



# The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



'PARLIAMENT MUST  
SEND SOLIDARITY  
MESSAGE TO TROOPS'

P5



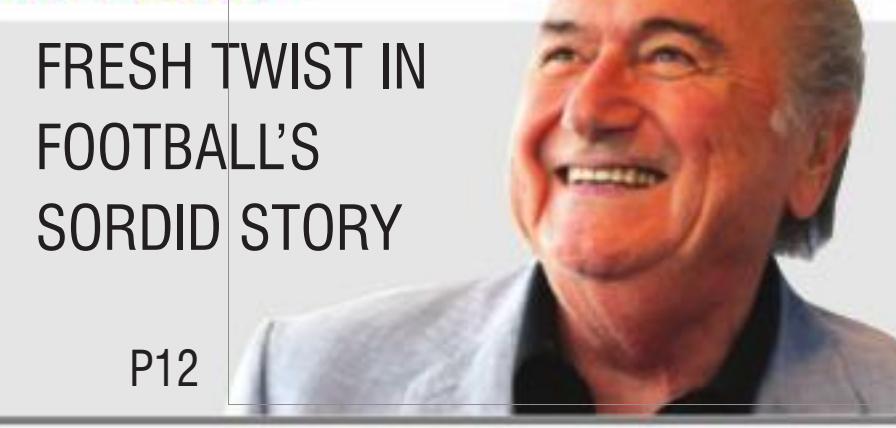
DICHOTOMY  
IN NEPAL

P6



SUGA WINS PARTY  
VOTE FOR JAPAN  
PRIME MINISTER

P9



FRESH TWIST IN  
FOOTBALL'S  
SORDID STORY

P12

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 37 and 26 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
Max: 88% Min: 55%
TEMPERATURE
Max: 36.6°C (+3) Min: 27.5°C (+3)
SUN RISES 06:07 hrs MOON RISES 4:32 hrs
SUN SETS 18:26 hrs MOON SETS 17:18 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



A health worker conducts Covid-19 testing of a security personnel at the Delhi Vidhan Sabha on Monday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

**Sisodia tests Covid +ve; Delhi sees dip in cases:** Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia on Monday said he has tested positive for Covid-19. The 48-year-old AAP leader said he has gone into self-isolation. He did not attend the one-day session of the Delhi Assembly. Delhi recorded 3,229 fresh Covid cases. The city had recorded over 4,000 single-day Covid cases for five consecutive days until Sunday.

P2

**Inflation rate:** Retail inflation softened slightly to 6.69 per cent in August as price rise in some food items eased, though wholesale inflation inched up to a five-month high of 0.16 per cent on costlier manufactured goods, official data showed on Monday. The consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation was at 6.73 per cent in July, which has been revised downwards from the earlier estimate of 6.93 per cent, as per data released by the National Statistical Office.

P8

## Monsoon session: 30 MPs test positive for Covid-19

For the first time, LS members sit in RS chamber as Parliament meets amidst pandemic

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

**A**round 30 MPs and more than 50 employees of Parliament have tested positive for Covid-19, sources said on Monday.

All parliamentarians and staff of the secretariats of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha had undergone mandatory Covid-19 tests before the start of the monsoon session.

As per the reports of these tests, around 30 MPs and over 50 employees of the secretariats tested positive for coronavirus, the sources said.

All those who have tested positive have been asked to stay in quarantine and they did not come to Parliament.

In a first, some Lok Sabha members attended the House proceedings on Monday while seated in the Rajya Sabha chamber as Parliament met for the Monsoon session amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

Speaker Om Birla said in Lok Sabha that rules and procedures have been eased to allow Lok Sabha members to sit in the upper house and Rajya Sabha members occupy seats in the lower house due to social distancing norms.

While Lok Sabha is meeting between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Monday, Rajya Sabha will assemble between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesday onwards, Rajya Sabha will meet in the morning and Lok Sabha in the afternoon.



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» All those who have tested positive have been asked to stay in quarantine and they did not come to Parliament

» Unlike in the past, there were no Opposition protests in the Well of the House, which is otherwise a usual occurrence on day one of the session as soon as the House assembles

He said as part of the procedures, the chambers of the two Houses and the galleries where members are seated will be considered as part of Lok Sabha when the House proceedings are on.

He said this is perhaps for the first time that such an arrangement had been put in place.

Birla said members do not have to stand while speaking as part of the new procedures put in place to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

In a lighter vein, he said some may find it difficult to speak while sitting.

While nearly 200 members were present in the Lok Sabha chamber, a little over 50 were seated in the visitors' gallery located above the main chamber.

When the House met at 9 a.m., the number of members present was less. But the numbers went up when the House reassembled at around 10.20 a.m. after a one-hour adjournment after paying tributes to former president Pranab Mukherjee, a sitting MP and 13 former members who died in the recent past.

Unlike in the past, there were no Opposition protests in the Well of the House, which is otherwise a usual occurrence on day one of the session as soon as the House assembles.

The front seats of the Treasury benches on the right of the Speaker's podium were occupied by Prime Minister Narendra Modi sitting on a seat marked as number one, Defence minister Rajnath Singh on seat number 2 and Agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on seat number 3.

The front seats of the Opposition benches were occupied by T R Baalu of the DMK and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury of the Congress.

National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah was seated in the second row of the Opposition benches.

As soon as the Prime Minister entered the House, he was greeted with claps and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" slogans. Modi greeted members, including those from the Opposition, with folded hands. All the members were

Lockdown prevented up to 29 lakh Covid cases'



NEW DELHI,  
14 SEPTEMBER

Union Health minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday told the Lok Sabha that the nationwide lockdown had helped prevent up to 29 lakh coronavirus cases and 78,000 deaths in the country.

"The nationwide lockdown, a bold decision by the government, is testimony to the fact that India collectively stood up to manage Covid-19. It has been estimated that this decision prevented 14-29 lakh cases and 37,000 to 78,000 deaths," Vardhan said.

The four months of the lockdown were used to create additional health infrastructure, strengthen resources, and produce critical elements like PPE, masks and ventilators in India, the health minister said.

wearing masks. Some were also seen wearing face shields, including Trinamool Congress leader Kalyan Banerjee.

The Question Hour is recognised as an essence of parliamentary democracy and executives are accountable and answerable during the Question Hour. In such an extraordinary situation, if the House is running, why Question Hour is singled out

ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY  
LEADER OF THE CONGRESS IN LOK SABHA

much essential for the existence of parliamentary democracy.

"Urge the Speaker not to allow the executive to encroach on the territory of the legislature. It is a shameful day," he said.

He also requested for a division, which was not accepted by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. Manish Tewari (Congress) said this is the only time when the opposition can hold the government accountable.

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee said the Question Hour is an integral part of the basic structure of parliamentary procedure and "we cannot destroy that part".

Today, the government has pressure to pass Bills, he said. "We also have our views to express," he added, "kindly do not take away this advantage. It will take the entire glamour, 50 per cent glamour of running Parliament," he added.

There are so many ways to question the government and it is not running away from discussion and "we are going to reply to all questions which you are going to raise," Joshi said.

**Bhushan pays ₹1 fine, files review plea against conviction**

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

Advocate Prashant Bhushan on Monday filed a review petition in the Supreme Court, challenging its verdict convicting him for criminal contempt of court by making derogatory statements against the judiciary through tweets.

On 12 September, Bhushan had moved a plea filed in the apex court seeking a right of appeal against his conviction, to be heard by a larger and a different bench.

The top court had imposed a token penalty of Re 1 on Bhushan, which he deposited in the court on Monday.

Addressing the media, Bhushan said that paying the fine does not mean he had accepted the verdict and he would file a review plea to contest his conviction.

Bhushan argued that tweet number 2 tends to convey that "the judges who have presided in the apex court in the period of last six years have a particular role in the destruction of Indian democracy and the last four CJIs had a more particular role in it."

"This might well be the impression that the tweet in question seeks to convey, but the Court doesn't, in fact, show, or even attempt to show, how the holding of this opinion constitutes contempt of court. This is an error apparent on the face of the judgment," said Bhushan on the 444-page review plea.

Bhushan insisted that the court had erroneously held him guilty of contempt, as the fair criticism of a judge and the judiciary is protected by Article 19 (1)(a) of the Constitution.

## India overtakes Brazil to record highest number of Covid-19 recoveries in world

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

the increasing number of high recoveries per day.

"Around 77,512 patients have been discharged in the last 24 hours. The total recovered cases are 37,80,107, which is the gap between recovered cases and active cases is consistently increasing. This has touched nearly 28 lakh today (27,93,509)," the Health Ministry said in a statement.

The Ministry further said that Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have recorded around 60 per cent of the total recovered Covid cases.

Nearly 60 per cent of the total number of Covid-19 cases are from five states - Maharashtra (21.9 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (11.7 per cent), Tamil Nadu (10.4 per cent), Karnataka (9.5 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (6.4 per cent), the ministry said.

Out of the 92,071 new cases, Maharashtra continues to contribute a high number and has

reported more than 22,000 new cases in a day. Andhra Pradesh has contributed more than 9,800 new cases, it said.

Of the new 1,136 deaths, nearly 53 per cent are concentrated in the three states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh.

These are followed by Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. More than 36 per cent of deaths reported on Sunday are from Maharashtra (416 deaths), the ministry said.

According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 5,72,39,428 samples have been tested up to 13 September with 9,78,500 samples being installed on Sunday. The total number of active coronavirus cases in India stands at 9,86,598 as on date while the number of Covid-19 cases in the country stands at 48,46,427.

Active cases are consistently increasing, and now stands at 27,93,509.



## SAFETY FIRST



Gym personnel prepare to welcome back fitness seekers after permission was granted to reopen them in the Capital after nearly six-month hiatus.

DEEPAK

## Mamata bats for open-air puja pandals

ARUNIMA GHOSH  
KOLKATA, 14 SEPTEMBER

**Many are saying that the Corona is over but one should be very cautious as it is unknown whether the pandemic will increase its impact or not. We should continue wearing masks, using hand sanitizers and maintaining social distancing norms**

crowded then it will increase the chance of spreading the infection.

"The Global Advisory committee suggested holding the puja in an airy and spacious area as a precautionary measure. The pandemic situation will remain for the time being so we have to be cautious," said Miss Banerjee.

Without naming any party, Miss Banerjee said that many are saying that the Corona is over but one should be very cautious as it is unknown whether the pandemic will increase its impact or not. "We should continue wearing masks, using hand sani-

tizers and maintaining social distancing norms.

Some are spreading fake news saying Covid is over and trying to take out rallies. Law should take its course," she said.

It may be mentioned here that the BJP leaders have claimed that Corona has gone and alleged that the state government was enforcing lockdowns to prevent them from holding political rallies.

Stressing that the Covid treatment process in the state was very good, Miss Banerjee said that the committee too appreciated it and has asked the government to be more careful before reopening schools and colleges.

Reiterating that treatment is provided free of cost to Covid patients, Miss Banerjee said that the discharge rate of patients in Bengal is 86.40 per cent, which is much higher in comparison to the national average of 77.93 per cent.

Bengal today recorded a single-day spike with 3,211 Covid cases and 58 deaths due to infection, taking the total case count to 2,05,919 and death toll to 4,003. 86 per cent of the deaths in the state are due to comorbidities.

The CM said that the bed occupancy rate is 32.36 per cent. Again, the positivity rate is 8.21 per cent against the national rate of 8.53 per cent, she added.

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Delhi riots case: Ex-JNU student leader Umar Khalid remanded in 10-day police custody



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

Former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student leader Umar Khalid, who was last night arrested by Delhi Police's special cell for his alleged involvement in the February 2020 Northeast Delhi riots case, was today remanded in ten-day police custody.

Umar was presented before a local court by Delhi Police through video conferencing.

Delhi Police sought 10-day police custody of Umar and the court accepted their plea.

Police had reportedly sought his custody for 10 days, saying they wanted to confront him with documents running into 11 lakh pages.

His counsel opposed the police's remand application, saying he was not in Delhi during 23-26 February, when the riots occurred.

Umar was arrested under the stringent anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in a case related to the communal violence that broke out in Northeast neighbourhoods of the national capital in February this year.

After 11 hours of interrogation, Delhi Police's special cell arrested Umar last night as an alleged conspirator in the Delhi riots case, sources said, adding his mobile phone has been seized by the cops.

In the FIR, police has reportedly claimed that the communal violence was a "premeditated conspiracy"

which was allegedly hatched by Khalid and others.

Khalid had allegedly given provocative speeches at two different places in Delhi and "instigated" the citizens to come out on the streets and block the roads during the then visit of US President Donald Trump in order to spread propaganda at the international level about how minorities in India were being tortured, the FIR alleged.

According to the FIR, women and children were made to block the roads under the Jafrabad metro station on 23 February to create tension amidst the neighbourhood people, said sources.

Earlier, Khalid was questioned by Delhi Police's crime branch on 2 September in connection with the Delhi riots.

Police authorities have claimed that investigation has been finalised in most of the important cases and that the chargesheets have been submitted in the court for trial.

So far, 1,575 people have been arrested, out of which 1,153 accused have been charge-sheeted, with 250 chargesheets having been filed so far.

As many as 751 FIRs were registered by Delhi Police in connection with the riots cases so far.

Communal clashes had broken out in Northeast Delhi in the last week of February after violence involving citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

We respect all languages. We have decided to form a new Hindi Academy. We have also decided to set up a Dalit Sahitya Academy. Dalits' languages have influence on the Bengali language

MAMATA BANERJEE

WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

Capital

# Won't let slum dwellers in Delhi be displaced till I'm alive: Kejri

CM tells Delhi Assembly the city's Covid death rate is perhaps lowest in the world and that concern should be over deaths and not no. of virus cases; Jain says the Covid situation'll soon be under control

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

**A**mid a fresh surge in Covid-19 cases in Delhi, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today said the coronavirus death rate in the national capital was possibly the lowest in the world and that the concern should be over the number of deaths due to the virus and not the number of cases.

"The largest number of Covid tests are being carried out in Delhi at present. Eleven per cent Delhi has been tested so far with nearly 21 lakh tests. The concern should be number of deaths, not the number of Covid cases. Death rate in Delhi is perhaps the lowest in the whole world," the CM said in his address during the one-day session of the Delhi Assembly.

"People from all over country are coming to Delhi for Covid treatment. A total of 5,264 people from other states have been treated so far in Delhi. It is a difficult time. Human history never witnessed such a pandemic. We have to work for the well-being of the humankind," Kejriwal said.

He thanked the Centre for helping Delhi with PPE kits, test kits and ventilators.

Noting that the first plasma bank opened in Delhi at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS), Kejriwal said 1,965 Covid patients have been given plasma so far



CM Arvind Kejriwal arrives at the Delhi Assembly to attend its special one-day session. In the Capital on Monday. SUBRATA DUTTA

in Delhi. "I am happy that 1,965 lives have been saved," he said. Health minister Satyendar Jain exuded confidence that the Covid situation will soon be under control and people should not panic. He also claimed that the Delhi government was the "first in the world" to start home isolation of coronavirus patients.

"The Covid situation will soon be under control. We are testing more than 60,000 people every day. There is no need to panic, but people should be cautious and use face mask and follow other measures to prevent spread of the virus," Jain told the Delhi Assembly.

"We learnt from wherever we could in the fight against coronavirus and maintained transparency. Delhi government was the first in the world to start home isolation. We started use of pulse oxime-

ters. I want to clarify that the treatment of corona in government hospitals is in no way less better than in private hospitals," Jain said, claiming that the highest number of Covid tests were being conducted in Delhi.

There were 500 permanent centres including dispensaries and hospitals where the Covid testing was being conducted, he said.

However, going after the Kejriwal government for its alleged failure to contain the rising number of Covid cases in Delhi, Leader of the Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri claimed in the Assembly that under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi Union home minister Amit Shah took the lead and provided relief to the people of Delhi from this pandemic.

Participating in a short-term discussion on the Corona pandemic in the House,

demic removing 48,000 jhuggis is not correct. What if the place becomes a coronavirus hotspot? Law says slum dwellers should not be removed before rehabilitation. It is legal right of every slum dweller to have a house," the CM told the House.

"I assure slum dwellers that I will not let them be displaced till I am alive. I assure that the Central and Delhi governments will work together for ensuring pucca houses to slum dwellers. All agencies concerned need to come together to work for providing them houses," the CM said.

A proposal on slum dwellers was passed by the House by voice vote.

During the debate, Bidhuri raised the slogan "Modi zindabad" and said that under the "Jahan Jhuggi wahan Makan" scheme, every slum dweller in Delhi will be provided a pucca house by 2022.

## Classified

EDUCATIONAL



GITARATTAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES & TRAINING

SECTOR-7, ROHINI, DELHI-85

For Management Quota Seats in D.E.L.D.Course

Admission forms are available at the Institute reception from 15th September 2020 to 24th September 2020, between 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Last date for submission of application form is 24th September 2020. The merit list and date of counseling will be displayed on the Institute's website [www.giast.org](http://www.giast.org) and notice board on 26th September 2020.

Registrar

At - H. No. 215, Surajpur, Dadri, Ghaziabad.

Also at : Main Road, Surajpur, Greater Noida, G. B. Nagar.

Also at : B-135, Bhikham Colony, Tigaon Bibhav Road, Ballabgarh, Haryana.

Also at : C-260, Gama-1, Greater Noida, G. B. Nagar.

In the abovementioned application, you are required to file reply in paper book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any) personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 26-11-2020 at 10-30 a.m. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar

Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow.

Seal of the Court

September, 2020.

Withdrawal of Nomination

27 September, 2020.

For Nomination Form

E-mail : [wbsu\\_office@gmail.com](mailto:wbsu_office@gmail.com)

Last date of application:

21st September, 2020.

ONE OF our clients Sri

Shankar Lal Gupta being the

present owner of all those:

i) Two residential rooms Nos. 39 & 40 admeasuring

about 350 sqft (super built-up area) &

ii) Two residential rooms Nos. 37 & 38 admeasuring about 374 sqft. (super built-up area) &

iii) Two office rooms Nos. 41 & 42 admeasuring about 484 sqft. (super built-up area)

all on the 5th floor of the building lying and situated at Municipal Premises No. 18B, Sukeas Lane, Kolkata-700001, Ward No. 42 within the limits of Kolkata Municipal Corporation has lost/misplaced the original three Prior Deeds all recorded in Book No. I of ARA-II, Kolkata, as being No. 3222 for the year 2003 and 3305 for the year 2008 and 703 for the year 2001 respectively. The loss/misplacement of the said deeds were record-

ed as GDE No. 779 in the General Diary on 12.09.2020 with Hare Street Police Station.

Anybody having any claim, right title and/or interest in the aforesaid properties

should lodge a claim with us within 7 days from this date failing which no such claim shall be entertained.

Supriyo Basu & Associates

Advocates

'Temple Chamber'

Room No. 48, Ground Floor

6, Old Post Office Street

Kolkata-700001

Ph: 46014847 / 46014849 /

40056311

E-mail: [sbasuadv@gmail.com](mailto:sbasuadv@gmail.com)

Date: 14.09.2020

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Debijoti Bagchi have

cancelled my all previous

Wills and have drawn and

registered a fresh Will on

30th day of June, 2020. This

is my last Will and same to

be effected after my death.

Mr. Debijoti Bagchi

Flat No. H-2

'Apsara Apartment'

67, Park Street

Kolkata-700016

Email: [debijoti\\_bagchi@yahoo.com](mailto:debijoti_bagchi@yahoo.com)

Date: 01/07/2020

TENDERS

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Date: 01/07/2020

FOR SALE

6308 water

damaged 50 kg Dalmia

Cement bags at Kharagpur,

contact: 9831062478. For

quotes until 28.09.2020

contact: 9831119525, R. No.

261002574.

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6308 water

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Cement bags at Kharagpur,

contact: 9831062478. For</p



Total orders for 1.92 crore PPEs have been placed by the central government so far:

HARSH VARDHAN  
UNION HEALTH MINISTER

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2020

03

## THUMBNAILS



Farmers shout slogans during a demonstration to protest against the government in Beas on Monday.

AFP

**15 deaths, 1,043 fresh virus cases in Uttarakhand:** Fifteen more people died from coronavirus in Uttarakhand on Monday as 1,043 cases surfaced, taking the number of infections in the state to 33,016, according to a bulletin issued by the Health Department. So far, 429 deaths have been reported in the state, it said.

According to it, 385 fresh cases were reported in Dehradun; 224 in Haridwar; 212 in Udhampur Singh Nagar and 46 in Nainital. Nine patients died at AIIMS, Rishikesh; four at Sushila Tiwari Hospital in Haldwani; and two at Doon Medical College. So far, a total of 22,077 have recovered from the infection, the bulletin said, adding that 10,374 people are still under treatment. As many as 136 patients have shifted out of the state, it said.

PTI

## CAG pulls up HP govt over utilisation certificates

Taking a dim view of continuous delay in submission of utilisation certificates by various HP govt bodies, the CAG, in its report, asks the state govt to ensure their timely submission and review the funding of such bodies

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 14 SEPTEMBER

**F**ed up with continuous delay in submission of utilisation certificates by various government bodies, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), in its report released on Monday, asked the Himachal Pradesh government to review the funding of such bodies in the state.

The CAG report, which was tabled by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur in the HP Assembly, states that out of 5,758 utilisation certificates with grant of Rs 5,128 crore, 2,407 certificates (42 percent) aggregating Rs 1,898 crore (37 percent) were pending till March 2019.

"This high dependency of utilisation certificates is fraught with the risk of misappropriation of funds and fraud. The state government should ensure timely submission of utilisation certificates of these institutions (grantees) and review whether grants should be continued to such government bodies," the report stated.

The CAG report pointed out that out of the 14 autonomous bodies, only three had submitted utilisation certificates for 2018-19 and the remaining bodies had not submitted it despite delay of one year as



HP CM Jai Ram Thakur addressing the House on the 6th day of the monsoon session of the state Assembly in Shimla on Monday.

of September 2019.

The state government had also reported 44 cases of misappropriation/loss, theft of government money to the tune of Rs 93.79 lakh till March 2019 and action in these cases was still awaited.

In addition, 41 cases out of the total 44 involved more than 5 years, the report added.

The CAG also pulled up the state government for not amending the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act as recommended by

the 14th Finance Commission.

The CAG pointed out that the increase in fiscal liabilities of the state government by 6.41 per cent to Rs 54,299 crore in 2018-19 as compared to previous year and these liabilities were 36 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). The total public debt had witnessed an annual average growth of 9.60 per cent and it increased from Rs 25,729 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 36,425 crore in 2018-19.

The CAG report showed that Himachal's revenue receipts increased by 13 per cent to Rs 30,950 crore as compared to Rs 27,367 crore in the previous year.

Only 33 per cent of receipts came from the state's own resources comprising taxes and non-taxes while the remaining 67 per cent was contributed by the Union government. These include the state's share in central taxes (18 percent) and grant-in-aid from the Central government (49 per cent), the report added.

## STREET FOOD IN COVID TIME



With street food stalls also reopening now amid the Covid pandemic, street food vendors get back to business at Sector 30 in Chandigarh. On Monday.

PARDEEP SAINI

## Sultry conditions prevail across northern India; relief likely for Delhi by weekend

PTI

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

There was rainfall and thundershower in many parts of India on Monday, with heavy to very heavy downpour being recorded at isolated places in the east, north-east and the south, while sultry weather conditions prevailed in most of the northern region.

An India Meteorological Department (IMD) bulletin said heavy to very heavy rainfall was observed at isolated

places in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Telangana, Rayalseema, Lakshadweep and coastal Andhra Pradesh and heavy rainfall at isolated places over eastern Rajasthan, western Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, Maharashtra, coastal Karnataka, Kerala, Konkan and Goa and Tamil Nadu.

The IMD said fairly widespread to widespread rainfall with isolated heavy falls was very likely over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Maharashtra, Gujarat, coastal and north-interior Karnataka and Kerala and Mahe during the next 4-5 days.

Mizoram, Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya, Marathawada, Konkan and Goa, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, Telangana, Rayalseema, Lakshadweep, Karnataka and Kerala and Mahe, it said.

"Union Minister of State for Finance, Anurag Thakur represents this constituency. And Professor Prem Kumar Dhumal, former BJP Chief Minister, hails from Hamirpur," he said. He said the BJP workers in Hamirpur Parliamentary constituency

have proved their worth by achieving hundred per cent target in all the Assembly segments.

The state BJP President said the BJP is heading for the new era.

"That's the era of digitalisation. The era of paperless functioning and Himachal unit has taken a leap in this area of technology," he said.

He said the e-vistarik scheme for Kangra-Chamba Parliamentary constituency will begin from 15 September. "There is great enthusiasm in the party workers in Kangra Chamba Parliamentary constituency too and the party is sure that this scheme would be a success there too," he said.

## Covid spike forces Pb govt to step up manufacturing of medical oxygen

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 14 SEPTEMBER

With Covid cases and fatalities rising in Punjab, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Monday directed the Health Department to step up indigenous manufacturing of medical oxygen to supplement the current supplies in order to ensure that there is no shortage of this critical commodity to tackle any future crisis.

The state, which has been procuring all its medical oxygen from neighbouring areas, has now decided to also go in for internal manufacturing to meet any shortfall that could arise with Covid cases spiking in the state.

Till now, Punjab was procuring all its medical oxygen supplies from other states, including Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and



Haryana. However, as cases continue to spike, and amid reports of oxygen shortages in several parts of the country, the CM stressed the need to generate additional supplies through internal manufacturing also.

In line with this decision, the health department has so far issued license to one industrial oxygen supplier in Punjab to manufacture Medical Oxygen, while six packaging units have been allowed to package oxygen for medical

use.

With this, the state now has internal capacity to manufacture 800 medical oxygen cylinders and packaging of 2000 units per day, and the government hopes that with the supplies already being procured from other states, this would help cope with any further escalation in demand in the coming weeks.

The state government has also appointed a nodal officer to monitor the supply and demand of medical oxygen amid spiralling cases of Covid, and the CM has asked the health department to ensure that indigenous production and packaging is further scaled up to meet any eventuality.

During a virtual meeting to assess the situation arising out of the pandemic, Amarinder directed the department to ensure that

there is no shortage of oxygen for treatment of Covid patients in the state.

The CM was informed that the state currently had adequate supplies of Oxygen to meet the demand triggered by an increasing number of Covid cases. He was further told that of the 6653 Covid patients admitted at the Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) in the state, 5269 had recovered and been discharged, with 550 still under treatment.

A special invitee to the meeting, Professor of Cardiology, AIIMS, Ambuj Roy said the majority of the Covid deaths in Punjab had taken place after 6 August. At 2.96 per cent the Case Fatality Rate (CFR) in Punjab was higher than the national average of 1.65 per cent as was the deaths per million at 78.5 (national average 58.3).

## Cong stages walkout from HP assembly over MLA's confinement in SP office

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 14 SEPTEMBER

The Himachal Pradesh Congress on Monday staged a walkout from the HP assembly over alleged confinement of MLA Sunder Singh Thakur in Kullu Superintendent of Police (SP)'s office premises.

The MLA was allegedly confined in the SP office premises after an Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) working in the office tested positive and the office except control room was closed as per the containment protocol.

Leader of the Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri raised the issue through attention motion as soon as the House was convened and demanded action against Kullu SP Gaurav Singh for endangering the life of the HP Legislative Assembly member.

"The MLA was confined in Kullu SP office on Sunday and by doing so, his life was put at risk. The opposition members called for immediate action against the SP," Agnihotri said, adding the entire office premises were sealed.

Replies to the opposition charge in HP assembly, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur and state government to not to degrade the institution of MLA to this level.

Replying to the opposition charge in HP assembly, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur advised opposition members and Agnihotri to not to politicize the issue and said the SP took action as per the situation as the MLA was asked to vacate the premises but he refused to comply with the directions.

"Sunder Singh Thakur was staging a protest against police overruling over BJP workers' protest and alleged scuffle in his hotel, inside the premises of SP Kullu office since Saturday which was against norms.

A person is allowed to protest outside the office and not inside premises of a public representative," he added. He said an ASI working in the SP office was tested positive for COVID-19 and after that process to implement Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) was started. The staff told him to vacate premises as it need-



HP Leader of the Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri along with other Congress MLAs, who staged a walkout from the HP Assembly, in Shimla on Monday.

LALIT KUMAR

**The MLA, who was staging protest in the Kullu SP office premises, was reportedly confined for over 12 hours after a cop tested positive for COVID-19 and the office was closed as per the containment protocol**

ed to be sanitized and sealed as per set protocol but he refused to budge and continued with his protest, leading to the situation.

Thakur further stated that the MLA seeking arrest of former MLA Maheshwar Singh for protests outside his office that was located besides Congress office in Kullu which had led to counter-sabotage from both sides.

The BJP protest was part of statewide agitation on the issue of demolition of Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut office by Shiv Sena-Congress alliance government in Maharashtra, he added.



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- Applicant can download prescribed forms and affidavit from [www.delhipolicelicensing.gov.in](http://www.delhipolicelicensing.gov.in)
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Forms can be submitted at District DCsP offices from 15.09.2020 to 22.09.2020 (both days inclusive)

Last date of depositing application forms is 22.09.2020 upto 06:00 PM at the respective offices of jurisdictional District DCsP.

Last date for issuance of license by Districts DCsP is 23.10.2020

Validity of temporary fireworks license for pucca shops is 24 days and 15 days for temporary shed from the date of issuance of respective licenses

Appeals against rejection of applications by District DCsP can be filed before jurisdictional Joint Commissioners of Police/Ranges between 23.10.2020 & 24.10.2020 (both days inclusive)

Appeals will be decided by the jurisdictional Joint CsP/Ranges between 26.10.2020 & 27.10.2020 (both days inclusive)

E-mail to CP, Delhi at: [cp.sns@delhipolicelicensing.gov.in](mailto:cp.sns@delhipolicelicensing.gov.in)  
Write to CP, Delhi at P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL 112 TO SHARE INFORMATION CALL 1090

DP/9254/2020



Taking away of 'Hill Tribes' status from Gorkhas... goes against the fundamental and founding principles of our nation

DARJEELING MP RAJU BISTA

SPEAKING IN PARLIAMENT ON THE DEMAND FOR TRIBAL STATUS FOR 11 GORKHA COMMUNITIES

India

THUMBNAILS



A health worker collects swab sample from a woman to test for Covid-19, in Hyderabad on Monday.

AFP

**Padma awards nominations open till Tuesday:** The Union Home Ministry on Monday said the process of online nominations for the 2021 Padma awards, recognising distinguished and exceptional achievements and service in various disciplines, will be available till Tuesday. The nominations or recommendations will be received only on the portal "https://padmaawards.gov.in/" \nhttps://padmaawards.gov.in.

PTI

**Same sex marriages:** The Centre on Monday told the Delhi HC that marriage between same sex couples was 'not permissible' as it is not recognised by 'our laws, legal system, society and our values'. The bench observed the world over things were changing, but it may or may not be applicable to India.

PTI

# TN resonates with NEET aspirants' suicides

Madras HC judge irked by government's announcement of solatium

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHENNAI, 14 SEPTEMBER



**O**n a day Tamil Nadu state Assembly convened for a three-day session, suicide of NEET aspirants reverberated across political and judicial spectrums alike.

In Madras High Court, Justice Kirubakaran expressed disappointment at the TN government's announcement that it will provide solatium to the kin of NEET aspirants who committed suicide.

The judge said it appears as if the government is glorifying suicides. Also politicians and media should act with caution and refrain from activities that can lead to encouraging suicides, he said.

Political parties once again demanded scrapping of NEET, which they believe have deprived rural candidates of their due seats.

DMK president M K Stalin in today said that he appealed to pass a resolution in the assembly for students who committed suicide but it was rejected.

In order to protest against NEET, all DMK MLAs were wearing face masks with slogan-Ban NEET and save Tamil Nadu students.

The single-judge bench, citing a previous order of the Madras HC that had asked the government to take steps to curb suicides due to NEET,

allowed advocate Suryaprakasham to file a contempt of court proceeding if warranted.

Justice Kirubakaran made the observation while advocating Suryaprakasham mentioned suicides among NEET aspirants due to pressure and fear of failure in the exam.

The advocate said suicides are unabated since the government has not implemented the order issued in the petition filed by an aspirant named Krishika. He also said that government failed to prevent suicides and the HC should accept a contempt proceeding against the government.

Two years ago, a petition was filed by Krishika regarding NEET and the case came up for hearing in Madras HC. The court had then directed the government to take appropriate action to thwart deaths due to failure in NEET. It asked the government to provide training, and help increase the confidence level of students gearing up for the exam.

Speaking to mediapersons after the Assembly session, Stalin

said many students commit suicide due to NEET exam issue. "There are many issues like NEET, National Education Policy 2020. I don't know how it'll be discussed in only two days," he said.

The principal opposition DMK was set to raise a host of issues including, demanding a resolution seeking to scrap the NEET exams in the state in the wake of four students ending their lives in the last five days, including three on Saturday alone, due to fear over clearing the NEET exams, the National Education Policy-2020 and the Centre's move to impose three-language policy in the State, corona situation, among others.

The DMK would also raise the alleged irregularities in the PM-Kisan scheme, which came to light in several districts, apart from the alleged failure of the government in handling the corona pandemic and the fresh privilege notices issued to Opposition Leader Stalin and 17 of his party MLAs for displaying banned gutkha products in the House in July 2017.

The assembly session which was convened today amid the coronavirus pandemic was adjourned after passing condolence resolutions. Meanwhile, actor Surya's statement on NEET stirred controversy. Hours after Surya issued a statement against NEET, calling out the courts, the media and the government,

Justice SM Subramanian of the Madras HC wrote to Chief Justice AP Saha, to initiate contempt proceedings against the actor.

Justice Subramanian contended that Surya's statement undermined and badly criticised the integrity and devotion of the judges and judicial system of the country.

In his statement, Surya said, "A government, which is supposed to create equal opportunities for everyone, brings in a law with an education system that creates inequality." He added that, "Education policies are formulated by those who do not know the ground realities of students from the poor and the downtrodden sections."

In his statement he also took on judiciary saying, "Courts, which are delivering justice through video-conferencing due to life-threatening coronavirus fears, are ordering students to fearlessly go and write the exams. The news of student suicide due to exam fear becomes a debated topic on most media outlets just for that day. Chanakya, who find spelling mistakes even in the suicide notes left behind by the students who have died, will engage in 'heated debates' over them."

Six retired judges have written to Chief Justice Saha, urging the court not to take up contempt proceedings against actor Surya over his letter. Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi submitted before the bench that he appeared on behalf of the applicants who are directly affected as they are jhuggi dwellers.

Khurshid emphasised that they need to be heard and urged the court to make them a party in the case. Singhvi argued that demolitions have taken place on Friday and Monday, therefore the instructions need to be given to stop it.

Mehta replied that such demolitions may have taken place in pursuance to some other matter, but not in this case.

No action against slums along rail tracks, SC told

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

The Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that momentarily none of the 48,000 slums along the railway tracks in Delhi would be removed.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, on behalf of Centre, submitted before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India SA Bobde that the Railways, urban development ministry and Delhi government will sit together and find a solution in four weeks. Till then, there will be no demolition of slums along the train tracks.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi submitted before the bench that the Court should order a status quo. The bench replied that it will not, as the Centre has already stated that there will be status quo till a decision is taken.

Senior advocate Salman Khurshid submitted before the bench that he appeared on behalf of the applicants who are directly affected as they are jhuggi dwellers.

Chairman declared Harivansh elected after a voice-vote. What followed was a series of speeches by different party leaders recalling his earlier performance as the Deputy Chairman. Members said the journalist-turned politician had allowed them to have their say, despite various constraints.

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi gave a long speech, and said that the Bihar member was born in the same village Sitabdiara in Ballia district where Sar-

Gold smuggling: NIA seeks custody

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
T'PURAM, 14 SEPTEMBER

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe team investigating the Trivandrum airport gold smuggling case has on Monday approached the court seeking custody of the accused Swapna Suresh, Sandeep Nair and others for further questioning.

The team has filed appli-

cation for this in the NIA special court in Kochi.

They sought the custody of the accused as the agency has to interrogate them in the light of digital evidences received on examining the laptops, mobile phones etc. Following the application of the agency, the court has directed to produce the accused in the court on Tues-day.

NDA nominee from JD-U Harivansh re-elected as RS deputy chairperson

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

The Monsoon Session of Rajya Sabha today commenced with the re-election of Janata Dal (U) member Harivansh as the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, and advice to members by Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu to have meaningful debates, as they met under the Covid crisis.

The whole House welcomed the re-election of Harivansh, although major Opposition had put up a common candidate, Prof Manoj Kumar Jha of the RJD, against him.

Modi said Harivansh had won the affection of all sections by the decisive style of his work. Modi said the last tenure of Harivansh had shown how hard he could work by presiding over discussions for hours and then getting the Bills passed through an equally long process. The RS had last year recorded the highest productivity in a decade. Modi said he was sure the House would cooperate with him. The PM said Harivansh was influenced by JP Narayan, and when he entered his Parliamentary career in 2014, he often reminded MPs about their responsibilities.

Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad congratulated Harivansh on his election and hoped he would do justice to all.

## Sushant probe: 7 drugs accused sent to NCB, judicial custody

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, 14 SEPTEMBER



Seven drug-peddlers nabbed by the Narcotics Control Bureau as part of its probe in the drug-angle in actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, were on Monday sent to the agency's or judicial custody for varying periods, officials said.

Drug peddler Anuj Keshwani, who was one of the earliest arrested by the NCB, has been sent to judicial custody till 23 September.

While Karamjeet Singh Anand, Dwayne Fernandes, and Ankush Anreja, all arrested in past couple of days, were sent to NCB custody till 16 September, three others - Sanket Patel, Sandeep Gupta and Aftab Fateh Ansari - also arrested in this period, have been sent to judicial custody till 23 September.

All the accused were pro-

duced before a Mumbai Court via video-conferencing this afternoon.

Keshwani was arrested after another drug peddler Kaizan Ibrahim revealed to the

NCB that he procured drugs from Keshwani for onward supplies to other clients.

Following further revelations made by Keshwani and others, the NCB had swooped

## Monthly allowance, other benefits for Brahmin priests: Mamata

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 14 SEPTEMBER



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today announced a monthly allowance of Rs 1,000 and free housing for around 8,000 poor Brahmin priests of the state.

"We had earlier provided land to the Sanatan Brahmin sect to set up an academy at Kolaghat. Many priests in this sect are financially weak. We have decided to help them by providing them with an allowance of Rs 1,000 per month and also free housing under the state government's Banglar Awas Yojana," Miss Banerjee said at a Press Conference in Nabanna.

Earlier, the Sanatan Brahmins had appealed to the CM for help and Miss Banerjee held meetings with the former. The decision which has come ahead of

the Assembly polls in 2021 will come into effect from next month.

She said that the state government helps all sections of the society and announced an advance pension for social services sector.

The state government has decided to digitize the 3,000 manuscripts in the Bishnupur Muse-

um, which speak of the languages and cultures of various ancient tribes. This apart, mapping of various ancient shrines or heritage structures of the state would be conducted by the government following which decision would be taken on which would be acquired or developed in private-public partnership.

Meerut: Covid spreading rapidly among health officials

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
MEERUT, 14 SEPTEMBER

Coronavirus has infected five senior medical officers at the office of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) which had led to the closure of the office for as many as four days for sanitization in past eight days.

Two assistant CMOs, a Deputy CMO and two medical officers have tested positive in the past eight days.

This has added to the concern as the CMO office is the epicentre of Covid related activities in the district. This will affect working for some days till they recover completely.

from the district and other concerned departments were present. However, there are places where laying of the pipelines to take the tap water is yet to start as well as work to set up treatment plant for the same are still incomplete.

"The finance department has given its nod to almost all districts administrations to carry out the project. But there are some places where we are facing varied problems. At all those places, officials and district magistrates have been instructed to take necessary steps to expedite work to complete it.

"The chief secretary has given strict instructions to quickly solve any land-related problems or other hindrances halting the progress of the project and proceed," he said.

## WB govt to provide tap water supply to 55L households by March next year: Official



The West Bengal government has set a target to provide 55 lakh households in the state with tap water supply by March next year, a senior official said on Monday.

He said the government has decided to provide tap water supply to at least 20,000 households daily under the 'Jal Swapno' scheme and work for the same will start from October.

Currently, under the scheme the state Public Health Engineering (PHE) department is connecting 2,000 households with tap water supply every day, he said. "The state PHE department has been given a target of connecting at least 55 lakh households with tap water supply by next March. For this, they

need to connect at least 20,000 households every day. The work for the same will begin from next month," the official said on Monday. The 'Jal Swapno' scheme was launched by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in July this year. The Rs 58,000 crore project is aimed at providing tap water connection to two crore households in the state within the next five-year period.

Over 3.5 lakh households have already been provided with tap water supply connection under the scheme since its launch in July this year.

The decision to expedite the process of taking tap water supply connections to more households in the state was taken at a video conference recently held by Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha where senior officials

2944/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

TENDER					
The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Chamba invited press tenders on behalf of Government of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work(s)					
Sr No	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Time Limit	Cost of tender form
1	Remodelling and Aug. of distribution system of various WSS under Luddu Uteep Baat & Baali in Tehsil & Distt. Chamba HP (SH:- Providing 195 Nos FHTC to house holds under census Village Kathanna Luddu Baali in GP Luddu & Belli).	417874/-	8357/-	Three Months	250/- 19.09.2020
2	Remodelling and Aug. of distribution system of various WSS under Luddu Uteep Baat & Baali in Tehsil & Distt. Chamba HP (SH:- Providing 188 Nos FHTC to house holds under census Village Mando & utip in GP Uteep).	402872/-	8057/-	Three Months	250/- 19.09.2020
3	Remodelling and Aug. of distribution system of various WSS under Luddu Uteep Baat & Baali in Tehsil & Distt. Chamba HP (SH:- Providing 221 Nos FHTC to house holds under census Village settal & Sundu in GP Baat).	473594/-	9472/-	Three Months	250/- 19.09.2020
4	Remodelling and Aug. of distribution system of various WSS under Luddu Uteep Baat & Baali in Tehsil & Distt. Chamba HP (SH:- Providing 159 Nos FHTC to house holds under census Village Gharmani Karian & Rundega in GP Belli & Karian).	340730/-	6815/-	Three Months	250/- 19.09.2020
5	Remodelling and Aug. of distribution system of various WSS under Luddu Uteep Baat & Baali in Tehsil & Distt. Chamba HP (SH:- Providing 130 Nos FHTC to house holds under census Village Aghar Benska Diggir & Jangal Jamwar in GP Utip).	278583/-	5572/-	Three Months	250/- 19.09.2020
6	Remodelling and Aug. of distribution system of various WSS under Luddu Uteep Baat & Baali in Tehsil & Distt. Chamba HP (SH:- Excavation laying jointing & testing of GI Pipe Node 1301 to 1302 (32mm dia) Node 1302 to 1303 & Node 2502 to 2503 (25 mm dia)).	395925/-	7919/-	Three Months	250/- 19.09.2020
7	Remodelling and Aug. of distribution system of various WSS under Luddu Uteep Baat & Baali in Tehsil & Distt. Chamba HP (SH:- Excavation laying jointing & testing of GI Pipe Node 1301 to 1302 (40 mm dia) Node 2500 to 2501 &amp				



Modi government said become 'aatmanirbhar' (self-sufficient) which means save your life yourself because the PM is busy with peacocks

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

TAKING A DIG AT PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI OVER RISE IN COVID-19 CASES

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2020

## THUMBNAILS



An artist dressed as Ravana stands outside a temple during a symbolic ritual for the annual Dussehra, in Allahabad on Monday.

AFP

**Shibu Soren, 14 others take oath as RS members:** Jharkhand Mukti Morcha chief Shibu Soren, DMK leader Tiruchi Siva and BJP's Syed Zafar Islam were among the 15 newly-elected members who took oath in the Rajya Sabha on Monday. PTI

**PM's birthday celebrations:** Gujarat BJP's 'Seva Saptah' to celebrate PM Narendra Modi turning 70 on 17 September began on Monday and will continue till Sunday. Each day of the 'service week' will have social initiatives, like help to 70 'divyangan' in 70 talukas, spectacles to 70 people in each block, distribution of fruits in Covid-19 facilities, plasma drives and blood donation camps. PTI

**IIT-JEE lauds students:** After announcement of the JEE-Mains result, IIT-JEE Punjab Bagh centre head Partha Halder applauds students, teachers as they dealt with the sudden shift to online classes due to Covid-19 pandemic in the country. "IIT-JEE began online classes from March 21. Our faculty faced challenges such as poor internet connectivity, shifting the entire curriculum online. The postponement exams also affected students, but still they did tremendously well in the exam," said Partha in a Press release statement. SNS

**Assam party:** A new regional political party was launched on Monday by student's organisations AASU and AJYCP. SNS

# Parl must send message to soldiers that nation stands behind them: PM

Modi's reference to border row with China in Ladakh that brave soldiers are defending borders with great courage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed confidence that Parliament will send out a unanimous and strong message that the country is unitedly standing behind its brave soldiers guarding India's borders, asserting that doing so is the legislature's "crucial responsibility".

In his remarks to media before the commencement of Parliament's monsoon session, Modi noted, in an apparent reference to the ongoing border row with China in Ladakh, that brave Indian soldiers are defending the borders with great courage and high spirits in difficult hilly terrains with snowfall expected in some time.

Referring to the issue, he said: "This Parliament, particularly in this session, has one more crucial responsibility... Just like the faith with which

they (soldiers) are standing, determined to protect the motherland, Parliament and all its members, too, will send out a message in a unanimous voice, spirit and resolve that the country stands in support of them."

Modi's call for lawmakers to send out a united message over the issue came amid expectations that Parliament may debate the tense border situation, with some Opposition leaders, especially from the Congress, sharply criticising the government's handling of the row with China.

Noting that Parliament is expected to take up many important discussions and decide on key issues, the PM

hoped MPs will do "value addition" to debates.

It is our experience that the more deep and diverse debate happens in Parliament, the more benefits it brings to the subject of discussion and the country, he added.

With the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to spread across the country, the Prime Minister observed that the session is taking place under special circumstances and asserted that MPs have chosen the path of duty.

"There is a corona pandemic on one hand while our obligation towards fulfilling our duties on the other; and all the MPs have chosen the path of duty. I congratulate and thank all the MPs for this initiative," he said.

He referred to the host of changes, including staggered timings of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha and the decision to run them on weekends too, brought to the running of this session due to the Covid-

19 crisis, and said MPs have welcomed them.

Everybody has to follow guidelines and precautions about which they have been informed, Modi said, adding, it is clear that there can be no

## India, China military talks soon

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

India and China are expected to hold another corps commander level meeting to discuss modalities for disengagement and de-escalation at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh where troops of the two countries have been locked in a bitter stand-off for over four-and-a-half months now.

Sources today said the two sides were in touch and the

meeting could be held later this week. The meeting would indicate whether the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was sincere to take the disengagement process forward, they added.

The corps commanders have held as many as five meetings between 5 June and 2 August but a breakthrough has eluded the two sides with Chinese troops reluctant to retreat from some of the friction points.

The meeting will be a follow-up to the talks held

last week between external affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Moscow at which they arrived at a five-point plan to resolve the face-off which has given a huge blow to the bilateral relationship.

The five-point plan, among other things, said the two foreign ministers agreed that border troops of both sides would continue their "dialogue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions."

While noting they will not get the opportunity to move around freely like before due to the coronavirus guidelines. "You will get every news. It is not a difficult task for you, but please take care of yourself."

## PRECARIOUSLY PERCHED



Men work on a hoarding board without proper safety gear, on Hill Cart Road in Siliguri on Monday.

PULAK KARMAKAR

## Govt tables 3 farm sector Bills, says MSP will stay; Oppon attack mode

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

The Centre on Monday introduced three Bills in the Lok Sabha on the farm sector, asserting they will help farmers get a remunerative price for their produce as well as private investments and technology.

Agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar introduced 'The Farmers' Produce Trade And Commerce (Promotion And Facilitation) Bill' and 'The Farmers' Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill', while minister of state for consumer affairs, food and public distribution Raosaheb Danve introduced 'The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill' to replace the ordinances promulgated by the government earlier.

Tomar said the proposed laws will enable barrier-free trade in agricultural produce, and also empower farmers to engage with investors of their choice. He said these steps are only the latest in a series of measures taken by the government as part of its continuous commitment to championing the cause of welfare of the farmers of India.

Tomar said almost 86 per cent of farmers have agricultural land of less than two hectares and they are often unable to benefit from minimum support price (MSPs).

He, however, assured the House that the MSP will stay.

The Congress and other parties have been opposing the legislations, alleging they will undermine the safety net provided to the farmers by the MSP system and will lead to their exploitation by

big companies.

Taking part in the debate, members of the Congress and the Trinamool Congress claimed the legislations will only benefit capitalists and accused the Centre of attacking the federal structure of the Constitution.

Tomar asked the Opposition members to study the content of the Bills before "running to oppose them".

Opposing the Bills, the leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said constitutional provisions are very clear that agriculture is a subject on the State List.

The Central government is not competent to make such a law, he asserted, adding, "This is a case of legislative overreach and a direct attack on the federal structure of the Constitution."

## Tribals form human chain to oppose eviction from SoU area

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
AHMEDABAD, 14 SEPTEMBER

A human chain by hundreds of tribal people with posters against the government's move to evict villagers from the vicinity of the Statute of Unity (SoU) site marked the UN Day of Rights of Indigenous People at Rajpipla on Sunday.

For the past several months, tribals from 14 villages near the Rs 2,950-crore Statue of Unity have been protesting against the forcible acquisition of their ancestral land

**Tribals from 14 villages near the Rs 2,950-crore Statue of Unity have been protesting against the forcible acquisition of their ancestral land**

made to contribute more land for the 182-metre statue of Sardar Patel due to their reverence for the 'Iron Man' who had integrated 562 princely States into the Indian Union. But, they are now reluctant to part with more patches of land for the benefit of private individuals wishing to set up hotels and other tourism facilities.

To overcome the legal hurdles in acquiring more land from the tribals, Gujarat government has legislated the Statute of Unity Area Development and Tourism Governance Act empowering itself to forcibly acquire land around SoU.

The tribals, organised under the banner of Adivasi Samanvay Manch, are demanding that this new piece of legislation to acquire their land forcibly be dropped.

## Recovery of US-made arms along Pak border in J&K, Punjab ring alarm bells for security forces

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 14 SEPTEMBER

Recovery of dumps of arms and ammunition on the Indian side along the international border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab and also the Line of Control (LoC) has come as an alarm signal for the security forces amid reports of ISI creating a strong nexus between Sikh and Kashmiri terrorist leaders hiding in Pakistan.

There were reports that Pakistan was planning to escalate terrorism in J&K and revive it in Punjab by creating a nexus between Sikh and Kashmiri militants in Pakistan.

There were reports that Ranjeet Singh alias Neeta, Pakistan-based chief of Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) enjoys considerable support of Kashmiri terrorists. Neeta, who belongs to Jammu, along with some ISI officials, played a major role in working out a nexus among various Sikh and Kashmiri terror groups.

Neeta, against whom cases were registered in Jammu, Punjab and Mumbai for fabricating bombs and exploding them in public places, had developed contacts for transporting arms.

The tribals, organised under the banner of Adivasi Samanvay Manch, are demanding that this new piece of legislation to acquire their land forcibly be dropped.



gence agency ISI.

Punjab had to seek help of J&K Police in 2015 to neutralise the terrorists during the attack in Dinanagar near Pathankot where the Punjab police personnel were seen engaged in the encounter without bulletproof jackets and firing with obsolete weapons. The day-long encounter culminated shortly before sunset only when the J&K Police joined the operation with its bulletproof mobile bunkers and sophisticated weapons.

What is worrying for security agencies was the recovery of US-made M4 assault rifles and Chinese grenades in the caches of arms and ammunition recovered in the two neighbouring states that share border with Pakistan.

AK-47 and AK-56 rifles were also recovered but smuggling of the US M-4 rifle was gradually increasing. The M-4 is considered an accurate rifle and was being used by the US Army, police said.

J&K DGP Dilbag Singh said a couple of attempts of terrorists to smuggle arms and ammunition to Kashmir from Punjab were recently foiled at Kathua and the Bar toll plaza near Nagrota. The NIA was probing these cases.

Regional discrimination will not be tolerated in J&K: L-G Sinha

SRINAGAR, 14 SEPTEMBER

Regional discrimination in administration will not be tolerated at any level in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha said here on Monday as he vowed to use technology to curb the menace of corruption.

He said the administration will use technology to weed out corruption from government offices.

"Where there is man (manual work), there is corruption. We will be using maximum technology for ensuring transparency in government," he added.

Sinha assured justice will be done for the families of the three youths from Rajouri who are believed to have been killed in an alleged fake encounter. "The Army has ordered its own inquiry and the administration is doing its own probe," he said.

"Where there is man (manual work), there is corruption. We will be using maximum technology for ensuring transparency in government," he added.

"We hope that before the 28th, 60 percent of our demands will be met, as from the 29th we are closing down essential services of the civic

## Darj civic workers go on hunger strike

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
DARJEELING, 14 SEPTEMBER

Continuing with their protest programmes for various demands, the TMC (Hills)-affiliated Darjeeling Nagarpalika Karmachari Sangathan (DNKS) today launched a relay hunger strike.

The workers of the Municipality have already held programmes like gate meetings and a pen-down strike for their various demands recently.

"This is another phase of our programmes for our demands. This relay hunger strike will continue till the 28th of this month and will have five people taking part in it, with another group replacing them after 24 hours," DNKS assistant secretary Pranay Sharma said.

"We hope that before the 28th, 60 percent of our demands will be met, as from the 29th we are closing down essential services of the civic

body also," he said, adding that it meant services like electricity, water distribution and garbage collection would be disrupted.

The different demands raised by the DNKS include payment of pending salary (38 days and 60 days) for the year 2017, implementation of pay band, along with increase in daily wages, and solution to died-in-harness cases.

Other demands are filling up of vacant posts of group B, C and D workers, with casual workers in the municipality to be regularised in it, starting of online system of Service Book and increase in the number of workers of the Municipality from 539.

The DNKS is also threatening a fast-unto-death if their demands are not met, while they are further planning to go to Kolkata to take up their issues with authorities concerned.

## WBP forms teams to tackle fake news menace

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOLKATA, 14 SEPTEMBER

The West Bengal Police has formed separate core groups of police officers with expertise in cybercrime detection to deal with the menace of circulation of "fake news", a senior official of the state home department said on Monday.

The core groups have been formed for each police unit, including the police districts, he said.

"The teams will be working 24X7 to address the problem. They will try to identify the origin of fake news and stop the spread of the misinformation. After that they will inform the force

about the source of the "fake news" and take action as per legal provisions," he said. The officers will be working in six police commissionerates, including Kolkata Police, 12 police districts and 16 district police divisions, he said.

Police personnel who are experts in cybercrime detection will be provided specialised training to sharpen their skills, the official said.

Two additional SI's, having knowledge in computer science, at each of the cyber crime units have been posted. CM Mamata Banerjee had last week directed police to take stringent measures on those spreading fake news on Durga Puja 'night curfews'.

## Politics begins over Raghuvansh's letters from ICU & death

MANOJ CHAURASIA  
PATNA, 14 SEPTEMBER

Hours after senior RJD leader Raghuvansh Prasad Singh died battling post-Covid complications at the AIIMS, Delhi, dirty politics has begun over his death and the letters believed to have been written by him just before his death.

Singh who remained associated with Lalu Prasad - who heads the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) - for over three decades not only resigned from the party but also sent many letters to chief minister Nitish



"How can a person admit

shortly before his death, the dead RJD leader had announced never to quit the party. RJD spokesperson Bhai Birendra, too, questioned the timing of the letters. According to him, all these letters were claimed to have been written on 10 September while he was admitted to the ICU after developing serious health complications and complaining of breathlessness. The very next day on Friday (11 September), he was put on ventilator support and he died less than 48 hours later. "No person admitted to the ICU can

write," Birendra said.

Speculations are rife that the former Union minister was made to change his mind under pressure from his elder son who is said to have quit his corporate job to take plunge in politics. Reports said he was in touch with the JD-U which promised to nominate him to the Upper House of the Bihar Assembly.

Even as the letter controversy continues, the NDA has blamed the Lalu Prasad family for the death of Singh. Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) chief Jitam Ram Man-

## Mayhem and peace

It has been a grim prologue to the swelling act of the Afghan theme. In parallel to the start of the peace talks ~ after 18 years ~ in Doha between the Afghan government and the Taliban, it was almost a rerun of the familiar script on Sunday. The mayhem perpetrated by the Taliban in as many as 18 provinces has brought the crucial talks under a cloud and at the threshold. The silver lining thus far is that the Taliban, as part of what it called a "goodwill gesture", has released 22 Afghan soldiers in Helmand province. The latest wave of attacks, contextualised with the release of soldiers, has made the Taliban come through as a bundle of contradictions. The striking feature of the current round in the capital of Qatar is the participation of the Afghan government, pre-eminently the presence of Abdullah Abdullah ~ the President in waiting ~ who is the Chairman of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation. Perhaps in the wake of the outrage in several provinces, representatives from several countries, notably the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, called on the Taliban to announce an immediate ceasefire before the negotiators assembled at the high table to find a way to end decades of civil war. The mood in the militant camp remains direly uncertain, most particularly after Sunday's offensive, and suggests that not all factions are on the same page. A 21-member Afghan team, headed by the former Intelligence chief, Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, is meeting the Taliban delegation to evolve a solution to the embattled country's prolonged civil war. The talks are part of the historic agreement signed between the US and the Taliban on 29 February, also in Doha. They were scheduled to be held ten days after the deal was signed, but kept getting postponed over the prickly issue ~ between the Afghan government and the Taliban ~ of the release of prisoners. The dispute was partially settled on Sunday with the release of 22 Afghan soldiers. The Afghan government, on its part, has claimed that it has freed all the 5000 Taliban inmates. Of course, many more have simply escaped from Afghan prison, the latest instance having been reported from Nangarhar province last month.

The current round in Qatar will hopefully be riveted towards achieving a significant reduction in violence and how to put in place a permanent ceasefire. Teams led by Taliban's political chief, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, and the chief representative of the government, Abdullah Abdullah, have already met the Emir of Qatar. The foreign minister of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, told the preliminary round that both parties must "rise above all form of division by reaching an agreement on the basis of no victor and no vanquished". Sunday's violence in parts of Afghanistan does not readily inspire optimism. The two sides will sit-to-face for the first time, and the world must live in hope.

## Dichotomy in Nepal

The festering tension in Nepal and the crisis in governance have been staved off with the Prime Minister, KP Sharma Oli, and his opponent, Pushma Kamal Dahal "Prachanda", agreeing to a power-sharing deal. This will, it is hoped, end the protracted dispute in the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (CPN), paving the way for effective governance in the Himalayan country. For now, the infighting and the clash of egos within has ended. Also to be welcomed is the CPN's resolve to resolve the border issue between India and Nepal through political and diplomatic channels. It has of late, exacerbated with Kathmandu's cartographic assault, specifically by incorporating three disputed strategically important Indian areas in the map of Nepal. In an effort to settle the quite obvious dichotomy in terms of governance, Prachanda will serve as executive chairman of the party with "full power" to handle party affairs. At another remove, Oli will focus on governance. Thus has a clear distinction been effected between governance and party affairs. The striking feature of the Oli-Prachanda agreement is that the party will be run on the basis of its established guidelines. That said, the government will be required to hold consultations with the party while deciding on issues of national importance. The party leadership will not interfere in the day-to-day affairs of the government, however. The party's Unity General Convention will be held in Kathmandu from April 7 to 12 next year. A meeting of the party's Central Working Committee has been scheduled for 31 October. It is pretty obvious that an attempt to streamline the equation between the party and government is now under way. Both leaders are now riveted to the core issues that led to the recent deadlock and the repeated postponement of Oli-Prachanda meetings. Of a piece with this anxiety is the unanimous endorsement of a 15-page proposal prepared by Oli and Prachanda. Above all, it aims at resolving the intra-party feud in the CPN. Given the bitter dispute, the mending of fences will be generally welcomed. The consensus proposal was prepared by the two on the basis of a report that was submitted by a party panel that was formed to resolve the intra-party bickering. The dispute, it bears recall, had surfaced after the dissident group leaders, notably Prachanda and Madhav Kumar Nepal, had demanded Oli's resignation from both the posts of party chairman and Prime Minister. The crisis had deepened after Oli had accused the dissident leaders of conspiring against him to topple his government. More basically, the dissidents have not concurred with the redrawing of Nepal's map, a development that has alienated Oli's government in its dealings with India. The contrived enlargement of the map had been termed as "untenable" by India. The inner-party squabble had placed Nepal in crisis, and the actions of China's hyper-active ambassador in Kathmandu had served to stir up the pot.

Surprisingly, most Urdu dailies had news of his death on the front page with some editorials and lengthy obits. Perhaps it was due to Agnivesh's consistent opposition to BJP's brand of Hindutva. A brahmin from Andhra, Agnivesh was a vocal Arya Samaj whose influence spread from Punjab-Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to other parts of the Hindi heart-

# Agricultural Revolution?

The basic problem of Indian agriculture is that of excess production and wrong crop mix that depresses the price of farm produce. Yet, the Government bans exports of an agricultural commodity whenever prices of that commodity rise but does precious little if prices touch rock-bottom



The fall of 23.9 per cent in our first quarter GDP has confirmed the worst fears of naysayers while optimists who believed in a V-shaped recovery and were seeing green shoots all around have gone silent. To be fair, we had our hands full, what with the coronavirus pandemic showing no signs of receding and China no intention of backing down. But, clearly, the time has come for the Government to pull out all stops to arrest the downward slide of the economy.

Uptight suggestions have been made on the ways to get out of the pandemic-induced economic distress. However, the emphasis of most proposals is on resuscitating the manufacturing sector which is down by 39.3 per cent and given the fall in demand, cannot easily come back to its earlier levels. Others have suggested massive Government expenditure on infrastructure. However, infrastructure projects, particularly by the Government, take an eternity to plan and execute while the problems faced by the economy require immediate redress.

Seemingly, no one has given a thought as to how agriculture can help in our economic recovery; although agriculture was the only part of the economy to withstand the vagaries of the virus scourge, growing by 3.9 per cent in the first quarter. Additionally, the demand for agricultural implements like tractors, and agricultural inputs like fertilisers kept the cash registers of many manufacturing concerns ringing. Clearly, a 'Grow in India' initiative can supplement the 'Make in India' initiative of the Government.

The economic stimulus of Rs.20 lakh crore, announced by the Prime Minister in May 2020, had a substantial package of Rs.4.30 lakh crore for farmers, out of which Rs 3.80 lakh crore were in the form of credit and guarantees while Rs.50,000 crore were in the form of Government spending. Elucidating the stimulus package, the Finance Minister promised Rs 2 lakh crore of concessional credit to 2.5 crore farmers and Rs 30,000 crore additional loans for small and marginal farmers. An Agricultural Infrastructure Fund of Rs.1 lakh crore was mooted; Food Micro Enterprises got Rs 10,000 crore, fisheries got Rs 20,000 crore, animal husbandry infrastructure got Rs 15,000 crore, herbal cultivation got Rs 4,000 crores and bee-keeping and vegetable cultivation got Rs 500 crore each. Sincerely implemented, investments of this magnitude can transform Indian

agriculture. However, even four months after announcement, the schemes on which the stimulus package for agriculture is to be spent, have not been fleshed out.

It was hoped that the Agricultural Infrastructure Fund (AIF) for building post-harvest storage and processing facilities, would be created out of a grant by the Centre but later developments indicate that Public Sector Banks would provide Rs 1 lakh crore as loans under AIF over the next four years and the Centre would only provide 3 per cent subsidy on the interest as also a credit guarantee. The budgetary implication for the Central Government is less than Rs 5,000 crore, spread over four years.

Some legislative reforms have also been enacted for the benefit of farmers. The Essential Commodities Act has been amended to remove

the existing restrictions on stocking food produce. Then, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020 (FPTC Ordinance) ends the monopoly of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs) and allows free purchase and sale of agricultural produce. Another ordinance, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, 2020 (FAPAFS Ordinance) legalises contract farming.

The amendments to the Essential Commodities Act have been well received but the FPTC and FAPAFS ordinances are being opposed tooth and nail by States and farmers' bodies who apprehend that the FPTC Ordinance would make APMCs defunct, leaving farmers at the mercy of big traders and corporates. Similarly, it appears that the FAPAFS Ordinance would facilitate the entry of corporates in farming, leading to huge mechanized farms, thereby threatening the livelihood of agricultural labourers and small farmers. Farmers also fear that cash-rich companies may force them to enter into disadvantageous leasing contracts. Additionally, non-BJP States feel that agriculture being in the State List, the Central ordinances have intruded on their legislative domain.

Leaving aside controversies, much more has to be done to make agriculture an engine of growth. We are witnessing a cruel

paradox of widespread hunger amongst plenty; the Global Hunger Report ranked India at 102 out of 117 countries, indicating an extensive prevalence of hunger, at a time when the stock of foodgrain in our Central Pool was 741.41 lakh tons consisting of 275.81 lakh tons of rice and 465.60 lakh tons of wheat (Source: Government of India, Press Release dated 2 July 2019).

The annual requirement of foodgrain under the National Food Security Act and Other Welfare Schemes is about 610 Lakh Metric Tons ~ much less than what is held by the Government in its godowns. Therefore, after making sufficient provision for domestic consumption, and developing an efficient strategy for distribution of foodgrain to the poor, we can export the remainder of our food stock.

The Green Revolution and subsequent improvements in agricultural practices have made us self-sufficient in foodgrain. The basic problem of Indian agriculture is that of excess production and wrong crop mix that depresses the price of farm produce. Yet, the Government bans exports of an agricultural commodity whenever prices of that commodity

rise but does precious little if prices touch rock-bottom through overproduction or manipulation by traders. Consequently, farming has become a subsistence occupation.

Large-scale export of foodgrains is not an idle thought; it is eminently feasible and has the potential of rejuvenating the agricultural sector. We can counter China's loan diplomacy with our food diplomacy. Most of our neighbours and African countries, that have become Chinese clients, are perpetually short of foodgrain which we can provide at a low cost or in exchange for their products.

Much has been said and written about global supply chains of industrial products but little thought has been given to establishing supply chain of agricultural commodities to the world at large. Significantly, our export of agricultural products increased from Rs 20,735 crore to Rs 25,553 crore i.e. by 23 per cent in the first quarter of this year while aggregate commodity exports declined by 36.71 per cent to Rs 3.89 lakh crore.

Factoring in the storage cost and wastage, the break-even cost

of foodgrain exports would be quite low. Additionally, a well thought out strategy of exporting niche products like exclusive mango varieties, exotic vegetables, livestock and processed food would realise great value for farmers. But, sufficient investment would be required to develop state of art cold chains, processing facilities and transport infrastructure.

The generous stimulus measures can be made effective only by proper implementation. The earlier implementation record of the Government does not inspire confidence; out of an allocation of Rs 3.34 lakh crore in Budget 2019 for agriculture and allied activities, only Rs 2.35 lakh crore could be spent. Seen in this perspective, Rs 1 lakh crore of the stimuli appears to be a budgetary shortfall; made-up in the current package.

As a long-term policy, the Government can aim to improve the competitiveness of the farm and forestry sector through support for restructuring, development and innovation. Another initiative could be the improvement of the environment and the countryside which would effectively counter climate change. Another priority could be of improving the quality of life in rural areas and promoting diversification of economic activity.

In the short term, policies may be designed to tackle the most common problems faced by farmers like soil erosion, soil depletion and proliferation of parasitical plants like watercress (*jal kumbhi*) and parthenium hysterophorus (congress grass). Compulsory composting of city waste would reduce pollution and provide low-cost manure to farmers, replacing costly fertilisers. The contemplated investment in infrastructure could be made in rural and semi-urban areas; establishing schools, building village roads and irrigation facilities. Unfortunately, the Government has its sights fixed only on industry and big business. Till the Government revises its policies to make agriculture rewarding for farmers, no substantial improvement in the agricultural sector is possible.

The plight of the farmer in an industrial society was nicely summed up by US President John F Kennedy: "The farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything at retail, sells everything at wholesale, and pays the freight both ways."

Untold benefits would flow to our country and economy if the agricultural sector, which engages almost half of our manpower, is rejuvenated and the lot of the farmers is improved.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

Get empowered,  
register to vote

**M**acy Dubs thinks, correctly, that colleges and universities should put up programs and courses to teach young people the importance of engagement "not just online but also on-ground" ~ for example, in the process of voting, and voting well.

Speaking at a recent forum held to mark International Youth Day, the social media influencer sounded a "clarion call" for the move, citing the urgency of young people learning about such fundamentals as "what it is to be a public servant." "O, gusto n'yo ba akong kumanta?" he said, mimicking candidates for public office doing the song-and-dance that passes for campaigning in these parts, as much in urban as in rural settings.

The need for voter education is quite pressing, especially calling to mind the motley group of lawmakers that made the cut in the 2019 midterm elections, including, among others, the dictator Ferdinand Marcos' eldest child, the former chief implementer of the government's bloody war on drugs, and a former city mayor and ranking government official who liked to employ sexy dancers in political gatherings.

And also the actor who made it back to the Senate despite being charged with amassing P224.5 million in kickbacks on his pork barrel while in office, in cahoots with businesswoman Janet Lim Napoles and his chief of staff

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**  
Richard Cambe, Fresh from acquittal by the Sandiganbayan on criminal liability but, apparently, on the "preponderance of evidence" principle, ordered to return P124.5 million to the public coffers, Bong Revilla danced on the stump with his trademark "budots" and, incredibly, elicited enough votes to return to the chamber. To think he is still in the dock for 16 counts of graft, for which he had to post bail. To think his chief of staff got it in the neck, so to speak, and is now languishing in the national penitentiary.

It cannot be overstated that young people have a crucial role in building this nation which is nearing a population of 110 million as we speak. In their energetic hands lie possibilities for seizing the moment and making things right in the 2022 elections.

Far from a mechanical task, or hopefully not one made under duress or the dictates of pelf, voting is an act of will and of choice, a means to make one's voice heard ~ now more than ever, when a crisis in public life continues to rage.

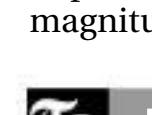
Voting will be a way for young people to have "a direct hand in the way policy is changed in our country," said the musician Frankie Pangilinan, speaking at the same forum moderated by the human rights lawyer Chel Diokno.

Her point challenges the dominant top-down system in which decisions purportedly for the public good are issued from on high without benefit of consultations with the common folk or their true representatives.

"Every single vote does count," Pangilinan said, perhaps seeking to wrench young people like herself from a fashionable ennui ~ "read up on candidates' credentials," she said, "feel empowered" ~ and also evincing a refreshing optimism.

## PERSONAL

**THANK** You St. Jude for hearing my prayer. — D.S.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Vocal activist

**SIR,** Swami Agnivesh will be greatly missed. The social crusader in saffron was a part-time politician who did not get his due even in death, as most English language newspapers did not carry his obituary.

Surprisingly, most Urdu dailies had news of his death on the front page with some editorials and lengthy obits. Perhaps it was due to Agnivesh's consistent opposition to BJP's brand of Hindutva.

A brahmin from Andhra, Agnivesh was a vocal Arya Samaji whose influence spread from Punjab-Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to other parts of the Hindi heart-

land. Agnivesh had given up a career as a professor in Calcutta to be a full time social activist. His mission was to resist the RSS at all levels.

Yours, etc., Shovonlal Chakraborty  
Kolkata, 13 September.

**QUALITY OF WORK**  
**SIR,** The article, 'Innovation

the key to pandemic



recovery' by Raja Murthy (10 September) assumes great relevance in modern times. The importance of honesty for innovation and quality work emphasized in this article should resonate in every Indian ear. Most rightly he has written that corruption and quality work cannot coexist.

This reminds me of my late grandmother (Late Malina Roy) who used to say that to create a society of good human beings we require good parenting.

The focus of parents should primarily be towards integrity of character and inculcating good values in the child.

Many a time in contemporary society we find the focus remaining on successful performance in competitive examinations and getting admission into premier institutions. Development of character is secondary.

The power of the uncorrupted human mind is tremendous and creative optimism is the need of the hour. The example of Sayagi U Ba Khin expressed in this article is inspiring to note.

Yours, etc., Souparna, Kolkata, 10 September.

## HOUNDED

**SIR,** It seems that the ancient Greek story-teller Aesop's fable, *The Wolf and the Lamb* (at the stream) is being re-enacted two and half a millennia later to frame certain

celebrities from the Mumbai film world ~ Rhea Chakraborty and Kangana Ranaut, for instance. The former was sought to be implicated in the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, for which she was grilled for more than twenty-five hours. Then she was arrested in a drug-related case.

Though Ranaut's fall from grace has its origin in intolerance to her criticism of law and order in a city reputed to have bred characters like Dawood Ibrahim and Chhota Rajan, she too might face the music when she would be hounded with drug-related charges. Let us hope she is not demolished like part of her building.

Yours, etc. B. Mondal, Kolkata, 13 September.

## SCAM IN TAMIL NADU

**SIR,** This is with reference to your editorial, 'PM Kisan Scam' (13 September). We can't imagine the extent of corruption in a state like Tamil Nadu where it is reported that about 5.5 lakh ineligible people have enrolled themselves as beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Scheme. It is strange that they have drawn Rs. 110 crore when many genuine farmers were debarred from their legitimate demands. It is also strange that such corruption has been resorted to by Government employees who do not own land. The process of beneficiary registration should have been more rigid.

There is no safeguard against misuse of Aadhaar details of people preserved in internet centres. If this is the state of affairs, how can people be sure that their Aadhaar details would not be stolen? The Union government should be very cautious when implementing any scheme of this kind.

Yours, etc., Dilip Kumar Dutta, Midnapore, 14 September.

HARSHA KAKAR

**A**fter India occupied dominating features along the Line of Actual Control, China resorted to intense propaganda warfare, threatening India with war. The levels of propaganda kept rising with each passing day. The Global Times, accused India of initiating firing and said on 8 September, "the Indian army outrageously fired warning shots at Chinese border defence patrol personnel who were attempting to negotiate, which is a serious military provocation and very vile in nature."

Colonel Zhang Shuili, spokesman for the Western Theatre Command of the PLA stated, "We request the Indian side to immediately stop dangerous actions, immediately withdraw cross-line personnel, strictly restrain front-line troops, and strictly investigate and punish personnel who fired shots." This Chinese statement was released at 3 am, China time, displaying it was a desperate move and fake.

The Indian army refuted Chinese claims, stating, "In the instant case, it was China's PLA troops who were attempting to close-in with one of our forward positions along the LAC and when dissuaded by own troops, PLA troops fired a few rounds in the air in an attempt to intimidate own troops." The game of claims and counter claims has just begun. Since India's offensive actions, CCP controlled Chinese media has been on an overdrive warning India of dire consequences.

Most Chinese media compared the current scenario with 1962. The Global Times stated on 8 September, "China claimed victory in the 1962 war, which should be a lesson for India. Moreover, the military capability of the PLA is not what it used to be decades ago. Now, the PLA is a modern one with information capability, systematic combat capability and joint combat capability." Another article on the same day stated, "the PLA does not fire the first shot, but if the Indian army fires the first shot at the PLA, the consequence must be the annihilation of the Indian army on the spot. If Indian troops dare to escalate the conflict, more Indian troops will be wiped out."

These comments appeared on social media seeking to influence the Indian public, opposition politicians and peaceniks, hoping for pressure on the government to scale back and withdraw from locations which have placed Chinese positions under threat. Currently, the only option open to China is launching assaults leading to high cost of Chinese lives. There are many aspects which

## A battle on China's hands



Chinese media will never mention as it would prove their propaganda fake. In 1962, Indian forces, lacking ammunition, winter clothing, artillery and air support, fought in isolated posts till the last man and last round, causing such high casualties that the Chinese were shocked and in cases had no resources to push operations ahead. These shortcomings no longer exist.

China will never mention the September 1967 Nathu La and Cho La clashes, where it suffered heavy casualties and was forced to withdraw in defeat. Nor will they declare their high casualties at Galwan, despite internal pressure, which would be embarrassing. Nor will China mention the valour and experience of Indian forces assaulting dizzying heights of Kargil and Siachen successfully.

Another fact which the CCP-controlled Chinese media will hide is that Chinese Han soldiers are at a major disadvantage in Ladakh. Sixty per cent of the Chinese army consists of conscripts recruited for a limited tenure from rural China. They join to gain benefits in future employment, not

for fighting wars. These soldiers can never survive the winters of Tibet and Ladakh. Historically, the PLA sends Chinese soldiers back to mainland China from November to April every year, leaving only locally recruited Border Defence Regiments and militia to patrol the LAC.

Expecting Han Chinese soldiers to stay back and survive winters, challenging a hardened Indian army, for whom such tenures are routine is almost impossible. It is for this reason that China is not desirous of dragging the current standoff into the winter. India, on the other hand is in no rush to end the standoff, unless it concludes on its own terms. It has already begun preparing for a long haul.

Another factor is that in 1962, the PLA could accept casualties, as the nation was still to push through the one-child norm, which commenced in 1979. Nor were there multiple media networks where casualty figures were demanded. The scenario is vastly different today. Each Chinese soldier, if a bachelor, has six adults, parents and grandparents, who have

pampered him and would be devastated by his loss. If married, dependents only increase. Hence, China cannot accept body bags in the manner they did in the 1960s. Despite all technology and high-end weapons, common to both sides, ultimately their soldiers would need to assault Indian defences. Further, China last fought a war with Vietnam in 1979, where it was forced to withdraw in shame.

Expecting soft, inexperienced and family-dependent troops to assault a voluntary army, comprising of battle hardened, trained soldiers is asking for the moon. Releasing Kargil and Siachen videos, as part of counter-propaganda warfare, would make the Chinese realise what the current Indian army is made of. Chinese propaganda videos of exercise firing would pale in comparison to the accurate Indian firing during the Kargil war against the heights occupied by Pakistani troops.

The major problem in the ongoing propaganda game is that global social media sites are banned in

China and their own are difficult to penetrate. Obtaining a gateway into these sites and pushing forth Indian forces' capability could impact morale of Chinese public and forces, which are currently being fed one-sided inputs. This avenue must be explored and exploited.

Within India, many are influenced by writings in Chinese state-controlled media, which project topics determined by their CCP. On the other hand, India has no formal organisation to counter propaganda projected by the Chinese. Unless this is done, Indians would never realise the truth and continue being influenced.

The Indian army, which has encountered Chinese soldiers through the years is aware of the soft Chinese soldier and hence is prepared to maintain its presence in difficult terrain through winters. The army also knows its capabilities and ability of its forces to withstand Chinese assaults.

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.

## The fissures in West Asia



ZARRAR KHUHRO

**W**hen the UAE-Israel deal was announced, the two Middle Eastern countries that most vociferously condemned it were Turkey and Iran. While Iran's position is consistent with its policies, and informed by the already intense tension between it and the Arab states and Israel, Turkey's anger at the UAE requires closer analysis, as it is a factor of the growing, and relatively under-reported regional rivalry between Turkey and the UAE.

This may seem like an odd match-up but increasingly, this rivalry is becoming a defining feature of Middle Eastern politics and beyond. It isn't

exactly a recent phenomenon either, and is tied to the competing visions the two countries have for the region. For the UAE, any hint of democracy in the Middle East is anathema as, in their view, it will first propel the Muslim Brotherhood into power and — even if it doesn't — will weaken the autocratic hold of the Gulf monarchies.

Turkey, despite the authoritarian leanings and nationalist policies of President Erdogan, remains a democracy and at least ideologically has a degree of sympathy for the Muslim Brotherhood. And so, in the 2000s we saw that while Ankara warmed to the Brotherhood and allied causes, the UAE conducted purges against the movement's members and suspected

sympathisers, removing them from positions in the state and educational institutions. This culminated in a major crackdown on the MB by the UAE in late 2011 and in 2014, the MB was declared a terrorist organisation.

But before this had come the 'Arab Spring', which sent the Gulf monarchies into panic mode as they saw an existential threat to their rule emerge. Turkey, on the other hand, saw it as something of a godsend and acted accordingly, extending moral support to the protesters.

When elections took place in Egypt and Mohamed Morsi took power, it seemed for a moment that things were going Turkey's way. It didn't last, of course, and the reaction of

the two countries to the Sisi coup was predictable: Turkey condemned it and the UAE welcomed it, shoring up the new regime with large amounts of cash and diplomatic support.

In the aftermath of the attempted coup in Turkey in 2016, suspicions grew in Ankara that the UAE — which showed thinly veiled delight at the coup — had in fact supported the putschists. Along with hints from Erdogan himself, Turkish media ran with stories alleging that the UAE had spent as much as \$3 billion in the effort which it said was in line with the kingdom's support for reactionary elements in Egypt and Sudan.

It has only gotten worse since then, and today we see the UAE and Turkey confront each other in a variety of theatres as the former tries to stymie Turkish plans at every opportunity. Take Syria: Ankara is bitterly opposed to the Assad regime and supported not only the initial anti-government protests but later also the rebel movements against Assad. In contrast, the UAE was more sympathetic to the Assad regime and has allegedly funded the Kurdish PKK — considered a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the US and the EU — in an apparent effort to strengthen it against Turkey.

Along with offering words of support for the largely Kurdish YPG, the UAE also labelled the Turkish 2019 offensive across the Syrian border (aimed at curtailing the activities of the YPG) as "a threat to peace", sparking another diplomatic war of words. Significantly, Turkey sided with Qatar when its relations with Saudi Arabia and the UAE soured, sending relief

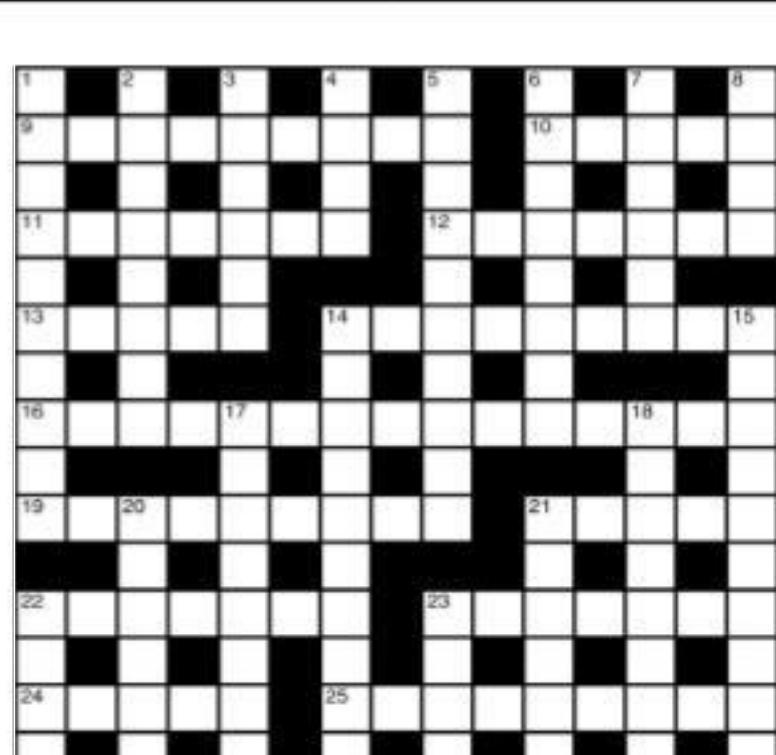
goods and stationing 5,000 Turkish troops in the beleaguered state.

The latest theatre of this expanding conflict is Libya, where the UAE has opened its considerable coffers in support of Khalifa Haftar, the heavily medalled general whose Lebanese National Army's months-long offensive on Tripoli recently ended in defeat despite all-out support by the Gulf states, Egypt and France. According to a UN report, the UAE conducted dozens of secret flights to Haftar-controlled airbases supplying him with cutting-edge weapons. Here we see Turkey again on the opposite side, supporting the UN-recognised Government of National Accord.

It's not just about 'flipping' countries into your camp to act as ideological allies, because for Turkey a friendly Libya offers further ingress into the Mediterranean. And if Turkey wants something, you can bet the UAE will try to prevent it, and so in the latest tensions between Turkey and Greece in the eastern Mediterranean we see the UAE predictably throwing its full support to Greece, even sending four F-16s to Crete for joint training with the Greek military. The stakes are high for Turkey here, as it drills for much-needed gas and energy supplies but faces increasing opposition from European powers, notably France, aiming to curtail its interests and expand their own, making them ready allies for the UAE. Turkey, on the other hand, has fewer regional allies and will have to modulate its strategic policy very carefully in the coming decade.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28074



### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

D	L	S	S	T
T	O	I	E	S
R	A	E	U	A
K	E	E	N	T
S	T	R	O	E
S	T	R	E	B
E	E	O	A	I
E	D	A	M	T
A	M	M	A	D
R	O	T	A	T
T	O	A	T	O
P	I	N	E	N
I	N	S	E	T
N	W	E	J	L
T	E	R	A	G
R	A	G	R	A
T	U	B	E	D
D	P	E	S	A

### ACROSS

- 9 Old cross an idiot forged getting rusty? (9)
- 10 Garment, one carried by old king on way back (5)
- 11 Fuel drenching a fellow sailor's jacket (7)
- 12 Clothing torn when straddling object (7)
- 13 That Scottish G string? (5)
- 14 Agents shield Philby, their leader revealing the most (9)
- 16 Hammered axe in New Forest or river (3,5,3,4)
- 19 One round nicks European after gunmen run riot (5,4)
- 21 At heart, Just William is sturdy stuff (5)
- 22 Time goes in for prince in cat

### COSTUME (7)

- 23 Tin contains soft odd Scottish pouch (7)
- 24 Brilliant band seen in odd places during trip abroad (5)
- 25 It's a relic, strangely lifelike (9)

### DOWN

- 1 Rival business last to charm small Parisian men (10)
- 2 Long to possess a strong yellow protective garment (8)
- 3 Garment Arab transported by air (6)
- 4 A regular feature of tattoo left in gear (4)
- 5 Peacekeepers restless about sport producing no results (10)
- 6 Southern tourist's solvent (8)
- 7 Was it put on by queen to house

### OLD FLAME? (6)

- 8 Caledonian boozers tours clubs (4)
- 14 South American writes about the German underwear (10)
- 15 Jumper that's taken in for protection? (10)
- 17 Headgear needed to run nonstop across Hawaii (5,3)
- 18 It's grand in Dubai for one to move abroad (8)
- 20 Boris gets confused about a line on chart, ... (6)
- 21 ... one of two left over in cheques originally (6)
- 22 Remove top of instrument to find another one (4)
- 23 Revolutionary rainproof clothing racket (4)

100 YEARS AGO

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

Mr. Chamberlain's latest statement in Parliament shows that, despite the widespread unpopularity of the Excess Profits Tax, he adheres to his intention to retain it for the current financial year and to retain it at the enhanced rate of sixty per cent. The one concession he is prepared to make to his critics is the now definite promise that the objectionable tax shall not exceed forty per cent in 1921-22. Mr. Chamberlain repeats his laudable assertion that the essential of the moment is the restoration of the country's credit. He still fails to perceive, however, that a more effective method of restoring credit than that which he proposes would be the reduction of the bloated national credits for the year by the amount which he hopes to derive from the objectionable tax. An heroic effort to save 300 million sterling from the waste of the public departments, while at the same time diverting to industrial uses the millions which he proposes to appropriate from industrial profits, would have met with universal approval. It is not, as Mr. Chamberlain appears to suppose, his efforts to re-establish the national credit which are unpopular, but the crude methods by which he endeavours to effect that end.

NEWS ITEMS

### RAILWAY WORKMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Under the auspices of the Railway Workmen's Association a meeting was held in the E.I. Railway, European Institute at Asansol, at which about 60 Europeans attended. Mr. Jones, the president of the Association, was in the chair. In the course of a lengthy speech he said the question was whether the Railway workmen were going to be represented in the Imperial Council of His Excellency the Viceroy of India by a Capitalist, a Democrat, or an Autocrat. A suggestion had been put forward whether the Railway workmen of the respective Railways should be represented in the Provincial Councils of the different provinces, or whether they should have a representative on the Imperial Legislative Council of India. The speaker urged the early establishment of a Conciliation Board through the Government of India.

### BRITISH EMPIRE FORESTRY

The British Empire Forestry Conference Committee considered the responsibility of the State for forest policy. The subject was introduced by Mr. Clutterbuck, Chief Conservator, United Provinces, India. In the afternoon the English delegate opened a discussion upon the forest authority, and the result of the discussions was an unanimous recognition that forests should be administered, as a trust for the community at large, by the Government, and that this trust imposed the responsibility for constituting an authority adequately organised and financed. The discussion covered the problems whereby the forest authority could deal with the commercial problems of the utilisation of timber.

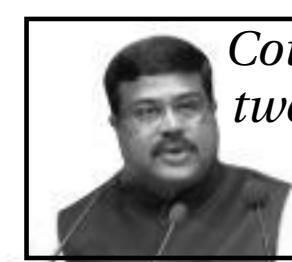
### PROPOSED AERIAL SURVEY OF CALCUTTA

A suggestion has been put forward by Mr. Helme, Chief Surveyor to the Calcutta Improvement Trust, that if provided with a series of aerial photographs he could produce a photographic map of Calcutta which, with the assistance of the Survey of India Office, could be reduced or enlarged to any scale by the photo-litho process. Such a map would be of special value to the Trust in that it would show at a glance the nature of the land whether densely or sparsely built over and whether water logged or not. It would be of much assistance for the selection of sites for open spaces, development schemes, reclamation schemes, brickfields, etc. It would also be an indisputable record of buildings, trees, tanks, etc., actually existing on a certain date.

### EXCESS PROFITS

Replying in the Commons to a motion by Mr. Terrell in favour of reduction of the Excess Profits Tax from sixty to forty per cent, Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that Britain had not suffered from the financial troubles experienced by the United States and Japan. He had been pleased to note the check in the spirit of uncontrolled expansion of speculation prevalent earlier in the year. He was anxious to find an alternative for the Excess Profits duty, pending which he could not abandon the tax. The tax was only a temporary one. He agreed that trade required certainty regarding the future. The Government had never contemplated that the sixty per cent levy would continue beyond the current year, and it would not exceed forty per cent next.

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)



Country's oil import bill declines by two-thirds on fall in international prices

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN  
PETROLEUM MINISTER

## THUMBNAILS

**Onions export ban:** The government on Monday banned the export of all varieties of onions with immediate effect, a move aimed at increasing availability and checking price of the commodity in the domestic market. "The export of all varieties of onions... is prohibited with immediate effect," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

PTI

**Central Bank rate cut:** Central Bank of India has reduced its marginal cost of funds-based lending rates by 5 basis points across all tenors, effective from Tuesday. The lender has cut the one-year MCLR to 7.10 per cent from 7.15 per cent, a release said. Overnight and one-month MCLRs have been reduced to 6.55 per cent from 6.60 per cent earlier.

PTI

**PepsiCo initiative:** As part of its efforts to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, PepsiCo India on Monday announced its commitment to provide hygiene kits to the farmer community in Howrah district of West Bengal. Hygiene kits being distributed include both masks and sanitisers - both being essential in the fight against Covid-19, said a Press release.

SNS

## FM seeks nod for additional spending of ₹2.35 lakh crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman today sought the Parliament's nod for additional spending of Rs 2.35 lakh crore, which includes cash outgo of Rs 1.66 lakh crore, primarily to meet expenses for combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

Of the total cash outgo, Rs 40,000 crore has been sought towards enhanced expenditure under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, Rs 20,000 crore towards capital infusion in public sector banks and Rs 33,771.48 crore for direct benefit transfer under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and National Social Assistance Programme. As part of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, Rs 33,771.48 crore has been transferred to beneficiaries of both women Jan Dhan account holders and old age pension holders.

"For providing grants-in-aid general for direct benefit transfer to Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan

# Economy to contract 9% in financial year 2020-21: S&P

Rising Covid-19 cases would keep private spending and investment lower for longer, it says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

**S**&P Global Ratings today slashed its FY21 growth forecast for India to (-) 9 per cent, from (-) 5 per cent estimated earlier, saying that rising Covid-19 cases would keep private spending and investment lower for longer.

"One factor holding back private economic activity is the continued escalation of the Covid-19," S&P Global Ratings Asia-Pacific economist Vishruth Rana said.

Rising Covid-19 cases in India will keep private spending and investment lower for longer. S&P Global Ratings now expects the country's economy to contract by 9 per cent in the current fiscal year, which ends on 31 March 2021, the US-based rating agency said in a statement.

For 2021-22 fiscal, it expects economic growth at 10 per cent.

S&P had earlier forecast India's economic contraction at 5 per cent.

It said risks to the growth out-

## SEVERAL FORECASTS



» Last week, two other global rating agencies Moody's and Fitch projected Indian economy to contract 11.5 per cent and 10.5 per cent, respectively, in the current fiscal.

» Goldman Sachs, however,

look include a weaker recovery in informal sectors of the economy and deeper economic losses for micro and small enterprises.

"In addition, if credit quality worsens materially following the expiration of loan moratoriums, the recovery will slow.

One factor that presents potential upside to growth is the availability of a widely-distributed Covid vaccine earlier than our current estimate around mid-2021," S&P added.

It said the 23.9 per cent contraction in the April-June quarter was larger than expect-

ed. "While India eased lockdowns in June, we believe the pandemic will continue to restrain economic activity. New cases per day in India averaged nearly 90,000 in the weekend ending 11 September, according to data from the World Health Organization.

"This is up from an average of about 70,000 per day in August. As long as the virus spread remains uncontrolled, consumers will be cautious in going out and spending and firms will be under strain," S&P said.

Last week, two other global rating agencies Moody's and Fitch projected Indian economy to contract 11.5 per cent and 10.5 per cent, respectively, in the current fiscal. However, Goldman Sachs has estimated the contraction at 14.8 per cent for fiscal 2020-21.

» Domestic agencies India Ratings and Research projected contraction at 11.8 per cent, while Crisil estimated contraction at 9 per cent.

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This will constrain the central bank from cutting policy rates further, it said.

S&P said India's high deficits limit the scope for fiscal stimulus and the targeted fiscal stimulus measures announced so far amount to about 1.2 per cent of GDP.

"This magnitude is lower compared with global averages. The International Monetary Fund estimates that on average comparable stimulus measures across global emerging markets have been about 3.1 percent of GDP," S&P added.

Domestic agencies India Ratings and Research projected contraction at 11.8 per cent, while Crisil estimated contraction at 9 per cent.

S&P said even as industrial activity is recovering faster than services, high frequency indicators suggest that output

# Govt seeks Parliament nod for ₹20,000 crore capital infusion in PSBs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

banks (PSBs) to boost credit for a strong impetus to the economy.

However, the government refrained from committing any capital in the Budget for financial year 2020-21 for the PSBs, hoping that the lenders will raise funds from the market depending on the requirements.

In the last financial year, Punjab National Bank got Rs 16,091 crore, Union Bank of India received Rs 11,768 crore while Canara Bank and Indian Bank got Rs 6,571 crore and Rs 2,534 crore, respectively.

Allahabad Bank received Rs 2,153 crore, United Bank of India got 1,666 crore and Andhra Bank received Rs 200 crore. These three lenders have been merged with various PSBs.

Besides, Bank of Baroda got a capital infusion of Rs 7,000 crore, Indian Overseas Bank received Rs 4,360 crore and UCO Bank got Rs 2,142 crore. Punjab & Sind Bank received Rs 787 crore and Central Bank of India got Rs 3,353 crore.

## WPI inflation at 5-mth high, retail inflation softens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPTEMBER

ministry said in a statement today.

Inflation in food articles during August stood at 3.84 per cent, led by vegetables and pulses at 7.03 per cent and 9.86 per cent, respectively; while in egg, meat and fish it was 6.23 per cent. The rate of rise in potato prices was high at 82.93 per cent, while in onion it was (-) 34.48 per cent. Fuel and power inflation fell 9.68 per cent in August, as against 9.84 per cent in the previous month. Manufactured products, however, witnessed hardening of inflation at 1.27 per cent in August against 0.51 per cent in July.

The wholesale price index-based (WPI) inflation had remained negative for four months ~ April (-) 1.57 per cent, May (-) 3.37 per cent, June (-) 1.81 per cent and July (-) 0.58 per cent ~ as coronavirus-induced lockdown hurt economic activity.

WPI inflation in March was 0.42 per cent.

The annual rate of inflation, based on monthly WPI, stood at (0.16 per cent) (provisional) for the month of August, 2020 (over August, 2019) as compared to 1.17 per cent during the corresponding month of the previous year," the commerce and industry

ministry said in a statement today.

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The core WPI moved decisively into a YoY inflation in August 2020, after having recorded a disinflation for 12 consecutive months, although the upmove partly reflected the low base. Going forward, we expect core inflation to harden somewhat to an average 1.5 per cent in second half of FY2021," Nayak said.

Looking ahead, the WPI may move in and out of disinflation in the next few months, partly driven by base effects as well as volatility in commodity and food prices. We expect the WPI to record an average disinflation of 0.5 per cent for FY2021, Nayak said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its policy review last month kept interest rates unchanged and said it sees an upside risk to inflation. The

apex bank projected retention of inflation to moderate in October-March period.

Meanwhile, retail inflation softened slightly to 6.69 per cent in August, even as food prices continued to rule high, official data showed today.

The government has revised downwards the retail inflation for July to 6.73 per cent from the earlier estimate of 6.93 per cent. Food inflation during the month stood at 9.62 per cent. Food inflation in August fell marginally to 9.05 per cent, according to the consumer price index (CPI) data.

The retail inflation, mainly taken into account by the RBI to arrive at its policy decisions, has been above the regulator's comfort level.

The government has mandated the central bank to restrict the inflation at 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent).

## MSME ministry tells corporates to clear dues of small units on priority

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, 14 SEPTEMBER

industry numbers.

The MSME ministry said it has "directly taken up the issue with top 500 corporate groups of the country". Emails have been sent to the owners, chief executives regarding pending payments of MSMEs, while "conveying solidarity during these difficult times." Many of the MSMEs are doing business with big corporate groups but are not receiving payments, according to the Union ministry statement today.

The total dues to MSMEs are estimated to be approximately Rs 5.5 lakh crore as of 31 March 2020, including dues owed to them by governmental departments.

To tackle the situation, the ministry has informed corporates that these payments are "very important for MSME operations, sustenance of jobs and other economic activities at the grass-root level". This will ultimately benefit the entire economy, including the corporate world.

## PUBLIC SECTOR ROUNDUP

### NFL achieves 16 pc growth



NFL has recorded total fertilizer sale of 23.81 Lakh MT in April-August'20 showing a growth of 16% compared to previous best of 20.57 Lakh MT recorded during same period in 2019-20.

On production front too, the company has surpassed the production targets by producing 16.11 Lakh MT urea in first five months of 2020-21, higher by 13% compared to 14.26 LMT produced during the same period in 2019-20. In the last few years, the Company has transformed from a

single product to multi-product company by adding DAP, MoP, SSP & Complex fertilizers, Bentonite Sulphur, Seeds, new strains of Bio-fertilizers and Agro-chemicals in its product line. The Company, at present, operates five urea plants located at Nangal / Bathinda, in Punjab, Panipat, Haryana and two Plants at Vijaipur in the Guna district of Madhya Pradesh besides having Bio-fertilizers plant in Vijaipur and Bentonite Sulphur plant in Panipat.

### Community management of acute malnutrition programme

If acute malnutrition is identified in the early stages the treatment can be provided at the community level itself and medical complications in the children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) can be averted, argues a recent report by UNICEF. "Only an estimated 10-15% of children with SAM are medically complicated and require in-patient treatment. Evidence shows that the remainder (85-90% of children with SAM) can be treated at the community level", states the report.

Releasing outcome of

### Pradhan inaugurates 56 CNG stations across 13 states and one UT

#### Daily CNG filling capacity to go up by over 50,000 vehicles



Gas Resource Ltd, GAIL (India) Ltd, Godavari Gas Ltd.,

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd., HP-Oil Gas Pvt. Ltd., Indian Oil Adani Gas Pvt. Ltd., Indraprastha Gas Ltd., Maharashtra Gas Ltd., Sabarmati Gas Ltd., Think Gas Bhopal Pvt. Ltd., Think Gas Ludhiana Pvt. Ltd. and Vadodara Gas Ltd.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that in the last 6 years, the number

of CNG stations has gone up from 947 to over 2300. He said that India is moving towards becoming a gas-based economy and the government is committed to provide infrastructure to facilitate this.

Pradhan said that the Government with the spirit of

Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas has worked to usher in a blue flame revolution in the country. The Minister also appealed to the entrepreneurs to take advantage of policy reforms, compete and bring in innovation in fuel marketing which will be beneficial for the consumers.

### Raigarh Pugalur transmission topower Western to Southern region

PowerGrid commissions Pole-1 of the Raigarh Pugalur HVDC transmission system comprising 1500 Mega Watt (MW) +800 kilovolt (kV), Raigarh HVDC Terminal Station (Chhattisgarh) & Pugalur HVDC Terminal Station (Tamil Nadu) along with 1765 kms long ±800 kV HVDC line from Raigarh to Pugalur and 2 nos. of HVAC lines in Tamil Nadu.

This system will facilitate power flow of 1500 MW from Western Region to Southern Region ensuring reliable and quality power supply. PowerGrid has completed this gigantic system despite many challenges and lockdown

restrictions encountered during COVID19 pandemic due to its professional expertise and project management capabilities.

The pole-I having a 1500 MW capacity, is the first leg of the 6000 MW Raigarh – Pugalur HVDC Project, between Western and Southern Region, which is envisaged for evacuation of bulk power generated by Independent Power Producers (IPPs) in the state of Chhattisgarh using the State-of-the-Art HVDC technology.

Implementation of balance portion of this project is in advanced stage and will be integrated in a phased manner during FY 2020-21.

SCOPE addresses mental health in international webinar

Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) organised its international webinar in association with Famhealth on 'Covid pandemic and its impact on mental health'. The webinar was addressed by Professor Stefano Pallanti, Stanford University, USA; Dr Ranjana Verma, Maryland, USA; Atul Sobti, DG, SCOPE; Dr Amitabh Saha, Max Hospitals, India and Dr Anjali Nagpal, CMD, Serenity Clinic, India. Over 1200 participants including senior officials of PSEs attended the webinar through SCOPE's various platforms. Sobti in his address said that SCOPE, as the apex organi-



*Myanmar is our friendly country and therefore, Bangladesh signed 3 instruments with Myanmar for repatriation.*

BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINISTER AK MOMEN  
ON THE COUNTRY'S ROHINGYAS' REPATRIATION PROCESS

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2020

09

## Yoshihide Suga wins party vote for Japan prime minister

Suga received 377 votes in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's internal elections

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO, 14 SEPTEMBER

**Y**oshihide Suga was elected as the new head of Japan's ruling party on Monday, virtually guaranteeing him parliamentary election as the country's next prime minister.

Suga received 377 votes in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) election to pick a successor to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who announced last month that he would resign due to health problems.

The other two contenders received a combined 157 votes. former Foreign minister Fumio Kishida got 89 and former Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba had 68.

The expected victory in the party vote by Suga, cur-



Yoshihide Suga speaks during a press conference at the LDP headquarters in Tokyo on Monday. ■ AFP

rently the chief Cabinet secretary of Abe's government, all but guarantees his election in a parliamentary vote Wednesday because of the majority held by the Liberal Democrats' ruling coalition.

Suga gained the support of party heavyweights and their

wing members early in the campaign on expectations that he would continue Abe's policies. That his victory appeared to be a done deal has raised criticism from inside and outside the party that the process is undemocratic and murky.

The closed-door politics also apparently led lawmakers to support Suga in hopes of getting favourable party and Cabinet posts in the new administration.

Suga has said his top priorities are fighting the coronavirus and turning around an economy battered by the pandemic. He repeatedly has noted achievements under the Abe-led government when asked about various policies.

Despite his low-key image as Abe's right-hand man, Suga is actually known for his iron-fist approach to getting jobs done as a policy coordinator and influencing bureaucrats by using the centralized power of the prime minister's office.

Suga says he is a reformist and that he has worked to achieve policies by breaking territorial barriers of bureau-

cacy. He has credited himself for those efforts in achieving a booming foreign tourism industry in Japan, lowering cellphone bills and bolstering agricultural exports.

Compared to his political skills at home, Suga has hardly travelled overseas, and his diplomatic skills are unknown, though he is largely expected to pursue Abe's priorities.

In addition to the coronavirus and the economic fallout, Suga stands to inherit several other challenges, including China, which continues its assertive actions in the East China Sea.

He also will have to decide what to do with the Tokyo Olympics, which were pushed back to next summer due to the coronavirus. And he will have to establish a good relationship with whoever wins the US presidential race.

### HOT MEALS



Volunteers prepare food for Muslim devotees during the local southern Thai celebrations for Ashura next to Yakaniyah mosque in Narathiwat on Monday. ■ AFP

US ambassador to China to step down next month

BEIJING, 14 SEPTEMBER

The US ambassador to China will step down early next month, ending a three-year tenure marked by a trade war and increasingly bitter relations between the world's two largest economies.

Terry Branstad, appointed by President Donald Trump in 2017, confirmed his decision in a phone call with Trump last week, the US Embassy said in a statement on Monday. It did not give a reason for his departure.

"I am proudest of our work in getting the phase one trade deal and delivering tangible results for our communities back home," he was quoted as saying at an embassy staff meeting on Monday. Word of his departure leaked out earlier in the day when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo thanked Branstad on Twitter for his service. Ambassador Branstad has contributed to rebalancing US-China relations so that it is results-oriented, reciprocal, and fair, Pompeo wrote in a follow-up tweet.

China's foreign ministry said before the embassy announcement that it was aware of Pompeo's tweet but had not received any notification that Branstad was leaving. Branstad became embroiled in a recent controversy when China's official People's Daily newspaper rejected an opinion column that he had written. AP

## Belarus leader visits Russia to secure support amid protests against extension of his 26-year rule

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW, 14 SEPTEMBER

Belarus' authoritarian president visited Russia on Monday in a bid to secure more loans and political support, as demonstrations against the extension of his 26-year rule entered their sixth week.

Alexander Lukashenko's talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Black Sea resort of Sochi come a day after an estimated 150,000 people flooded the streets of the Belarusian capital, demanding Lukashenko's resignation.

The Interior Ministry said 774 people were arrested in Minsk and other cities of Belarus for holding unsanctioned rallies on Sunday.

Protesters in Belarus have dismissed Lukashenko's reelection for a sixth term in the August 9 vote as rigged. The United States and the European Union have criticized the election as neither free nor fair and urged the Belarusian leader to engage in talks with the opposition, a demand he rejected.

In a bid to win Moscow's support, the 66-year-old former state farm director has tried to cast the protests as an effort by the West to isolate Russia, which sees the neighbour as a key bulwark against NATO and a major conduit for energy exports to Europe.

Russia and Belarus have a union treaty envisaging close

political, economic and military ties, but they have often engaged in acrimonious disputes. Before the election, Lukashenko repeatedly accused the Kremlin of pressuring Belarus to abandon its independence.

But with the United States and the European Union criticizing the election and readying a package of sanctions, Lukashenko now has to rely squarely on Russia's support.

Despite frictions in the past, the Kremlin abhors the prospect of public protests forcing the resignation of the nation's leader, fearing it could embolden Putin's critics at home. Putin quickly congratulated Lukashenko on his re-election and promised

to send Russian police to Belarus if protests there turn violent, noting that there is no need for that yet. Moscow has also signalled it's ready to discuss the restructuring of Belarus' USD 1 billion debt to Russia, a key issue in Monday's talks between Putin and Lukashenko.

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the main opposition challenger who moved to Lithuania a day after the vote under pressure from the authorities, warned Putin that any agreements he may reach with Lukashenko will not stand.

"I'm very sorry that you have opted to have a dialogue with the dictator and not the Belarusian people," she said Monday.

## Failure to resolve Rohingya issue will cause radicalism & terrorism: B'desh foreign min

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DHAKA, 14 SEPTEMBER

Myanmar should immediately engage non-military civilian observers from friendly countries, including India, to make the Rohingya repatriation process effective,

Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Momen has said, warning that the failure in resolving the humanitarian problem would lead to radicalism and terrorism that would hamper peace and stability in the

region.

"They also agreed to create a conducive environment for their voluntary repatriation and they agreed to ensure safety and security of the displaced people."

"But unfortunately, till today, none went back and instead of creating a conducive environment, fighting and shelling is ongoing in the Rakhine state," he added.

According to the United Nations, more than 9,00,000 Rohingya Muslims fled Myanmar's restive Rakhine State since 2017 after large-scale violence following a military crackdown.

The exodus of refugees in large numbers has resulted in a major crisis in neighbouring Bangladesh.

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## Fires raise fight over climate change before Trump's visit

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BEAVERCREEK, 14 SEPTEMBER

US to global warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas.

The Democratic governors say the fires are a consequence of climate change, while the Trump administration has blamed poor forest management for the flames that have raced through the region and made the air in places like Portland, Oregon, Seattle and San Francisco some of the worst in the world.

Trump is headed to McClellan Park, a former air base just outside Sacramento, California, White House spokesman Judd Deere said. California Gov. Gavin Newsom's office said he would be meeting with Trump. The governors have been

blunt: Washington Gov. Jay Inslee on Sunday called climate change a blowtorch over our states in the West."

It is maddening right now that when we have this cosmic challenge to our communities, with the entire West Coast of the United States on

fire, to have a president to deny that these are not just wildfires, these are climate fires, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Sunday on ABC's This Week.

As Newsom toured a ghost-like landscape destroyed by flames Friday, he called out the ideological BS of those who

deny the danger. The debate is over around climate change. Just come to the state of California, observe it with your own eyes, he said.

He noted that just in the last month, California had its hottest August, with world-record-setting heat in Death Valley. It had 14,000 dry lightning strikes that set off hundreds of fires, some that combined into creating five of the 10 largest fires in the state's recorded history. And it had back-to-back heat waves.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said about 500,000 acres typically burn each year, but just in the past week, flames have swallowed over a million acres,

pointing to long-term drought and recent wild weather swings in the state. This is truly the bellwether for climate change on the West Coast," she said Sunday on CBS' Face the Nation."

And this is a wake-up call for all of us that we have got to do everything in our power to tackle climate change."

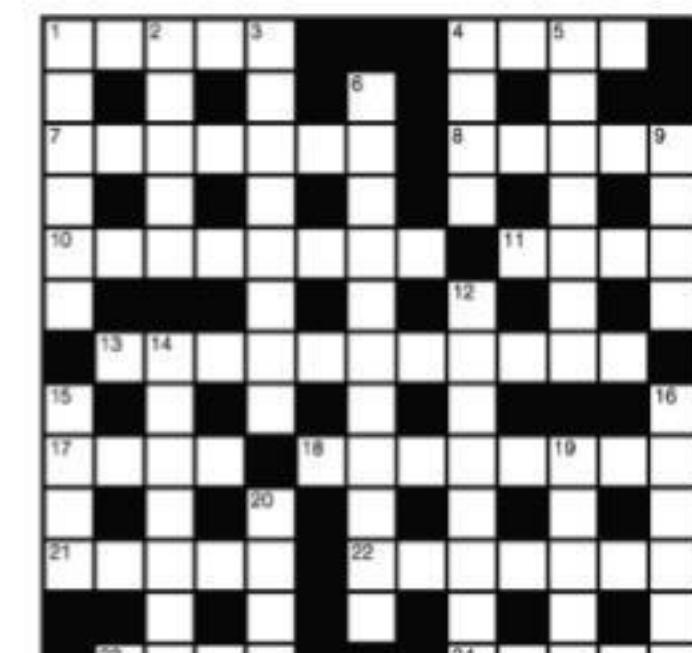
At a rally in Nevada, Trump blamed the way states have run the land, saying it is about forest management.

White House adviser Peter Navarro echoed that Sunday on CNN's State of the Union, saying that for many years in California, particularly because of budget cutbacks, there was no inclination to manage our forests. Forest management, which includes tree thinning and brush clearing, is costly, labor-intensive work that is effective in reducing fuel for wildfires. Millions of dollars are spent on such reduction efforts every year in Western states though many argue more needs to be done. The efforts can also be undercut when homeowners in rural areas don't undertake similar efforts on their own properties.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti accused Trump of perpetuating a lie that only forest management can curtail the massive fires seen in recent years.

### LEISURE

#### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**

- Sea duck (5)
- Untruths (4)
- Fragrance (7)
- Wedding attendant (5)
- Excited uncertainty (8)
- Border (4)
- Waste (7,4)
- Engrossed (4)
- Demanding person (8)
- Crockery item (5)
- Brilliant (7)
- Unwanted plant (4)
- Root vegetable (5)

**DOWN**

- Reveal (6)
- Pub game (5)
- Gambling game (8)
- Oaf (4)
- Spiny anteater (7)
- Viewpoint (11)
- Tall grass stalk (4)
- Branch of mathematics (8)
- Put back (7)
- Enfold (4)
- Squirm (6)
- Rental contract (5)
- Vendetta (4)

**SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**

- Average (11)
- Myopia, Chasten, Flash, Rehabilitate, Steely, Shut. (16)
- Emanate, Ennity, Avert, Phrasch, Academy, Skip, Sweat, Detachment, (18)
- Resistance, 14 Phrasch, 15 Ennity, 17 Avert, 18 Skip, 19 Academy, 20 Steely, 21 Shut. (20)

Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

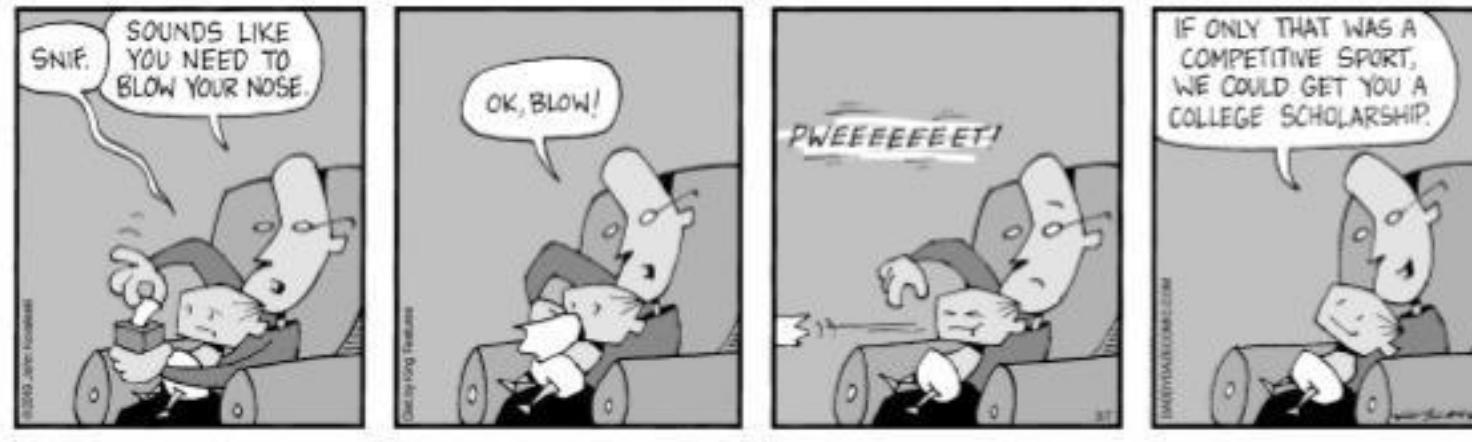
#### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



#### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



#### DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



#### NEED TO KNOW

##### HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

22586262, 22585007

##### RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

238605626, 23867842

##### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- Bara Roadways 18001803833, 180018038338, Reservation 13513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 41528181

25656421/25656431 Reservation 3466262 (City)

25652294 (Airport)

• Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

##### SCRABBLE BRAND



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You have to do your part. You have to commit yourselves to the rules of caution to protect your health and the health of the people you love

ITALIAN PREMIER GIUSEPPE CONTE

ON THE COUNTRY'S SCHOOLS REOPENING AFTER MORE THAN SIX MONTHS

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	29	25 R
HONG KONG	29	26 R
TOKYO	27	21 H
LONDON	30	17 H
DUBAI	42	28 S
SAN FRANCISCO	21	16 H
NEW YORK	22	14 S
MOSCOW	17	6 H

S=sunny, CL= clear, H=hazy, R=rainy...

## THUMBNAILS



People cycle beneath a mural of Architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh with an added mask in Glasgow City Centre on Monday. AFP

**TikTok picks Oracle as US tech partner:** Oracle said Monday that the Chinese owner of TikTok has picked the U.S. company to be its "trusted technology provider," beating out rival Microsoft in a deal that could help keep the popular video-sharing app running in the US. AFP

**Italy Ex-Premier recovers from Covid-19:** Former Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi, who has made a career out of bouncing back from setbacks, was released Monday from the hospital after an insidious bout of COVID-19 that he said was the most dangerous challenge he had ever faced. AFP

**Anti-lockdown protests:** Australian police arrested 74 people and fined another 176 for flouting coronavirus restrictions during anti-lockdown protests in Melbourne on Monday. Victoria is the worst virus-hit state with nearly 20,000 cases and 729 deaths. PTI

## Report: Israeli strike kills 10 Iran-backed gunmen in Syria

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIRUT, 14 SEPTEMBER

A suspected Israeli airstrike on Iran-backed fighters in eastern Syria on Monday killed 10 fighters, including eight Iraqis, a Syrian opposition war monitor reported.

Israel rarely comments on such reports, but is believed to have carried out scores of raids targeting Iran's military presence in Syria in recent years.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the airstrike hit an area close to the town of Boukamal near the Iraqi border. It added that the strikes also destroyed arms depots and ambulances were seen rushing to the area. The Observatory said the 10 killed were eight Iraqis and two Syrians. It said the strike is the third this month in Syria's eastern province of Deir el-Zour that

## Touting 'peace' where there was never war

US president to host a signing ceremony between Israelis and Arabs at the White House, billing it as an "historic breakthrough"

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM, 14 SEPTEMBER

For the first time in more than a quarter-century, a US president will host a signing ceremony between Israelis and Arabs at the White House, billing it as an "historic breakthrough" in a region long known for its stubborn conflicts.

But while the optics of Tuesday's event will evoke the groundbreaking agreements that ended decades of war between Israel and neighbouring Egypt and Jordan, and that launched the peace process with the Palestinians, the reality is quite different.

The United Arab Emirates will establish diplomatic relations with Israel, a fellow US ally it has never gone to war with, formalising ties that go back several years. The agreement cements an informal alliance against Iran and could pave the way for the UAE to



acquire advanced US weapons, while leaving the far more contentious Israeli-Palestinian conflict as intractable as ever.

That hasn't stopped President Donald Trump from referring to the UAE deal, which was announced last month, as heralding a previously unthinkable regional transformation.

A similar agreement announced Friday with Bahrain, which welcomed a visiting Israeli Cabinet minister as early as 1994, also for-

malises longstanding ties. The agreement with Bahrain has raised the possibility that Saudi Arabia the ultimate prize in Israel's normalisation drive could follow suit.

Bahrain's Sunni monarchy is closely allied with Saudi Arabia, which helped quash a popular uprising among the island nation's Shiite majority in 2011. Saudi Arabia has quietly acquiesced to the UAE deal, opening its airspace to commercial flights between Israel and the Emi-

rates. But it's debatable whether agreements like these, among already friendly countries, do much to advance regional peace. The region's main conflict pits Israel and the Gulf Arab countries against Iran and its proxies. In the long term, many believe the biggest threat to Israel's survival as a Jewish-majority and democratic state is the conflict with the Palestinians, who may soon outnumber Jews in the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

The Trump administration hopes that as more Arab countries normalise ties with Israel, it will pressure the Palestinians to return to peace negotiations, which ground to a halt more than a decade ago.

Over the last three years, Trump has cut off aid to the Palestinians, recognised contested Jerusalem as Israel's capital, dropped the longstanding US opposition to Israeli settlements and released a Mideast plan that over-

whelmingly favours Israel.

The breakdown of the long-standing Arab consensus that recognition only be granted in return for territorial concessions has meanwhile left the Palestinians arguably more weak, isolated and demoralised than at any point in their history. But rather than cowing Palestinian leaders into submission, those moves have only made them more defiant.

President Mahmoud Abbas officially cut all ties to Israel and the US in May and said the Palestinians would no longer be bound by any past agreements.

The Palestinians have rejected the UAE and Bahrain deals as a betrayal of their cause and insist no other country has the right to negotiate on their behalf. Normalisation of states in the region with Israel will not change the essence of this conflict, which is the systemic denial of the Palestinian people's inalienable right to freedom and sovereignty.

said Hanan Ashrawi, a senior Palestinian official.

Daniel Shapiro, who served as US Ambassador to Israel during the Obama administration, said normalisation is a positive step that could potentially improve the prospects for peace. If it's used effectively it can be a basis for a renewed effort to generate momentum for two states," said Shapiro, who is now a visiting fellow at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies.

"But it has to be led by US administration that is committed to a two-state solution, and that's very different from the Trump plan.

Aaron David Miller, a veteran American peace negotiator, said anyone hoping to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "would not have behaved the way this administration has behaved for the last four years. I don't think this is going to make it any easier or in real time bring us any closer to serious negotiations,

but I would have argued that before the UAE-Israel deal," said Miller, who is now at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

While Trump's approach has pushed the Palestinians into a corner, it has also vindicated Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's long-standing belief that his country can secure its future and avoid international isolation without making any concessions to the Palestinians.

For more than three decades, the Palestinians have sought an independent state in east Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war with Arab states.

Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but imposed a blockade after militant group Hamas seized power two years later. The Trump plan would allow Israel to annex up to 30 per cent of the occupied West Bank, including all of its flourishing Jewish settlements.

## Foreign labs confirm Navalny poisoned with Novichok



The file photo taken on 23 August, 2019 shows Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny leaving the detention centre in Moscow after serving 30 days in jail. Navalny's condition is improving and he is able to get out of bed for brief periods, the German hospital treating him said on Monday. AFP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERLIN, 14 SEPTEMBER

Specialist labs in France and Sweden have confirmed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was poisoned with the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok, the German government said Monday.

A German military laboratory previously confirmed the substance in his samples. German government spokesman Steffen Seibert said that the Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has also received samples and is taking steps to have those tested at its reference laboratories.

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

He said Germany had asked France and Sweden for an independent review of the German findings using new samples from Navalny.

Navalny, the most visible opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin, was flown to Germany two days after falling ill on August 20 on a domestic flight in Russia. Berlin has demanded an update on his condition.

that Russia investigate the case.

Seibert on Monday renewed Germany's demand that Russia explain itself on the matter. He added that we are in close consultation with our European partners on further steps.

The Kremlin has bristled at calls from Chancellor Angela Merkel and other world leaders for Russia to answer questions in the case, denying any official involvement and accusing the West of trying to smear Moscow.

Russian authorities have prodded Germany to share the evidence that led it to conclude without doubt that Navalny was poisoned with a military nerve agent from the Novichok group, the same class of Soviet-era agent that British authorities said was used on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury, England, in 2018.

Berlin has rejected suggestions from Moscow that it is dragging its heels.

Navalny was kept in an induced coma for more than a week as he was treated with an antidote, before hospital officials said a week ago that his condition had improved enough for him to be brought out of it. It isn't clear when Berlin's Charite hospital will next issue an update on his condition.

## GREEN WARRIORS



A group of Parisian citizens, on their own initiative, use strong magnets at the end of ropes to fish out a bicycle, one of the many metal objects dumped into the canal waters along the Canal de l'Ourcq, in Paris. AFP

## Covid-19: WHO says tough time ahead for Europe

AGENCE-FRANCE-PRESSE

COPENHAGEN, 14 SEPTEMBER

The World Health Organisation (WHO) expects Europe to see a rise in the daily number of Covid-19 deaths in October and November, the head of the body's European branch said on Monday.

Cases in Europe have risen sharply in recent weeks, especially in Spain and France. More than 51,000 new cases were reported on Friday alone in the 55 countries monitored by WHO Europe, which is more than the highest peak in April, according to the organisation. "It's going to get tougher. In October, November, we are going to see more mortality," WHO Europe director Hans Kluge said. Even though the continent is experiencing a surge of cases, the number of deaths has remained relatively stable. But the resurgence is



expected to lead to an increase in daily fatalities, the WHO said. "It's a moment where countries don't want to hear this bad news, and I understand," Dr Kluge told AFP in an interview, stressing that he wanted to send the "positive message" that the pandemic "is going to finish, at one moment or another". The WHO Europe's 55 member states are holding an online meeting on Monday and Tuesday to discuss their response to the new coronavirus and agree on their overall five-year strategy. However Dr Kluge said,

based in Copenhagen, raised a warning finger to those who believe that the development of a vaccine will bring an end to the pandemic. "I hear the whole time, 'The vaccine is going to be the end of the pandemic.' Of course not," the Belgian said. "We don't even know if the vaccine is going to help all population groups. We are getting some signs now that it will help for one group and not for the other," he said. "And then if we have to order different vaccines, what a logistical nightmare!"

"The end of the pandemic is the moment that we as a community are going to learn how to live with this pandemic. And it depends on us and that's a very positive message," Dr Kluge warned of approaches becoming overly politicised and said it was important that the response be based on epidemiological and public health data.

He also defended authorities that have been hesitant to impose and ease measures in recent months as they are faced with a new disease. "WHO has been blamed a number of times but communicating on something you don't really know is very very difficult," Dr Kluge said. "For some you go too far," he said. As per Dr Kluge, as research progresses, knowledge of the virus remains imperfect, meaning that decisions must be made

with an incomplete picture. "In a number of countries we see that the politics overrule the scientists and also in a number of other countries we see that people are doubting the science, that's very dangerous," Dr Kluge said.

In nations covered by WHO Europe, the number of daily deaths has remained at around the same level since early June, with around 400-500 deaths per day linked to Covid-19. Despite the worrying trend, the response now should not be the same as those adopted in the winter and early spring. "In February we were targeting society... now we are targeting the virus," Dr Kluge said, adding that measures could now be imposed on a more local level. "If we have a good surveillance system we should be able to control it locally and then in a couple of weeks, relax again," Dr Kluge said.

## Millions return to school in Italy after more than 6 months of closure due to Covid-19

AGENCE-FRANCE-PRESSE

ROME, 14 SEPTEMBER

Millions of Italian children returned to the classroom on Monday (Sept 14) as most schools reopened more than six months after they were closed to curb the coronavirus pandemic.

Although some Italian schools opened earlier this month, roughly 5.6 million students from a total of eight million went back to school on Monday, confronting a new reality of restrictions.

Italy was one of the first in Europe to be hit by the pandemic, which has now officially killed over 35,500 people out of a total of 280,000 cases.

Premier Giuseppe Conte admitted on Sunday that Italian schools faced a difficult situation, including a lack of teachers, single-seat benches and surgical masks. "There will be difficulties and inconveniences, especially in the beginning," Mr Conte wrote on Facebook.

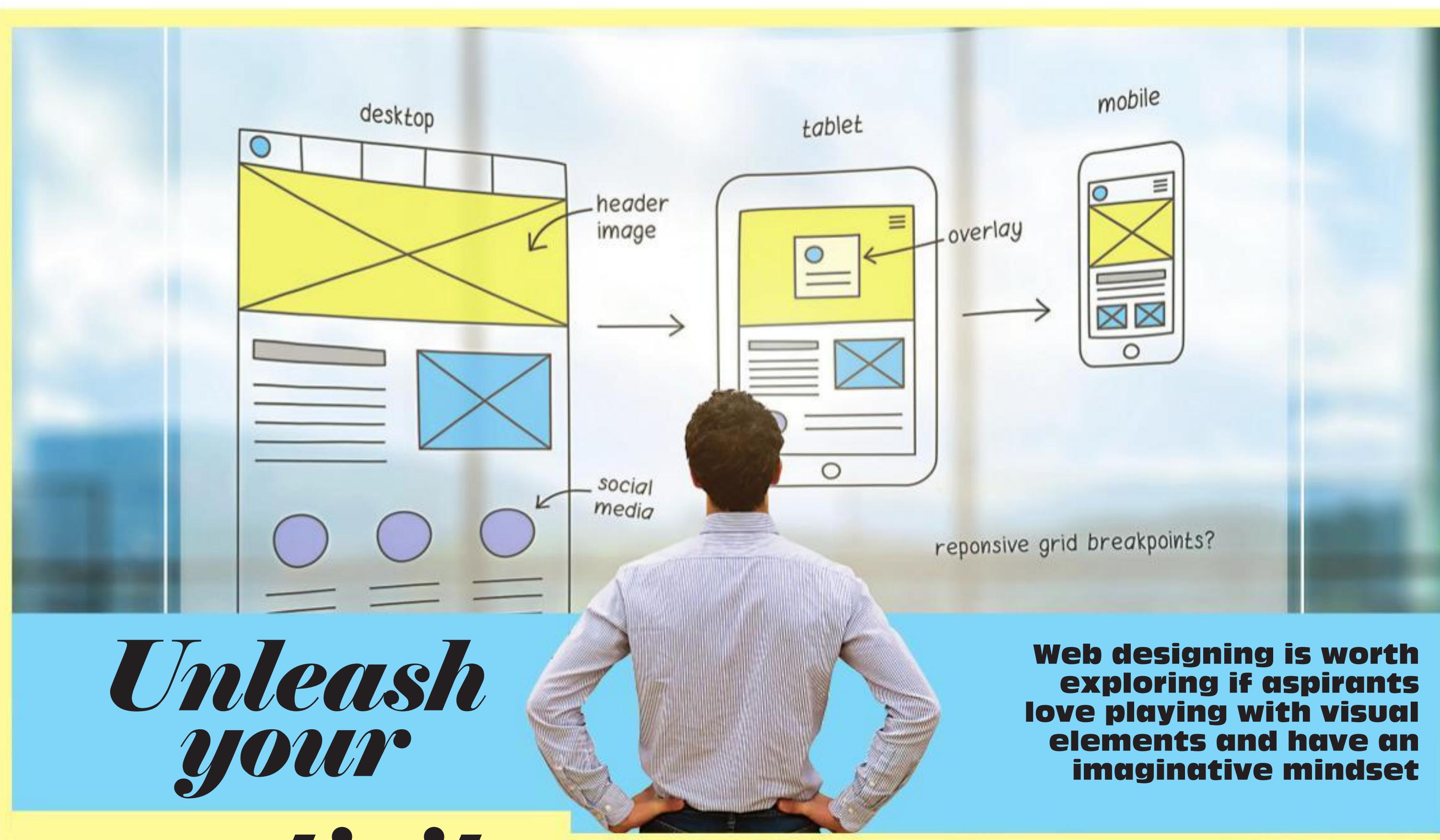
He also saluted teachers, who he said had "made an extraordinary effort in the months of confinement to continue lessons and distant learning."

"We are grateful to you," he said. With the country registering more than 1,500 infections a day, Mr Conte also had particular words for youngsters.

You have to do your part. You have to commit yourselves to the rules of caution that will allow you to protect your health and the health of the people you love," he said.

Italian Education Minister Lucia Azzolina said more than 5,000 extra classrooms had been created to give pupils more space. Nevertheless, some southern regions like Puglia and Calabria already postponed the reopening until Sept 24 over concerns that they were not ready to meet the new requirements. Italian officials said the back-to-school strategy involved immediate quarantine of those "in close contact" with a student or teacher testing positive.

After a positive result, pupils will be allowed back to school only after returning two negative tests, carried out a day apart.



## Unleash your creativity

AARTI UBEROI

**W**ith the advancement of technology and deconstruction of barriers to work, there are limitless professional opportunities today that allow one to unleash one's creativity. In today's age, with remote working becoming the norm, employers focusing on the quality of output rather than being physically present in the workplace and digital avenues have become increasingly popular.

One of these streams, and among the most attractive, is web design. Not only is the profession at the forefront of the modern digital world, but it is also one of the fastest-growing fields at the intersection of creativity, tech and customer experience. Every firm – big or small, and irrespective of the industry it belongs to – needs an internet presence in the form of a website to

put forth its values and key propositions.

With the demand for high-quality websites increasing with every passing day, the function of a web designer is sought-after increasing.

### What is web design?

Web design involves creating a website that includes the creative aspects – the content and the design. The work of a web designer is to define the appearance and layout of the website. While content is also deeply interlinked, not all web designers have control on content creation and rely on content writers for the same.

This role usually refers to the user experience part of the website development rather than the software/coding. For instance, a web designer decides the colours, images, page structure and fonts used on the web-

site to ensure the visual appeal and sleek user experience, ensuring high-impact of the content used.

### Careers in web design

These are not limited to simply web designer. By pursuing related programmes and gaining skills in parallel domains, you can work as a UI designer, UX designer, graphic designer, information architect, design researcher or tester, social media designer and even interaction designer, among others. While some of these are more lucrative than the others, it is well-known that the tech-focused roles garner bigger payouts due to higher-level skills and demand.

### Skills needed as a web designer

As a web designer, one needs to be as adept at tech as at the non-tech features of building a website. To understand this better, some of the most critical skills are needed to become a skilled web designer.

While it's implied that a designer has the requisite design knowledge, one need to be more skilled at visual design suited for digital products.

Therefore, one should be proficient at creating mood-boards, proportions, design grids, etc, and have a clear visual design foundation.

Generally known as UX, this is not the same as the customarily used phrase – graphic design. A successful web designer empathises, evaluates and comprehends the mindset of his audience and inculcates it into the design. He approaches the design from a user-first perspective, builds and tests user flows and designs wireframes to ensure that the experience is seamless.

One of the most crucial soft skills to possess as a web designer is being proficient as client management. As a designer, one is likely to handle multiple clients and projects simultaneously. To be able to manage one's clients and be conscious of the budgetary expectations and workflow will definitely build one's reputation as a professional.

This is in no way an exhaustive list of skills needed to pursue a career in web design. With endless technological capabilities one can equip oneself with (think the entire Adobe suite

and other multimedia editing software), there are also softer skills like time management and communication that help in advancing one's career as a web designer.

While there are dedicated courses on web design, both full-time and part-time, students of multidisciplinary programmes like communication design are also equipped with advanced web design skills as a part of their curriculum.

The web design industry has continually seen accelerated growth in the past few years with the boom in digital penetration and demand for mobile-responsive websites. There are extensive opportunities for career advancement in the field as an independent professional as well as a part of an organisation.

If one loves playing with visual elements and have a creative mindset, the ability to learn technology swiftly and eagerness to work with clients from across different genres, web design is definitely a career worth exploring.

The writer is course leader, communication design, Indian Institute of Art & Design

**Web designing is worth exploring if aspirants love playing with visual elements and have an imaginative mindset**

## PLUS POINTS

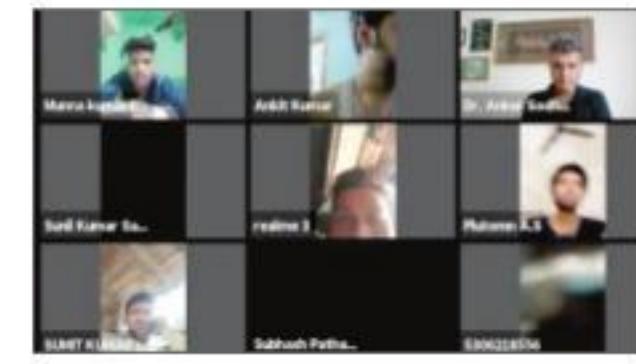
### Musical tribute



Aashish Khan School of World Music (AKSWM) paid a humble tribute to Late Acharya Baba Allauddin Khan Sahab recently. Musicians, their family members and other musical associates from around the world participated in this virtual concert telecasted live from the Facebook page of AKSWM. Sarod players Ustad Shahzad Hossain Khan and Shiraz Ali Khan were the major attraction. Tabla duo by Sanjoy Das and his son Samanvay Das was brilliant; especially breathtaking was young Das' stroke that forecasted a glorious future. Beautiful rendition of *raga Puriya* on the strings of sarod by Gaurav Mazumdar created a magical web. Another memorable performance was the tabla duo by veteran tabla wizard Pandit Anindo Chatterjee and his son Anubrata Chatterjee. Together, they played *tentaa* which captivated the audience. Pandit Arup Chattopadhyay, renowned tabla player played *teental* in his masterly way. The programme ended with heart-melting words about late Baba Sahab, shared by renowned flutist Nityanand Haldirup, tabla exponent Bickram Ghosh and harmonium maestro Jyoti Gohoi.

— OISHI PATTANAYAK

### Interactive session



Sanskriti School of Engineering and Information Technology organised a webinar in collaboration with leading edtech company UpGrad on career and placement opportunities in engineering and information technology recently. Facilitated by Dr Ankur Sodhi, associate director, UpGrad, the session was arranged to explore and understand career opportunities post Covid-19.

Sodhi gave a deeper insight into AI, business analytics, and various other courses for the exponentially growing technology-enabled education. The dean of the school said that the session was very interactive and informative for all the students as well as us faculty members.

### Distinctive approach



Indian education system and coaching have always been used synonymously; to this effect, Coaching Federation of India (CFI) has formed recently. It is the first industry governing body that would work to protect the interests of the coaching industry, which has honed millions of successful skilled professionals. For the coaching professionals, CFI will play a multi-layered role – one that includes resolving problems through inter-disciplinary structure, providing health and life insurance benefit for financial security of CFI members and their family, regular interface with the government authorities for sundry issues such as relaxation in electricity bills and coaching rents during lockdown period, and a representation for reduction in GST, among others.

### Learning never stops

SAI International School hosted one of its kind virtual science and math exhibition recently. Students from class six to 10 participated in it.

The exhibition offered students a much-needed opportunity to connect with fellow peers and showcase their creativity, innovation, and scientific temperament. The faculty approached each activity in a way that they could safely investigate a variety of topics at home using common household items and also analyse and explain their project in terms of scalability and social utility.

The topics shortlisted for the exhibition were as per the CBSE guidelines for projects at the middle school level. Some of the innovative topics which the students worked on include sustainable agricultural practices, future of transport and communication, fighting pandemic with science and many others.

## COURSES RELEVANT TO PRESENT TIMES

**Opportunities for students interested in pharmaceutical sector are not only quite high but are also growing at an exponential rate**

dents who pursue programmes in pharmacy can expect to flourish in careers as drug control administrator, hospital manager, trainer, assistant professor, food and drug administrator, health centre manager, drug dispenser, pharmaceutical marketing representative, research manager, health inspector, chemical analyst, drug technician, drug therapist, customs officer, pharma data analyst, drug inspector, hospital drug admin-

istrator, medical transcriptionist, insurance coder and regulatory manager to name a few.

Pharma students can utilise the lockdown period by solving previous years question papers and three-hour mock tests (computer based), each comprising 125 questions carrying 500 marks. Students are required to lay more emphasis on physical and organic chemistry, pharmacology and pharmacodynamics among others. The

students should attempt only those questions, which they are sure about as the exam entails negative marking.

In the post-Covid-19 scenario, the roles of pharmaceutical professionals are likely to increase as patients are staying in hospital for a prolonged period in quarantine. The role and importance of pharmaceutical professionals will increase as they are well aware of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics which means

how the pharmaceutical drug is impacting the body and how the body is responding to the drug.

To summarise, any degree in the subject is likely to offer promising and enriching careers in pharmaceutical and healthcare sector at the global level with lucrative salary packages in the post-Covid-19 scenario.

The writer is vice chancellor, Sanskriti University



For more updates

## 'GRIM BATTLE'

Former Ferrari boss Jean Todt has revealed he saw Michael Schumacher (*photo, left*) last week and says the seven-time Formula One world champion is fighting to overcome the devastating injuries that have kept him out of public view for almost seven years.

www.thestatesman.com

## THUMBNAILS

**PFL expansion:** Professional Fighters League (PFL), the fastest-growing and most innovative league in the world, today announced an international distribution partnership with Eurosport India, marking the first time MMA will be televised on the platform.

**Vidit's moment:** India captain Vidit Gujrathi is on cloud nine after leading the team to the historic gold at the recently concluded FIDE Online Chess Olympiad after India were declared joint winners alongside Russia. "It was 2018 when the first time I played against Anand. It was a really good memory when I finally won against him in 2019," Gujrathi said.

**Rabindra fourth:** The AGS Events duo G.Vannelet and Akhil Rabindra, who were driving an Aston Martin Vantage AMR finished fourth in the Pro-Am category in the first race of the day before suffering the mechanical failure in the running race at the Magny-Cours in the Championnat de France FFSA GT.

**Online campaign:** MyTeam11 unveiled their campaign named "India Ki Apni Fantasy App" around the Indian T-20 season. Brand ambassador Virender Sehwag along with newly signed campaign ambassador for the Indian T-20 season, former New Zealand fast bowler and renowned cricket commentator Danny Morrison.

**OZ loss:** England won the second one-dayer by 24 runs to level their three-match series against Australia after the visitors, chasing a modest target of 232, suffered a dramatic collapse on Sunday. Australia had appeared to be cruising as they reached 144 for two.

**Hamilton's protest:** Lewis Hamilton took a knee before the Tuscan Grand Prix on Sunday with a message on his shirt declaring "Arrest the cops who killed Breonna Taylor." The words "say her name" and a photograph were on the back of Briton Hamilton's shirt.

**Thin win:** Olympique Marseille earned a smash-and-grab 1-0 win at Ligue 1 champions Paris St Germain after forward Florian Thauvin struck in the 31st minute of a pulsating though ill-tempered, littered-with-fouls match at the Parc des Princes on Sunday.

**Neymar contradicted:** Marseille's Alvaro Gonzalez has defended himself after Neymar accused him of making racist remarks, saying the Paris Saint-Germain striker should learn how to lose and accept it on the field. Neymar was one of five players sent off on Sunday.

**Salah praised:** Mohamed Salah's Premier League numbers are up there among the best of the era but Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp insists he offers his side much more than the bare statistics. Salah's hat-trick in the 4-3 win over Leeds took his tally to 76.

**Perfect start:** Jamie Vardy's penalty double gave Leicester the perfect start to their Premier League campaign at West Brom. He scored 23 times last season to claim the Golden Boot and got his first goals of the new term on Sunday to wrap up a 3-0 win on Sunday.

## Power brokers' trial casts fresh cloud over Fifa

## AGENCIES

LAUSANNE, 14 SEPTEMBER

Fifa's disgraced former secretary-general Jerome Valcke and Paris Saint-German chief Nasser Al-Khelaifi go on trial in Switzerland on Monday in the latest chapter of soccer's seemingly endless corruption saga.

The two men have been indicted for alleged corruption in the attribution of soccer broadcasting rights - Al-Khelaifi is also the boss of *beIN Media*.

The hearing, which has already been delayed because

of the coronavirus, is scheduled to last until 25 September at the Federal Criminal Court of Bellinzona. But it will open under another cloud as suspicions of collusion between the Swiss prosecution and Fifa have undermined its credibility.

Center stage is Valcke, a former right-hand man of ousted Fifa president Sepp Blatter (*in photo*), who appears in two separate cases of television-rights corruption.

He faces up to five years in prison if found guilty.

The 59-year-old Frenchman stands accused of want-

ing to transfer the West Asian and North Africa rights for screening the 2026 and 2030 World Cups to Qatari giant *beIN Media*, in exchange for "unwarranted benefits" from Al-Khelaifi.

According to the prosecution, the case relates to a meeting on 24 October, 2013 at the French headquarters of *beIN*, when Al-Khelaifi allegedly promised to buy a villa in Sardinia for five million euros (\$5.9 million), granting its exclusive use to Valcke.

Al-Khelaifi, who has denied the charges, was then to hand the property over to the

Frenchman two years later under certain conditions.

In return, the prosecution claims, Valcke committed to "do what was in his power" to ensure *beIN* would become the regional broadcaster for the two World Cups, something which happened on 29 April, 2014, in an agreement that Fifa has never since contested.

Legally, however, it is no longer a question of "private corruption."

The prosecution had to drop that qualification because of an "amicable agreement" reached at the end of January between Fifa and Al-Khelaifi,

the contents of which have not been made public.

So Valcke must now justify having "kept for himself" advantages "which should have gone to Fifa."

An employee at the time, the obligation to return money received in the course of his duties "also applies to bribes", according to a decision in March.

Al-Khelaifi, one of the most influential men in world soccer, faces the charge of "inciting Valcke to commit aggravated criminal mismanagement," for which he could also face five years in prison.



PRESIDENT

## Dominic Thiem wants more Grand Slams

## AGENCIES

NEW YORK, 14 SEPTEMBER

Dominic Thiem (*in photo*) yesterday produced a remarkable fightback to beat German fifth seed Alexander Zverev 2-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (6) to win the US Open for the first time.

The second seed became the first Austrian to claim a singles title at Flushing Meadows, albeit in unique circumstances as no fans were present at the hardcourt major due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 4hr 2min match inside a near-empty Arthur Ashe Stadium marked the first time in the US Open's Open Era history that a player had recovered from losing the opening two sets to win the title. It was also the first time the final had been settled by a tie-break.

The title marks Thiem's maiden Grand Slam trophy after three previous defeats in finals of tennis majors.

"It's amazing how far our journeys brought us to share this moment and I wish - really I wish - we could have two winners today, I think we both deserved it," Thiem said on court after a tearful speech from his crestfallen opponent and close friend.

"It's going to be or I expect that it's going to be easier for me now in the biggest tournaments," Thiem told reporters.

"Because, of course, I had it in the back of my head that I had a great career so far, way better career than I could ever dreamt of, but until today there was still a big part, a big goal missing."

"With this goal achieved, I think and I hope that I'm going to be a little bit more



relaxed and play a little bit more freely at the biggest events," he added.

Zverev cried as he tried to thank his parents Alexander - also his coach - and Irina who were not in New York after testing positive for coronavirus.

"I miss them. I'm sure they are sitting at home pretty proud even though I lost. I wish one day I can bring the trophy home," he said.

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

He also becomes the first new Grand Slam champion since Croatian Marin Cilic won at Flushing Meadows in 2014. Thiem is also the first Grand Slam champion other than

Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal or Roger Federer since Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka won the third of his majors at the 2016 US Open.

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

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

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

The tide was beginning to turn though as Zverev's play became increasingly cagey as his suspect second serve got slower and his forehand,

another weakness, became more defensive.

After Thiem easily took set four, Zverev found himself serving for the championship at 5-3 in the fifth set.

But he could not hold and soon Thiem found himself 6-5 ahead.

He took a medical timeout before it was his turn to serve for the championship.

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

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

He won the title on his third and collapsed to the court with his head in his hands.

## Adjusting to UAE conditions biggest challenge: Boult

## PTI/IANS

DUBAI, 14 SEPTEMBER



Set to lead four-time champions Mumbai Indians bowling attack in absence of Lasith Malinga, Kiwi left-arm pacer Trent Boult (*in photo*) believes the biggest challenge for all the teams in the 13th IPL will be to adjust to the hot and humid UAE conditions.

In his first stint with the Mumbai Indians after being traded by Delhi Capitals last year, Boult will have to share bulk of the responsibility of the team's bowling attack after Sri Lankan Malinga opted out of this year's IPL due to personal reasons.

Speaking about his new association, Boult said it is always a sigh of relief for any bowler to be on the other side of a batting-heavy outfit like Mumbai Indians.

"The biggest challenge so far has been trying to prepare to come to 45 degrees in the middle of the desert. I come from a very small country New Zealand which is about 7 or 8 degrees at the moment in the middle of winter," Boult said in a video posted by Mumbai Indians on their official Twitter handle. "Obviously, played for a couple of other franchises, but I'm very excited to be part of this Mumbai family."

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the 31-year-old said.

"But I'm hoping for good wickets and if good wickets are on the table, then it's about being clear with what we are trying to do as a bowling team. And if we put the ball where we want to, then I think we get the skills to outperform any opposition."

Boult believes there is plenty of diversity in Mumbai Indians' bowling unit, which is a good sign for the team. "I'm very excited to be part of that bowling pack. There is a lot of experience there, there is a lot of diversity suppose and there is a group of players who have performed around the world," the New Zealand pacers said. "I am sure we will back each other to do the job. It's big strength of the MI family I think."

Defending champions Mumbai Indians will take on last year's runners-up Chennai Super Kings in the IPL 2020 opener on September 19 in Abu Dhabi.

No clarity on Eng, Aus players' availability for openers: KXIP CEO

There is still no clarity on whether a smooth transfer of players from one bio-secure bubble in the United Kingdom to another in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will be possible for upcoming IPL.

"I've played a little bit of cricket here and I'm aware that the conditions can change quite drastically depending on the time of the year etc,"

Fears of England and Australia players - currently involved in an ODI series in England -- being held up by quarantine rules in the UAE were somewhat put to rest by Kolkata Knight Riders boss Venky Mysore who said last week that those players will be available for selection for their teams' opening matches.

Mysore said that there would be no need for them to undergo quarantine, considering the players are travelling from one bio-secure bubble to another.

But Menon is not too sure. "Nobody has any clarity on that yet. The BCCI is supposed to come back on whether the quarantine can be reduced as they are coming from a bubble to [another] bubble. We don't have any clarity yet," Menon said.

The KL Rahul-led Kings XI Punjab's Australian batsman Glenn Maxwell and England pacer Chris Jordan are currently involved in the series, which is locked at 1-1 with the final ODI to be played on Wednesday. Kings XI Punjab take the field for the first time this IPL season against Delhi Capitals at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on September 20. "From what I hear from the bubble, things are exactly as it was planned. We have been following the SoP that has been laid out by the BCCI and authorities," said the CEO.

KKR and Mumbai Indians are the only two teams based in Abu Dhabi with the rest are stationed in Dubai which has no mandatory quarantine period unless the person tests COVID-19 positive.

Kings XI Punjab are yet to win the IPL trophy in 12 attempts, but Menon is optimistic they will break the jinx this time.

"We are hopeful of winning the title this year. The format is one where anything can happen on a given day, so we will have to see how it goes."

## Osaka's triumph confirms her status as new star

## AGENCIES

NEW YORK, 14 SEPTEMBER



2013.

Still it was a remarkable and unexpected run for the 31-year-old Belarusian, who reached her first major final in seven years.

It was the second time in two weeks Azarenka, twice a winner at the Australian Open, and Osaka had set up a final showdown. The pair had been set to meet in the Western and Southern Open final on August 29 until Osaka withdrew on August 29.

The last few years of Azarenka's career have been disrupted, firstly by injury then by a custody battle over her son, born in December 2016.

As Osaka walked off with a third Grand Slam title, Azarenka was denied a US Open crown for a third time having also finished runner-up in 2012 and

2015 in me," nAzarenka said. "It's been a long road of getting here, but this was fun."

The presentation ceremony showed the precautions everyone has had to take during the Covid-19 era, with the two finalists having to pick up their respective prizes themselves from a table placed on court, while everyone stood socially distant for the obligatory photocall. As she has done in every match over the past fortnight, Osaka appeared on court with her left thigh strapped and a face mask with the name of a Black American victim of police brutality or racial injustice.

For the final it was Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old boy shot by police in 2014 while playing with a toy gun in a playground.

Osaka had already replaced Serena Williams as top earner and now has assumed the leadership mantle that goes with it.

With the United States rocked by unrest following the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, just three weeks ago by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Osaka had withdrawn from her semi-final at the Western and Southern Open in protest.

The men's and women's tour responded by postponing

all the matches that were due to take place on the day of the protest by 24 hours and persuaded Osaka to contest the rescheduled match.

By taking the stand, the 22-year-old activist had made her point.

Azarenka, who ended Serena Williams' bid for a record equalling 24th Grand Slam title in the semi-finals, carried that momentum into the final with a near flawless first set.

One of top returners in the women's game, an energized Azarenka broke the fourth seed to start the final and twice more in a lopsided opening set that took just 27 minutes.

If any spectators had been allowed in Arthur Ashe Stadium, they no doubt would have been left stunned by events as a rampaging Azarenka again broke Osaka at the first opportunity in the second to go