

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2020



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Bhumi Pednekar goes for pilgrimage to a temple in her ancestral village in Goa



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WINDOWS



Actress Cate Blanchett walks along the red carpet during the closing ceremonies for the 77th Venice International Film Festival in Venice on Saturday. — AP

Lanka MPs reject law that will boost President's power

Colombo: The Sri Lankan government's proposed 20th Constitution Amendment has faced internal resistance from within a faction of the ruling SLPP parliamentary group itself, ahead of its inclusion in Parliament's order paper, the party members said on Sunday. The government on September 2 gazetted the 20th Amendment draft, the new proposed legislation that would replace the 19th Amendment introduced in 2015 that curtailed the powers of the President and strengthened Parliament's role. ■ **More on Page 6**

Hizb threat letter to Cong, BJP leaders

Srinagar: The J&K police on Sunday lodged an FIR over a threat letter received by senior Congress leaders Raman Bhalla, purportedly from the Hizbul Mujahideen, in which top BJP leaders were also named. A DSP rank officer has been appointed to investigate the case. ■ **More on Page 3**

Farooq in Delhi to attend Parliament

New Delhi: Lok Sabha MP and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah has arrived in New Delhi to attend the Monsoon Session which is beginning on Monday, his first Parliament appearance after the abrogation of provisions of Article 370.

COUNTERPOINT



Our young MP is asking if there will be any debate on Kavana and Rhea?

WEATHER

Max: 35°C
Min: 27°C
RH: 57%
Rain: 20%

Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrpad Bahula Dwadasi till 1.25 am (Tuesday)
Star: Pushyami till 3.45 pm
Variyam: 3.47 am to 5.18 am (Tuesday)
Durmuhurtam: 12.36 pm to 1.24 pm; 3.02 pm to 3.50 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
SUNSET TODAY 6.27 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.06 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 3.25 PM
MOONSET TODAY 4.31 AM

LADAKH

Military talks will show if PLA is ready to disengage

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

The next corps commanders' meeting between Indian and China, which is expected later this week, is crucial as it will show whether the People's Liberation Army is ready to work on ground towards disengagement and de-escalation after the foreign ministers of the two countries agreed on a five-point agenda during their meeting last week in Moscow.

Sources said all the diplomatic dialogue will mean nothing unless the Chinese military is ready to disengage on the ground. India wants that the status quo ante of April 2020 should be restored, and the Chinese should withdraw their 50,000-odd troops which they have pushed near the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh.

"The corps commanders may meet this week. The dates have not been confirmed yet," the sources said. "After drawing up the five-point understanding with all its diplomatic rhetoric, the ball is back in the military field. Wonder how the 'disengagement' and 'proper distancing' is possible without a common reference point or mutually known LAC alignment. India must insist on the delineation of the LAC," former Army Chief Gen. Ved Prakash Malik tweeted on Saturday. "The

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Around 90% students appear for NEET



A candidate undergoes thermal screening as she arrives at an examination centre to appear in the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET) at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in New Delhi on Sunday. Over 15.97 lakh candidates (around 90%) appeared for the medical college entrance exam from 3,843 exam centres across the country. — PTI

■ **Report on Page 4**

Nepal plays games on India border at Beijing's behest

VIKRAM SHARMA
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 13

With India locked in a standoff with China on the Line of Actual Control, Nepal has started to play its games with renewed vigour. The K.P. Sharma Oli government is increasingly sending feelers to people living in three villages adjoining the Kalapani region in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand to shift their loyalties to Nepal in order to stake claim over the villages which are administered by India.

Coming at a time when the Nepal Army is believed to be assisting China expand its military



Valley of Kalapani in Uttarakhand

bases close to Mount Kailash, China seems to be behind the latest move by Nepal, which is seen as a quid pro quo arrangement between the two neighbours.

In return, the Nepal government is promising tonnes of money, land and houses along with

Nepalese citizenship — most of which is believed to be funded by China.

Sources in the know of the Nepalese "operation" told this newspaper that for the past few days, "agents" working for the Nepal government have got in touch with people

■ **Turn to Page 4**

Bihar's Raghuvansh, 74, dies at AIIMS

Lalu: I asked you not to go anywhere. But now you have gone so far

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

Former Union minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh passed away Sunday due to breathlessness and other related complications at AIIMS here. His death was consoled by the President, the Prime Minister, the ruling BJP as well as the Opposition parties. He was 74.

Singh is survived by two sons and a daughter. His wife had died earlier. His body will be taken to Patna for the last rites, his close aides said.

Singh tested positive for Covid-19 in June and was admitted to Patna's AIIMS, and later shifted to Delhi due to post-Covid



Raghuvansh Prasad Singh

complications. On Friday, he took critically ill and was put on a ventilator in the ICU.

He had created a stir in Bihar politics recently by sending a handwritten resignation letter to RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav from his hospital bed. Sources said he was peeved over his marginalisation in the party. In June he stepped down as RJD's

■ **He had created a stir in Bihar politics recently by sending a handwritten resignation letter to RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav from his hospital bed. Sources said he was peeved over his marginalisation in the party.**

national vice-president over Tejashwi Yadav's move to induct his rival Rama Singh. Though Rama Singh's RJD entry was postponed after Lalu Yadav intervened, and persuaded Raghuvansh Prasad Singh to reconsider his decision, he had refused. Sources said he "was upset and hurt after Tej Pratap humiliated him for opposing the party's

decision to induct Rama Singh". After his death on Sunday, Lalu Prasad Yadav tweeted: "I had asked you not to go anywhere. But now you have gone so far. We will miss you".

Condoling his death, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his death left a deep void in Bihar and national politics, describing Singh as a grassroots leader with deep understanding of poverty and the problems of the poor.

He also referred to the "churning" the departed leader faced in his last days, indicating his disenchantment with the RJD and its chief Lalu Prasad Yadav.

After that, the House may take up discussion on two bills which have already been passed by the Rajya Sabha. A discussion on the Covid-19 pandemic can start on Tuesday. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh also said on Sunday that his party wants a discussion in the Lok Sabha and Rajya

■ **Turn to Page 4**



BJP MP Jagdambika Pal pays tribute in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Parliament House in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

Amit Shah admitted to AIIMS for full checkup

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

Days before Parliament's Monsoon Session, Union home minister Amit Shah was admitted to Delhi's AIIMS late on Saturday night, two weeks after being discharged. He was earlier admitted to AIIMS for post-Covid-care on August 18. AIIMS said on Sunday: "Amit Shah was discharged from AIIMS

after post-Covid care on August 30. As per advice, he has been admitted for a complete medical checkup before the Parliament session for 1-2 days."

The minister had earlier tested positive for Covid-19 and admitted to Gurgaon's Medanta Hospital, and later went into home isolation on August 14 after testing negative. ■ **More on Page 3**

■ **Turn to Page 4**

94,372 new cases in last 24 hrs, tally up to 475L

SANJAY KAW
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

The Union health ministry issued a set of fresh protocols on Sunday, saying that patients who recovered from acute Covid-19 may continue to have symptoms like fatigue, body ache, cough, sore throat and difficulty in breathing.

The country registered another huge spike of 94,372 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, that pushed the overall tally to above 47.5 lakhs. It is the fourth consecutive day when new Covid-19 cases hovered around 95,000. With 1,114 new fatalities, the death toll has risen to 78,586. Of the new infections in the last 24 hours, Maharashtra alone had more than 22,000 cases, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka with over 9,000 cases each. Maharashtra also had the maximum number of 391 deaths, followed by Karnataka and Tamil Nadu with 94 and 76 fatalities respectively.

There has also been a steep rise in recoveries, with the recovery rate going up to 77.88 per cent. With the surge in coronavirus cases, the health ministry suggested yoga, pranayama and walks in its "post-Covid management protocol". It made it clear the recovery period may be longer for those suffering from severe symptoms and those with any pre-existing health conditions. It strongly advised physical exercise and taking immunity boosting medicines after recovery. ■ **More on Page 4**

London night out before 'rule of 6' kicks in



People sit outdoors during a night out in Soho in London's West End on Saturday. People have been warned against hav-

ing a 'party weekend' as a former chief scientific adviser said the UK is 'on the edge of losing control' of coronavirus. The public

has been urged to act 'in tune' with Covid-19 guidelines before the 'rule of six' restrictions come into force on Monday. — AP

Ex-PMs reject Boris' plan on Brexit, says it will 'shame' UK

London, Sept. 13: Two former British Prime Ministers who played crucial roles in bringing peace to Northern Ireland joined forces Sunday to urge lawmakers to reject government plans to override the Brexit deal with the European Union, arguing that it imperils that peace and damages the U.K.'s reputation.

In an article in *The Sunday Times*, John Major and Tony Blair slammed the current British government for "shaming" the country with legislation that, in places, goes against the very deal it signed to allow for the UK's smooth departure from the EU earlier this year.

Major, a Conservative

■ **In an article in *The Sunday Times*, John Major and Tony Blair slammed the current British government for "shaming" the country with legislation that, in places, goes against the very deal it signed to allow for the UK's smooth departure from the EU earlier this year.**

prime minister from 1990 to 1997, and Blair, his Labour successor for a decade, said Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Internal Market Bill "questions the very integrity" of the UK.

"This government's action is shaming itself and embarrassing our nation," they said.

The planned legislation,

which will be debated by British lawmakers this week, has led to a furious outcry within the EU as it would diminish the bloc's previously agreed oversight of trade between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland if a U.K.-EU trade agreement isn't secured.

The British government has admitted that the legislation would break international law, but argues that it's an insurance policy for that potential "no-deal" scenario. Johnson has said the legislation is needed to end EU threats to impose a "blockade" in the Irish Sea that the prime minister asserted could "carve up our country." — AP

■ **More on Page 6**

IN BRIEF

Man shot dead in Madhu Vihar area

New Delhi: A 33-year-old man was shot dead allegedly by three unidentified persons on Sunday in east Delhi's Madhu Vihar area, police said. The victim has been identified as Yogesh, a resident of Dakshinpur, they said. Police said they received information around 2 pm regarding the incident at Madhu Vihar area. "The victim received multiple gunshots and was rushed to Max hospital, Patparganj where he was declared dead," deputy commissioner of police (east) Jasmeet Singh said. The eye witness told police that three persons came on a bike and fired bullets at the victim while he was sitting inside his car, a senior police officer said. Yogesh used to run a car washing workshop in Dakshinpur. He was involved in a murder case in 2011 of Ambedkar Nagar police station. He has involvements in some other cases too, police said, adding that further investigation is underway. — PTI

Father kills 3-yr-old after fight with wife

Noida: A three-year-old girl died in a fight between her parents during which she was allegedly smashed on the floor by her father in Uttar Pradesh's Noida on Sunday, police said. Her mother was also brutally injured in the incident that took place around 9.30 am at their home in Barola village, under Sector 49 police station limits, the police said. "When a local police team reached the spot, the woman was found injured and the child was found dead. They were immediately taken to a hospital, where the woman is undergoing treatment," additional CP, Noida, Ranvijay Singh said. "An inquiry from neighbours and other locals revealed that the man was an alcoholic and often fought with his wife. They had a major fight day before yesterday also," Singh said. The accused, identified as Amit, is a native of Bulandshahr district. He worked here and stayed with his family but is absconding now, according to the police. The accused also informed the family of his wife Renu that the child has died but told them it happened due to some other reason, the police said. "He tried to misinform his in-laws," the Additional deputy commissioner of police said, adding that it prima facie appears that Amit killed his child and wounded his wife.

Noida: 6 held for car thefts in Delhi-NCR

Noida: Six members of a gang involved in stealing vehicles across Delhi NCR for almost a decade were arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Noida on Sunday, police said. The gang's role is suspected in more than 100 vehicle thefts in the region and the Noida police had been working on this case for a month, leading to the arrest, a senior officer said. "The police have recovered over a dozen vehicles six of which have been traced to theft cases in Delhi," DCP, Noida, Rajesh S. said. The arrested have been identified as Manoj Nehra, a resident of Muzaffarnagar, Afzal Ahmed, a native of Meerut, and their aides Firoz, Lavpreet, Rahat and Subhash Saini, he said. "Two more persons, who bought stolen vehicles from them, have been identified as Aadil, a native of Kashmir, and Ayub from Meerut. Searches are on to nab them," the DCP said.

Pregnancy during Covid is best Experts

New Delhi: With Bollywood A-listers Kareena Kapoor Khan and Anushka Sharma getting pregnant amid this unprecedented time of coronavirus pandemic, leading gynaecologists and infertility experts across Delhi and NCR have opined that remote working is the best time to conceive. According to them, now couples are getting enough "comfortable environment" to plan their future besides undergoing "less stress" resulting from no more long commuting hours and owing to striking a balance between their professional and personal lives. Dr Sandeep Chadha, the consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Motherhood Hospital in Noida, feels that this is the ideal time to conceive because air quality is at its best.



Parents of candidates appearing in the NEET wait outside at an examination centre at Vidya on in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

City records over 4K new Covid cases for 5th day

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

The tally of coronavirus cases in Delhi rose to 2.18 lakh on Sunday with 4,235 more people contracting the viral disease, while 29 fresh fatalities in the last 24 hours pushed the death toll to 4,744.

This was the fifth day in a trot that the national capital recorded a daily spike of over 4,000 fresh cases. The city recorded its biggest single-day jump of 4,321 fresh Covid-19 cases on Saturday, 4,266 on Friday, 4,308 on Thursday and 4,039 on Wednesday.

Of the total 2,18,304 cases reported in Delhi so far, 1,84,748 have either recovered, been discharged or migrated out.

In the last 24 hours, 56,656 tests were conducted to detect Covid-19 infection, of which 10,116 were RTPCR/CBNAAT/TrueN at tests and 46,540 rapid antigen tests. A record 60,580 tests were conducted last Friday, followed by 60,076 on Saturday.

The health authorities have conducted around 5.5 lakh tests in the last 13 days — with an average of more than 42,000 a day. The number of total tests

10 including 2 juveniles held for duping through e-com platforms

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

The Delhi police has arrested 10 people and apprehended two juveniles for allegedly cheating hundreds of people through e-commerce apps by posing as Army or paramilitary personnel, officials said on Sunday.

The accused exploited the trustworthiness associated with the armed forces to cheat potential buyers or sellers.

The accused, during the coronavirus-triggered lockdown, had also cheated several people after putting advertisements on various social media platforms regarding home delivery of liquor. On being approached, they would request the potential buyer to pay in advance and would stop responding to their calls once the money was received, the police said.

"During the investigation, a team comprising of inspector Parveen, SI Hansraj, SI Vijender, SI Ajit, SI Harjit, and others under the supervision of ACP Aditya Gautam identified the location of the accused and raids were conducted following which 10 of them were arrested," DCP (Cyber) Anyesh Roy said.

Those arrested were identified as Husban (22), Hasib (24), Faisal (19), Sajid (27), Sabir (25) Shezad Khan (26), Aziz Akhtar (25), and Sakir (29), all residents of Nuh district in Haryana; Yashvir (26), a resident of Faridabad; and Salim (35) from Rajasthan, it said. Of the juveniles who were apprehended, one is from Rajasthan and the other belongs to Nuh, the police said.

The accused used two modes to dupe people of their money. Posing as Army or paramilitary personnel, they would post advertisements on e-commerce websites for sale of their goods, mostly cars and bikes.

Five inmates under treatment for Covid-19 in Delhi prisons: Official

New Delhi, Sept. 13: Five inmates, who recently arrived in jails in Delhi, have tested positive for Covid and are undergoing treatment, officials said on Sunday.

This comes less than a month after the Delhi Prisons Department declared there was no active Covid case among the inmates in its three jail complexes.

According to the data shared by the officials, the number of active Covid

conducted was 15,83,485 on August 31. It rose to 21,39,432 on Sunday.

The case positivity rate during the last 24 hours was 7.48 per cent while the cumulative positivity rate was 10.20 per cent.

Since August end, the number of active cases has nearly doubled in the city. It was 14,626 on August 31 and 28,812 on Sunday. There has been over 78 per cent increase in the number of containment zones in the city — from from 833 on August

31 to 1,488 on Sunday.

During the same period, the number of occupied beds in hospitals has risen from 4,146 to 6,503. There were 9,999 Covid beds available in the city on August 31 as against 7,874 left on Sunday.

The Arvind Kejriwal-led government scaled up Covid testing through its network of hospitals, dispensaries and mohalla clinics as the number of cases started going up towards the end of August.

2 men, known to each other, shot dead in separate incidents

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

Two men were shot dead in separate incidents allegedly by some unidentified persons in northeast Delhi's Dayalpur area, police said on Sunday.

The deceased have been identified as Abdul Hamid (50) and Farukh (45), they said.

The incidents took place on Saturday around 9 pm. Both the deceased were known to each other, police said.

Police said that both the incidents took place within a span of 10 to 15 minutes. According to a senior police officer, Hamid was present inside his office around 9 pm at Nehru Vihar when some unidentified persons fired multiple rounds at him. He died on the spot.

After 10-15 minutes in Monga Nagar, Farukh was shot dead when he was standing near his fac-

▶ THE INCIDENTS took place on Saturday around 9 pm. Both the deceased were known to each other

tory. The accused later escaped from there, the officer said.

Farukh was also declared dead on the spot. Both the deceased men knew each other.

The bodies have been sent to the mortuary, they said.

Police are investigating the case from all angles and also trying to find out whether the accused in both the cases were same or not.

Two cases have been registered and CCTV cameras of the area are being scanned to identify the accused persons, the officer said.

Farukh was a history-sheeter with involvements in Uttar Pradesh, police said.

Covid hospitals allowed to increase bed capacity: Jain

Govt directs 33 pvt hospitals to reserve 80% ICU beds for patients

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said on Sunday the city government has instructed 33 big private hospitals in the national capital to reserve 80 per cent of ICU beds for Covid patients, amid a shortage of such beds at some facilities.

Delhi has been witnessing a surge in novel coronavirus cases from the last week of August. Delhi recorded its biggest single-day jump of 4,321 fresh Covid cases on Saturday.

The infection tally in Delhi rose to 2.18 lakh on Sunday with 4,235 more people contracting the viral disease. This was the fifth day in a trot that the national capital recorded a daily spike of over 4,000 fresh cases, authorities said. Mr Jain said the Delhi government has directed all the private hospitals having bed strength of 50 or more to reserve at least 80 per cent of their total ICU bed strength for Covid patients.

▶ The infection tally in Delhi rose to 2.18 lakh on Sunday with 4,235 more people contracting the viral disease. This was the fifth day in a trot that the national capital recorded a daily spike of over 4,000 fresh cases.

▶ The minister added that the order is relevant only for private hospitals and to ensure more bed capacity in their intensive care units is available so that the demand for ICU beds for Covid-19 patients can be met

Considering an increase in cases for the last few days, the Department of Health has ordered 33 hospitals to reserve 80 per cent of the total ICU beds available for Covid patients. In a video conference with 33 private hospitals, Jain had discussed reserving more beds in their ICUs.

"If in some hospitals, non-Covid patients are already admitted, once discharged, the vacant beds will be reserved for Covid patients only," he told reporters here.

He reiterated that the hospitals in Delhi that are treating Covid-19 patients are allowed to increase their bed capacity up to 30

per cent which shall only be used for Covid-19 patients.

The minister added that the order is relevant only for private hospitals and to ensure more bed capacity in their intensive care units is available so that the demand for ICU beds for Covid-19 patients can be met. Mr Jain said according to the Delhi Corona app, a total of 14,372 beds are present and 7,938 of them are still vacant and the current order is regarding ICU beds only in private hospitals and there are ample beds available in state-run and Centre-run hospitals.

"ICU beds are facing a

slight problem. Although there is a sufficient number of beds in hospitals, there is a shortage of ICU beds in easily approachable hospitals. Hospitals which are in high demand have been ordered to increase ICU beds. Right now ICU beds are available in central government and Delhi government hospitals," he added.

The best way to protect oneself against Covid-19, the minister said, is using face masks and maintaining social distancing norms. He appealed to the people to be more careful when they go out in public and crowded areas.

Asked if a second lockdown can be imposed amid a surge in coronavirus cases, the Delhi Health minister ruled out the possibility. "The time for enforcing a lockdown has ended. We have got a lot of experience after the lockdown. The most effective way to prevent the infection is to wear masks. If you wear masks, you can avoid infection to a great extent," he said.



Resident of a slum near Sarai Rohilla Railway line in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

Slum eviction: Tiwari calls for joint meeting of stakeholders

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

BJP Lok Sabha member from Northeast Delhi Manoj Tiwari has written to the Union Railways minister Piyush Goyal for a joint meeting of stakeholders including chief minister Arvind Kejriwal for better planning and coordination for compliance of Supreme Court order to remove 48,000 slum dwellings along railway tracks in the city.

Mr Tiwari has also written a letter to Mr Kejriwal for rehabilitation of affected slum dwellers and arrangement of transit accommodation for them.

The Supreme Court, in its order on August 31, has ordered the removal of



Manoj Tiwari

around 48,000 slums along the nearly 140 km stretch of railway tracks in Delhi within three months.

Mr Tiwari, in his letter to Mr Kejriwal, stated that it is the "responsibility" of the state government to ensure that the slum dwellers are shifted and given proper accommodation without any risk to their lives in this time of Covid-19 pandemic.

"Under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), 31,424 flats were constructed between 2007 and 2019 that are available with the Delhi government. Also, there are around 20,000 flats which are under various stages of construction and are likely to be completed by another 90 days," Mr Tiwari said.

"The rehabilitation of the slum dwellers is to be done by the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB). Therefore, I demand that those available flats, which are in ready-to-move condition, be immediately handed over to the slum dwellers," Mr Tiwari demanded in his letter to Mr Kejriwal.

DMRC: Ph-4 stations will accept '1 Nation 1 Card', mobile phones to also work for entry

New Delhi, Sept. 13: The

automatic fare collection system in the upcoming Phase-IV lines of the Delhi Metro will be fully compliant with the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC), and commuters will also be able to use a mobile phone to enter or exit a station on its corridors, DMRC chief Mangu Singh has said.

Asserting that Delhi Metro is a "modern metro system" comparable to the best in the world, he also said that these two facilities might be rolled out at the Airport Express Line by the end of this year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2019 had launched the indigenously-developed NCMC to enable people to pay multiple kinds of transport charges, including for metro and bus services across the country, through a common card.

Dubbed as "One Nation One Card", the inter-operable transport card would allow the holders to also

▶ DUBBED AS 'One Nation One Card', the inter-operable transport card would allow the holders to also pay their toll taxes, parking charges, retail shopping and even withdraw money.

pay their toll taxes, parking charges, retail shopping and even withdraw money.

Singh said the facility to use mobile phones to enter or exit automatic fare collection (AFC) gates, are available in major modern modern systems in various countries, including in the Seoul Metro.

"We are working to continuously improve our system, with better technological and other interventions, to improve our rolling stocks and energy efficiency. In Ph-IV, our AFC system will fully accept the national common mobility cards, which can be used in any cities,"

he told PTI.

"Also, a mobile phone will effectively work as smart card, and riders will be able to use to enter or exit the AFC gates, in Ph-IV lines," Singh said.

The managing director of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, however, underlined that e-payment system and technology are fast-evolving and by the time the Ph-IV work is complete, new technologies may emerge.

"But, we have been working on it for quite some time, and the facilities of NCMC and entry and exit using mobile phones might be available by the end of this year on the Airport Express Line" he added.

Currently, riders on the Airport Express Line can also enter or exit AFC gates using a QR code on mobile phone that has to be collected from a metro counter, but the future plan is to have a system whereby commuters can generate their own QR codes on phones and enter

through AFC gates using that facility, the top official said.

The DMRC chief said, these two facilities will be first available on the brand new lines to be built under Ph-IV, and hopefully by the time the construction is over, the corridors to be built under this phase as extensions of existing lines, would "also be upgraded" for compliance.

Asked if old smart cards will work in Ph-IV lines, he said, "Yes."

The Union Cabinet, in a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister, in March last year had approved three out of the six corridors of the Delhi Metro's proposed phase IV.

Under approved segment of Phase-IV, 61.679-km of new metro lines shall be constructed across three different corridors comprising 45 metro stations. These new sections shall provide interconnectivity among the already operational lines of the Delhi Metro. — PTI

City may witness rains next week, says IMD

New Delhi, Sept. 13: Dry weather pushed the mercury slightly up in the city on Sunday and a fresh spell of rains is likely next week, the weatherman said.

The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, recorded a maximum of 37 degrees Celsius, three notches more than normal. The national capital has recorded 74 per cent less rainfall in September so far.

Humidity levels ranged between 52 and 86 per cent.

The national capital has recorded 74 per cent less rainfall in September so far, according to India meteorological department data.

The Safdarjung Observatory has recorded just 20.9 mm rainfall against the normal of 80.3 mm this month so far, while the Lodhi road weather station has gauged only 18.5 mm precipitation against the normal of 80.3 mm — a deficiency of 77 per cent.

The Palam weather station has recorded 30.3 mm rainfall against the 50-

▶ THE SAFDARJUNG Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, recorded a maximum of 37 degrees Celsius, three notches more than normal. The national capital has recorded 74 per cent less rainfall in September so far.

year average of 80.9 mm, according to the IMD data.

Delhi received 237 mm rainfall in August this year, the highest for the month in seven years.

Overall, the city has recorded 576.5 mm rainfall against the usual of 596.4 mm since June 1, when the monsoon season starts.

The IMD has also said that monsoon is likely to stay longer in Delhi and start withdrawing only in the "initial days of October".

The wind system had reached Delhi on June 25, two days earlier than normal. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Man throws dog into lake, clip viral

Bhopal: A video showing a man throw a dog into Bhopal's Upper Lake went viral on social media on Sunday following which police registered a case. Some of those who shared the video claimed it was shot at Boat Club Road near Van Vihar on the banks of the lake, also called Bada Talab, here. A man, in his twenties, can be seen picking up one of two dogs roaming near him and throwing it into the lake and giggling as he looks at the person shooting the video. A song from Hindi movie *Commando 3* can be heard in the background in the video. Bhopal Deputy Inspector General of Police Irshad Wali said cognizance of the video had been taken while Additional Superintendent of Police Ramsanehi Mishra said a case had been filed. — PTI

Protests against Maratha quota stay

Pune: Members of the Maratha Kranti Morcha on Sunday staged protests in Solapur's Shivaji Chowk area against the state and Union governments following the Supreme Court stay on the implementation of a decision to provide quota for the community in jobs and education. The apex court on Wednesday stayed implementation of the Maratha quota law and referred petitions challenging the law to a larger constitution bench. Protesters conducted a mock funeral of the state and Central governments and demanded that the two work together to ensure the community gets justice. — PTI

Police station is attacked in Bengal

Canning: Several police personnel were injured on Sunday in an attack by alleged Trinamool Congress supporters, who demanded the immediate release of four party workers, at Sunderban Coastal police station in South 24 Parganas district, officials said. Trouble started when a group of people pelted stones at the police station, demanding immediate release of four TMC supporters, who were arrested in connection with a clash between the BJP and the ruling party at Chhoto Mollakhali in Gosaba block of Sunderbans on Saturday, they said. The mob also vandalised several vehicles outside the station. — PTI

'RSS volunteers to help labourers'

Lucknow: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Sunday that volunteers of the organisation should work towards making employment available to labourers and also raise awareness among the people about protecting the environment. On the first day of his two-day visit to Lucknow, Bhagwat with the volunteers of the RSS' Awadh unit and was informed about various work done by them so far during the COVID-19 pandemic, the unit's co-in-charge of publicity Diwakar Awasthi said. "A large 'saijan shakti' (power of good people) has emerged in the society. The volunteers of the Sangh should contact such 'saijan shakti', and work to make employment available to labourers. "Work should be done, to induce a feeling of self-reliance among the labourers in urban areas and farmers in rural areas," the RSS chief said. He also said that in the days to come the organisation will spread awareness among the society on conservation of trees, wastage of water and less usage of plastic items. — PTI

18-yr-old kills self over NEET stress

Barlipada: An 18-year-old medical aspirant died by suicide in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, apparently because she was anxious about the result of the National Entrance cum Eligibility Test (NEET) held on Sunday, the police said. She was found hanging in her residence here on Saturday night by her parents. When taken to a hospital, she was declared dead. A purported suicide note recovered from the house stated that the girl said that as she was under stress and not sure about clearing the NEET. — PTI



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla arrives to attend the meeting of Business Advisory Committee (BAC) at Parliament House Annex in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

'Create separate UT for Kashmiri Pandits'

Jammu, Sept. 13: The Panun Kashmir, a frontal organisation of migrant Kashmiri Pandits, Sunday reiterated its demand for creation of a separate Union Territory for their rehabilitation in the valley, besides enactment of a law by parliament on the "genocide" the community was allegedly subjected to. The group made the demand on the eve of Balidan Divas' (Martyr's day), during a virtual event organised to pay homage to the community members and security

forces who laid down their lives fighting terrorism in the Union Territory.

They also appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to formally accept that Hindus of Kashmir were subjected to genocide.

The group said, "The participants stressed on the creation of a separate geopolitical dispensation in the form of a Union Territory to the East and North of river Jhelum. "We want to state that the changes in Jammu and

Kashmir on August 5, 2019 have made the creation of Panun Kashmir East and North of river Jhelum constitutionally possible rather than redundant, Panun Kashmir chairman Dr Ajay Churungoo said. We have no hesitation in stating that internally displaced Hindus of Kashmir are caught up between the forces that continue to perpetrate atrocities on them and the forces of denial of genocide." He said the policies on the return and rehabilitation of internally displaced

minority pursued by successive governments in the erstwhile state of J&K as well as in the Centre have been the most brazen expressions of "denial of genocide". He said denial of exodus of KPs has not only been destructive to others but has also led to spillover of fundamentalism into rest of India. The Panun Kashmir has already submitted the Panun Kashmir Prevention of Hindu Genocide and Atrocities Bill to Government of India, he said. — PTI



Candidates arrive at an examination centre to appear in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) during unlock 4.0 in Kolkata on Sunday. — PTI

90% candidates appear amid Covid precautions

New Delhi, Sept. 13: Nearly 90 per cent candidates appeared in the medical entrance exam NEET held at over 3,800 centres across the country on Sunday amid strict precautions in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) began at 2 PM, but entry to centres started at 11 AM. Students were allotted different slots for staggered movement to ensure social distancing.

As many as 15.97 lakh candidates had registered for NEET, which was earlier postponed twice in view of the pandemic.

Based on random sampling, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said that the attendance

NEET
CANDIDATES WHO missed the exams after testing positive for COVID-19 will get another opportunity to sit for the test

for the exam was between 85-90 per cent. However, the official attendance figures were not available yet. The attendance in 2019 was 92.9 per cent.

The candidates who missed the exams after testing positive for COVID-19 will get another opportunity to sit for the test, the date for which will be announced later.

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'

wished luck to the candidates appearing for the exam and assured that arrangements were in place for their safety.

"NTA informed me that around 85-90 per cent students appeared in NEET exam. I sincerely thank all chief ministers and NTA for proper arrangements made to facilitate student participation. NEET participation reflects the tenacity and grit of young," he tweeted.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who has been demanding the exam be postponed following a spike in coronavirus cases, wished students while expressing his sympathies with those who could not take it due to Covid-19. — PTI

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Pak using tunnels to push terrorists: DGP

Drones being used to drop weapons for militants

Jammu, Sept. 13: Pakistan is using cross-border underground tunnels to push terrorists into India and drones to drop weapons for them, the chief of Jammu and Kashmir police said Sunday.

Director General of Police Dilbag Singh, however, said the anti-infiltration grid is active and anti-tunnelling operations are underway to scuttle "nefarious designs".

"Digging of tunnels beneath the IB is part of the nefarious designs of Pakistan to facilitate infiltration of terrorists into this side to step up terrorism," Singh told reporters in Samba district after inspecting the recently discovered 170-metre tunnel at Galar village along the IB.

The tunnel with a depth of 20-25 feet and originating from Pakistan was found by a BSF team near the border-fencing on August 28.

"I saw this huge tunnel which is almost similar to the one detected in Chanyari in 2013-14. After the Nagrota encounter, we had received specific inputs that infiltration had taken place through a tunnel and was searching for it," the DGP said.

Hizbul threat to target politicians, cops file FIR

Jammu, Sept. 13: Police have registered an FIR after a senior Congress leader received a letter from Hizbul Mujahideen threatening to target mainstream politicians of the Jammu region, including Union minister Jitendra Singh, if they did not relinquish politics, officials said on Sunday.

The two-page letter, written in Urdu on the terror group's letter pad, was delivered by post to senior vice president of J-K Congress and former minister Raman Bhalla at his headquarters on Friday, the officials said.

"We have registered a case under relevant sections of the law and further investigation is on," Senior Superintendent of Police, Jammu, Shridhar Patil told PTI.

Bhalla said he approached police soon after the receipt of the letter as a thorough investigation is required into the incident.

"We will not be cowed down by such threats from anti-national elements. We have stood against the terror unleashed at the behest of Pakistan in J&K over the past three decades," he said. — PTI

Three Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorists were killed in the encounter in Nagrota in January this year.

"The investigation is on but the ground indicators suggest that the tunnel was used by Pakistan in the past to push infiltrators," he said but did not rule out the possibility of more such tunnels. He

Shah admitted in AIIMS for full health checkup

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

Union home Minister Amit Shah was admitted to Delhi's AIIMS last night, nearly two weeks after he was discharged from the hospital. He was earlier admitted to the national capital's top hospital for post Covid-care.

The Monsoon Session of Parliament begins Monday with Covid safety measures, including compulsory face mask and social distancing in place. With 200 out of 785 members of Parliament above 65 years of age, and at least seven Union Ministers and two dozen lawmakers recovering from COVID-19, the coronavirus pandemic has cast a shadow over the monsoon session.

In an official statement, the AIIMS this morning said: "Shri Amit Shah, Honourable Home Minister, was discharged from AIIMS, New Delhi, after post Covid-care on August 30. As per advice given at discharge, he has now been admitted for complete medical check-up before parliament session for 1-2 days (sic)."

The 55-year-old BJP leader had tested positive for coronavirus, which has affected over 47 lakh people in India so far, on August 2 when he was taken to private hospital Medanta in Gurgaon. On August 14, he had tweeted that he would be in home isolation for a few more days on the advice of his



Amit Shah

doctors. Mr Shah was admitted to the AIIMS on August 18 after he complained of "fatigue and body ache". He left the hospital after 13 days on August 31 after the doctors said the Home Minister had "recovered".

"Amit Shah, Union Home Minister, is admitted at AIIMS, New Delhi for post-COVID care. He has recovered and is likely to be discharged in a short time," the AIIMS had said in a statement on August 30. He was admitted to the hospital again at about 11 pm on Saturday.

Several BJP leaders wished him speedy recovery on social media. "Just received the news about the ill-health of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. I pray to God for his good health," Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan tweeted in Hindi. Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Rajé tweeted: "I pray to god for his speedy recovery."



Tribals from villages around Statue of Unity stage protest

Rajpipla, Sept. 13: Hundreds of tribals from 14 villages around the Statue of Unity on Sunday formed human chains against acquisition of their land by the Gujarat government for development of the area, which they said would affect their livelihood.

On the occasion of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Day, residents protested peacefully outside their villages by holding placards and banners.

One of their main demands included cancellation of the recently-enacted Statue of Unity Area Development and Tourism Governance Act, an activist said.

The act gives power to the government to acquire land across these villages for any development projects in the area around the world's tallest 1,82-metre statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

People from 50 tribal-dominated talukas in 16 districts in eastern Gujarat took part in the protests organised by Adivasi Samanvay Manch, said activist Praful Vasava.

"The state government is forcibly taking away farm land owned by tribals that forms the basis of their livelihood in the name of development projects," he alleged.

He said a large number of tribals were displaced because of the projects.

"We demand that the government grant us rights under the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act," he said.

When asked about protests, Narmada district superintendent of police Himkar Singh said tribals marked the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Day on Sunday.

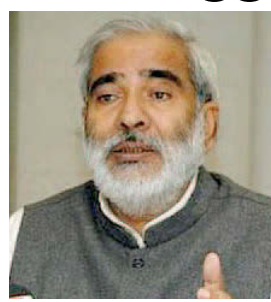
"They just came out of their houses on road to protest and they did so peacefully. Similar events were organised all over the district and in other parts of Gujarat," the police officer said. — PTI

Raghuvansh Prasad Singh: A perfect blend of rustic aggression and learning

Patna, Sept. 13: Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, the veteran socialist leader, who announced his decision to quit the RJD from his hospital bed just four days before his death, was an inimitable blend of rustic aggression and learning, qualities that helped him carve a niche for himself in Bihar politics.

For years he lived under the shadow of his alter ego, RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, while they together negotiated the choppy waters of state and national politics, but was not quite overshadowed by his leader.

An astute legislator, Singh would fish out Practice and Procedure of Parliament written by M.



Raghuvansh Prasad Singh

N. Kaul and S.L. Shukdhakar whenever a tricky situation arose, almost instinctively open the relevant page that would have the answer to end a logjam, and begin reading out in his quirky Hinglish that many found hilarious. No amount of interruption by fellow parliamentarians would deter him from completing what he had set out to say.

Behind the rough and ready visage lay the analytical mind of a mathematician professor who always had his leader's ears.

Singh, however, died a disillusioned man and put in his papers from his hospital bed at AIIMS, New Delhi, on Thursday. "Since the death of Jannayak Karpoori Thakur, I stood behind you for 32 years, but not now," he said in his brief one-line resignation letter to Prasad, who is serving sentences in four fodder scam cases in Ranchi.

In the footnote, the once staunch Prasad loyalist, added, "I got the affection of party leaders and work-

ers, besides common people. Please forgive me."

Thakur was a prominent socialist leader and former state chief minister.

Hours later, Prasad wrote back from jail in complete disbelief.

Singh cut his teeth in politics in Samyukta Socialist Party, before he became a member of the Bihar assembly in 1977.

He represented Belsand assembly seat multiple times and was also the chairman of the Bihar Legislative Council before making his Lok Sabha debut in 1996. It was under his stewardship of the Union Rural Development Ministry that NREGA, the flagship rural livelihood scheme, was implemented. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

4 smugglers held with leopard skins

Bhubaneswar: Odisha's forest department personnel on Sunday seized three leopard skins and arrested four youths in Nabarangpur district on charges of smuggling. Forest officer Magar Dhanaji Raose told media persons that a special team intercepted a motorcycle in an area bordering Kalahandi and Nabarangpur districts at around 11.30 am, one leopard skin was recovered from the two motorists. The forest personnel then arrested the two youths riding the motorcycle. Another team frisked a two-wheeler near Usuripadar Chhak under Nandahandi block in Nabarangpur district at around 3:30 pm. During the search the Forest personnel recovered two leopard skins from the motorcycle and arrested another two youths, said Raose.

Mantri, MP admitted to Covid hospital

Bhubaneswar: Odisha textiles, handlooms and handicrafts minister Padmini Dian and her husband Sadashib Dian and Nabarangpur Lok Sabha member Ramesh Chandra Majhi who tested positive for coronavirus earlier last week, were on Sunday shifted to Covid hospital in the state capital after they complained of difficulty in breathing. Ms Dain, her husband, son and nephew tested positive for the virus on September 3 following which they were under home isolation. When the minister and her husband faced difficulty in breathing late on Saturday evening, they were shifted to Covid hospital at Jeypore in Koraput district and later sent to SUM Covid Hospital in Bhubaneswar.

Tiger found dead in Maha sanctuary

Nagpur: A sub-adult male tiger was found dead in Umred Pauni Karhandla wildlife sanctuary in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, a forest official said on Sunday. The carcass of the two-year-old big cat was spotted by forest staff on Saturday during patrolling in Kuhl wildlife range, Field Director, Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Ravikiran Govekar said in a release. "The dead tiger was one of three sub-adult cubs of female tiger T17," it said. Prima facie, the death might have caused due to internecine fight, the release said. "Movements of adult male tiger T22 from Bramhapuri were recently captured in this area," it added. — PTI

Interest-free loans for Gujarat women

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat government on Sunday said it will launch a special scheme to provide interest-free loans to promote self-employment among women in the time of Covid-19 pandemic on September 17. Under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Kalyan Scheme (MMKS), loans of '1 lakh will be given to women self-help groups (SHGs) each comprising 10 members, an official release said. The state government will bear the interest burden on loans, it said. A total of one lakh such SHGs — 50,000 each in rural and urban areas — will be granted loans under the scheme, it said. "The Gujarat government has decided to introduce a scheme to provide loan sans interest to women to make them self-employed. The scheme will help women to become self-reliant and will enable them to help their families to cope with finances in the time of coronavirus pandemic," the release said. — PTI

Karna govt failed to fight Covid: Cong

Mangaluru: Karnataka is witnessing an alarming increase in the number of coronavirus cases as the state government has totally 'failed' to handle the pandemic crisis, working president of state Congress, Saleem Ahmed said on Sunday. Addressing reporters here, Ahmed, who is on a tour of the southern states to review the Congress party's 'Arogya Hasta' programme, alleged that there was complete lack of coordination among different departments to tackle the crisis. Ahmed said the state government has not yet responded to the charges of misappropriation of funds meant for Covid-19 care and the irregularities in purchase of equipment. — PTI

Kangana meets Maha gov amid row with Sena

Mumbai, Sept. 13: Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut, who is locked in a bitter battle with the ruling Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, met state Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari here on Sunday to apprise him of the "injustice" done to her.

She said she explained to the governor her "point of view" and sought "justice".

The meeting took place days after the Sena-ruled Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) demolished alleged illegal alterations at Kangana's bungalow at Pali Hill in suburban Bandra following a verbal spat between the ruling party and her over her remarks on Mumbai and the city police.

Talking to reporters after the meeting at Raj Bhavan, the actor said, "I met the governor. He heard me as a daughter. I came to meet him as a citizen. I have nothing to do with politics." "I told him about the injustice meted out to me and what happened was improper. It was indecent behaviour," she said.

Kangana was accompanied by her sister Rangoli Chandel. Both of them removed their masks for clicking photos when they met the governor. Kangana bowed to touch Koshyari's feet. About the meeting, she later tweeted, "A short while ago, I met his Excellency the Governor of Maharashtra Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari ji. I explained my point of view to him and also requested that justice be given to me. It will restore faith of common citizen and particularly daughters in the system."

The trouble between the Sena and Kangana started

Sena trains guns on Akshay, slams Bollywood over silence

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, SEPT. 13

The Shiv Sena has now trained guns on actor Akshay Kumar asking why other Bollywood stars are silent about the conspiracy to defame Mumbai. "Not all, but at least half of them should have expressed their views about Mumbai's defamation and said Kangana Ranaut's stand was not that of the entire Hindi film industry. Is Mumbai only for making money to them?" asked Sena MP Sanjay Raut.

Mumbai has given them everything. The bigger artists like Akshay Kumar should have come forward for Mumbai. But they feel pain when it comes to expressing gratitude for Mumbai, he said in his weekly column Rokhtok (forthright) in the Sena mouthpiece Saamana on Sunday.

Referring to Kangana's statements, Mr Raut said, "An actress calls Mumbai as Pakistan. She uses derogatory language

against the Chief Minister of Maharashtra by sitting in Mumbai, but the people of the state should not react on it. What kind of one-sided freedom is this?"

The Sena MP alleged that there are systematic efforts to undermine the importance of Mumbai. Its continuous defamation is a part of this conspiracy. Some people think that Maharashtra will automatically collapse by damaging the glory of Mumbai, he added.

Mr Raut also slammed the Maharashtra BJP for supporting Kangana in this matter. "It is really unfortunate that the BJP, which is the main opposition party in the state, has stood behind the actress, who has called Mumbai as Pakistan and BMC as Babar. They want to win elections in Bihar by backing Kangana. For this, it is okay for them to insult Maharashtra. Not a single Marathi Union minister in Delhi has felt bad about Maharashtra's insult, he said.

after the actor recently said she feared the Mumbai police more than the "movie mafia" and likened the Maharashtra capital to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Reacting to her statement, Sena leader Sanjay Raut had purportedly said, "We kindly request her not to come to Mumbai. This is nothing but an insult to Mumbai Police."

The 33-year-old actor,

who returned to Mumbai on Wednesday from her home state Himachal Pradesh the same day her house was partially demolished by the civic body, had alleged that the Maharashtra government was targeting her because of her clash with the Sena. She had also criticised Maharashtra chief minister and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray.

— PTI



Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut (left) with Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai on Sunday.

— PTI

Will face all political storms: Uddhav

SONU SHRIVASTAVA MUMBAI, SEPT. 13

Maharashtra chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday assured that he would fight with Coronavirus infection as well as all political storms in the state. While addressing the people through social media, Mr Thackeray announced to start a campaign 'My Family, My Responsibility' from September 15. Meanwhile, calling CM's address a big disappointment, the BJP said people were expecting him to explain the government's roadmap to tackle rising number of cases and deaths due to Covid-19. Despite the worsening situation in the state, the CM was seen



Uddhav Thackeray

only praising himself, the opposition party said.

Mr Thackeray has been facing flak from detractors on both political and coronavirus fronts. He said a conspiracy is afoot to malign Maharashtra. "Whatever political storms come, I will face... I will fight coronavirus too," said the chief minis-

ter. A day after Covid-19 infection cases in Maharashtra crossed the 10-lakh mark, Mr Thackeray said his government has done effective work to tackle the pandemic.

Speaking in the backdrop of political criticism over demolition of actress Kangana Ranaut's bungalow in Mumbai and the way his government handled the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, Mr Thackeray assured people that he would fight the political crisis too. "I will have to remove the mask of Chief Minister to respond to politics. I don't speak, it does not mean I don't have answers," Mr Thackeray said.

Speaking on the state government's "Mission

Begin Again" campaign during the pandemic, Thackeray said his administration effectively tackled the Covid-19 situation, cyclones and floods and will also deal with the political storm with people's support.

The chief minister said his government was doing its best to deal with all challenges. "We should share our responsibilities to make the 'my family, my responsibility' campaign (against coronavirus) which begins on September 15 a success. This war can be won only with people's wholehearted support," he said. It is not feasible for the government to undertake check-up of each and every one of the 12 crore populace of the state, he said.

Flyers can take photos, videos during flights but...

Recording equipment can't be used: DGCA

New Delhi, Sept. 13: Aviation regulator DGCA "clarified" on Sunday passengers can take photos and videos inside flights but can't use any recording equipment that creates chaos, disrupts flight operations, violates safety norms or is banned by the crew members.

On Saturday, the regulator had said that a scheduled flight will be suspended for a period of two weeks if anyone is found taking photographs inside the plane.

Two days back, the Directorate General of

Civil Aviation had asked IndiGo to take "appropriate action" after it found alleged violation of safety and social-distancing protocols by mediapersons in the airline's Chandigarh-Mumbai flight that had actor Kangana Ranaut as a passenger.

According to a video of the incident that took place inside the flight on September 9, reporters and cameramen were jostling and bunching up to get a comment from Ranaut, who was sitting in one of the front rows of the plane.

The DGCA order on Sunday "clarified that a bona fide passenger travelling in an aircraft engaged in scheduled air transport services may do still and video photography from inside such an aircraft while in flight; take off and landing" as per its circular dated December 9, 2004.

"However, this permission does not include use of any recording equipment which imperils or compromises air safety; violates prevalent norms; creates chaos or disruption during operation of flight or expressly prohib-

ited by crew," the order noted.

Action may be initiated against those persons found in violation of above guidelines, the order added.

The Sunday order is a clarification on top of the Saturday order that said, "It has been decided that from now on, incase any violation (photography) occurs on any scheduled passenger aircraft - the schedule of flight for that particular route shall be suspended for a period of two weeks from the next day (of the incident)."

Nepal plays games on India

■ Continued from Page 1 residing in Kuti, Nabhi and Gunji villages — located a few kilometres from Kalapani territory in Pithoragarh district — asking them to consider shifting loyalties to Nepal.

The locals of these three Indian villages, located at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, who share a "roti-beti" relationship with the people of Darchula in Nepal, are getting multiple calls from people on the other side asking them to consider the "irresistible offer".

Information reaching Indian security agencies is that these agents have been either been making calls directly to the villagers, claiming to be their "well-wishers", or taking the other easy way of making the locals of Darchula speak with their friends and relatives in the three villages.

For decades, people on both sides have remained in constant touch with each other, hopping in and out of Indian territory almost every day as they either have business links or relatives on the other side. Many Indian girls have married into Nepali families in Darchula and elsewhere in Nepal.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the India-Nepal border has been sealed for the past few months.

People on both sides communicate with each other using Nepal Telecom SIM cards.

Shelter home case: CBI to file chargesheet against UP babus

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

The CBI, probing the alleged sexual exploitation of minor girls at a shelter home in Deoria district in Uttar Pradesh, is all set to file chargesheet against four senior public servants of the state government and several private persons. Besides, the agency will recommend departmental action against lower level officials of the state government.

According to sources, investigation by the agency has revealed that these public servants allegedly released funds worth several crores to the accused NGO without any physical audit. "Despite serious complaints pertaining to the alleged financial irregularities

against the Deoria-based NGO—Maa Vindhyavasini Mahila Evam Balika Sanrakshan Griha—, senior public servants of the revenue department of the state government kept on releasing funds to the shelter home. The accused NGO was running the shelter home", sources said. The central probe agency will mention names of at least four senior public servants and others in its chargesheet, that will be filed very soon, they added.

"It's a matter of serious concern that government funds were released to the NGO without any physical audit by the senior public servants", sources said. The CBI had registered two FIRs against Girija Tripathi and Superintendent Kanchan Lata Tripathi of the Maa

Vindhyavasini Mahila Evam Balika Sanrakshan Griha, Deoria in connection with the case. The charges slapped in the CBI FIRs pertain to wrongful confinement, trafficking, sexual harassment, sexual assault, assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty under IPC, provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences and Juvenile Justice Act among others.

The CBI registered FIRs based on the cases registered by the UP Police. The CBI is already probing a similar case pertaining to the alleged sexual exploitation of children at a shelter home in Muzaffarpur (Bihar). Uttar Pradesh government had recommended a CBI probe into the matter.

Military talks will show if PLA is ready to disengage

■ Continued from Page 1 Chinese use negotiations to gain time, strengthen positions on the ground and keep the adversary guessing about their real intentions. Troops need to remain fully alert, stand firm and not be lulled by diplomatic talks," he added.

This will be the sixth round of corps commanders' talks between the two sides. A major general-level meeting was also held on August 8 at Daulat Beg

Oldie to discuss disengagement at the strategic Depsang plains.

The last and fifth corps commanders' meeting was held on August 2 at Moldo, where the Chinese had refused to go back from the Finger area in Pangong Tso. The Chinese side also did not meet its earlier commitment to disengage in other standoff points, including Gogra Post. There was a feeling that the Chinese side was using the corps command-

ers meeting to buy time to strengthen their positions in the transgression areas.

However, the situation changed after August 29-30 when India occupied some strategic peaks in the Chushul sector, which overlook the Chinese garrison in Moldo. In the Finger area in Pangong Tso, Indian soldiers are now at several points which are higher than the Chinese positions on the ridgelines of Finger 4.

WEST BENGAL
BJP worker's body found hanging from a tree

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, SEPT. 13

A BJP worker was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Hooghly of West Bengal on Sunday morning. Ganesh Roy, the deceased, was a booth level worker of the party. The body, with legs bent and apparently touching the ground almost, was hanging from a tree, one and half km away from his home. A noose was tied around the neck of Roy, in his mid fifties.

The police later recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. Roy's family members said that he went out of home at Khanati village in Goghat on Saturday afternoon but he did not return. According to them, he was murdered by the Trinamul Congress which they claimed was threatening him with dire consequences before the Lok Sabha Elections last year.

Echoing them state BJP president Dilip Ghosh also accused the ruling Trinamul Congress of killing Roy in cold blood and then hanging the body to pass it as a case of suicide.

"It has become a new practice to kill our party workers and hang their bodies by the ruling party. We will organise a strong protest against it across the state."

‘Recovered Covid patients should follow Pranayam’

New Delhi, Sept. 13: Yogasana, Pranayama, meditation and intake of chyawanprash are among some of the suggestions given by the Union health ministry in its new management protocol for patients who have recovered from Covid-19.

Calling for a holistic approach for follow-up care and well-being of all post-Covid recovered patients, the health ministry said such patients must continue Covid appropriate behaviour by use of mask, hand and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing.

The protocol provides an approach for managing patients who have recovered from Covid-19 for care at home. However, the procedure is not meant to be seen as preventive or as a curative therapy. The recovery period is likely to be longer for patients who suffered from more severe form of the disease and those with pre-existing illness, it said.

At individual level, the protocol suggested drinking adequate amount of warm water (if not contra-indicated), taking immunity promoting AYUSH medicine prescribed by a qualified practitioner of AYUSH and if health permits then regular household work to be done. It advised people to resume professional work in a graded manner.

■ DAILY PRACTICE of Yogasana, Pranayama and meditation, as much as health permits or as prescribed, breathing exercises as prescribed by treating physician and daily morning or evening walk at a comfortable pace as tolerated are among other measures

Daily practice of Yogasana, Pranayama and meditation, as much as health permits or as prescribed, breathing exercises as prescribed by treating physician and daily morning or evening walk at a comfortable pace as tolerated were among other measures.

The protocol also called for self-health monitoring at home of temperature, blood pressure, blood sugar (especially if diabetic), pulse oximetry etc (if medically advised).

"If there is persistent dry cough/sore throat, do saline gargles and take steam inhalation. The addition of herbs/spices for gargling/steam inhalation. Cough medications, should be taken on advice of medical doctor or qualified practitioner of Ayush. Look for early warning signs like high grade fever, breathlessness, unexplained chest pain, new onset of confusion, focal weakness," it said. — PTI

Opposition seeks LS debate on LAC, jobs, eco slowdown

■ Continued from Page 1 Sabha on the China border and the state of the economy. He also mentioned the closure of businesses and the state of the MSME industry, the handling of the Covid pandemic and other issues like airport privatisation, the draft EIA notification. "We hope that the Opposition would get an opportunity to speak and serious national issues will be discussed. We expect the PM to be present in the Lok Sabha and

Rajya Sabha and respond to the questions raised by us," he said at a virtual press conference.

Meanwhile, Parliament is fully geared up for the 18-day session from Monday under the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic with many firsts, including sitting of the two Houses in shifts without any day off, entry only to those with a negative Covid-19 report and the compulsory wearing of masks. Most parliamentary operations have been

digitalised, the entire premises sanitised and all doors made touch-free.

The first-of-its-kind Monsoon Session will see the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha sitting in two different shifts, while special seating arrangements for MPs in adherence to social distancing rules. Barring the first day, the Rajya Sabha will convene in the morning shift from 9 am till 1 pm, and the Lok Sabha in the evening shift from 3 pm to 7 pm. — PTI

THE ASIAN AGE

14 SEPTEMBER 2020

It's status quo once again for Congress

The latest recast of the Congress leadership by its president Sonia Gandhi seems to be in line with the saying “the more you change, the more you remain the same”. The party has chosen to return to ad hocism, a strategy which has helped it float at many critical times but weakened it every time. Ms Gandhi, who returned to her post after being ‘interim president’ for a year, has picked the same people who have been at the helm of the party all these years, to assist her. The Congress Working Committee (CWC), once the most powerful political forum in the country, sees no change that reflects the changed political reality of the country.

The exercise comes in the background of 23 senior party leaders writing a letter to Ms Gandhi demanding that the party have a full-time president who can inspire the party cadre, more freedom to state units and election to the state units. It is to the credit of Ms Gandhi that she has included

It is disappointing that the grand old party of Indian politics has chosen to ignore the signals that emanate from the ground asking it to reinvent itself and be the bulwark of resistance to the right wing politics that is bent on undoing every single block with which the republic is built

some of the letter writers, including veteran face Ghulam Nabi Azad and Jitendra Prasad, members of the CWC. She, however, dropped them from the new arrangement which will advise her on “organisational and operational” matters. That articulate faces of the party such as Dr Shashi Tharoor, who has been an effective voice of the party within Parliament where it is a famished lot, and outside

has not been accommodated in any of the new committees, is a signal that the rebels will find it tough to go further up in the party hierarchy if they raise their voice for more democratisation. The party seems to have no

plans to brook dissidence if it is aimed at its first family.

It is disappointing that the grand old party of Indian politics has chosen to ignore the signals that emanate from the ground asking it to reinvent itself and be the bulwark of resistance to the right wing politics that is bent on undoing every single block with which the republic is built. Instead of looking for fresh faces that can inject new enthusiasm into the minds of the party workers whom one would be able to find in every village, the choice of leadership has remained a game of musical chairs.

A series of challenges of unprecedented magnitude and reach, each one with a firepower that can seriously damage its future, faces India and the government and the party that leads it have conveniently chosen to ignore each one of it. It is estimated that India will have the most number of Covid infections by mid-October. The economy has been in tatters and the pandemic has pushed it further down. The border issue is far from over, though the determined efforts of the Armed Forces have been able to checkmate the enemy at the border. The country deserves an Opposition which can hold the government accountable to Parliament and the people, and the Congress has the leading roles in ensuring it. A vibrant and elected leadership alone can ensure it.

Vilification campaign

It turned out to be a false alarm. First, a tweet by the Swaraj Abhiyan leader and then a clarification issued by Delhi Police have confirmed that Yogendra Yadav, Sitaram Yechury, Jayati Ghosh and Apoorvanand have not been arraigned as accused in a supplementary chargesheet filed in connection with the death of a 17-year-old in the February riots in Delhi. It does raise a few uncomfortable queries, though, pertaining to both the source and the process resulting in the misleading news flash by the agency.

The leaders and activists, however, have been named in unauthenticated disclosure statements obtained by police from the accused and which form part of the chargesheet. It is not admissible in court but can form the basis of legal action against these individuals should there be found, or concocted, corroborative evidence. Prima facie, the allegation against them is about “provoking and mobilising” the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests in Jaffrabad on February 22. But since they were perfectly within their rights to criticise and rally public opinion against CAA, it is no more than the government’s political position on the matter. “Maligning the image of the government”, to quote from the second chargesheet, is no offence under the law.

The Delhi Police investigation into the riots has been loudly condemned by this newspaper for being shoddy in the extreme and ideologically charged. The original chargesheet was against Pinjra Tod members Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal, and Jamia Millia Islamia’s Gulfisha Fathima. Incredibly though it may appear to be, they are now being accused of instigating an unknown person to shoot Amaan, the 17-year-old riot victim. Curiously or not, Kalita and Narwal have written, “I refuse to sign”, in some pages of the statements in the new chargesheet.

Recently, hearing a bail plea by her, the Delhi high court held that there is no evidence against Kalita of participating in any conspiracy. Clearly, these new “revelations” strategically hyped by the police is part of its partisan agenda to discredit the anti-CAA movement, discourage new participants and intimidate, harass and harm the protesters.

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T. VENKATRAM REDDY

Editor in Chief

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THE ASIAN AGE offices are located at:
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 25211124.

Mumbai: Sigma House, # 43, Ground Floor, R. A. Kidwai Marg, Near Wadala Rly Station, Wadala (West), Mumbai - 400 031 Phone (022) 24195301 Fax (022) 24195347

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Subhani

Staring at Dragon's eyes: India must stay on guard



Ruchi Ghanashyam

The fire that was lit by the Chinese in the Galwan Valley on June 15 continues to smoulder in eastern Ladakh. The worst incident of violence on the India-China border since 1967 claimed the lives of 20 Indian soldiers. Several weeks later, many efforts to resolve the situation are yet to yield the desired results. India has demanded China restore the status quo, while China blames India, claiming sovereignty over the area.

This is the second India-China standoff in recent memory. The tussle between the two militaries in Doklam in 2017 is still fresh in our memory. The Chinese attitude towards India has been evident for years, if not decades. Covert Chinese backing for anti-India groups in the Northeast has been known for long. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, its tight embrace of Pakistan, including support at the UN for Pakistan-based terrorist Masood Azhar, are mirrored in its anti-India activities elsewhere in our neighbourhood. Each of India's neighbours is vulnerable to Chinese stratagems: Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives or Bhutan.

China's aggressiveness isn't restricted to India's neighbourhood. Its activities in the South China Sea have alienated much of Southeast Asia, and raised alarm bells in several Western capitals. Its bellicose approach to Taiwan hasn't gone unnoticed in Washington or elsewhere. Even worse is its approach towards Hong Kong, where it is systematically undermining the “One country, two systems” principle, which was the basis for the governance of Hong Kong and Macau since they became China's

Special Administrative Regions in the late-1990s. Britain has taken the lead to speak out against the draconian security law that China imposed on Hong Kong in July.

Human rights violations across China are another issue that bothers the West. The heavy-handed tackling of unarmed protesters in Hong Kong was brought into the world's living rooms by international TV channels. The treatment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang province has alarmed not only the West but also Central Asia.

China has demonstrated a voracious economic appetite. Of late, it has increasingly given direct loans and trade credits to developing nations, much beyond their capacity to pay back. One report claims it has given \$1.5 trillion in such loans and credits to over 150 countries, and more than 50 developing nations owe more than 15 per cent of their GDP to China. It eyes the assets of nations unable to service their debts, though the Chinese media denies this.

China's approach to trade is no less aggressive. The United States and China are engaged in what is described as a trade war, while European and other countries are concerned over China's single-minded approach. Chinese companies like Huawei and many Chinese apps are increasingly attracting greater scrutiny. India, too, has taken action to ban several of these apps.

While disliking China's political and economic approach, most countries have looked the other way due to their growing dependence on Chinese finance and investments. The tipping point may have been reached as the world struggles to cope with the human and economic impact of the coronavirus that has brought most developed countries

virtually to their knees.

India faces a challenge from China on its borders. It also has an opportunity to engage with a world that is increasingly uncomfortable with China's actions. The engagement among the “Quadrilateral” (India, Australia, Japan and the US) has been revitalised. It is time that the “Quad” is expanded to include Britain, that has a direct interest in Hong Kong and is a long-time maritime power. In addition, Britain has a good understanding of this region. France can similarly bring greater depth to this initiative. Closer coordination between the Quad and Southeast Asia must also be on our agenda. Our engagements shouldn't be limited to the Indo-Pacific; strengthening ties with Central Asian nations should also be an important objective.

These efforts shouldn't be seen or projected as “anti-China”, and such coordination is vital to maintain secure and peaceful maritime movement in the Indo-Pacific. It could benefit development of the “blue economy”, studying the impact of climate change and disaster relief and management. Our engagements with the Quad also shouldn't be seen as a panacea for our border problems with China. We must resolve the current situation with China through dialogue, but our engagement with China must firmly convey our resolve to defend our sovereignty. India's preference for peace should not be mistaken for military inability or unwillingness. This “red line” must be understood by the Chinese. Within the bounds of this position, the creativity of our diplomats and policymakers can try and find a solution that is acceptable to both sides and which the Chinese leadership can take back to their people

The Chinese seem to have opened too many fronts. Despite its strength and power, China today seems to have few friends in the world.

without appearing to have surrendered or backtracked.

In war and diplomacy, it is always advisable not to open too many fronts simultaneously. The Chinese seem to have opened too many fronts. Despite its strength and power, China today seems to have few friends in the world. It's efforts to encircle India may have had dubious success, but its own overambition, bordering on arrogance, has led to the near encirclement of China itself.

Is it an arrogant misjudgement on China's part, which made it supremely confident of handling such widespread unhappiness of its actions across the globe? Somehow, it's difficult to accept that Chinese policymakers could have been so naive. Some blame internal struggle and dissonance within the Chinese leadership for the current overstretch. Others point to the centenary of the Communist Party of China next year and the desire of the leadership in Beijing to deliver the Chinese vision of itself as a great superpower at this important landmark. Covid-19's appearance as China is preparing to deliver this vision; its actions in Ladakh and other places while the rest of the world is preoccupied with the Wuhan virus could be a coincidence, unless the macho Chinese behaviour in Ladakh and south of its borders is aimed at diverting the attention of its own people.

China is busy spreading its wings. From Hambantota to Gwadar, from Djibouti to Greece's Piraeus Port, and now its efforts to establish its footprint in the islands of southern Italy, combined with its increasing assertiveness in Hong Kong, the South China Sea and Ladakh, paint a picture of a China that has decided its time has come. India must remain on guard, both militarily and diplomatically. When it comes to the crunch, our battles are our own!

The writer is a retired IFS officer who recently served as India's high commissioner to Britain

LETTERS

MALA FIDE PROBE

The Delhi Police's chargesheet linking Sitaram Yechury, Yogendra Yadav, economist Jayati Ghosh and others to the Delhi riots is a bid to misuse state power to target the Opposition. This proves the mala fide nature of Delhi Police investigation which let off BJP leaders like Kapil Mishra and Parvesh Verma despite their making incendiary speeches that triggered the bloodbath. It is partisan and beyond atrocious.

Sankar Paul
Chakdah, West Bengal

GO, AFGHANS

THE OPENING OF THE peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government in Qatar after nearly two decades is a historic step. Long years of conflict had left the Afghans battered and cast a shadow on the country's future. US secretary of state Mike Pompeo and other world leaders have urged for peace ahead of the negotiations. The Taliban is expected to hold out an olive branch to the Afghan government in exchange for release of its jailed fighters. More power to the Afghans' elbow!

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

MOVE EMBASSY

AS THE ONCE ARCH ENEMIES of Israel like Egypt, Jordan, UAE and now, Bahrain, have recognised the Jewish State, can India do its bit in this regard? Though New Delhi has established full-fledged diplomatic relations with Israel about a quarter century ago, it has not yet recognised Jerusalem as its capital. Till recently, it was the Muslim countries that used to dictate India's foreign policies. Should India not think of shifting its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem?

Arum Malankar
Mumbai

AUTHENTIC GRAVITAS

SALUTE TO THE upright humanitarian who resisted poisonous Hindutva in preference to the divine spiritualism which enlightens the consciousness. He advocated opening of the Puri Jagannath temple to non-Hindus and was also deemed a Naxalite sympathiser. He was even boycotted by Arya Samaj for participating in Bigg Boss. Goodbye, Swami Agnivesh!

Kajal Chatterjee
Kolkata

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to M.C. Joshi (Sep. 13). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Kishwar Desai

London Diary

Apocalypse just around corner, Rule of Six can't ward it off

A big shock this week was the pause of the human trials for the “Oxford vaccine” as it is now known, when one volunteer fell ill. The vaccine is our eagerly awaited “Christmas present” ever since Prime Minister Boris Johnson had said there would be a vaccine by the end of the year, and we were dreaming of an unmasked Christmas. And now more sobering information comes to us that even vaccines which reach the human trial stage have only a 20 per cent chance of success and no one knows out of the five vaccine candidates that Britain has lined up—which one will eventually triumph. In any case no country plans to vaccinate the whole population—so new rules will have to be drawn up. Rule Britannia, as they say!

But in these disrupted times, when everyone is stuck at home (and I have always maintained that I don't mind at all as I am now doing the final edit of my new book in which I will be slobberingly grateful to “self isolation”) — the

two sections of society who will always appreciate WFH are women and authors. For once I am in the winning team — being a woman and an author!

But meanwhile, we are now seeing The Return of Carona in the UK. This is a horrifying sequel to the first act. Covid cases are doubling every week and the dreaded R number is 1.7. As it happens, schools are starting again and within a fortnight universities will reopen. The government already looks indecisive as it did last April. Now it keeps on changing its mind as frequently as the weather changes. Can we blame them? There is no ready-made solution — and even those subjects which may have a solution such as Brexit are being tossed around. I always think of Boris as a “jolly” leader who somehow thinks that if you remain optimistic the problem will disappear. But Brexit plus Carona equals Chaos. Right now, the country looks unprepared for

the apocalypse round the corner.

But when in doubt invent a new rule! Rule Britannia! A new rule says that only six persons can gather together indoors or outdoors. So all those restaurants and pubs which did a roaring trade in the summer will be back under wraps. Offices were about to reopen and London transport would have carried more passengers on the underground. But now this has been put under a cloud. Of course before it comes into effect on Monday the weekend will be full of crowded beaches, pubs and restaurant. The stiff upper lip of the quietly obedient Briton is nowhere to be found, and instead we see lips firmly wrapped around beer glasses.

Indeed one argument is that it was the haste with which the government relaxed the lockdown to help the economy that may have caused the resurgence of the infection. For the first time since he became Chancellor, Rishi Sunak is

being questioned about the wisdom of his Eat Out to Help Out Policy which gave customers price cuts in restaurants for each meal they had on selected days of the week. And the opening of the pubs would have added to the return of Covid. But as has often happened since the epidemic started, scientists, civil servants, politicians have not agreed on anything. “The Rule of Six” sounds suspiciously like a Sherlock Holmes mystery — and possibly will remain one.

Of course football resumed this weekend but without spectators just as it was during the last season. People will still watch it online and at least there will something to talk about on Monday morning when they meet their mates or crowd out the phone lines of radio talk shows. The English male talks more about football than any other topic over the weekend — before the match on Saturday and then after final whistle and over the entire weekend

ending at Monday lunchtime.

But what about theatre? How many of us are prepared walk into a theatre to watch a play about Covid-19? At least it will be a live performance with properly socially distanced seating. Well, some people have done exactly that because Ralph Fiennes is enacting the role of a Covid patient at a time the government dithers over the next step, at the Bridge theatre. The playwright of *Beat the Devil* is David Hare — who apparently did get the infection — and then was inspired to write the play. Perhaps it is a great idea to stage this monologue — but honestly, even though the combination of Fiennes and Hare are dynamite, right now a monologue on Covid is the last thing I need.

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. Her latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life and Times of Devika Rani, will be out by November.

IN BRIEF

Swiss cops break up party

Geneva: Police in the Swiss capital Bern said they used water cannon and rubber bullets to disperse a crowd of mostly young people holding an illegal “street carnival”. Several hundred people gathered late Saturday in the northeast of the city around cars blaring music and floats. A huge banner in French read “Street Carnival”, according to a photo on aurka.com, the website of a Swiss photographer who specialises in demonstrations and street art. Police said they intervened when those taking part began heading toward the city centre and throwing bottles and stones at officers. It was not immediately clear why the gathering was deemed illegal. Demonstrators “set up barricades and set off fireworks”, a police statement said.

Vatican: Return to in-person Mass

Vatican City: The Vatican has said it was “necessary and urgent” to return to in-person Masses as soon as anti-Coronavirus measures permit. The head of the Vatican’s liturgy office, Cardinal Robert Sarah, on Saturday said in a letter to bishops conferences that virtual liturgies, while useful, were no replacement for the real thing. He said physical presence by the faithful in churches was “vital, indispensable, irreplaceable”. While some Catholic priests claimed Coronavirus lockdowns that shuttered churches infringed on religious liberties, Pope Francis has adhered to Italy’s strict lockdown. He halted all public Masses at the Vatican, livestreamed his morning liturgies during the peak of Italy’s outbreak, and at one point even admonished priests who balked at the measures for their “adolescent resistance”. The Vatican said on Saturday that Francis had approved Sarah’s letter to bishops conferences.

Protest outside Netanyahu house

Jerusalem: Thousands of Israelis demonstrated outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s official residence in central Jerusalem late Saturday, demanding he resign over his trial on corruption charges and what is widely seen as his mishandling of the Coronavirus pandemic. With Israel reporting record levels of new Coronavirus cases each day, the country appears to be headed toward a nationwide lockdown this week ahead of the Jewish New Year. Saturday’s demonstration came a day after Israel announced an agreement to establish diplomatic relations with Bahrain, the second Arab country to normalise ties with Israel in under a month and just the fourth overall. But the surprise announcement had little effect on the thousands of demonstrators gathering outside Netanyahu’s residence every Saturday throughout the summer to protest his corruption trial, handling of the health crisis and the resulting economic pain.

PHILIPPINES DEPORTS U.S. MARINE

Manila, Sept. 13: A US Marine convicted of killing a Filipino transgender woman was deported Sunday after a presidential pardon cut short his detention in a case that renewed outrage over a pact governing American military presence in the Philippines. Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton left a message to President Rodrigo Duterte and to the family of Jennifer Laude, who he was convicted of killing in 2014 after finding out that she was a transgender in a motel northwest of Manila. The message’s content will be released after his departure, his lawyer, Rowena Garcia-Flores, said. Philippine immigration officers and American security personnel escorted the 25-year-old Marine from his cell in the main military camp in metropolitan Manila to the airport, where he boarded a military aircraft. Ahead of the flight, he was subjected to a Coronavirus test, which turned negative, immigration spokeswoman Dana Sandoval said. “He’s been successfully deported,” Sandoval said. On Monday, Duterte granted an “absolute and unconditional pardon” to Pemberton in a move that caught many by surprise. The Philippine leader has long been a vocal critic of US security policies while reaching out to China and Russia.

Marching on in Minsk



Opposition supporters parade through the streets during a rally to protest against the presidential election results in Minsk on Saturday. Belarusians have been demonstrating against the disputed re-election of President Alexander Lukashenko for a month, with more than 100,000 people flooding the streets of Minsk for the four straight weekends.

— AFP

Afghan peace talks: The hard work begins

Search on for lasting ceasefire after decades of fighting

Doha, Sept. 13: Peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government negotiators get down to business Sunday, with the search for a lasting ceasefire one of many key issues up for discussion. A slick opening ceremony in the Qatari capital Doha on Saturday saw the Afghan government, and allies including the United States, call for a ceasefire. But the Taliban, who have fought a guerrilla campaign against both since they were forced from power in 2001, did not mention a truce as they came to the negotiating table. The head of the peace process for the Afghan government suggested to AFP that the Taliban could offer a ceasefire in

exchange for the release of more of their jailed fighters. “This could be one of their ideas or one of their demands,” said Abdullah Abdullah, the chairman of Afghanistan’s High Council for National Reconciliation. Negotiations will be arduous and messy, delegates warned during the opening ceremony, and are starting even as deadly violence continues to grip Afghanistan. “We will undoubtedly encounter many challenges in the talks over the coming days, weeks and months,” US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said as he called for the warring sides to “seize this opportunity” to secure peace.

— AFP

AFGHAN RESOLUTION IS THE KEY TO REGIONAL PEACE, SAYS IMRAN

SHAFQAT ALI ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 13

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday said successful culmination of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process was indispensable for Afghanistan and regional peace. In a Facebook post, the Prime Minister reiterated the determination that Pakistan will continue to remain in full support and solidarity with the Afghan people as they march forward in this consequential journey for peace and development. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Pervez Khattak

said Pakistan was committed to bring peace in Afghanistan. He termed resumption of intra-Afghan dialogue a good omen for the region. He said peace in Afghanistan is vital for the prosperity of Pakistan. Speaking about the national issues, the Defence Minister said the country had come out of the financial crisis and now the government had focused provision of relief to the people. Pervez Khattak said the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan will honour all pledges made with the people.

2 L.A. DEPUTIES SHOT, HUNT ON FOR ATTACKER

Compton (US), Sept. 13: The shooting of two Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies in an apparent ambush prompted a manhunt for the shooter, reaction from the President and protests outside the hospital where the wounded deputies were being treated Saturday night in California.

The 31-year-old female deputy and 24-year-old male deputy both underwent surgery Saturday evening, Sheriff Alex Villanueva said in a late-night news conference. Both graduated from the academy 14 months ago, he said. The deputies were shot while sitting in their patrol car at a Metro rail station and were able to radio for help, the sheriff said. Villanueva expressed frustration as he urged people to pray for the officers.

It sparked thousands of reactions, including from President Donald Trump, who responded, “Animals that must be hit hard!” — AP

Lens on foreign journos if giving ‘slanted view’ of Oz

Melbourne, Sept. 13: Foreign journalists working in Australia will come under the scrutiny of federal agencies if they provide a “slanted view” of the country, interfere with its democracy or steal the intellectual property, a senior minister warned on Sunday, amidst a diplomatic standoff with China. Australian Home Affairs Ministers Peter Dutton said there had been a concerted effort with Australian

federal police working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies to make sure that the government can address foreign interference wherever it may occur in the country. “If people are here as journalists and they’re reporting fairly on the news, then that’s fine. And if people are masquerading as journalists or business leaders or whoever they might be, and there’s

evidence that they are acting in a contrary to Australian law, then ASIO and AFP and other agencies will act,” Dutton said. “If there’s an attempt with interfering or conducting espionage-type activities, then we have a problem with that. But for a journalist coming into our country, applying scrutiny as anybody on your panel would today — we don’t have an issue,” he said. — PTI

Lanka Constitution Amendment faces internal resistance

Colombo, Sept. 13: The Sri Lankan government’s proposed 20th Constitution Amendment has faced internal resistance from within a faction of the ruling SLPP parliamentary group itself, ahead of its inclusion in Parliament’s order paper, the party members said on Sunday. The government on Sept. 2 gazetted the 20th Constitution Amendment draft, the new proposed legisla-

tion that would replace the 19th Amendment introduced in 2015 that curtailed the powers of the President and strengthened the role of Parliament. The 19A was seen as the most progressive pro-democracy reformist move since Sri Lanka came to be governed under the all-powerful executive presidency in 1978. It depoliticised the government administration by ensuring the indepe-

ndence of key pillars such as the judiciary, public service and elections. The 20th Amendment proposes to restore full legal immunity to the President, removing the provisions made in the 19A to take legal action against the President. The office of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa in a statement on Saturday night said that a nine-member ministerial committee has been appointed to review the 20A in its present form and, if needed, a fresh gazette will be issued. Ever since the government gazetted the 20A, some of the ruling SLPP’s own parliamentarians and the party’s allies have been publicly expressing unhappiness over its certain provisions, the party members said. If the 20A is implemented in its present form, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa

will be the hardest-hit as his current powers as the premier would be diminished with his younger brother and the President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, assuming full executive power, they said. Moreover, Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is also a two-time president, will not be able to contest for the presidential election again as the two term bar has been retained in the 20A draft,

the party members said. The draft legislation was to be placed in Parliament’s order book this week for debate and adaptation. However, it faced internal resistance from within a faction of the SLPP parliamentary group. And now, with Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is also the leader of the Sri Lanka People’s Party (SLPP), appointing a committee, this process could be delayed. — PTI

FILM | FEST

Hungarian Kornel Mundruczo’s 1st English foray *Pieces of A Woman* is set in Massachusetts

And the Oscar goes to... ‘Princess’ Venessa Kirby

SUPARNA SHARMA NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13

It doesn’t happen often, but when it does, it creates what we call “the magic of cinema”. Bringing to life characters and a world that simply didn’t exist before a writer conjured them up requires a unique mix of individual pursuit of brilliance, but also a *jugalbandi* of skill, daring and commitment with others. A director who can imagine and create it, an actor who can make us believe in it, a cinematographer who captures it and an editor who eventually decides

what we see, how, when, and for how long. No matter how well one of them does, creating that magic depends on what everyone does. Hungarian director Kornel Mundruczo’s first English language film, *Pieces of A Woman*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) on Saturday, strives for that kind of brilliance and achieves it in a bravura sequence that comes barely six minutes into the film and goes on for almost 24 minutes. Based on a screenplay by Kata Webber, *Pieces of A Woman* is set in Massachu-

setts, US, where Martha (Venessa Kirby), a slim, chic executive, and her construction worker husband Shaun (Shia LaBeouf) have planned a home birth for their first child. They have bought a baby-friendly car, a room with a crib is ready, and the midwife has been booked. September 17. There is slight chill in the air. Winter is coming. And so is the baby. Cinematographer Benjamin Loeb’s long, intimate sequence, shot by a hand-held camera, stays with Martha for the entirety of the birth of her baby. It starts with mild contrac-

tions, her water breaking, the contractions increasing and a replacement midwife turning up. In this sequence, where there are few, carefully-concealed cuts, the camera stays close to Martha as a helpless Shaun tries his best to be of some use. It zooms in when Martha needs a hand to squeeze and

steps back as she gets delirious with pain and says she smells something rotten. We feel as if we too are attached to her, bobbing around Martha gently in amniotic fluid along with her baby. Your hair will stand on its end when Martha screams in pain, her veins popping out as she tries to push the baby out. This visceral look at what child birth entails for a woman, eager and desperate to eject a piece of herself, is just the beginning of change — of Martha’s body and emotions. Venessa Kirby, most well-known for playing Princess

Margaret in Netflix’s *Crown*, is stripped of all veneer of glamour and even dialogue in *Pieces of A Woman* as she has to first let a child rip through her, and then cradle a tragedy that keeps taking her apart, bit by bit. Kirby carries this destruction, this loss in her body, in her silence, in her inability to tolerate even the most loving and benign of touches. They all feel as if they are taking a bite of her broken pieces. While Martha is pretending to live, a media and court room drama is playing out. But Martha is keeping everything and everybody at an arm’s

length. Her mother, Elizabeth (played with flinty self-assurance and infuriating interference by Ellen Burstyn), won’t have it. In the film’s second most powerful scene, Elizabeth tells her own story and the film again takes Martha apart so that she can piece herself back together. Though it’s too early to tell, but for now my prediction is that the next Oscar for best performance female will go to Venessa Kirby. And I won’t be surprised if Ellen Burstyn stands smiling next to her, holding her own golden knight.

China calls HK people held at sea ‘separatists’

US threat to world peace: China min

Beijing, Sept. 13: The 12 Hong Kong people arrested at sea by mainland authorities last month were separatists, a spokeswoman for China’s foreign ministry said on Sunday, in response to her US counterpart’s characterisation of the arrest as a deterioration of human rights.

The comment came a day after relatives of the detainees held a news conference in Hong Kong demanding the urgent return of the 12 who were intercepted by the Guangdong coast guard on Aug. 23 on a boat bound for Taiwan.

Donning masks and hats to shield their identities, they made their first public appeal for help and information on their relatives’ plight, pleading for them to be allowed to consult lawyers appointed by their families and not the Chinese government and to be allowed to call relatives in Hong Kong.

US State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus tweeted on Saturday that their arrest was “another example of the deterioration of human rights in Hong Kong”, and called on mainland authorities to “ensure due process”.

The arrests came about two months after the mainland government imposed a security law on the special administrative region following months of pro-democracy demonstrations.

China’s Hua Chunying responded in another tweet. “Seriously?! Fact check: The 12 people were arrested for illegally cross-

Beijing, Sept. 13: China’s Defence Ministry on Sunday blasted a critical US report on the country’s military ambitions, saying it is the US instead that poses the biggest threat to the international order and world peace. The statement follows the September 2 release of the annual Defence Department report to Congress on Chinese military developments and goals that it said would have “serious implications for US national interests and the security of the international rules-based order”.

Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Wu Qian called the report a “wanton distortion” of China’s aims and the relationship between the People’s Liberation Army and China’s 1.4 billion people.

“Many years of evidence shows that it is the US that is the fomentor of regional unrest, the viola-

tor of the international order and the destroyer of world peace,” he said. US actions in Iraq, Syria, Libya and other countries over the past two decades have resulted in the deaths of more than 800,000 people and displacement of millions, Qian said.

“Rather than reflecting on itself, the US issued a so-called report that made false comments about China’s normal defence and military construction,” he said in the statement. “We call on the US to view China’s national defence and military construction objectively and rationally, cease making false statements and related reports, and take concrete actions to safeguard the healthy development of bilateral military relations.”

The report examined the PLA’s technical capabilities, doctrines and the ultimate aims of China’s military buildup. — AP

ing the border in waters. They are not democratic activists, but elements attempting to separate #HongKong from China,” she wrote. The Shenzhen city police, in its first notice since the arrest, on Sunday said the 12 Hong Kong citizens were under criminal detention on suspicion of illegally crossing the

border. The investigation is ongoing, it said.

“Police will protect the legitimate rights and interests of criminal suspects in accordance with law,” the police said.

The relatives on Saturday said they had been given no information on the allegations. — Reuters

Blair, Major call for boycott of Johnson’s Brexit bill plan

IF THE government has concerns about specific parts of the withdrawal treaty, there are ready mechanisms within it to resolve them amicably; in the first instance by negotiation between the UK and the EU and, if that fails, through independent arbitration. It has chosen to ignore these options.

TONY BLAIR AND JOHN MAJOR, Britain’s former PMs

“If the government has concerns about specific parts of the withdrawal treaty, there are ready mechanisms within it to resolve them amicably; in the first instance by negotiation between the UK and the EU and, if that fails, through independent arbitration. It has chosen to ignore these options. Instead, it has thrown the withdrawal treaty into uncertainty and given the EU genuine reason to

question whether Britain can be relied upon in any future trade agreements with the EU,” they wrote.

Major was a Conservative prime minister from 1990 to 1997. His Labour successor Blair served as Britain’s prime minister from 1997 to 2007. Amid growing discord over the issue within his own party, Johnson has sought the backing of his MPs for the new Bill saying the EU is threatening to impose a customs border in the Irish Sea, separating Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK.

The Bill focuses on the Northern Ireland Protocol — the part of the Brexit divorce designed to prevent a hard border on the island of Ireland. If it became law, it would give UK ministers powers to modify or “disapply” rules relating to the movement of goods between Britain and Northern Ireland that will come into force from January 2021, unless the UK and EU are able to strike a trade deal ahead of that.

— PTI

quick BITES

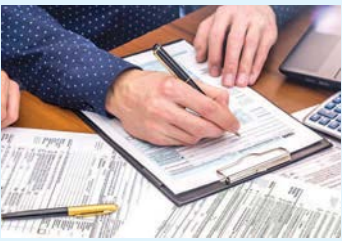
INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,854.55	0.04
Nifty 50	11,464.45	0.13
S&P 500*	3,340.97	0.05
Dollar (₹)	73.53	-0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.32	1.30
Euro (₹)	87.06	0.17
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,452	1.91
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	39.83	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	0.669	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.674	-0.010

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Banks sanction ₹1.63 lakh cr to 42 lakh MSMEs

The finance ministry said banks have sanctioned loans worth over Rs 1.63 lakh crore to more than 42 lakh business units under the Rs 3-lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for the MSME sector. Of this, over Rs 1.18 lakh crore has been disbursed to 25 lakh enterprises, till Sept. 10. The scheme is the biggest fiscal component of the Rs 20-lakh crore Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package.

ICAI seeks more time to file FY19 GST returns



The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has written to the GST Council seeking deferment of the 2018-19 GST annual return filing deadline by three months till December 31. The last date for filing the annual return for 2018-19 for GST-registered taxpayer is Sept. 30. In its representation to the GST Council, the ICAI said majority of the offices are working only partially due to the pandemic.

FPIs pull out ₹3,510 crore from equities in Sept.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) turned net sellers in Indian markets by pulling out Rs 2,038 crore so far in September as they turned cautious in view of rising Indo-China tensions and weak global cues. According to the depositors' data, a net Rs 3,510 crore was withdrawn from equities while Rs 1,472 crore was pumped into debts by them between September 1 and 11.

Covid cases account for 11% of health claims

Treatment for Covid-19 accounted for as much as 11 per cent of the total health insurance claims paid by insurance companies during the first five months of the current financial year, says a Policybazaar.com research. It said 89 per cent of health insurance claims during April 1 and August 31 were for other major illnesses, including cancer, heart problems, kidney and treatment.

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Govt wants to expand domestic market Foreign listing to be tied to local listing

ADITYA KALRA, ADITI SHAH & ABHIRUP ROY NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, SEPT. 13

Indian companies that list overseas will have to later launch on a domestic bourse under policy changes being considered by government officials, sources told Reuters, a move that global investors fear will harm valuations. India said in March it would allow local firms to directly list abroad to better access foreign capital for growth, but the rules have yet to be decided. Currently only certain types of securities such as depository receipts are able to be listed in foreign markets, and only after the companies go public in India.

The new policy, aimed at helping local firms achieve better valuations, could be a shot in the arm for Indian unicorn start-ups valued at over \$1 billion and Reliance's digital unit which is eyeing a US listing after raising over \$20 billion from global names like KKR & Co.

But in recent weeks Indian officials told global investors and companies in meetings they were considering mandating a secondary listing for local companies on Indian bourses after they list abroad, five sources said.

The time period under consideration for such a requirement ranges from six months to three years, sources said. A separate senior regulatory source in India said "dual listing was being



considered by the (finance) ministry for sure," but a final position on the matter has not been reached.

Japan's SoftBank and an Indian payment firm it backs, Paytm, as well as Reliance and US-based Sequoia Capital have conveyed to the government the secondary listing provision risks splitting trading volumes, hurting long-term valuations and raising compliance needs and costs, the sources added.

"To require companies to subsequently list in India will make these rules meaningless," said a senior executive from a global venture-capital firm.

SoftBank and Sequoia have invested in various Indian firms like ride-hailing company Ola and hospitality firm Oyo. Foreign listings could provide exits for such investors at higher valuations but also allow Indian firms, especially from the tech sector, to access specialised investors abroad who can better value their companies.

The rules are being drafted by the finance and corporate affairs ministries,

in discussion with the capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India, and will be finalised in coming weeks.

Currently, Indian companies can list locally and then access foreign equity capital through instruments like American depository receipts (ADRs), a route used by Infosys and ICICI Bank.

India is concerned that the upcoming policy change will mean that companies hunting for higher valuations through access to a wider group of investors, would choose to only list abroad, the sources said. That risks hitting the growth ambitions of Indian capital markets and depriving local investors of the wealth-creation opportunity.

"The government needs to balance Indian aspirations so that (domestic) investors can invest in these companies," said Siddharth Pai, founding partner at investment firm 3one4 Capital. "This is a trailblazing endeavour, if India plays its cards right."

— Reuters

Dilip Buildcon in talks to sell 7 highway projects

New Delhi, Sept 13: Highways builder Dilip Buildcon Ltd (DBL) is in talks with large global financial investors to sell seven of its road projects.

The company that claims to be India's largest road construction company currently building 16 per cent of all Nat-ional Highways, has already sold five of its projects to Cube Highways.

"After the successful transaction of selling HAM portfolio with Shrem group, we have sold yet another portfolio of 5 HAM projects to Cube Highways, focusing on the efficient use of equity," DBL said in its annual report.

It had won 12 HAM (hybrid annuity mode) projects in 2018-19.

The company is in talks with few "large global financial investors," in this regard, it said. "We will continue to emphasise on improving the Return on Equity by exploring possibilities for monetising the remaining 7 HAM projects out of the 12 we had won in FY19, for which we are in talks with a few large financial investors," it said.

To fuel highway projects, the government had earlier approved HAM under which it provides 40 per cent of the project cost to the developer to start work while the remaining investment is made by the developer.

—PTI

Non-tariff steps affect all Indian products: UN

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 13

Non-tariff measures like technical barriers to trade (TBT) and export-related measures affect all the products exported out and imported into India, finds a study by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad).

A total of 4,618 non-tariff measures (NTMs) have been issued by 17 Indian ministries and institutions. China has issued 7,332 NTMs, Australia 1,897 and Japan 1,278, finds a study by Unctad on NTMs in countries initially engaged in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations. The study includes countries like Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. Non-tariff measures are policy steps other than ordinary customs tariffs that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in goods.

TBT, which is any regulation, standard or procedure that can make exporting goods to a country difficult as well as other export-related measures, affects all the 11,483 products or HS codes traded by the country.



While TBT accounts for 36.24 per cent of the NTMs, sanitary and phytosanitary measures account for 50 per cent of the NTMs. Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures are quarantine and biosecurity measures which applied to protect human, animal or plant life or health from risks arising from the introduction, establishment and spread of pests and diseases and from risks arising from additives, toxins and contaminants in food and feed.

Such measures have been largely issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Both these ministries account for 63.6 per cent of total NTMs in India.

Animal and animal products, food, vegetables and chemicals mostly have SPS measures. Of all the product groups, food-stuff is the product group,

which has 100 per cent NTMs, followed by vegetable products (99.72 per cent) and animals and animal products (99.56 per cent).

As many as 7,557 products have four different NTMs and more. The product groups that mostly have four or more NTMs are textiles (88.9 per cent), machinery/electricals (80.4 per cent) and chemicals and allied industries (57.5 per cent).

Although the current database for NTMs with respect to India is relatively comprehensive, it requires regular updates to capture the impact on international trade, value chains, and business models, finds Unctad. Indian laws are often amended and continuously reviewed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ministry of Finance to ensure that India's trade practices and policy are fair, inclusive, profitable and feasible.

NVIDIA NEARS \$40 BILLION DEAL TO BUY CHIPMAKER ARM

DINESH NAIR, LIANA BAKER & IAN KING SEPT. 13

Nvidia Corp is nearing a deal to acquire SoftBank Group Corp's chipmaker Arm Ltd, according to people familiar with the mat-

ter, an acquisition that would extend its reach into mobile devices.

A transaction could be announced as soon as this week, said the people. The companies have been discussing a deal that would value Arm at about \$40 bil-

lion in cash and stock, two of the people said.

The Wall Street Journal reported Saturday that a deal worth more than \$40 billion could be sealed early this week. Nvidia and Softbank represeedined to comment. — Bloomberg

Over 13 lakh join stock rush in last one month

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 13

More than 13.21 lakh new retail investors were added in the BSE's registered investors' list in the last one-month period, indicating growing retail investors' interest in the equity market.

Maharashtra (2,77,588), Rajasthan (1,03,145), Gujarat (1,01,190), Uttar Pradesh (1,01,076), Andhra Pradesh (87,633) and Telangana (82,441) were states where the highest new unique client codes were added in the last one month.

Among the large states, Telangana registered the highest percentage increase in new client additions to the capital market at 6.70 per cent while Andhra Pradesh clocked 3.17 per cent rise.

Smaller states of North East are seeing the highest percentage increase due to smaller base—for example, Manipur (8.84 per cent/2,579 new investors).

Delhi showed relatively lower increase in new additions, with a 1.64 per cent rise, or 50,265 new investors.

"Over 35.97 lakh new retail investors were added since last quarter, taking total registered investors' number to over 5.42 crore," as per latest BSE data as on September 13.

Another evidence of large number retail investors investing in stocks has emerged from national depository Central Depository Services (CDSL) adding 50 lakh investors since January 2020.

"The net number of active demat accounts opened with CDSL has crossed a new milestone of 2.5 crore (25 million)," CDSL said at the beginning of September.

CDSL crossed the 2-crore mark in January 2020 and crossed the 2.5 crore mark as on August 31, 2020.

Speaking on the milestone achieved, CDSL MD & CEO Nehal Vora said, "The growth of investors, especially in the current unprecedented times, is a representation that the Investor is now moving to a self-sufficient environment with opening and operating demat accounts from the comfort of their homes."

NUPUR ACHARYA SEPT. 13

India's mid- and small-cap stocks are set to receive a boost after the regulator tweaked rules for multi-cap mutual funds, a move analysts say could push about Rs 40,000 crore (\$5.4 billion) to the broader market.

Multi-cap funds must hold at least 75 per cent of their assets in equities—up from 65 per cent at present—with 25 per cent each in large, medium and smaller companies to ensure they stick to their mandate of investing in a wide set of stocks, the Securities & Exchange Board of India said in a circular late Friday.

The ruling that lays out how equity assets are to be spread across segments is aimed at balancing the playing field in a polarised market, where a handful of large companies have helped the main stock indexes erase the bulk of virus-induced losses. Multi-cap funds hold 74 per cent of their Rs 1.4 lakh crore of assets in large-cap stocks, according to JM Financial Research.



Analysis

"Many multi-cap funds have traditionally been run with a large-cap bias, in the range of 60-75 per cent, with some going even as high as 85-90 per cent depending on their views on relative valuations between the three segments," said Kaustubh Belapurkar, director of fund research at the Indian unit of Morningstar Investment Adviser.

The mid-cap segment may get Rs 13,000 crore, while Rs 27,000 crore could flow to smaller companies as managers rebalance portfolios, Belapurkar said. JM Financial estimates the total inflow at Rs 41,100 crore. Funds have up to February 2021 to meet the new allocation norms. Smaller companies – the stars of India's market in 2017—have trailed the

benchmark indexes in the past two years, as investors sought the safety of the biggest stocks amid headwinds from the crisis in the shadow bank sector and the slowdown in economic growth even before the pandemic struck.

The S&P BSE MidCap Index fell for a second straight year in 2019, even as the main S&P BSE Sensex posted its fourth annual advance.

A move by Sebi to standardise classification across funds in 2018 led to most fund flows moving to the top 100 companies. Friday's order aims to restore the balance, analysts said.

"Whether it can be attributed to Sebi's earlier categorisation or not, mid-cap indexes have slid throughout the two-year period as the money flowed into large-caps," said Vidya Bala, head of research and co-founder at Chennai-based Primeinvestor.in.

"With small companies under stress for funding, it is possible the regulator sees the need for re-distribution of money in the capital market."

— Bloomberg

Tyre-maker ATG to invest ₹ 1,240 cr at Vizag plant

Mumbai, Sept. 13: Off-highway tyre-maker Alliance Tire Group (ATG), owned by the Japanese major Yokohama Group, is setting up its third plant in the country in Visakhapatnam with an investment of \$165 million (around Rs 1,240 crore).

The proposed plant will add over 20,000 tonnes per annum (55 tonne per day rubber weight) capacity to the 2.3-lakh-tonne annual production from two India plants and will be commissioned by the first quarter of 2023. The plant will generate around over 600 new jobs, adding to its 5,500-strong headcount, Nitin Mantri, chairman of Yokohama India and director of ATG, told PTI on Sunday.

ATG has one plant at Dahej in Gujarat with an annual capacity of 1.3 lakh tonne (360 tonne per day) and another at Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu with an annual capacity of 1 lakh tonne. The group has a 45,000-tonne plant in Israel as well where it has its main



R&D centre. The TN facility has an R&D centre.

These two plants produce all the three key off-highway tyre brands, of ATG Alliance for agricultural machinery, Galaxy for construction & industrial machinery, and Primex for forestry machinery. Over 90 per cent of the production is exported to over 120 countries.

Mantri said they were looking for a suitable location for the third plant for almost three years now and had identified Vizag before the pandemic broke out.

From a demand side we see one of the best farming seasons ahead here and forestry is also doing well globally. Only construction is down. — PTI

How flying business class feels more like economy now

ANGUS WHITLEY & ANURAG KOTOKY SEPT. 13

Forget the flute of chilled Moët & Chandon before takeoff, mid-flight gin and tonics and a roaming dessert trolley after dinner. Flying business class isn't what it used to be.

Efforts to minimise human interaction and reduce the risk of infection are taking the shine off the most expensive seats onboard commercial aircraft. Gone are the multi-course banquets and warm personal service, once the hallmarks of carriers like Singapore Airlines Ltd and Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. These days, what's left of premium-grade travel is functional, hygienic and closer

to cattle class – only with more legroom.

The limitations are one more headache for an industry grappling with a near-total collapse in demand and follow years of luxury onepmanship among carriers in a contest for the most profitable passengers.

Suddenly, it's harder to tell airlines apart when you're up the pointy end. That's making it tougher to win top-paying customers, and risks pushing some to the back of the plane.

"There's nobody to help you with your bag, you're not escorted to your seat, and there's definitely no pre-flight champagne," said Sandra Lim, who flew business class to Singapore from Los

Angeles with Singapore Air late last month. "It feels like it's reverted back to economy class."

Crew wore face masks and eye shields, and avoided contact and shared touch points where possible, Lim said. While passengers could ask for a drink, they weren't freely offered, and there were no menus. Meals came with everything on one tray, just like in economy, rather than in separate courses.

"When you strip away the food and service, it's just a mode of transport to get from point A to B," said Lim, a 38-year-old food and beverage consultant.

Some overseas routes have resumed, but traffic worldwide has barely started to creep back. International passenger



demand was down 92 per cent in July. The planes that were flying were typically about half full, according to the International Air Transport Association.

It's also not clear to what extent the premium mar-

ket, which IATA says generated 30 per cent of airlines' international revenues in 2019, can recover. Many grounded business travellers have become accustomed to video conferencing rather than making visits in person, and a global recession threatens corporate budgets.

LAG SA, owner of British Airways and Iberia, said in July that leisure demand will recover before corporate travel, and this "structural change" in the market will lead to new cabin layouts. On a conference call, IAG chief financial officer Stephen Gunning said British Airways retired its Boeing Co 747s early partly because they had so many premium seats.

Virgin Australia

Holdings Ltd chief executive officer Paul Scurrah said at a conference this month that business travel would rebound slower than the overall market as some companies maintain work-from-home policies. Qantas Airways Ltd CEO Alan Joyce was optimistic that demand would fully recover, but not until 2023 or 2024.

Low-cost airlines such as Ryanair Holdings Plc and EasyJet Plc, largely catering to short-haul leisure travellers, are likely to bounce back faster than airlines with a bigger international focus, UBS Group AG analysts led by Jarrod Castle said in a report last month.

According to Volodymyr Bilotkach, a lecturer in air-transport management

at the Singapore Institute of Technology, a single business class seat that lies flat needs to generate at least four times the profit of an economy seat to justify all the space it takes up in the plane.

Some airlines will use the pandemic to permanently downgrade their offerings in premium cabins to save money, said Jeremy Clark, who runs Malaysia-based JC Consulting, which advises carriers on catering and service.

"There will still be airlines that recognise the value good food and service bring to their brand in return for the relatively small cost of providing it," said Clark. "We're human beings. We like to be spoiled."

— Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Sree's spot-fixing ban comes to end

New Delhi: India pacer S. Sreesanth's ban for alleged spot-fixing came to an end on Sunday, concluding a seven-year punishment that was originally meant to be for life and was aggressively contested by the flamboyant bowler.

The 37-year-old has already made it clear that he intends to resume at least his domestic career at the end of the ban and his home state Kerala has promised to consider him if he manages to prove his fitness.

"I'm completely free of any charges nd anything nd now gonna represent the sport I love the most.will give my very best to every ball I ball even (if) it's just practice," he tweeted on Friday, a couple of days before the end of his suspension.

"Just have another 5 to 7 years max to give it all I've got nd I will give the very best to any team I play," he added.

However, with the Indian domestic season postponed at present due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it remains to be seen when exactly Sreesanth is able to make a comeback if Kerala decides to give him a chance.

— PTI

Ruturaj to undergo 2 more Covid tests

Dubai: Young Chennai Super Kings batsman Ruturaj Gaekwad, who tested positive for Covid-19 last month, will undergo two fresh tests starting Sunday and could miss the first few games of the IPL.

Thirteen members of the CSK contingent tested positive for the virus and two of them were players — Gaekwad and Deepak Chahar. Chahar, along with 11 others, has recovered and resumed training after clearing his mandatory two tests.

"Ruturaj will undergo two tests as per protocol, today and tomorrow. If he tests negative, he will be back in team hotel bubble. The other staff members have tested negative and are now back to normal. They are back in team bubble," CSK CEO K.S. Viswanathan said on Sunday.

For Gaekwad, CSK will follow the established protocol and he will also have to undergo cardiovascular and lung function tests to ascertain his fitness if he clears the virus tests. — PTI

Coach Simeone is Corona positive

Madrid: Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone has the Coronavirus.

The Argentine wasn't showing any symptoms and was in isolation, the club said on Saturday. Simeone and the rest of the team were tested on Friday. The club did not say if anyone else was infected.

The Spanish league stopped play from March until June because of the pandemic. The top flight managed to finish the season in July without any major infections. But as the virus has started to spread again in Spain, teams have reported infections in recent weeks.

Atletico are scheduled to play a friendly at C d'iz on Tuesday. Like Real Madrid, Barcelona, and Sevilla, Atletico have their first two rounds of the Spanish league postponed to give the teams more rest after the completed in Europe in August.

— AP

LeBron leads Lakers to finals

Miami: LeBron James had 29 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists as the Los Angeles Lakers advanced to their first NBA Western Conference final in a decade with a 119-96 blowout win over the Houston Rockets on Saturday. Anthony Davis tallied 13 points and 11 rebounds, Kyle Kuzma had 17 and Markieff Morris finished with 16 for the Lakers, who eliminated the Rockets in five games in Orlando. Los Angeles advanced to their first NBA final four since the Kobe Bryant-led Lakers beat Phoenix for the conference title and then defeated Boston for the 2010 NBA championship, the last time they won. — AFP

Live on TV

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Brighton vs Chelsea from 12.30 am (Tuesday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

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NAOMI AGAIN!

Osaka beats Victoria to win second US Open crown

New York, Sept. 13: Japan's Naomi Osaka came from a set down to beat Victoria Azarenka of Belarus to win the US Open on Saturday and clinch her third Grand Slam title.

Osaka, the fourth seed, overcame her unseeded opponent 1-6, 6-3, 6-3 inside a near-empty Arthur Ashe Stadium at Flushing Meadows.

It brought 22-year-old Osaka's haul of tennis major trophies to three after her victories at the 2018 US Open and 2019 Australian Open.

"I didn't really enjoy that. It was a really tough match for me," Osaka said following her 1hr 53min victory.

Azarenka, 31, sprinted to the first set in just 26 minutes, dominating Osaka with an 88 percent success rate on her first serve.

The Japanese was uncharacteristically sloppy, hitting a whopping 13 unforced errors.

Azarenka then went 2-0 ahead in the second set before Osaka fought back to break her opponent's serve twice and take a 4-3 lead.

The momentum had quickly swung in Osaka's favor and she broke a third time to take the match to a deciding set.

"I just thought it would be very embarrassing to lose this in under an hour so I just have to try as hard as I can and stop having a really bad attitude," said Osaka, explaining the turnaround.

Osaka enjoyed the first breakthrough of set three in game four when she broke Azarenka's serve to take a 3-1 lead. Azarenka then blew a golden opportunity to get back into the match, wasting three break points as Osaka recovered from 0-40 to hold for a 4-1 lead.

Azarenka saved four break points to make it 4-2 as she battled to keep the contest alive.

When she broke Osaka in game seven, the set was back on serve.

But Osaka immediately



Naomi Osaka of Japan holds up the championship trophy after defeating Victoria Azarenka of Belarus in their US Open women's singles final in New York on Saturday. Osaka won 1-6, 6-3, 6-3.

— AP

broke back after Azarenka pushed a forehand wide to leave herself the opportunity of serving for the match and title. On Osaka's second championship point, Azarenka found the net.

'THIS WAS FUN'

Azarenka, a two-time

Grand Slam champion, was playing in her first tennis major final since losing the 2013 US Open to Serena Williams.

The last few years of the former world number one's career have been disrupted, firstly by injury then by a custody battle over her son, born

in December 2016.

But she enjoyed a fairytale run in New York, clinching the Western & Southern title before reaching Saturday's US Open final, where she lost for the third time.

"It's been a long road of getting here, but this was fun," she added.

— AFP

Mayhem at Mugello as Hami clinches 90th race

Mugello (Italy), Sept. 13: Lewis Hamilton won a chaotic, crash-littered Tuscan Grand Prix on Sunday, extending his lead at the top of the Formula One drivers' championship.

Reigning champion Hamilton finished ahead of his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas to claim his 90th F1 victory in a race which only 12 drivers finished, moving the Briton to within one win of equalling Michael Schumacher's all-time record.

"It's was all a bit of a daze," said Hamilton to Sky Sports.

"It was incredibly tough today... All those restarts, the con-

centration that's needed during that time, it was really, really hard."

Hamilton, 35, is now on 190 points, some 55 ahead of Bottas and is also on course this season to equal Schumacher's record of seven world titles after claiming his sixth win in nine races this year.

Alex Albon finished third, claiming his first podium finish for Red Bull, after a thrilling drive to compensate his team for the early exit of Max Verstappen in the first of two multi-car collisions in a race of three Safety Car interventions. The race took two hours and 25 minutes to complete, with the spells behind the Safety Car adding up to 76 minutes.

Two spectacular multi-car collisions brought Sunday's Tuscan Grand Prix to a chaotic standstill and reduced the field to just 13 of the original starters, but despite all the carnage no driver was injured.

— AFP



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton celebrates after winning the Tuscany Grand Prix at the Mugello circuit in Scarperia, Italy, on Sunday.

— AP

ENGLISH PREMIER | LEAGUE



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah scores his side's fourth goal against Leeds United in their Premier League match at the Anfield Stadium in Liverpool on Saturday.

— AP

Super Salah seals it for Liverpool

London, Sept. 13: Mohamed Salah hit a hat-trick as Liverpool kicked off their Premier League title defence with a thrilling 4-3 win against Leeds on Saturday.

Just 48 days after last season's delayed conclusion, the Premier League returned with a bang as Liverpool and Leeds served up a feast of goals to open the 2020-21 campaign.

Jürgen Klopp's side are English champions for the first time since 1990 and their bid for a record-equaling 20th title got off to a memorable start.

Liverpool didn't have it all their own way as Leeds came from behind three times before Egypt forward Salah finished them off with two minutes left.

Leeds are back in the top-flight for the first time in 16 years and Marcelo Bielsa's team deserve credit for putting Liverpool under enough pressure to expose flaws in a team that won the title by 18 points.

Salah won a fourth-minute penalty when his shot hit Leeds debutant Robin Koch on his outstretched arm and he dispatched the spot-kick himself.

Leeds fashioned a stunning equaliser in the 12th minute when on-loan Manchester City midfielder Jack Harrison cut past Trent Alexander-Arnold and Joe Gomez before drilling a superb low finish

THE RESULTS

Liverpool (Salah 4-pen, 33, 88-pen, Van Dijk 20)	4
Leeds (Harrison 12, Bamford 30, Klich 66)	3
Crystal Palace (Zaha 13)	1
Southampton	0
West Ham	0
Newcastle (Wilson 56, Hendrick 87)	2

into the bottom corner.

Virgil van Dijk restored Liverpool's lead eight minutes later with a thumping header from Andrew Robertson's corner.

Leeds equalised again in the 30th minute when Van Dijk made a hash of a flicked attempt to clear and Patrick Bamford pounced to guide his shot past Alison Becker.

A remarkable game produced more drama as Salah struck again three minutes later with a thunderous drive into the roof of the net.

Leeds equalised for a third time in the 66th minute. But Liverpool won it in the 88th minute when Leeds debutant Rodrigo tripped Fabinho and Salah slotted in the penalty, leaving Klopp to sum up the feelings of both teams when he mouthed "wow" at the final whistle. — AFP

MESSI PLAYS 45 MINUTES IN BARCA FRIENDLY WIN

Madrid, Sept. 13: Lionel Messi started and played 45 minutes in Barcelona's first pre-season friendly on Saturday as Ronald Koeman showed no hesitation in reintegrating the Argentinian.

Barca beat third tier side Gimnastic Tarragona 3-1, with Ousmane Dembele opening the scoring on his first appearance since November.

Antoine Griezmann and Philippe Coutinho then each scored penalties, either side of Javier Bonilla pulling one back for the visitors.

But Messi's return at the Johan Cruyff Stadium was perhaps the biggest plus for Koeman,

who was taking charge of his first game since being appointed coach last month. Barca will not play their first La Liga game against Villarreal until round three at the end of the month, having been granted extra time off due to their involvement in last season's Champions League.

Still without fans due to the coronavirus pandemic, Spain's top flight got off to a slow start at Ipurua, where Eibar finished with 10 men after Pape Diop was sent off in the 87th minute.

Granada then picked up where they left off last season by defeating Athletic Bilbao 2-0.

— AFP

Has SASCOC decision put SA cricket in jeopardy?



Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

There are a few days to go before the grand entertainment of cricket hits Indian television screens. As teams are preparing for the Indian Premier League (IPL) that kicks off on September 19, an important bit of news did not find much space among the reams being written about the blue riband tournament run by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

A few days ago, South Africa's Olympics body South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SAS-

COC) asked key members of Cricket South Africa (CSA) to step down from their posts and took over the administration of cricket in the country. To CSA, which has been in the deep end with allegations of corruption, racism and many other evils, SASCOC's directive has dug the hole deeper, casting a pall of gloom for cricketers and fans in the country.

Even as the 10-odd South African (SA) cricketers are busy shaking the rust, caused by a long absence of competitive cricket, in the Arabian desert for the IPL,

the question on the minds of their colleagues who are not as lucky is a terrible one directly concerning their future. South African cricket in the recent past has undergone turmoil, losing much talent, thanks to the Kolpak ruling which hit their country the hardest.

SASCOC's decision now puts a cloud over the future of SA cricket on the whole depending on which way the International Cricket Council (ICC) will interpret it. According to an article in the ICC constitution, cricketing matters of each member country must be handled autonomously only by the board without interference from the government or other public or quasi-public body. The debate whether SASCOC's ruling constitutes government

interference or not is something which ICC's legal team must be pondering over at this point in time.

SASCOC has strongly denied that their directive constitutes meddling by the government and stresses that it has not acted under any kind of directive from the country's rulers and is a completely independent act. While the legal eagles will be busy trying to decide SASCOC's stand, it will be pertinent to note that there is a precedent of familiar cases that have happened in the past.

SA's neighbours, Zimbabwe, were suspended by the ICC in July last year for alleged intrusion by their government in Zimbabwe Cricket's (ZC) affairs. Thus the country became first full member

of the ICC to be banned from playing any form of cricket. A similar fate was suffered by Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN), an associate member and a rising force in the Subcontinent. Both countries were brought back into the ICC fold in October 2019.

According to their website, SASCOC is the Sports Confederation for all Sports Federations in the Republic of South Africa, and of course, is recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC), amongst others. The latest media release by them confirms that CA is its member and is required to comply fully with their constitution. SASCOC claims that it has acted in good faith, and in the best

interests of the sport.

What then constitutes 'government interference' in the constitution of the ICC? If an association has members of that country's ruling party on their board, will their opinion or acts be defined as those suggested by the government? In the case of Pakistan Cricket Board, their country's head of state automatically becomes their patron-in-chief. When Imran Khan, the current head takes a call on cricketing matters will it be termed as one taken by an eminent cricketer (their most successful cricket captain) or the head of their government?

Closer to home, though the committee formed under Retd. Chief Justice R. M. Lodha did not stop politicians from holding posts in the BCCI, the

Supreme Court (SC) suggested a ban on government servants and ministers donning the role of cricket administrators. Laws are meant to be laid and enforced for the betterment of the populace, in this case for the game to prosper.

From an ICC perspective, for now, SASCOC's action will cause furrows among their legal team and the country will be under close scrutiny.

It will be prudent for ICC to take a relook at their constitution and come out with clear guidelines which leave little room for doubt for their members, going forward. They could well consider the statement of Chief Justice T. S. Thakur who had said: "Politicians as a category cannot be barred. There is a politician in everyone."