Gill's third IPL, the one where he would like to own the stage with his languid grace and effortless hitting, which he is so capable of. He can hit sixes over extra cover with grace and caress the ball through covers too.

These are exactly the traits that made Rohit Sharma, the great white ball exponent that he is. Seasoned Rohit versus young Shubman is one for the keeps and makes this battle enticing. But it's not just grace which makes T20 so appealing. The brute masculinity of power that sends the ball soaring into the orbit is what makes it so special.

Hardik Pandya, who is back with a chiselled body. There is no doubt that he can unleash his firepower against Sunil Narine and Kuldeep Yadav as well as KKR's highest paid multi million dollar recruit Pat Cummins. The second pacer could be between Prasidh Krishana and Kamlesh Nagarkoti. But Hardik will find his match in Andre Russell, easily the most destructive hitter in current T20 cricket. Russell had openly criticised the team management last year for sending him down the order. He had hit 52 sixes during one of KKR's worst editions. — PTT

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 25
- Mumbai won: 19
- Kolkata won: 6

MEETING IN 2019

- Kolkata Knight Riders beat Mumbai Indians by 34 runs in Kolkata
- Mumbai Indians beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 9 wickets in Mumbai

FOR THE RECORD

- Andre Russell's strike rate is the best in IPL. He made 1342 runs off 711 balls in 48 innings of 57 runs at a strike rate of 188.74.
- Kieron Pollard will become the 14th player to appear in 150 or more matches in IPL. The West Indian all rounder played all 149 matches for Mumbai Indians in IPL since 2010.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

IPL POINTS TABLE

| Teams | P | W | L | N/R | Pts | NRR |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|-----|-----|--------|
| Rajasthan Royals | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | +0.800 |
| Royal Challengers Bangalore | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | +0.500 |
| Delhi Capitals | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | +0.000 |
| Chennai Super Kings | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | -0.145 |
| Kings XI Punjab | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | +0.000 |
| Kolkata Knight Riders | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +0.000 |
| Mumbai Indians | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | -0.486 |
| Sunrisers Hyderabad | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | -0.500 |

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



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