



THE HANS INDIA

● Simultaneously published from Hyderabad | Warangal | Tirupati | Amaravati | Visakhapatnam | Khammam | Kurnool | Delhi: RNI No: DELENG/2017/74095 ●

● Follow @ /thehansindia | /thehansindiaweb | /thehansindia | /thehansindia | /thehansindia ●

Forecast: Showers late. More sun than clouds. Temp: Max,34°C. Min,27°C. Humidity: 61% Sunrise: 06:00 Sunset: 06:38

To advertise
or
to subscribe
give a
missed call to
88823 96396

WINDOWS

PM's twitter handle hacked, restored later

New Delhi (PTI): Twitter on Thursday said the account linked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal website was hacked, and it has now been restored. "We're aware of this activity and have taken steps to secure the compromised account. We are actively investigating the situation. At this time, we are not aware of additional accounts being impacted. Advice on keeping your account secure can be found here," a Twitter spokesperson said in an emailed statement. The compromised account has about 2.5 million followers. After hacking the @narendramodi.in Twitter account, which is the Prime Minister's personal website, the cybercriminal reportedly sent out posts seeking donations for the PM National Relief Fund for COVID-19 using crypto currency. "Yes, this account is hacked by John Wick (hckindia@tutanota.com). We have not hacked Paytm Mall," another message had said.

Govt ready to answer question in Parliament

New Delhi (PTI): The government on Thursday said it will answer every question asked in Parliament and 160 "unstarred" questions will be answered every day during the upcoming Monsoon session starting September 14, sources said. Countering the Opposition charge of curtailing the Question Hour, the sources in the government said this is not the first time that the Question Hour will not be taken up during a session as it was dispensed with in 2004 and 2009, besides also in 1991 as well as in 1962, 1975 and 1976 for various reasons. A research conducted by the Rajya Sabha also revealed that 60 per cent of Question Hour time was not availed during the last five years with only 40 per cent utilisation. Sources said the Question Hour was first done away with during the Emergency in 1975 and 1976, when everything was functioning normally except opposition leaders, who were put behind bars, and the media, which was censored. Unlike then, the government has argued that it is a real health emergency in the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the session is being held under extraordinary circumstances even as there is a paucity of time



Talks, incursions go on

Army chief in Ladakh to review ops to thwart Chinese incursion attempts

New Delhi (IANS): Indian Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane is on a two-day visit to Ladakh to review operational preparedness of the force amid border tension with China. General Naravane reached Leh early Thursday and interacted with senior officers present. His visit to forward location was expected, said source in the forces. The Army chief would be discussing strategy over how to thwart Chinese incursion attempts.

Chinese's People Liberation Army (PLA) troops have made fresh incursion attempts into India territories. Both the countries military representatives are now engaged in dialogue to de-escalate the tension. China made provocative military movements to change the status quo at Pangong Tso.

On August 31, Chinese troops indulged in provocative actions despite Indian soldiers earlier occupying the heights to thwart the PLA's land-grabbing bid over the weekend. On the intervening night of August 29 and August 30, PLA troops violated previous consensus agreed in military and diplomatic engagements during the ongoing standoff in eastern Ladakh and tried change the status



IAF Chinook helicopter flies amid the prolonged India-China stand off in the Ladakh region, in Leh on Thursday

China funds protests along Indo-Nepal border

New Delhi (IANS): China has paid Rs 2.5 crore (in Nepali currency) to various organisations based in Nepal to carry out demonstrations against India along the Indo-Nepal border that stretches to over 1,700 km, intelligence agencies said. "Chinese Embassy in Nepal has provided financial support to the tune of Rs 2.5 crore (NPR) for organising anti-India protests/ demonstrations along India-Nepal border areas highlighting the recent border disputes and interferences of India in Nepal's internal/ political matters," the agencies stated. NPR stands for Nepalese Rupee.

The India-Nepal relation has been strained after China increased its influence on the Himalayan nation. It was India's road construction to the Lipulekh at 17,000 feet that had sparked a diplomatic row between India and Nepal as Kathmandu claimed the area to be its territory. Lipulekh is a tri-junction between India, Nepal and China situated atop the Kalapani Valley in Uttarakhand.

The road construction was aimed at shortening travel time for pilgrims visiting the Kailash Mansarovar.

After this, Nepal brought out a new political map showing the contested area as its own.

quo. Naravane would also be reviewing the formidable logistical challenges posed by harsh climate at heights exceeding 12,000 feet and temperature as extreme as minus 50 degrees Celsius as winter approaches.

The force requires special clothing, diet and shelter for around 35,000 extra troops deployed in Eastern Ladakh. Most of the friction points in Ladakh like Pangong Lake and Galwan Valley where the face-offs have happened are 14,000 feet above the sea level.

Both countries have been engaged in the current four-month-long standoff at the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh. Despite several levels of dialogue, there has not been any breakthrough and the deadlock continues.

On June 15, as many as 20 Indian soldiers and an unknown number of Chinese troops were killed in a violent clash in the Galwan Valley.

Chinese aggression started increasing along the LAC and more particularly in Galwan Valley since May 5. The Chinese side transgressed in the areas of Kugrang Nala, Gogra and north bank of Pangong lake on May 17 and 18.



Arrangements made by the Delhi Metro at its stations for a new travel protocol to be followed by the passengers once Metro services resume from September 7, at Rajiv Chowk Metro station in New Delhi on Thursday

Metro for least contact travel

Foot pedal-driven lifts, auto-dispensers for sanitiser

New Delhi (PTI): From automated thermal screening-cum-sanitiser dispenser to lift calling system driven by a foot pedal, Delhi Metro has taken a slew of measures to ensure least physical contact for riders when it resumes services next week.

After being closed for over five months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, metro services will be resumed in three stages from September 7-12, but stations located in containment zones will remain closed. On Thursday, a preview was held for media-persons at Rajiv Chowk Metro Station, from the point of entering station premises to boarding a coach. A city police official said wearing of masks inside

the premises and inside trains is mandatory and "challans will be issued if they violate this" rule. Officials said that at all stations, CISF staff will be doing "contactless frisking" and red lines have been drawn at a gap of one foot to ensure social distancing while queuing up.

At the point of entry at 45 stations, automated thermal screening-cum-sanitiser dispensers have been installed, which can read a commuter's body temperature once a person puts their forehead in front of it, and sanitiser will drop from a dispenser below, once hands are kept below the nozzle, officials said.

This facility will be available at 17 metro stations, in-

cluding Rajiv Chowk, Patel Chowk, Central Secretariat and Vishwavidyalaya stations, of the Yellow Line which will be the first to resume services on September 7.

At other stations, auto-dispenser for sanitiser will be there, but thermal screening will be done manually using a thermal gun, officials said. Also, at 16 metro stations, including at Kashmere Gate, Rajiv Chowk, IGI Airport, Hauz Khas, and Mandi House, push-button facilities to call a lift have been disabled, and commuters can press a foot pedal to call it. Beyond that the lift will operate automatically, from vertical movement to opening and closing of doors.

Continued on Page 5

CAG to audit TTD funds

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Tirupati: The accounts of Lord Venkateswara would now be subject to scrutiny by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). This decision was taken by the TTD recently but was kept under wraps for reasons best known to it.

Normally, the TTD announces all major decisions taken by the board but in this case it had not only taken a decision to

get the accounts audited by the CAG but had also asked the AP State Audit Department to hand over all the records to the CAG for financial year 2020-21.

Not just that, it had also resolved and requested the CAG for a special CAG audit for the years of 2014-2019 when the TDP was in power. These decisions were taken at the TTD board meeting held on August 28. While it is being said that auditing of accounts by the CAG would

bring in greater transparency, why it decided to seek special auditing for 2014-2019 has now become a matter of political controversy. The issue would not have come to light if the BJP MP Dr Subrahmanyam Swamy had not tweeted saying, "My associate Satyapal Sabharwal and I had filed a PIL in Andhra HC seeking a CAG audit of Tirupati Temple funds for the last 5 years and hereafter.

Continued on Page 5



Delhi among 5 states which account for 70% Covid deaths

New Delhi (PTI): Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi and Tamil Nadu account for 70 per cent of the total COVID-19 deaths in the country, the Health Ministry said on Thursday. The ministry further said that the five states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu account for 62 per cent of the active cases in the country.

Addressing a press conference, Health Sec-

retary Rajesh Bhushan said if deaths are tracked in these states and UTs across weeks then a different picture emerges.

"If we track deaths in these five states across weeks, then out of 5 only 2 states i.e. Karnataka and Delhi have shown an increase in Case Fatality Trajectory. However, in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu there is decrease in daily deaths," he said.

Continued on Page 5

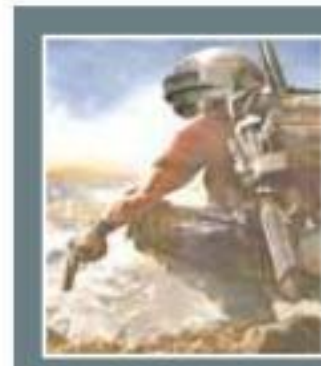
PUBG players pin hopes on VPNs

Most of VPN providers China-based; dominance likely to continue

P V PRASAD

Nellore: As soon as the Centre had announced a ban on 118 Chinese apps, including the popular Player Unknown's Battle Ground (PUBG), now gamers are pinning hopes on the VPN technology to play the game.

The Centre had banned only mobile version and still gamers can play it on the desktop and laptop versions which requires some



Game organizers assuring players that servers would be set up in India shortly for restarting the indigenous game officially

authentication. The Virtual Private Network (VPN), which is also called the black hole, being operated by foreign servers, hides credentials of the people

who visit any website or server. In fact, it is a tool to protect browsing from cyber hacking and dangerous malware. But this is being used for playing hereafter if

technology permits. A VPN creates a secure connection over the internet between a computer, smartphone, or tablet and the app people are using.

It maintains an authenticated, encrypted way for securely passing data traffic. So, nobody will be able to track their location. There are practically no chances for the hackers to look up for any attempts to breach the data.

Continued on Page 5

Remove 48K shanties along rail tracks in 3 months: SC

New Delhi (IANS): The Supreme Court has ordered removal of around 48,000 slum dwellings across railway tracks in Delhi within three months and said no political interference will be entertained in the matter.

The observation from the top court came while dealing with the issue of piling up waste, plastic bags and garbage, lying along the railway tracks in Delhi.

"The encroachments which are there in the safety zones should be removed within a period of three months and no interference, political or otherwise, should be there and no court shall grant any stay with respect to removal of the encroachments in the area in question," said the top court.

The bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra said that any interim order granted with respect to encroachments, which have been made along with railway tracks, will not be effective.

"The picture painted in the report of the EPCA, as well as in the reply filed by the Railways indicates that nothing has been done so far and waste is being piled up and at the same time, there is human habitation which has come in the same area unauthorisedly, which are required to be taken care of," observed the top court.

It asked for a meeting of all the stakeholders, i.e. Railways, Delhi government and concerned Municipal Corporations as well as Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Trust (DUISB) to be called next week and work be started forthwith.

"70 per cent of the requisite amount shall be borne by the Railways and 30 per cent by the state government," said the top court.

India with G-4 serves ultimatum on UN Security Council reforms

United Nations (IANS): India, along with Brazil, Germany and Japan, has served an ultimatum that the supporters of Security Council reforms will be forced to look for other ways to move the process forward if the UN's Inter-governmental Negotiations (IGN) for reform continues to be "held hostage" by those opposing change.

As the General Assembly rolled over on Monday the deadlocked IGN process to the next session that starts later this month, India's Deputy Permanent Representative Nagaraj Naidu issued the warning in a letter to Assembly President Tijjani Muham-

mad-Bande written on behalf of the G-4, the group of four countries that mutually support each other for a permanent seat on a reformed Council.

He wrote, "There is a need to ensure that the IGN process is not held hostage, procedurally and substantially, by those who do not wish to bring about reform in the Security Council."

"If this happens, and there are indications that this is already happening, those who demand reforms will be forced to look for other ways to finally make progress, including potentially outside the IGN process," he added.

The letter did not identify the countries hiding behind the "smokescreen" of procedures in the IGN to hold the process hostage.

They are a group of 12 countries that call themselves Uniting for Consensus (UfC) led by Italy and includes Pakistan. The group's agenda is prevent adding permanent members to the Council.

For more than a decade the group has blocked the adoption of a negotiating text on which to base the discussions by insisting that there should be a consensus on reforms before the text can be adopted. Consequently, the IGN

process has not been able to hold meaningful negotiations.

"In the last decade or more of IGN meetings (since 2009), there has been practically no progress," Nagaraj wrote, because of the contention that "rules of procedure, allegedly, should not apply, due to the supposed 'informal nature' of the discussion."

"There has been no effort to capture the discussions in a single consolidated text for negotiations, which should be the essential task for any facilitator of any UN negotiations," he added.

The formal decision to rollover the negotiations was adopted on Monday using the si-

lence procedure of voting under which resolutions and decisions are declared approved by the Assembly if no one voices an opposition within a timeframe after the Assembly president's announcement.

The procedure is being followed because the COVID-19 pandemic has stopped in-person Assembly meetings where voting can be held in the traditional manner.

The letter on behalf of the G-4 and a separate one written along the same lines by India were not to be construed as "breaking the silence," which would be a vote against the decision.

One of the avenues for bypassing the IGN is initiating the process to amend the UN Charter under its Article 108, which requires a two-thirds majority of UN members including all the permanent Council members.

While it may be possible to muster a two-thirds majority, the hurdle would be getting all the permanent members to agree.

The US, Britain and France support India's permanent membership while Russia is lukewarm in its backing and China is against it.

The US is likely to oppose possible African nations for permanent membership.

Womenia

TWEET PATROL


**SHRADDHA
@SHRADDHAKAPOOR**

Birthday Baapu! Party popper #ShaktiKapoor
Happy birthday to my precious Baapu!
Thank you for being my Superhero and the best father in the universe ☺



Get smooth, radiant skin

A great alternative to your expensive beauty products in the market is fruit face packs which are quite effective, have no side effects and are cost efficient



Shahnaz Husain

Tired of trying market-based synthetic, artificial and expensive face packs that promise you glowing, smooth and radiant skin?

Fruit packs are a great and best alternative for adding radiance to the skin. They can also be applied daily. The homemade fruit face packs are natural and easy to make, which gives you clear, smooth and glowing skin with regular use at home.

Here are some fruit face packs that help you achieve a beautiful glowing

Mango

Take 3 tablespoons Mango pulp and mix with one teaspoon each ground almonds, oats and lemon juice. Apply on the face, avoiding the lips and area around the eyes. Wash off after 20 to 30 minutes. Take slices of ripe mango. Mash it until it is smooth. Add one teaspoon full of multani mitti and make a thick, smooth paste. Apply this paste around face and neck and wash it off after 30 minutes to get supple and glowing skin



Papaya

Mix 3 teaspoons of ripe papaya with 3 teaspoons of oats and one teaspoon each of curd and honey. Leave on for 20 to 30 minutes and wash off with water. It softens the skin and adds a glow. Alternatively, mash a few slices of ripe papaya until it is smooth. Add a few drops of honey and lemon juice to make thick paste. Apply the paste on the face for 30 minutes and wash it off with fresh clean water

Banana

Banana pulp can be added to egg white and one teaspoon honey. Leave it on for 20 to 30 minutes and then wash it off. Almond oil may also be added to the pack, especially during the dry winter season. Alternatively you can take one banana. One tsp honey and a few drops of lemon juice. Mash the banana and add honey and lemon juice to apply the paste on your face and other areas of the skin. Leave it and wash it off after 30 minutes. Avoid using lemon juice if you

have dry and sensitive skin.

Apples

Raw apple pulp or apple juice can be applied on the skin daily and then washed off with plain water after 20 minutes. Grated apples can be added to face masks. Mix oats with curd, honey and apple pulp or grated apple into a paste. Apply on the face and wash it off after 20 to 30 minutes. Grate a few slices of apple, with its skin removed and add a few drops of honey to make it a paste. Apply the paste onto your face and uncovered areas like hands, elbows etc. Wash it off with warm water after 30 minutes

Pomegranate

Pomegranate juice can be mixed with

lemon juice in equal quantities and applied on the face. Rinse off after 20 minutes with water. Pomegranate peel can be dried and powdered and used in face packs. Mix two teaspoons each pomegranate peel powder and fuller's earth (multani mitti) with enough rose water to make a paste. Apply on the face, avoiding the lips and area around the eyes. Wash off when it dries.

Grapefruit

Both pink and red grapefruits are said to be rich in Vitamin A, carotene and lycopene. They are also rich in Vitamins C & A, as well as potassium and magnesium. Mix the juice with oats to make a paste and apply on the face. Wash off when it dries. It helps to remove blackheads.

Fashion ka Caravan

Television actor Aamna Sharif looks beautiful in the Peplum style lehenga from our latest collection, Caravan. A resortwear collection in tune with the revival of vintage looks, this bold and bright ensemble is a floral parade boasting of crewel hand embroidery inspired designs. Featuring strong base tones like fuchsia, red, yellow, black and ivory it is a signature statement in optimism and positivity



Creativity calls for courage: Singer Falu Shah

SIDDHI JAIN

Celebrated Grammy-nominated singer, Falu Shah, together with her Boston-based band 'Karyshma' has launched their latest collection 'Someday'. An EP of traditional Indian classical, folk, and Sufi songs; these renditions of traditional Hindustani music celebrate the unity and oneness that is 'India', at a time of uncertainty and universal distress.

Falu, who is the band's lead singer-songwriter, along with her other band members told IANSLife, "The unprecedented times that we are currently going through – the bleakness - inspired us to bring back and spread love through 'Someday'. In spite of the band residing on two different

The Grammy-nominated female artiste from India and her band 'Karyshma', have launched their incredible and buoyant musical saga during the global pandemic

coasts, we didn't want the geographical inconsistencies to get in the way of our inspiration."

They added: "Creativity takes courage, and with this album our effort is to shed some light of hope during the current pandem-

ic and bring a smile to the face of our beloved audience."

"The songs you hear on this album represent my childhood memories when I resorted to music for solace and comfort. In 31 days across six different cities we,

Falu and Karyshma, tried to capture that feeling. I hope you hear the voice of hope and calmness in this album," shared Falu.

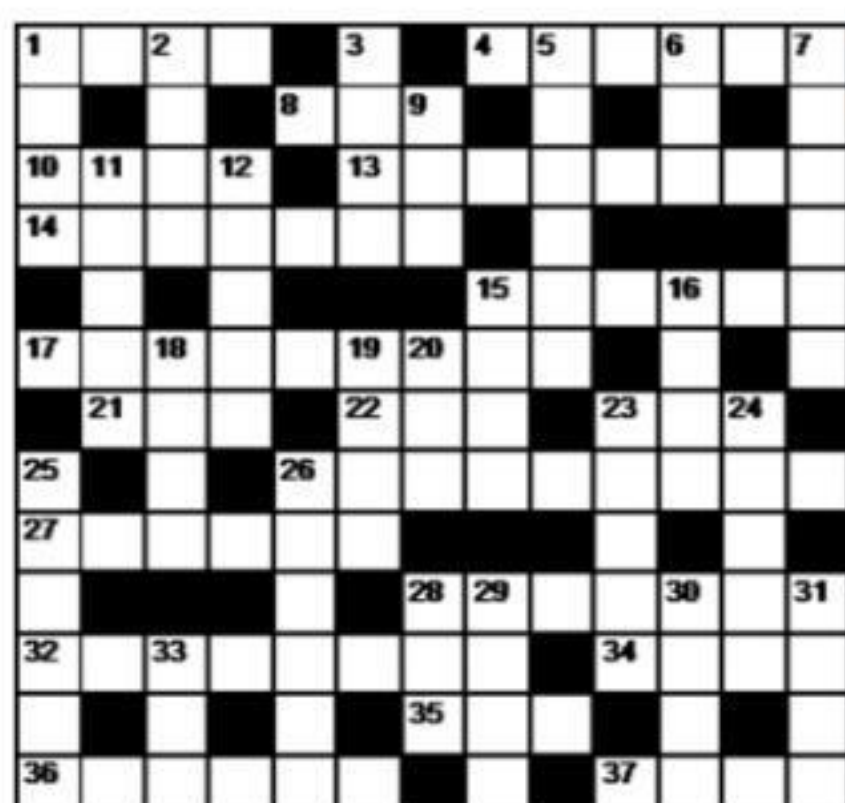
With 'Someday', the band reimagines South Asia's musical traditions - from classical ragas to the 15th century song-and-dance stylings of thumri, and the ghazals of Sufi mystics dating back to the 7th century. Drawing from more recent times, the band reconstructs 'Yara' - a classic from Indian Cinema's golden age.

In order to provide context to 'Someday', the band has also put together a visual which features footage of life and culture in India, interspersed with insights on the music of 'Someday', it is available to watch on YouTube. You can also catch it on Spotify and Apple Music.

QUICK TIP

NUDE SHADES AT WORK

During the long working hours, it is important to wear shades that are not too loud and look professional. A nude lip shade, therefore, look elegant in office and also enhance your confidence.



SOLUTION TO SEPTEMBER 3

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Snatch or seize (4)
- 4 Radiant (6)
- 8 Exclamation of contempt (3)
- 10 Very much stirred up (4)
- 13 Told, recounted or reported (8)
- 14 Parades ostentatiously (7)
- 15 Moved with a lame walk (6)
- 17 Around the South Pole (9)
- 21 Domesticated canid (3)
- 22 Animal to batter (3)
- 23 Counterparts of "downs" (3)
- 26 South Indian state (9)
- 27 Disclose (6)
- 28 In reality (2,5)
- 32 Capital of Chile (8)
- 34 Goes bad (4)
- 35 In the open (3)
- 36 Testify (6)
- 37 Beloved (4)

Down

- 1 German count (4)
- 2 Wild ox of Celebes (4)
- 3 Gasp (4)
- 5 Pungent bulb (6)
- 6 Superlative suffix (3)
- 7 Got by (4,2)
- 9 Possesses (3)
- 11 Secreting organ (5)
- 12 Russian prison camp (5)
- 15 Delineate (4)
- 16 Insect stage (4)
- 18 Upper-class gent (4)
- 19 Stuff (4)
- 20 Sailor (3)
- 23 Absolute (5)
- 24 Avoid out of fear (5)
- 25 Midday nap (6)
- 26 Poisonous snakes (6)
- 28 In the past (3)
- 29 Excursion (4)
- 30 First-class (1-3)
- 31 Autocrat (4)
- 33 Mesh (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO SEPTEMBER 3

NEWS ROUNDUP

Kirti Kulhari feels blessed to travel amid pandemic

Actress Kirti Kulhari is currently spending time amidst mountains in Himachal Pradesh, and she truly feels blessed.

"And finally the actual morning... all the way from #kharota #himachalpradesh In the current times, I actually feel so blessed that I can travel and experience this," she wrote on her Instagram account, adding pictures of herself enjoying the scenic background.

Kirti also asked people not to be scared to travel amid pandemic.

"And those of you who wish to do the same, just some precautions and you could do it too... #besafe #dontbescared," she added. Fans were mesmerised seeing Kirti's pictures of her stay at Kharota.

"Such beautiful clicks," a user commented.

"Wanna travel too," another one wrote.

On the work front, Kirti was recently seen in the second season of the web show "Four More Shots Please!" She will also be seen sharing screen space with Parineeti Chopra in the Hindi adaptation of "The Girl On The Train".



No Permanent Commission of women Army officers after cut-off date: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday refused to entertain a plea for granting benefits of Permanent Commission to women SSC officers of Army, who superannuated on completing 14-years in service after the cut-off date of February 17, fixed by the top court.

The top court said that relief sought by these women officers, in substance amounts to review of its verdict and if it allows the plea then other batches of officers may also seek similar relief.

On February 17, the top court in its landmark verdict had directed the Centre to consider within three months, all serving SSC women officers for PC irrespective of them having crossed 14 years or, as the case may be, 20 years of service.

It had said, as a one-time measure, the benefit of continuing in



service until the attainment of 20 years pensionable service shall also apply to all the existing SSC officers with more than fourteen years of service. A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud, Indu Malhotra and K

M Joseph, said on Thursday that it is not inclined to hear the petition as the relief sought, in substance, amounts to review of the judgement.

During the hearing, the advocate

Meenakshi Lekhi said that this application has been filed by 19 women officers who superannuated in March and are seeking that the benefits of permanent commission be granted to them. Lekhi said that the cut-off date fixed by the court is that of the judgement, February 17, but the government order accepting the cut-off date and grant of permanent commission came in July.

Justice Chandrachud said, "If we relax that date of cut off, then there will be no stop. Where do we draw the line? That is actually worrying me." The bench referred to the judgement and said it had given the direction as a one-time measure only. It observed that: "These women officers completed their 14-years of service in March and we gave a cut-off date of our judgment. The government order came later.

How far back can we go?"

Senior advocate R Balasubramanian, appearing for the Centre, opposed the application and said that it cannot be left open ended. He said that the present applicants had not completed 14 years of service as on February 17, when the top court had delivered its judgement. He said that on July 16, the government passed the orders relating to the Permanent Commission and all those who had completed 14 years in service as on February 17 cut-off date will get pension and other benefits. He said if the court allows the issue to remain open-ended then it will become un-implementable for the government. The bench told Lekhi, "Now, if we grant the benefit (as sought by applicants) then we will have to give it to the successive batches of officers also."



Social distancing stickers pasted on passenger seats as part of preparations ahead of the resumption of Delhi Metro services from Sept. 7 with restrictions.

Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson infected

London: Superstar Dwayne Johnson on early Thursday morning revealed that he along with his family had tested positive for coronavirus three weeks ago, but they have all "gotten through COVID-19" now. The 37-year-old actor posted a video of himself on Instagram where he is seen sharing his health update with the fans. In the 11-minute-long video, 'The Rock' is seen firstly breaking about his COVID-19 diagnosis before finally assuring his fans that he and his family are now completely healthy and are "no longer contagious."



"I wanted to give you guys a little helpful update on some of the things that I have been going through on my end for the past two and a half to three weeks now. So update is this - my wife Lauren, as well as my two baby girls and myself, we have all tested positive for COVID-19," he said in the video.

BCCI contingent member tests -ve

New Delhi: A member of the BCCI contingent, which is here to oversee the conduct of IPL, has tested positive for COVID-19, a league source told PTI on Thursday. The event is scheduled to start on September 19. "There is one positive case in the BCCI contingent. I can't tell you whether it's from cricket operations team or the medical team. But testing is on and everyone else is healthy and asymptomatic," a senior IPL official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"There is no cause for concern," he added. The development comes after 13 members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent, including two players, tested positive for the dreaded virus last week. They are currently undergoing the mandatory 14-day quarantine.

Dilip Kumar's bro Ehsan Khan dies

Mumbai: Veteran actor Dilip Kumar's younger brother Ehsan Khan, who tested positive for coronavirus last month, has died, according to the Bollywood star's family friend, Faisal Farooqui. He was 90. The cinema icon's two brothers, Ehsan Khan and Aslam Khan were admitted to Lilavati Hospital on August 15 after they complained of breathlessness and eventually tested positive for COVID-19. While Aslam Khan, 88, passed away on August 21, Ehsan Khan breathed his last late Wednesday night due to coronavirus, Dr Jalil Parkar, who was treating the duo, said.

China deploys 5 militia squads in Eastern Ladakh

New Delhi (IANS): China has deployed five militia squads for rapid response at the disputed Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh. It has done so to "consolidate the border" and "stabilise Tibet region", sources said.

"Militia is basically a reserve force of the Chinese's People Liberation Army. They are deployed during war time situations and help the PLA in its military operations," said a senior government officer. The officer also explained that Chinese militia conducts independent operations and provides combat support and manpower to replenish the PLA. "It is an irregular mix of mountaineers, boxers, members of local fight clubs and others. Most of the members are raised from the local population," said the officer.

India and China continued to hold talks at Brigadier-level for the fifth day as well after the



Indian Army thwarted Chinese Army's attempts to transgress in new areas.

On the intervening night of August 29 and August 30, 2020, PLA troops had violated the previous consensus agreed in military and diplomatic engagements during the ongoing standoff in eastern Ladakh and carried out provocative military movements to change the status quo. "Indian troops pre-empted this PLA activity

on the Southern Bank of Pangong Tso, and undertook measures to strengthen our positions and thwart Chinese intentions to unilaterally change facts on ground," the force said.

North of the Pangong Tso, China has refused to move back from its present military position. China has strengthened their positions between Finger-5 and 8 of the Pangong Lake. The PLA has refused to pull back eastwards from the 8-km stretch it has occupied from Finger-4 to Finger-8 by building scores of new fortifications there since early May. The mountain spurs jutting into the lake are referred to as Fingers in military parlance. India has asked China to completely withdraw troops from Pangong Tso.

On June 15, twenty Indian soldiers and an unknown number of Chinese troops were killed in a violent clash at the Galwan valley.

Doc, wife pour hot water on 12-year-old domestic help

Dibrugarh: In a horrible incident, a doctor and his wife in Assam allegedly poured hot water on their 12-year-old domestic help while he was asleep in their house.

A case has been registered against the doctor and his wife, who is a college principal. Both of them are absconding, police said. The incident took place in Assam's Dibrugarh district.

Siddhi Prasad Deuri, a retired doctor of the Assam Medical College and Hospital, had, in an inebriated state, allegedly poured hot water on the boy as he was sleeping.

Police personnel had gone to the couple's residence to interrogate them but found that saline was being administered to Deuri, who is a cancer patient. They had asked the duo to report to the police station at the earliest, he said.

Several child protection groups and social organisations have demanded that the duo be arrested immediately and the boy be given the best medical facilities.



Jaipur (IANS): A Khap panchayat, an unelected council of village elders, recently penalised a man and woman from the Sansi Community in Rajasthan's Sikar district by making them bathe publicly to wash their alleged 'sins'.

The nephew and aunt who were allegedly involved in an 'illicit' relationship, were asked to deposit Rs 31,000 and Rs 22,000 respectively by the Khap panchayat as penalty before they were allowed to return to the social fold.

Sansi Samaj members submitted a memorandum to the Superintendent of Police, demanding stringent action against the khap panchayat. They said that the guilty should be put behind bars, the

amount collected by the woman given back to her and those who gathered at the site booked for flouting social distancing norms. Sikar SP Gagandeep Singla, meanwhile, said that a probe is underway and the team is recording villagers' statements. "Also, we are trying to get videos or pictures of the incident," he added.

The incident was reported on August 21 and as per the Khap panchayat, the man and woman were asked to wash off their sins by bathing in a public place. Hundreds of villagers gathered to look at the so-called punishment. A few on-lookers even took pictures and made videos of the incident, but nobody came forward to help them.



Khap panchayat forces man, woman to bathe publicly to 'wash off sins'

SSR had bipolar disorder, doc told Mumbai cops

Mumbai: Sushant Singh Rajput was battling bipolar disorder, and struggling with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) for the last 13 years, his doctor told Mumbai Police in his statement after the actor's death.

According to the doctor, Sushant's mental health significantly worsened in the year 2013 as was evident in Sushant's sisters' statements to the Mumbai cops. On the other hand, Sushant's manager Shruti Modi reportedly informed the Central Bureau of Investigation that the late actor would often consume marijuana along with Rhea Chakraborty, who would smoke joints with SSR's house manager Samuel Miranda and her brother Showik Chakraborty regularly on Sushant's terrace.

For the uninitiated, the Narcotics Control Bureau has been investigating a possible drug angle in the Sushant Singh Rajput death case after the Enforcement Directorate of-

ficials traced Rhea Chakraborty's WhatsApp chats which alleges her of "usage and dealing of banned drugs."

Mumbai court on Thursday remanded an alleged contraband dealer, arrested in connection with the drugs trafficking case linked to the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, in the custody of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) till September 9. The accused, Zaid Vilatra (21), was produced before a metropolitan magistrates court which remanded him in NCBs custody for seven days for further probe in the case. The NCB on Wednesday said it arrested Vilatra and one Basit Parihar in connection with the drug trafficking case linked to the Rajput death case.

A billboard in Hollywood that was set up to campaign for justice for Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput has been pulled down. His sister Shweta Singh Kirti has claimed that paid PR working against the campaign



Late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's house staff members Keshav and Neeraj Singh arrive at DRDO guest house, at Santacruz in Mumbai on Thursday

is behind the act. Shweta took to Instagram and shared a snapshot of a mail exchange between the American billboard company in question and her.

Demonetisation benefited biggest billionaires: Rahul

New Delhi: Continuing with his attack on the BJP-led central government over the state of economy, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a video alleged that the demonetisation was an attack on India's unorganised sector and a move to benefit India's biggest billionaires.

The video posted by Gandhi on his Twitter handle was second in series where he explained the "the intention behind" the demonetisation move.

The Congress leader said the Centre's move affected farmers, labourers, small shopkeepers who are part of the unorganised sector.

"What did India's poor get out of demonetisation? The answer is 'nothing'. Then who benefited from it? The advantage was taken by India's biggest billionaires," Gandhi said.

Gandhi said the second aim of demonetisation was to wipe out cash from the system. "The Prime Minister himself said that he envisaged a cashless India. But in a cashless India, the informal sector will be destroyed," he added.

The Congress has stepped up its attack on the government after the country's economy suffered its worst slump on record in April-June, with the gross domestic product (GDP) contracting by 23.9 per cent as the coron-



avirus-related lockdowns weighed on the already-declining consumer demand and investment.

The GDP contraction in the world's fifth-largest economy compared with a 3.1-per cent growth in the preceding January-March quarter and a 5.2-per cent expansion in the same period a year ago, according to official data released on Monday.

(With agency inputs)

Ban on apps: China asks India to rectify 'mistake'

RIP PUBG: TWITTER FILLED WITH MIXED REAX MEMES AFTER BAN

Beijing: A day after India banned 118 Chinese mobile apps, China on Thursday said the move violated the legal interests of Chinese investors and service providers.

China's Commerce Ministry said Beijing is seriously concerned and "resolutely opposes" the Indian government's move. It asked India to "correct its mistakes".

Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng said India

has "abused the concept of national security and adopted discriminatory restrictive measures against Chinese companies."

The Centre's move comes amid the renewed tension between India and China along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh region.

The IT Ministry said it had received complaints from various sources, including several reports about misuse of some mo-

bile apps available on Android and iOS platforms for stealing and surreptitiously transmitting users' data to servers outside India. The Centre had earlier banned 59 Chinese apps, including TikTok and UC Browser, in the aftermath of Galwan Valley clash when at least 20 Indian soldiers were killed by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA).

A flood of reactions on various social media platforms like

Twitter continued on Thursday. "My Last Chicken Dinner!!!! End of An Era...Will miss you #PUBG," a Twitter user wrote. Another said: "I never played #PUBG but happy for the generation who was wasting time in it. #PUBGBANNED #PUBG-MOBILE". "If India launches our own #AatmaNirbhar version of #pubg, what would be the name? It'll start - Mahayudh," another user commented. Several users also

shared MS Dhoni memes. The former international cricketer spent most of his time in lockdown, playing games like PUBG, which was revealed by his wife Sakshi Dhoni during an Instagram Live chat session.

"PUBG retired before Dhoni could retire from PUBG," a user mentioned.

"DHONI knew PUBG would be banned in India. So he flew to UAE (sic)," wrote another user.



A robust cyber security policy is imperative

Twitter has confirmed that an account for the personal website of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was hacked. The account, with over 2.5 million followers, is the official Twitter handle for Modi's personal website. His personal Twitter account, which was unaffected by this incident, has more than 61m followers. Twitter said it was aware of the activity and had taken steps to secure the compromised account.

The tweets, which have since been taken down, asked the followers to donate to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund through cryptocurrency. Four tweets were posted from the hacked account @narendramodiiin before it was secured. "I appeal to you all to donate generously to PM National Relief Fund for COVID-19, Now India begin with cryptocurrency. Kindly donate eth to - Official Tweet of PM Modi" was the first tweet at 3:09 am Indian Standard Time (IST). "I appeal to you all to

donate generously to PM National Relief Fund for COVID-19, Now India begin with cryptocurrency. Kindly Donate Bitcoin to" was the second tweet, at 3:11 am IST.

The third tweet, at 3:14 am, had the same content as the second but the Bitcoin address was different. The final tweet, at 3:16 am, was a sign off by the hacker(s): "Yes this account is hacked by John Wick (hckindia@tutanota.com), We have not hacked Paytm Mall". This is rather a strange appeal. Whoever wanted to make money - of that is the motive, let us say - would surely not demand cryptocurrency. It's not clear how much amount, if any, was donated to the cryptocurrency addresses shared by the hacker. It's also not clear at what time was the account secured and through what means.

It's likely that the hacker had access to the account for more time than he (or she or they) used for messaging. No official statement has been made by the Prime Minister's office. On August 15, in his Independence Day speech, the Prime Minister announced that India would get a new, 'robust' cyber security policy soon. As the hacking of his own Twitter account shows, India can no

longer ignore the cyberspace. The Internet Crime Report for 2019, released by the Internet Crime Complaint Centre of the FBI, has revealed that India stands third in the world among top 20 countries that are victims of internet crimes.

Modi in his speech said that his government was aware of the threats emanating from cyber space and how they had the potential to impact India's society, economy and development. "Cyber security is a very important aspect, which cannot be ignored. The government is alert on this and is working on a new, robust policy," he added. The imperative of this move is to be understood from the decision of the government to connect 1.5 lakh gram panchayats through optical fibre network. Cybercrime would only increase once this happens.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), cybercrimes in India almost doubled in 2017 from the previous year. In 2016, there were 12,317 cases reported, which spiked to 21,796 cases in 2017. In 2018, the number further rose to 27,248 cases. The hacking of the Prime Minister's account will expedite the adoption of the new cyber policy.

AN ASSAULT ON THE MAP

The dispute between India and China

SAMRAT

There are reports of fresh tensions between the Indian and Chinese militaries in Ladakh from around Pangong Tso. The situation there has smouldered since the bloody clashes between Indian and Chinese soldiers in the Galwan Valley area in June in which 20 Indian and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers died in hand-to-hand fighting.

The Chinese, according to a report in The Hindu, are currently occupying around 1,000 sq km of territory in Ladakh that was not in their possession before this year. This is in addition to the whole of Aksai Chin, the barren high-altitude desert between Ladakh and Tibet that appears on Indian maps as a part of India, although it has never been in the physical occupation of any government of independent India. India on its part rules Arunachal Pradesh, which appears in Chinese maps as their territory. The latest reports indicate that Indian forces also pre-emptively occupied the heights on the southern banks of Pangong Tso in Ladakh, thus pushing into areas where they were not formerly present.

Differing maps present countries with a problem that is very difficult to solve. It is not politically feasible for any government to align maps to ground realities because that would be seen as giving away swathes of the country's territory. Even though the territories in dispute may never actually have been ruled by either of the contending parties, national pride is involved. Historical realities are forgotten and clashes, possibly escalating into war, become a path that cannot be avoided.

The territorial dispute between India and China is over borderlands that are at the edges of both countries. They are over spaces that were largely blanks on the map until after 1800, and in some cases, even after 1900. The fight over them is actually a consequence of technologies of communication that have enabled state cores to expand their reaches to distant peripheries. The clash is fundamentally one caused by nation-states colonising what were formerly non-state spaces.

Take Aksai Chin, for example. The area was and is a forbidding desert that remained uninhabited and uninhabitable for most of the history. It ended up finding its way into the map of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir thanks to a junior civilian sub-assistant of the Survey



The logic of proud nationalism dictates that maps may become larger, but they certainly cannot be allowed to shrink. This requirement to defend the map at any cost is part of the essential character of the nation-state

of India named WH Johnson, whose cartographic exertions in 1865 made it Kashmiri territory. In 2003, writing (paywall) on this in the Economic and Political Weekly, Mohan Guruswamy noted that "Johnson's survey is not without some controversy. To have completed the journey to Khotan, which lay well beyond the forbidding Kuen Lun range, and to return to Leh in the time he did, he would have had to be covering over 30 kms a day. Even if that frenetic pace were possible, it is doubtful any serious survey effort would have been possible".

Regardless of the quality and veracity of Johnson's surveying and map-making, the Maharaja of Kashmir was pleased to find his territory suddenly enlarged. Johnson resigned from his Survey of India job and was appointed governor of Ladakh by the Maharaja. The territory he had quite literally drawn into Jammu and Kashmir however remained unoccupied. A few years later, according to an article by AG Noorani, the British Viceroy of India, Lord Lansdowne, believing the territory to be of no value, and not wishing to leave a no-man's land between their domains and China, suggested the Chinese should be encouraged to take it as a way of

ensuring the Russians, then seen as the primary threat for British India, did not find a way in.

The status of Aksai Chin remained unclear even after India and China emerged as modern nation-states in their present avatars in 1947 and 1949 respectively. Praveen Swami, in a piece for Firstpost earlier this year, pointed out that "India's 1950 map of its borders included no claim to Aksai Chin, recording the Ladakh frontier areas as 'undefined'". Ladakh sort of shaded into Tibet on that map; there was no line between them.

India and China today are now fighting over those very same "no-man's lands" that neither of them had actually previously owned, or even particularly wanted. The case of Arunachal Pradesh is similar. Much of the area in dispute appeared as blanks on the map until after 1900. The first surveys from the Indian side were done in the early 1900s by British expeditions that followed the course of one or the other of the Brahmaputra river's formative tributaries, the Lohit, Dibang and Siang. There were no roads, the rivers were not navigable by boat, and the thick jungles were inhabited by tribes that were hostile to strangers, often greet-

ing them with murderous physical attacks. There was of course no question of any existing administrative machinery, either Indian or Chinese, of any kind. No emperor in Delhi or Beijing, and no king in Tibet or Assam, had ever ruled those lands.

These areas, which had never belonged to anyone but the local tribes, gradually began to appear on Indian and Chinese maps as their own territories. They became an administrative territory called the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) under Indian rule, after being part of Assam immediately after Independence. Beijing first laid claim to NEFA, with the exception of Tirap, as well as parts of Ladakh, in a 1958 official map, according to Swami.

The maps then took on a life of their own. The nation-state deified them. For India, an expansive map even became a backdrop to the image of Bharat Mata - although the original painting of Bharat Mata by Abanindranath Tagore in 1905 had no such cartographic character to it.

Neither India nor China can now allow changes to their maps. The logic of proud nationalism dictates that maps may become larger, but they certainly cannot be allowed to shrink. This requirement to defend the map at any cost is part of the essential character of the nation-state. Flag-waving populism and majoritarianism only make it more obvious.

Majoritarianism is part and parcel of the nation-state, which by definition belongs to a certain

group, explicitly in many cases, but implicitly in others. We know that England belongs to the English and Spain to the Spaniards, China to the Han Chinese and Japan to the Japanese, Pakistan to Muslims and Israel to Jews. However, all countries tend to have internal diversity, because that is simply how the human world is. The degree of diversity varies, but there is diversity everywhere. The internally diverse population of the country is united under the majority in the nation-state by the imagery of map and flag, the emotional tune of the national anthem, and the social contract of the Constitution. Without these bindings, the centre cannot hold.

Any assault on its map, flag, anthem or Constitution is thus an existential issue for the nation-state. This is why the escalating dispute between India and China in Ladakh may continue to escalate. The territory in question may be a sliver of land in a high-altitude cold desert far away from the national heartlands, inhabited by populations very different from the respective dominant majorities on either side... but if in our perception it is ours, and in their perception it is theirs, both sides are now bound to defend their maps, as they were in the past. Having embarked upon a path of confrontation, it will be extremely difficult for India and China to back down from their positions and claims.

(This article was first published on www.firstpost.com. Reprinted with their permission.

TUK-TUK WARRIORS



Abuse victims who rode to women's rescue in lockdown India

ANNIE BANERJI

As the coronavirus kept virtually everyone at home, Talat Jahan was busily crisscrossing the slums in her black-and-yellow rickshaw - on a lockdown mission to help women suffering abuse and hunger in her central Indian city.

Jahan, 29, a domestic abuse survivor, and about a dozen other women who recently trained to become Bhopal's first female rickshaw drivers, ferried food and other essentials to hard-hit city families during India's months-long lockdown.

But often, Jahan said, she and her fellow volunteers from the Gauravi one-stop crisis centre were simply a sympathetic ear for women cooped up with their abusers during the COVID-19 lockdown, which led to a spike in domestic violence worldwide.

"Some women who were stuck at home with their abusive husbands, they would come and seek me out and tell me about their troubles," said Jahan, who suffered violence and demands for a dowry from her in-laws.

Bhopal's charity-run Gauravi was the first such centre set up after the gang rape and murder of a woman on board a Delhi bus in 2012, a crime that sparked global outrage over women's treatment and led to tougher anti-rape laws in India.

Gauravi, which means "brave heart" in Hindi, gives abuse victims legal, financial, social and psychological support.

It also helped Jahan and the other women rickshaw drivers - many of whom are survivors of domestic violence - find a new profession, as well as a way to assist other women in need.

"I felt blessed to be able to help these women because I had been through the same and knew what it is like, this feeling of helplessness," Jahan told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh state.

"When one of them said to me 'Had it not been for you, I would have died', I knew I was doing something right."

As countries across the world reported a surge in calls to domestic violence hotlines, India's federal and state governments set up a dedicated helpline for women during the coronavirus restrictions.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) also launched a WhatsApp helpline in April, according to the women's ministry.

The NCW registered 660 complaints of domestic violence in July, up about 45% from the previous month. During the strict lockdown between late March and June, the commission's helpline logged some 1,500 complaints.

Neither the women's ministry or the NCW responded to requests for comment.

Healing touch

Sarika Sinha, a director at ActionAid India who manages Gauravi, said the women tuk-tuk drivers played a key role in identifying and ensuring support to domestic abuse victims.

"It's a difficult time. You lose your livelihood, you lose your food, you lose your security," she said.

"So, where do these most vulnerable women go? That's the larger picture that needs to be seen against the COVID-19 pandemic."

The United Nations has called domestic violence a "shadow pandemic", predicting that lockdowns could lead to a 20% surge in abuse. To prevent such an outcome, the women at Gauravi decided to find vulnerable people, list their needs, pack kits of food and vital aid and use their tuk-tuks to deliver nearly 10,000 of them over the three months. They also drove women to work, helped them call government ambulances and raised awareness about COVID-19 when public transport - including tuk-tuks - came to a halt, depriving the women drivers of the daily income of up to 1,500 rupees (\$20).

She said the centre received 1,400 distress calls from women during the lockdown, ranging from domestic abuse, marital rape and trafficking cases to pregnant women unable to access healthcare and abortion services.

In cases involving domestic violence, counsellors would talk to the couple over the phone. If that failed, they would meet the husband at the couple's home or at Gauravi before approaching the police for help.

"If husbands didn't mend their ways, we would keep the women and their young children at our shelter," said Neelima Jatav, 26, who joined Gauravi as a staff worker after enduring domestic abuse, divorce and a miscarriage.

While there were many challenges - not least securing travel permits to reach distressed women, one of the biggest was social distancing, Sinha said.

"Earlier we would hug women, hold them, wipe their tears to comfort them during a difficult time," she said.

"A healing touch - that was what was most needed during COVID-19 - and that totally got lost."

There is no quick end in sight to the outbreak in India as coronavirus cases soar in the world's second most-populous nation, reaching 3.69 million this week as the country repeatedly reports the highest global single-day caseloads.

Despite the surge in infections, restrictions are being eased as authorities seek to revive the economy.

Not enough

The United Nations has called domestic violence a "shadow pandemic", predicting that lockdowns could lead to a 20% surge in abuse.

To prevent such an outcome, the women at Gauravi decided to find vulnerable people, list their needs, pack kits of food and vital aid and use their tuk-tuks to deliver nearly 10,000 of them over the three months.

They also drove women to work, helped them call government ambulances and raised awareness about COVID-19 when public transport - including tuk-tuks - came to a halt, depriving the women drivers of the daily income of up to 1,500 rupees (\$20).

Pranita Achyut, a director at the International Center for Research on Women in Asia, welcomed such projects, but said India had a long way to go in adequately supporting and rehabilitating women trying to flee abuse.

"Unless we take violence as a systemic, structural issue, small bits and pieces - while they are important and necessary - will not be enough," she said.

She called for a range of actions, including reforming India's creaking criminal justice system to ensure more domestic abuse cases reach court and make it more sensitive to the mental health problems suffered by many victims.

In the meantime, Jahan said she was happy with her newly-acquired driving skill, which she credits for a boost in her confidence - something she lacked in the past.

"I was very nervous at first... and people made fun of me too. But I carried on regardless. They slowly understood I was not going to back down," she said, adding that she now felt ready to learn how to drive a bus, and then fly a plane. "I've never been on a bus, but it has been my childhood dream to fly one."

The question hour imbroglio

No questions in Lok Sabha, no press conferences for the last six years, no audit for PM-CARES, no transparency in governance - overall, no democracy seems to be the rule of Modi government but amusingly it has been criticising Congress's Emergency regime, day in and day out (No Question Hour, curtailed zero hour, September 3). It appears Covid pandemic is being conveniently used as an excuse by the Modi-led BJP to cover up its failures of GDP contraction, non-reimbursement of GST dues to states and so on. One wonders behind the logic to do away with question hour, when BJP indulged in activities of toppling of elected governments freely in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan during lockdown period.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

Raina beeti jaaye?

Suresh Raina has bowled a googly by hinting at returning to IPL this season. Though the CSK all-rounder had pulled out of the tournament quoting personal reasons, it was plain that he had left for all the wrong reasons. Cricket buffs also raised questions about his relationship with the team and the skipper, MS Dhoni. Having put himself in a spot, it could this be the end of the IPL road for Raina.

N J Ravichander, Bengaluru



LETTERS

Border stand-off

It is believed that the bilateral discussions between Military Generals of India and China some time ago resulted in fiasco in the face of Chinese troops moved to Line Of Control with a view to wage a war. India, of course, is watching every moment to defend. A possible war would end up with heavy casualty of men and material with no win on either side. It would be a further big blow to Indian economy and social structure as the nation is already in chaos with Coronavirus. United Nations has to play its role to pacify the tensions.

Dr NSR Murthy, Secunderabad

Corona Kavach scheme

The insurance industry is one industry which had to react quickly to the pandemic and to develop new policies to face the growing spread of Coronavirus. Lack of education and awareness have been the main reasons for India being largely underinsured particularly in the area of the health insurance with only 18 per cent of the urban and 14 per cent of rural population availing protective schemes. There are no drugs as yet to fully cure patients and work on the vaccines for virus is still

in the trail stages. Corona Kavach is a single premium where your sum insured of 50,000 becomes maximum Sum Insured of 5 lakhs. People should shield themselves with insurance.

Munmun Bua, Hyderabad

Roads or death traps?

It is a matter of grave concern that the national capital Delhi tops in the fatalities caused by road accidents. Although it is the drivers who are held accountable for the fatalities in most of the road accidents, one cannot overlook the poor infrastructure of the roads as a serious cause of these mishaps. During an inspection by the officials of the Public Works Department (PWD) last year, more than 2000 potholes were found on the roads of Delhi which is terribly alarming. Besides this, broken footpaths, dislocated kerb stones and uncontrolled growth of trees affecting the traffic are some of the other anomalies which accounts for the increasing number of road accidents in India. It is distressing to note that India ranks first in the world in terms of road accidents with 1.46 lakhs of fatalities annually as per the latest reports of the International Road Federation (IRF), Geneva. In a review of accident prevention, there has to be holistic view of all factors.

Tushar Anand, Patna

thehansreader@gmail.com

Free power will stay, asserts CM



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy addressing the Cabinet meeting at the Secretariat on Thursday

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday asserted that the free electricity being given to the farmers in the state will remain free forever and that not even a single power connection would be disconnected. He made it clear that there won't be any burden on the farmers due to the reforms being initiated by the state government.

The Chief Minister came up with these categorical assertions during a meeting of the state Cabinet here on Thursday. Significantly, the meeting, chaired by the Chief Minister, approved the agriculture electricity cash transfer scheme.

Speaking on this occasion, the Chief Minister said that the government would regularise all agricultural electricity connections in the state. Giving the details of the scheme, he said: "The

- **Makes it clear there will not be any burden on farmers because of the reforms taken up by the govt**
- **Says TDP chief has no right to talk about free power as only YSRC has 'patent' on the scheme**
- **All agriculture connections will be regularised**
- **Daytime power supply to farming will be increased to 100% from the current 89%**

cash equivalent to the electricity bill will be directly transferred into the bank account of a farmer who has an agricultural power connection. The same money, the farmers will be paying to the discoms (power distribution companies). There will not be any burden, not even a single penny, on the farmer due to this," he said.

Training his guns at TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu, he said: "Chandrababu had in the past said that free electricity is not feasible. He ridiculed the very concept, saying that electric

wires will only be useful for drying up clothes, if free power is given. The very same Chandrababu has the dubious distinction of ordering police firing in Basheerbagh on farmers who protested against steep power tariff hikes. They (Chandrababu Naidu's regime) left behind close to Rs 8,000 crore pending dues that were to be paid towards free electricity. After the YSRCP came to power, we have cleared all those dues. We have upgraded electricity feeders at a cost of Rs 1,700 crore.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said his

government was providing quality electricity. The day-time nine-hour supply of electricity is already being implemented in 89 per cent of feeders. This will be in 100 per cent implementation from the coming rabi season. The government will fortify this scheme further with an additional 10,000 megawatts of solar power. It is devising plans to ensure that there are no obstacles for the implementation of free power supply. "Only YSR has the patent on free electricity supply to the farming community. Hence, his name for the scheme," Jagan said.

Chief Minister's principal advisor Ajeya Kallam already announced that the state government was compelled to introduce the cash transfer scheme for agriculture electricity only due to the reforms being brought in by the Central government.

TELUGU VS ENGLISH

SC declines to stay HC order quashing State govt move

- **A bench hearing the appeal of the State govt notes that the medium should be in mother tongue 'as far as possible'**
- **State govt counsel says English medium decision is progressive measure, seeks stay on HC verdict**
- **Advocate for caveator who was the petitioner in the HC argues that the State should foster mother tongue**



New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday declined interim stay on an Andhra Pradesh High Court order quashing its decision making compulsory for students of government schools to study in English medium from Class 1 to 6 in the ongoing academic year. The apex court will hear arguments on this on the next date of hearing three weeks later.

A bench comprising Justices D Y Chandrachud, K M Joseph and Indu Malhotra noted that Section 29(2)(f) of the Act says the medium should be in mother tongue "so far as it is applicable" unless not possible, and it seems the High Court had considered this.

Senior advocate K V

Viswanathan, appearing for the state government, argued that the government's decision is a progressive measure and sought a stay on the High Court order.

He submitted before the bench that nothing in the Right to Education Act, which says that medium has to be in mother tongue. Viswanathan said the government undertook a survey and majority of parents desire English medium.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayan, who is on caveat, opposed the stay on the High Court and submitted that the state should be fostering its mother tongue. Sankaranarayan argued that the choice is being taken away from parents and

children, as Telugu speaking schools are being replaced with English medium.

Viswanathan reiterated that the top court should stay the High Court order. The bench allowed Sankaranarayan to file a reply and declined to stay the High Court order.

The Andhra Pradesh High Court had on April 15 struck down the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy-government's decision making English medium mandatory and termed the order "unconstitutional and violative of several Acts, including the Right to Education Act". The government had issued the orders on November 20, 2019.

44 public services to be delivered in time-bound manner

- **Govt amends AP Public Services Delivery Guarantee Rules**
- **If the officials concerned fail in delivering the services within the prescribed time, applicants or consumers will be paid compensation**

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: The state government has amended the AP Public Services Delivery Guarantee Rules on Thursday in order to facilitate the investors a friendly environment. Karikal Valaven, special chief secretary, industries and commerce department, issued GO MS No 47 to this effect.

Through this GO, the government brought altogether 44 services under the purview of service delivery guarantee and decided to amend the existing rules.

If the respective officials fail in delivering the services within the time frame, then the government will pay compensation, as per these rules.

The services like registration of cooperative societies under APCS Act, 1964, registration of cooperative societies under MACS Act, registration of contractors for workers and services, sewerage connection, inspection carried out for granting road cutting permission, encumbrance certificate, F-line application, certificate of land use, certificate for verification of weights and measures, renewal of certificate for verification of weights and measures, certificate of non forest land, registration of provisional and permanent certificate for clinical establishment under Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act and many others were brought under these rules.

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Nelapadu (Amaravati): State Election Commissioner (SEC) Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar filed a quash petition in the Andhra Pradesh High Court here on Thursday appealing to quash the criminal cases filed by the CID against the employees of the State Election Commission in an attempt to control the working of the commission.

The SEC said in his petition that the government was deliberately interfering in the work of the commission.

Assistant secretary of the commission Sambamurthy also filed another petition stating

- **Alleges the CID filed criminal cases against SEC staff**
- **Seeks direction to the CID to return the computer and other material of the commission**



that the CID had taken away the computer disk from his office.

Ramesh Kumar said that the CID has collected the data from the computer of the commission and they should return the computer disk and other material to the commission.

He also demanded investigation by the CBI into the criminal cases filed by the CID against

the employees of the commission. Ramesh Kumar mentioned the principal Secretary of the Union Home Ministry, principal secretary of Panchayat Raj, DGP, additional DG of the CID as respondents.

The High Court stated that the petitions of both the SEC and the assistant secretary would be heard on September 7.

Delhi HC issues notices to YSRCP on name

HANS NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi: Delhi High Court issued notices to YSRCP and the Election Commission of India seeking their response to a petition filed by Anna YSRCP seeking derecognition of YSRCP.

The court issued the notices to the parties concerned after hearing a petition of the founder and president of AP unit of Anna YSR Congress Party Abdul Sattar here on Thursday.

The petitioner contended that YSRCP has copied his party's name and was using the same for its daily use. He sought derecognition of the YSRCP as it was similar to his party's name.

The court has adjourned the case to November 4.

Booze prices up, but cheap liquor prices cut

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: The state government has reduced the price of cheap liquors to encourage 'safe drinking' while upping the prices of premium brands to reduce alcohol consumption.

While the first one is necessitated as people were switching to sanitisers and strong spirits as substitute for cheap liquor or non-availability due to Covid-19 restrictions, the second one is to reduce consumption as per the government policy. Rajat Bhargava, special chief secretary, revenue (excise) department issued a GO to this effect here on Thursday. It is explained that due to non-availability of liquor and Covid-19 containment zones, some people resorted to consumption of methyl alcohol and sanitisers resulting in unfortunate deaths of 26 persons and hence the lower price category liquor prices were being reduced.

But, liquor prices of premium brands got hiked by 75 per cent to discourage liquor consumption as per the government policy to reduce alcohol consumption slowly before completely banning it.

The increase ranges from Rs 40 to Rs 1,320 depending on the brand for upper brands for 60 ml to 1000 ml.. There is no change on the prices of a category of Rs 150 to Rs 190 on 180 ml liquor. On the other hand, the lower priced liquor saw a slashing of prices between Rs 10 (60 ml) to Rs 280 (700 ml).

The price of beers of all categories and all ranges was per bottle/can.

Delhi among 5 states which account for 70% Covid deaths

Continued from P1

"On a week-to-week basis, there has been 4.5 per cent decrease in average daily deaths reported in Andhra Pradesh, 11.5 per cent decline in Maharashtra and 18.2 per cent decline in Tamil Nadu. On the other hand, Delhi has seen 50 per cent and Karnataka has seen 9.6 per cent increase in average daily fatalities," he said.

There was a decline of both active cases and deaths but there has been a rise in the past few weeks in the national capital, he said. Giving statistics on the number of cases per million population, Bhushan said India has 2,792 cases of COVID-19 per million population which is amongst the lowest in the world. He added that in India, deaths per million population is 49 which is also amongst the lowest in the world. "Recovered cases of COVID-19 are 3.6 times the number of active cases," he added.

HANS NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi: The state government filed a petition in the apex court here on Thursday challenging the interim orders of the AP High Court staying all further actions against the management of the Ramesh Hospitals in connection with the fire accident that claimed 10 patients' lives and injured some more recently.

It may be recalled that the High

State govt moves SC for action against Ramesh Hospitals

The HC earlier stayed all the proceedings against the hospital in connection with the fire at the hospital's Covid care centre in Swarna Palace hotel that claimed 10 lives

Court has not only directed the state government not to arrest Dr Ramesh, managing director of the Ramesh Hospitals and its non-executive chairman Sitarammohan

Rao in connection with the fire accident at its Covid care centre in Swarna Palace Hotel. The court has also stayed the ongoing probe against the incident.

The High Court had questioned the negligence of the government, district collector, district medical and health officer too along with that of sub-collector in the issue. It also questioned inaction against the officials, including the sub-collector and others who had given permission for the centre to be set up in the hotel which did not have any fire safety measures in this regard and non-inclusion of their names in the FIR.

Naidu calls for high alert on Covid-19, asks Jagan to instil confidence in people

Addressing a virtual meet with doctors, experts and survivors, the TDP says failures of the govt led to a situation in the State where 3 to 4 Covid deaths are taking place every hour

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu underscored the need for greater alertness and preparedness on the part of every citizen in order to successfully overcome coronavirus threat by dutifully following all the required do's and don'ts and precautionary measures.

Addressing a virtual conference

with doctors, experts and the virus survivors on Thursday, Naidu asserted that all sections of people must gear up for lifestyle modifications to suit the emerging situation as Covid-19 has been devastating lives, livelihoods, countries and economies the world over. Everybody should talk and spread the word by utilising online platforms more effectively so as to create wider awareness which alone

would help fight the dreaded virus till the end.

Stating that much needs to be done in Andhra Pradesh, Naidu deplored that administrative failures on the part of YSRCP government led to a heightened threat from coronavirus in the state..The Chief Minister has not realised the need to provide leadership and confidence that is needed in this troubled time, he added.

PUBG players pin hopes on VPNs

Continued from P1

But the tool is being used by many people for downloading cracked and pirated software, movies and other technical material from the sites using this network hiding their identity and now the gamers can play using it.

Game organizers are also indicating the players that there are chances of restoring the game shortly soon after opening Indian servers being planned in Mumbai labeling the process as 'authenticated and Indianized'.

In fact, this game was developed by South Korean based firm-PUBG Corporation, subsidiary of videogame company,

Bluehole. Experts in cybersecurity and networking say roughly one-third of the world's top virtual private network providers are owned by six Chinese companies, according to a study by the privacy and security research firm VPNpro. It found that the top 97 VPNs are run by just 23 parent companies, many of them are based in countries with lax network privacy laws.

Six of these companies are based in China and collectively offer 29 VPN services. In many cases, information about the parent company is hidden to the users, they say.

Seven of the top VPN services are owned by Gaditek, based in Pakistan and the Pakistani gov-

ernment can legally access any data without a warrant with the help of these networks. Still, he mentioned that China still has control over the globe with the presence of virtual networking companies.

"We have many options to play the game even though the Indian government bans it. VPN is also having some problems as some recent guidelines that prevent complete hiding of the credentials. When a government demands the data, the provider must reveal at any cost," said an online gamer. But he finally admitted that action against China is indisputable in terms of the safety of the country.

Metro for least contact travel

Continued from P1

There are 50 such lifts at these metro stations. Also as per the COVID-19 safety norms, a maximum of three passengers will be allowed in a lift at a time at any station, a senior official said. The stoppage duration of trains will be longer. From 10-15 seconds at each station it will be increased to 20-25 seconds, and at interchange facilities, it will be increased from 35-40 seconds to 55-60 seconds, when services resume. DMRC has 10 lines spanning 242 stations, and 264 stations including the Rapid Metro in Gurgaon. On Wednesday, the city recorded 2,509 coronavirus cases, the highest single-day spike in nearly the last 60 days. Officials of the urban transporter also cautioned that "trains may not stop at some of the stations" if social distancing norms are not adhered to by passengers.

"The Delhi Metro services will be resumed in a graded manner in three stages from September 7-12 with the Yellow Line or Line 2 connecting Samyapur Bali in Delhi to HUDA City Centre in Gurgaon and Rapid Metro to be the first ones to be made operational on September 7," the DMRC said on Wednesday.

Trains will operate in batches of four-hour each from 7-11 am in the morning and 4-8 pm in the evening, it said. Metro services in Delhi-NCR have been closed since March 22 due to the pandemic. The Ministry of Home Affairs on Saturday had issued Unlock 4 guidelines, permitting metro rail operations from September 7 in a graded manner. "This is a new normal and an evolving scenario, so we will anyway be assessing the situation once we resume services," a senior official said.

CAG to audit TTD funds

Continued from P1

CM Jagan gracefully consented. TTD Chm, Subba Reddy and Member & VHS AP leader Govind Hari piloted it thru TTD Board. Task completed."

According to the Chairman of the Board, "TTD move is aimed at bringing in more transparency

and bolstering Jagan Reddy's vision of clean governance," he said. The TTD, he said, was dragged into several controversies by those with vested interests, hence we want the CAG to set the record straight and furnish a report within 6 months, he added.

Now the board will send an affidavit to the High Court seeking an external audit of the temples accounts, funds, jewellery worth crores of rupees donated by pilgrims and trust members.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Apparel exports will register 40% growth

“We are working with a target to achieve a 40 per cent increase in apparel exports this financial year with major focus on new medical textiles. This will take our total apparel exports up from \$15.4 billion last fiscal to about \$22 billion in 2020-21.”

- AEPC Chairman **A Sakthivel**



COVID CRISIS

Private banks likely to gain market share

Fitch Ratings said private sector banks, with stronger loss-absorption buffers, are likely to gain market share from their state-owned peers in the medium term. Private banks' loss-absorption buffers strengthen their ability to recognise losses up-front with less disruption in their efforts to accelerate market-share gains, Fitch said.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	77.8	South	
Euro	91.01	African Rand	5.03
UAE Dirham	21.98	Hong Kong Dollar	10.89
Thai Baht	2.69	Japanese Yen	0.79
British Pound	101.44	New Zealand Dollar	52.01
Australian Dollar	56.36	Saudi Riyal	21.53
Canadian Dollar	58.87	Swedish Krona	9.66
Swiss Franc	83.67	Singapore Dollar	56.5

DELHI FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2020

BIZ BRIEFS

Axis MF unveils new fund

Hyderabad: Axis Mutual Fund on Thursday said it is targeting to collect up to Rs 1,500 crore from a new offering which will help domestic investors take bets in the global markets. The fund house launched 'Axis Global Alpha Equity Fund of Fund' which will invest in Schroder International Selection Fund Global Equity Alpha. The fund house is targeting to get Rs 1,000-1,500 crore from up to 75,000 investors in the new fund offering. Axis, which already has two funds dedicated to giving domestic investors a slice of global equities, said that the new fund offer will open between September 4-18.

Realme 7, 7 Pro launched

Hyderabad: Smartphone maker Realme on Thursday launched its much-anticipated 7 series smartphone Realme 7 and 7 Pro with quad rear cameras in India. Realme 7 Pro will be available in two variants - 6GB+128GB and 8GB+256GB - priced at Rs 19,999 and Rs 21,999, respectively. The device will go on sale on September 14 on realme.com and Flipkart. Realme 7 also comes in two variants - 6GB+64GB priced at Rs 14,999 and 8GB+128GB priced at Rs 16,999 - and will go on sale on September 10. "We aim to enhance the lives of our users and strengthen our commitment to create an evolved lifestyle for them. Thanks to our 'Make in India' capabilities, both Realme 7 and 7 Pro will be available not only online, but also offline across our preferred partners soon," said Madhav Sheth, Chief Executive Officer, Realme India and Europe.

Term plans economical

Hyderabad: Insurance portal Policybazaar.com said that term insurance plans would offer maximum coverage for the lowest cost. According to it, term insurance is essential for people who have increased liabilities and dependants. The regular term insurance policies offer the coverage for a set and pre-decided number of years that can range from anywhere between 5 years to 45 years. It is a plan that entitles the policy holder's nominee to receive the main plan benefit i.e. the sum assured in the event of the policy holder's demise during the policy term. However, there are no maturity proceeds. But if people opt for term insurance plans that offer return of premium, all premium amount paid will be returned if policyholder survives policy term. Santosh Agarwal, Chief Business Officer, Life Insurance, Policybazaar, said: "One can buy term insurance even till the age of over 99 years now".

Vedanta bags CII awards

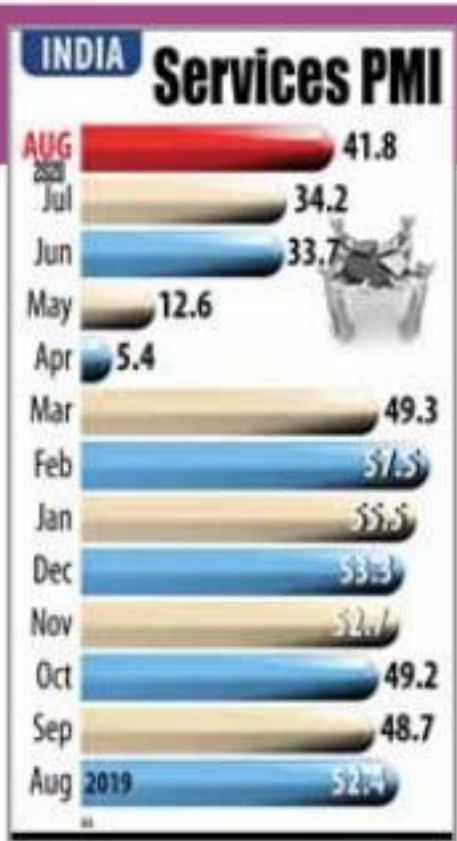
Hyderabad: Vedanta Aluminium, a leading producer of aluminium, bagged five awards at the 21st National Award for Excellence in Energy Management held recently. Vedanta Ltd was conferred with 'Excellent Energy Efficient Unit' award for deploying processes that significantly improved energy efficiency in alumina refinery while BALCO received 'Excellent Energy Efficient Unit' as well as 'Innovative Project' award for its best practices and breakthrough innovation in energy management. Instituted by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), the awards aim to catalyze innovation and adoption of practices for boosting energy efficiency of organizations. Ajay Kapur, CEO-Aluminium & Power, Vedanta Ltd., said, "These awards stand testimony to our persistent efforts in pushing the benchmarks of energy performance across our operations".

Services biz remains in contraction zone in Aug

Covid-19 curbs continue to adversely impact client demand, but downturn eased a bit



August highlights another month of challenging operating conditions in the Indian services sector. Sustained periods of closure and ongoing lockdown restrictions have weighed heavily on the health of the industry



New Delhi: The downturn in India's services sector activity eased significantly in August but remained in the contraction zone as Covid-19 pandemic-induced restrictions continued to adversely impact client demand and business operations, a monthly survey said on Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index rose sharply from 34.2 in July to 41.8 in August, the highest since March, before the escalation of the pandemic. However, the Indian services sector activity contracted for the sixth successive month in August. A print above 50 means expansion and a score below that denotes contraction, as per the IHS Markit India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). "August highlights another month of challenging operating conditions in the Indian services sector. Sustained periods of closure and ongoing lockdown re-

strictions in both domestic and foreign markets have weighed heavily on the health of the industry," said Shreya Patel, Economist at IHS Markit. New business and output continued to contract at marked rates, albeit slower than the records seen in April and May, the survey said, adding that restrictions also contributed to a record increase in outstanding business. "Output and new work continue to fall at solid rates, while restrictions meant that firms were often unable to complete projects. Backlogs of work accumulated to the greatest extent in almost 15 years of data collection," Patel said. On the employment front, reduced business activity saw the Indian service sector operating below capacity. As a result, firms reported job shedding for a sixth consecutive month. On the price front, sustained revenue losses through the second quarter and increasing cost burdens led com-

panies to raise charges for the first time since March. Looking ahead, sentiment was neutral in August. Two-thirds of the panelists expected output in the year ahead to remain unchanged on current levels. "That said, the survey showed signs of a potential recovery. Business sentiment was neutral after being negative in the previous three months and employment fell at the softest pace since March," Patel said.

Meanwhile, the Composite PMI Output Index, which measures combined services and manufacturing output, rose from 37.2 in July to 46 in August, and remained below the neutral 50 level, thereby signaling a fifth consecutive decline in private sector business activity.

FM asks banks to launch loan recast scheme

Says banks should provide support to borrowers after lifting of moratorium



The RBI last month permitted one-time restructuring of both corporate and retail loans, without treating them as non-performing assets (NPA). Restructuring benefit can be availed of by those whose account was standard as on March 1

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday asked banks and NBFCs to roll out loan restructuring scheme for Covid-19 related stress by September 15 and provide adequate support to the borrowers following the lifting of moratorium on repayment of debts.

The Minister urged lenders to immediately put in place a board-approved policy for resolution at the review meeting with heads of scheduled commercial banks and NBFCs through video conferencing. During the meeting, the minister impressed upon the lenders that as and when the moratorium on loan repayments is lifted, borrowers must be given support and Covid-19 related distress must not impact the lenders' assessment of their creditworthiness, an official statement said. The six months moratorium on payment of EMIs ended on August 31. In the

three-hour meeting, the statement said, the Finance Minister asked lenders to identify eligible borrowers and reach out to

them, and the quick implementation of a sustained resolution plan by lenders for the revival of every viable business. Banks are in the process of getting a board-approved restructuring framework in line with the RBI's framework and eligibility defined by the central bank in its notification on August 6.

The Finance Minister also emphasised that resolution schemes must be rolled out by lenders by September 15, 2020, and a sustained media campaign to create awareness be carried out thereafter, the statement said. She advised lenders to ensure that regularly updated FAQs (frequently asked questions) on the resolution framework are uploaded on their websites in Hindi, English and regional languages, and also circulated to their offices and branches, it added.

On their part, bankers assured the Finance Minister that they

are ready with their resolution policies and have started the process of identifying and reaching out to eligible borrowers and that they will comply with the timelines stipulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Ministry of Finance has also been engaging with the RBI to ensure that the lenders are assisted by the central bank in the resolution process.

The RBI last month permitted one-time restructuring of both corporate and retail loans without getting classified as a non-performing asset (NPA). Restructuring benefit can be availed by those whose account was standard on March 1 and defaults should not be over 30 days. Besides, K V Kamath committee is working on recommendations on financial parameters like debt service coverage ratio, debt-equity ratio post-resolution and interest coverage ratio for recasting corporate loans.

Banking apps lag behind in functionality: Report

New Delhi: Despite the renewed push for digital due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most Indian mobile banking apps, except ICICI's iMobile app, are behind the curve on functionality, says a new report from market research firm Forrester. About 70 per cent of Indian online adults with a bank account do their banking on a mobile app or website using their smartphone, show data from Forrester. However, compared with 2019, banks have improved their user experience only marginally and lag behind in functionality, said the report which evaluated the smartphone apps of five banks in India -- Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, and State Bank of India (SBI).

For the study, the researchers scored banks' mobile apps on 39 functionality



and 24 user experience criteria. "While banks have been focusing on improving UX (user experience), they do not give equal attention to all aspects of it. ICICI Bank does a good job of streamlining payment experiences, but can do better at error prevention," said the report.

"Axis Bank offers clutter-free visual design and clear content but lacks help pages. HDFC Bank helps customers prevent errors and shares privacy information up front but falters with unclear language and marketing material that impedes progress," it added.

DFPCL inks partnership deal with Samunnati

HANS BUSINESS

Hyderabad: Deepak Fertilisers and Petrochemicals Corporation Limited (DFPCL), a leading producer of fertilisers and industrial chemicals, on Thursday announced its tie-up with Samunnati, a specialized agri value chain enabler that offers customised financial, co-financial and non-financial solutions to stakeholders across the agri value chain.

With this tie-up, DFPCL will offer crop based advisory to help the thousands of farmers under FPOs across four states to improve yields, quality and earnings. At the same time, the partnership will also facilitate access to farm credit at affordable rates, thereby empowering the farmers to improve their scale and modernise the process. As per the Memorandum



To offer crop-based advisory to help thousands of farmers under FPOs

of Understanding (MoU), the farmer producer organisations (FPOs) will be able to access crop-based advisory and agri-inputs through DFPCL along with the customized financial options through Samunnati. Mahesh Girdhar, DFPCL's Crop Nutrition Business president, said: "This collaboration is another step fortifying our commitment to revolutionise India's agriculture sector - by empowering our farmers. Armed with the required information and scientific knowledge of crop nutrition, DFPCL will guide the FPOs and associated farmers under the Samunnati umbrella for a better yield and with a mission to transform their lives for the better."

Markets end lower in volatile trade

Mumbai: Benchmark equity indices closed lower in a volatile trade on Thursday, dragged by losses mainly in banking counters as overall weak macroeconomic scenario weighed on investor sentiment.

The BSE Sensex ended 95.09 points or 0.24 per cent lower at 38,990.94; and the NSE Nifty closed 7.55 points or 0.07 per cent down at 11,527.45. On the Sensex chart, ICICI Bank was the top loser, shedding around 2 per cent, followed by Bharti Airtel, Axis Bank, Kotak Bank and PowerGrid. On the other hand, Titan, Tech Mahindra, Nestle, Maruti, Sun Pharma and Asian Paints were among the gainers.

Sectorally, BSE bankex, finance, metal, energy, realty and utilities indices fell up to 1.51 per cent. While consumer durables, IT, teck, capital goods, industrials and auto indices rose up to 3.37 per cent. Broader midcap and smallcap indices outperformed the BSE benchmark, ending up to 0.74



Banking stocks play spoilsport; Sensex down 90 points

per cent higher. "Markets exhibited volatility and ended flat for the day, switching between gains and losses. However,

global markets, especially Europe, were generally positive for the day, anticipating better economic data," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said. Domestically, data emerged that the services sector had contracted for the 6th consecutive month, in spite of phased reopening of the economy in the last two months, he said, adding that this has led to worries that the comeback, foreseen for the economy, could be long drawn out.

The market turned negative after the latest IHS Markit

Rupee tumbles 44 paise to end at 73.47 against \$

Mumbai: The rupee slumped 44 paise to close at 73.47 against the US dollar on Thursday as rise in demand for the American currency from oil importers weighed on forex market sentiment. Besides, stronger greenback against

its key rival currencies and subdued domestic equities exerted pressure on the domestic unit. At the inter-bank forex market, the rupee opened on a weak note at 73.23, lost further ground during the session and finally settled for the day at

73.47 against the greenback, registering a fall of 44 paise over its last close.

During the session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 73.23 and a low of 73.48 against the American currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index,



which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.18 per cent to 93.01.

Urea crunch leaves TS govt worried

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: The State government is in a fix over the continuous short supply of urea for the current Kharif season. According to officials of the State Agriculture Department, there is an overall supply backlog of 2.54 lakh metric tonnes from April to August end. Adding to this, the State has to get an allocated supply of 2.10 lakh metric tonnes of urea from the Centre. This comes to about 4.64 lakh metric tonnes of urea that the State has to get by the September end.

However, as per the indications from the Union Chemicals and Fertilizers Ministry, the State is likely to get the fresh urea supplies only by the mid of September.

State Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy on Thursday stated that the State had placed a request for the total of 22.30 lakh metric tonnes of fertilizers,



► State to get a total of 4.64 lakh metric tonnes of urea by September end

► TS urges Centre to supply urea without imposing cuts

comprising 10.5 lakh metric tonnes of urea and 11.8 lakh metric tonnes of other fertilizers.

“There is no problem in supply of other fertilizers. But with urea, the State has been facing short supply,” he added.

It may be mentioned here that the demand for urea shot up after a 36 per cent more area has come under cultivation during the current Kharif season when compared to the corresponding season last year.

Sensing the demand for urea, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao had taken up this issue with the Centre. Besides, State Agriculture Minister and State Agriculture Secretary B Janardhan Reddy had held discussion with the officials of the Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers and requested the Centre to supply the allocated amount of urea for the season without imposing any cuts.

Meanwhile, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy too pitched in to address the situation. He met Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers Sadananda Gowda and sought his intervention. Reddy informed that the Union Minister had assured to ensure smooth supply of urea besides monitoring the supply situation. However, the officials concerned informed that the shipments of urea allocated to Telangana would likely reach Visakhapatnam Port by mid of September.

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Trade union leader and former APSRTC director M Nageswara Rao on Thursday sought immediate relief measures for Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) like grant of Rs 1,000 crore and relaxation of all types of taxes for a period of two years from the government for saving the loss making Corporation.

In a letter to Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, the trade union leader suggested demanded the government to exempt TSRTC from paying all types of taxes for a period of two years. He wanted the government to have accountability in the management. He also wanted the government to form a high-level committee and seek a report within

► In a letter to KCR, former Director of APSRTC Nageswara Rao urges him to exempt the loss-making corporation from taxes

► Says the RTC suffered huge losses during the lockdown and had to borrow money to pay salaries of employees

45 days on measures to overcome the ill-effects of long-term corona pandemic, for increasing income and for controlling the expenditure.

Nageswara Rao said that the Corporation had suffered a loss of Rs 929 crore during 2018-19 and Rs 1,000 Crore

during 2019-20. The Corporation had loans of Rs 2,113 crore till November 21, 2019 and it has taken another loan Rs 600 crore.

The Union leader informed that the employees were given half salaries during March, April and May and as a result the Corporation will have to pay dues of Rs 250 crore to the employees.

The DA dues were also not provided to the employees and there was no salary advance to the staff during the festivals. The Corporation has not earning any profit since March 22, the day on which lockdown was imposed.

The income in the month of June was Rs 97 crore, in July it was Rs 72 crore. He said that the increase in diesel prices (Rs 13) has led to additional loss of Rs 260 crore.

Cong urges State govt to resolve teachers' grievances

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: The Congress on Thursday demanded that the State government resolve the grievances of government and private teachers and lecturers struggling with poor finances amid the pandemic.

In an open letter to Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, AICC secretary Vamshi Chand Reddy demanded that the Telangana government stand by them and devise policies that can help them support their families. The former MLA held that the Covid-19 induced crisis had worsened the plight of teachers, and added that with no salaries, teachers of private schools and colleges were struggling hard to feed their families and unable to make a decent living. “Is this how we treat our God-like teachers who are responsible for what we are today?” he questioned and said “on the auspicious occasion of the Teacher’s Day (5th September), on behalf of all the teachers and lecturers, I demand the State government to stand by them.” Some

of the demands he put forth for government teachers include announcement of PRC and release of interim relief, paying back deducted salary amount (during the lockdown period), announcing promotion to all eligible candidates, initiating transfer process and special permission to pregnant women, blind people, physically handicapped and teachers who were tested positive to Covid-19. He also demanded relief to private schools, intermediate, degree, and technical colleges teachers and lecturers. Amongst other demands are payment of full salaries during lockdown or else government aid, reinstatement of candidates who were fired, interest-free loans to budget schools, payment to lecturers based on UGC guidelines and release of impending dues of mess charges, tuition fees and fee reimbursement.

“Most importantly, on Teacher’s Day, as a mark of respect, every teacher’s family should be given Rs 20,000 in the form of Guru Dakshina,” he added.



Residents stand in queue as they collect tokens from a health worker at a free coronavirus testing centre at a Primary Health Centre in Secunderabad on Thursday

CRIME NEWS

Mystery shrouds young couple's suicide

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: A sub-engineer with the TSSPDCL and his wife, an employee of Postal Department, allegedly committed suicide by hanging at their residence in Chilkaiguda on Wednesday. The couple were identified as Venkatesh (32) and Bhargavi (28) who also had a three-month-old son.

According to the police, they were alerted by the parents of Venkatesh who stayed in the next house. The parents informed them that they did not see their son coming out of the house for a long time and when they tried calling him, there was no response. So, they peeped from the window and found their son’s body hanging on the ceiling fan. The family members then broke open the door and found that their daughter-in-law was also hanging in the bathroom whereas the baby was sleeping in the bedroom.

Detective Inspector Varunkanth Reddy said, “As soon as the information reached us, we rushed to the spot along with the CLUES team and started investigation. The bodies have been sent to post-mortem. Once the autopsy report is declared, we will begin the investigation and if it is a case of murder, then the accused will be arrested.”

“There was no suicide note at the scene of offence. But we seized the mobile phones of the couple and the phone numbers of the entire family have been kept on surveillance as part of the investigation,” stated the Inspector.

Hyd man drowns in US lake

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: A 23-year-old Hyderabad youth, who was working in the Amazon Company in the US was drowned in a lake at St Louis, Missouri, August 24. However, the incident came to the light on Thursday when the news was disclosed by the family members.

According to sources, the vic-

tim, Khaja Imran, went to US for higher studies in 2017. After completing his studies, he secured a job at the Amazon Company and has been working for the last one year. On August 24, he stepped into a lake along with his friends and swam deep into the waters. However, he soon started panicking and could not swim back and eventually drowned. His friends could not

rescue him as they were also feared of deep waters.

The news of the incident reached his family in Hyderabad and they visited the country on an emergency visa after taking help from the local authorities. The Consulate General of USA was also notified about the incident which then helped the family in processing the emergency visa quickly.

Businessman duped of ₹25 lakh in online oil business fraud

Hyderabad: The cybercrime police of Cyberabad registered a case against fraudsters who cheated gullible people on the pretext of investing money in oil companies.

According to a release issued by the police here on Wednesday, Shopan Shintre, a resident of Miyapur, who owns a company named Universal Catalyst filed a complaint against Mukesh Enterprises and Pol Pharma alleging that he was cheated to the tune of Rs 25 lakh.

The complainant further alleged that Zofia Antoni and Tomasz Moys were named as the sales agents of Pol Pharma and Mukesh enterprises in India. They approached Shopan Shintre’s company Universal Catalyst LLP online and lured him to invest in TetraPleura oil extract. The complainant had crosschecked the company’s details and found no issues as the online sites were showing the same information as mentioned in the invoice, read the release. Shintre received a Letter of Intent for sale of 850 litres of TetraPleura oil extract at the rate of 5,500 USD per litre on company letterhead, but was initially asked to buy 20 litres for an urgent requirement, alleged Shintre in his complaint.

After verifying the details the complainant transferred a total of Rs 25,00,000 into two bank accounts as the company quoted a price of Rs 1,25,000 per litre, with a 99 per cent refund guarantee of the purchase value.

Since then there was no response from Mukesh Enterprises and when the complainant tried to call up Pol Pharma, he found the email ID and mobile numbers to be fake. When Pol Pharma denied the duo to be their employees, we realised that it was a fraud, said the complainant. Cybercrime police registered a case against the accused and the matter is being investigated.

Veggie vendor found dead

Warangal: A vegetable vendor was found dead under suspicious circumstances while her son sustained grievous injuries. The police said that unknown persons attacked Doram Sharada and her son Akhil at their rented house in Tailors Street. It’s learnt that Sharada’s husband died some five years ago. Since then Sharada has been living with her son. The police swung into action after the neighbours informed them about the incident on Thursday morning. The police admitted Akhil, who sustained serious injuries, to MGM Hospital.

Hanamkonda ACP M Jithender Reddy said that they pressed into service their CLUES team and forensic experts, besides the dog squad to trace the culprits. The police, who observed the crime scene, suspect that the woman might have died after an almirah fell on her. There was also a possibility of unknown persons attacking the woman, the police added. The police shifted the body to MGM Hospital for postmortem.

ASI succumbs to corona

Hyderabad: An Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of Police deputed at Miyapur police station of Cyberabad Commissionerate died due to Covid-19. The ASI was identified as V Vishwanatham, 57. He passed away on Wednesday night after battling with the deadly virus for over three weeks. He is survived by wife and three sons.

According to Miyapur police, Vishwanatham tested positive for Coronavirus on August 18 and was admitted to Udhava Hospital in Miyapur. However, he succumbed to the virus while undergoing treatment.

The ASI was a native of Jarasangam in Sangareddy district and joined the police force in November 1985 as a constable. He worked at different police stations in the erstwhile Medak district.

In 2010, he was promoted as a head constable and moved to the Cyberabad Commissionerate. While working at Miyapur police station, he was promoted as an ASI in 2018.

TRSLP meeting on Sept 7

Party to discuss strategies for the ensuing monsoon session that starts from Monday

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: The TRS legislative party meeting will be held at the party office, Telangana Bhavan, at 5 pm on September 7 to discuss the strategies for the ensuing monsoon session of the Assembly.

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao would give necessary instructions to the party MLAs and members of Legislative Council in the Monday meeting. The legislative party leaders would pay tributes to former Dubbaka MLAS Ramalinga Reddy, who died recently. All the MLAs and MLCs have been asked to attend the party meeting at Telangana Bhavan. The monsoon sessions are starting from Monday and would be for 20 days. The legislature authorities have said that all the Covid-19 protocols would be followed during the session.

CS asks dept heads to get ready for Assembly session

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Thursday instructed the secretaries and heads of all departments to cancel their leaves and planned outstation visits during the Assembly session, that is set to begin from September 7. The head of the State administration directed the Special Chief Secretaries and Principal Secretaries to prepare an updated report on all the activities of their departments for ensuring smooth legislative sessions.

He also asked the secretaries to submit reports immediately and also coordinate with the Assembly officials in matters concerned to their respective departments. Somesh Kumar ordered the top officials of all departments to present in the Legislative Council during the session. Officials should be ready with the notes pertaining to issues that are likely to come up for discussion by the members during the sessions, he added.

TMREIS reaches out to its rural students

Conducts online classes with the help of different teleconferencing apps

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Apart from Zoom, the Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society (TMREIS) is employing various apps to reach out to students who live in remote areas of the State. The State-run schools are successfully conducting online classes for all the subjects, including Urdu, for the last two months in all 204 TMR schools.

Secretary of the Society B Shafullah, in a press statement on Thursday, informed that TMREIS has been conducting full-fledged teaching and learning classes through Zoom app by actively involving all teachers and students. Other applications like WhatsApp and YouTube are also being used to reach out to the students who reside in remote areas of the State.



Government School teachers checking notes of students and notifying them about the e-education class timings that are being telecasted on the T-SAT network and Doordarshan channel at Addagutta in Hyderabad on Thursday

“A plan of action in this regard has been worked out for students through a combination of strate-

gies using digital devices and with the support of parents. As per the plan, for classes 6 to 10, daily syl-

labus worksheets with content, questions and activities are sent by teachers,” he explained.

TMREIS started conducting online classes for class 6 to intermediate 2nd year students from July 23 by sending e-learning material or activities to those enrolled through WhatsApp or SMS. For students who don’t have access to smartphone, the online classes are conducted on various digital, TV, T-SAT platforms across all schools.

“All the principals are instructed to ensure that class teachers have the updated WhatsApp group of parents and students of their respective section. Teachers are also maintaining a list of the number of parents who are not available on WhatsApp. Those parents who are not covered in the WhatsApp group are contacted over phone by the concerned class teachers,” Shafullah added.

NTPC wins National Management Games 2020

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: State-run power giant NTPC won AIMA-Chanakya (Business Simulation Game) National Management Games 2020.

The victory was also significant since NTPC won the prestigious National Management Games for the first time in five years.

The team from NTPC Vallur, Tamil Nadu achieved the feat of being crowned the national champion after competing against teams from 112 organisations from different parts of the country.

Team NTPC Vallur qualified for the regional rounds, which was held online and subsequently qualified for the finals.

AIMA Chanakya National Management Games, an online Business Simulation Game

conducted every year is aimed at ensuring that participating executives from various industries get an introduction to the complexities of running an organisation and gain expertise and skills from this event.

National Management Games (NMG) is one of its kind platform for Corporate Managers to face the thrill of Managing Business in a competitive mode. It is one of the most anticipated and reputable annual events based on business management simulation, conducted by AIMA (All India Management Association).

The participants experience the complexities of running a company by focusing on resource management, market trends, cost analysis, product positioning, production planning, and inventory control.

Ganguly wanted Dhoni for 2004 tour of Pak: John Wright

New Delhi (IANS): As India skipper, Sourav Ganguly was very keen to have Mahendra Singh Dhoni in the national team for the historic tour of Pakistan in 2004, but the dashing wicket-keeper-batsman missed the bus by the skin of his teeth, John Wright, who was India coach at the time, has disclosed to IANS.

Parthiv Patel was chosen for the three-Test series, the first to be played against India in Pakistan after 15 years, and Rahul Dravid kept the wickets in the five One-day Internationals. "Dhoni nearly toured with us to Pakistan [in 2004]. Sourav was very keen to have him in the squad. He was on the borderline, and it was one of those decisions that could have gone either way. As it turned out, we selected a successful Test team, and he didn't make it," Wright

told IANS in an interview, paying rich tribute to Dhoni. India won the three-Test series 2-1 and the five-ODI series 3-2.

"That was obviously when Dhoni had started to come into discussions at the national level. Sourav had very good things to say about him and always encouraged youngsters who came into the set-up. But you never know how things would have worked out [for Dhoni had he been picked for the Pakistan tour]. That's when I first started to hear about him," recalled Wright, who had a five-year stint (2000-2005) as the first foreign coach of India.

Dhoni eventually made his One-day International debut in December 2004, against Bangladesh in Chittagong, aged 23 years and 169 days. And he made his Test debut in December 2005, against Sri Lanka in



Chennai, when he was 24 years and 148 days old. The man from Ranchi went on to become one of the most successful India captains in the two shorter formats of the game – ODI and T20. Besides, he was a reliable hard-hitting batsman and specialised in chasing down win-

ning targets with ridiculous ease in the two formats. "And Dhoni seemed to be reading the game an over ahead. That's always a sign of a good, strategic captaincy," former New Zealand captain Wright said from his home city Christchurch. "He's obviously

one of India's greatest captains along with one or two in the Modern Era. He has certainly been fantastic for India. His record speaks for itself."

Dhoni led India in 200 of the 350 ODIs he played, for 55 per cent success. In T20 Internationals, he captained the country in 72 of the 98 matches for 58.33 per cent success. And, he was captain in 60 of the 90 Tests and ended up with 45 per cent success.

Also, Dhoni won all three ICC trophies as India captain – World T20 in 2007, 50-over World Cup in 2011, and 50-over Champions Trophy in 2013. The dashing cricketer retired from international cricket last month after a highly successful 14-year international career, but continues to captain Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League.

While recalling his association with Dhoni, Wright pointed out that he was with the dasher for a short time, but said he was highly impressed by many aspects of the youngster's cricket intelligence and personality.

"It was obvious that Dhoni was not only a very gifted cricketer but also an extremely intelligent one. He was a very good listener who didn't say much in his first series [under me], but was observing and learning all the time. I thought at the time that he had a big future in front of him," said the articulate former left-handed opening batsman.

Was Dhoni a born leader or worked himself up for captaincy? "I can't make that judgement because I wasn't there [for long to see him captain]. He just played just one series [under me

as coach]. What I heard from afar was that he didn't have any difficulty in taking the reins over when there were more experienced players in the side and they seemed to respect his leadership which is always a sign of leadership ability," Wright said.

The former New Zealand captain seems most impressed by Dhoni's ability to change gears while batting and adapt to different situations of a game – something that he witnessed in India's home ODI series against Pakistan in 2005.

"He got a hundred in his career's fifth One-day International [in Visakhapatnam] while Virender Sehwag looked quite slow. That was a brilliant innings. It was one of those hundreds for which you would stand and say: 'This guy is very special'," he said referring to Dhoni's brisk 123-ball 148.

Top seed Pliskova crashes out

New York (IANS): Czech top seed Karolina Pliskova crashed out of the US Open in the second round while Japan's Naomi Osaka and Pliskova's compatriot Petra Kvitová advanced. The 2016 runner up fell to France's Caroline Garcia 6-1 7-6 (7-2) in a match that lasted one hour and 33 minutes.

Garcia, ranked 50 on the WTA standings, will next face 28th seed Jennifer Brady, who beat CiCi Bellis 6-1 6-2 in just 51 minutes. Against Pliskova, she produced 30 winners and just 17 unforced errors with the latter cutting a frustrated figure throughout the match and in the media interactions afterwards on Wednesday.

"In the second set I had a set point. That was definitely one ball I could make. I had a second serve on my forehand," world no.3 Pliskova said. "Maybe I should just play rally. I tried to go for it. It was a little bit windy on the court. I think she played an amazing set and a half. Of course, I got my chances later in the second set. I didn't play good, so that's it."

Meanwhile, 2018 champion and fourth seed Osaka made light work of Italy's Camila Giorgi, winning her second round fixture 6-1 6-2. Giorgi made 24 unforced errors during the match. Kvitová managed a hard-fought two-set win over Ukraine's Kateryna Kozlova with the final score standing 7-6

- Osaka, Kvitova advance in US Open
- Novak Djokovic rallies past Edmund



Kataryna Kozlova, of the Ukraine, serves to Petra Kvitova, of the Czech Republic, during the second round of the US Open Tennis Championships in New York on Thursday

(7-3) 6-2. German 17th seed beat compatriot Anna-Lena Friedsam 6-3 7-6 (8-6).

World no.1 Novak Djokovic lost a tie-breaker for the first time this year but rallied past Kyle Edmund to advance from the second round. Djokovic won the match 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. He next faces Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff, who beat USA's Michael Mmoh 6-2, 6-2, 7-5. Djokovic, who is chasing his fourth US Open title, lost an intense first set that went on for more than an hour. He had previ-

ously won all 10 tiebreaks he played this year.

Stefanos Tsitsipas meanwhile beat Maxime Cressy 7-6, 6-3, 6-4 to mark his debut at the Arthur Ashe Stadium. He thus progresses to the third round of the US Open for the first time in his career where he will face Borna Coric. He remains on course to face Alexander Zverev, who beat 19-year-old Brandon Nakashima 7-5, 6-7 (8), 6-3, 6-1. 12th seed Dennis Shapovalov beat South Korean Kwon Soon-woo 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.



DIVIJ SHARAN AND CACIC BOW OUT

New York (PTI): India's Divij Sharan and his Serbian partner Nikola Cacic fought hard before going down in three sets to eighth seeds Nikola Mektic and Wesley Koolhof in the first round of the US Open men's doubles event here. Sharan and Cacic lost 4-6, 6-3, 3-6 against Croatia's Mektic and Koolhof of the Netherlands in a tough contest that lasted one hour and 46 minutes on Wednesday. The winners will next play Italy's Simone Bolelli and Maximo Gonzalez of Argentina. The other Indian in the men's doubles draw -- Rohan Bopanna -- and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov will take on Ernesto Escobedo and Noah Rubin of the United States in the first round.

IN COMMAND



Inter Miami midfielder Rodolfo Pizarro (left) controls the ball against Atlanta United's Brooks Lennon (right) and Eric Remedi during the first half of an MLS soccer match, in Atlanta on Thursday

Dhoni asked me to keep it at stumps for hat-trick: Kuldeep

New Delhi (IANS): Kuldeep Yadav in September 2017 became the first Indian since Kapil Dev in 1991 to take a hat-trick in an ODI match. In the second ODI against Australia, Kuldeep dismissed Matthew Wade, Ashton Agar and Pat Cummins off consecutive deliveries to all but confirm India's victory in the match.

He said that former India captain M.S. Dhoni, who was keeping wickets for India at the time, had asked him to bowl at the stumps for the hat-trick delivery.

"I spoke to Virat bhai and asked him if I could bowl from the other end. He said once Chahal's spell was over, I could bowl from that end. I struck a very good rhythm and started bowling in the spot," Kuldeep said in a recent interaction on his Indian Premier League (IPL) side Kolkata Knight Riders' website.

"I got my first wicket of Matthew Wade and then in the next ball, I plucked Ashton

Agar. For the third ball, I asked Mahi bhai (M.S. Dhoni) what to bowl. When you have so many variations, you get confused. He just let me do whatever I felt was right but suggested that I kept it to the stumps.

"I kept a slip and gully in



place. Luckily I bowled a good ball and got the edge. Getting a hat-trick at Eden Garden, that too in the first year of international cricket, is a big thing and this was one of the biggest moments of my life," Kuldeep recalled.

Kuldeep would go on to pick a hat-trick again, this time in December 2019 against the West Indies. He thus became the first Indian bowler to have two ODI hat-tricks to his name.

Tour de France: Van Aert wins Stage 5

Privas (IANS): Wout van Aert made it two-from-two for his purring Jumbo-Visma team with victory in Stage 5 of the Tour de France at Privas as Julian Alaphilippe lost the yellow jersey in controversial circumstances to Adam Yates after incurring a time penalty for an illegal feed.

No sooner had the in-form Belgian van Aert finished celebrating his team's second win in as many days as the race jury announced that a 20-second penalty had been imposed on Frenchman Alaphilippe for taking on an illegal water bottle from his Deceuninck-QuickStep team car with 17km remaining, contrary to the regulations.

With Alaphilippe dropping to sixteenth place in the standings, Britain's Yates (Mitchelton-Scott) takes control of the Tour for the first time in his career. Trailing the Frenchman by four seconds in the overnight stand-



The pack rides during the fifth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 183 kilometers (114 miles) in Privas on Thursday

ings, Yates now leads the race by three seconds on van Aert's Jumbo-Visma teammate Primož Roglič of Slovenia, the Stage 4 winner. Van Aert, the in-form

Belgian, powered past Dutchman Cees Bol of Team Sunweb to win by half a wheel one day after helping to guide Roglič to victory in Tuesday's first summit finish.

Man United wrests Beek from Ajax

Manchester (IANS): Manchester United announced the signing of Dutch midfielder Donny van de Beek from Ajax. The 23-year-old Dutchman has signed a five-year contract at Old Trafford, with an option to extend by a further year.

The transfer fee is reported to be around 39 million Euros, which is subject to increase to 44 million Euros if certain clauses are met. A product of the famed Ajax youth academy, Van de Beek made his first-team debut in 2015. In total, he played 175 official matches for Ajax, scoring 41 times. With Ajax, Van de Beek won the Eredivisie and the KNVB Cup in 2019 and made it to the semifinals of that year's UEFA Champions League. He has also played 10 times for the Netherlands national team.

East Bengal have enough time to build team for ISL: Bhutia

Kolkata (IANS): Former India captain and East Bengal great Bhaichung Bhutia feels the club will not be playing catch up and have enough time to get their house in order if they eventually manage to hop on to the Indian Super League (ISL) bus this season.

"I am very happy that finally East Bengal got an investor and are hopeful of playing ISL this year. I am really happy for the fans. They have been praying to see East Bengal play in the top league," Bhutia told IANS on Thursday.

East Bengal were without a sponsor for a long time after their former investors Quess Corp, who had a 70 percent stake in the club, terminated their tie-up on May 31 despite having a three-year deal. On Wednesday, East Bengal announced that they had sold a majority stake to city-based Shree Cement and would now appeal to the ISL organisers in a bid to make a dramatic late entry into the country's



top tier club competition.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made the announcement on Wednesday, saying "all problems are solved, East Bengal will now play in the ISL".

The seventh edition of the ISL is set to start in Goa in the third week of November. Asked if East Bengal have enough time to build a team and at the same time fulfil all formalities, Bhutia said: "I think

they have enough time. Other teams have also not really started training and some, like Chennaiyin FC and NorthEast United, have just appointed their coaches. Even Hyderabad FC had to change.

"East Bengal have already signed quite a few players, I think. So I don't think there should be any problem," said Bhutia, who began his career with East Bengal in 1992 and went on to win every single trophy with the club, including one National Football League title and the ASEAN Cup in 2003. The iconic former striker had five different stints donning red-and-gold starting between 1993 and 2011.

The player transfer window closes on October 20 and the registration deadline is October 23. East Bengal are yet to appoint a head coach and are still in talks with Spaniard Mario Rivera who guided the red-and-gold brigade to a second place finish in the truncated I-League.

Bhutia said his advice to East Bengal would be to forget everything and go and win the 'trophy'. "I think they have learnt their lessons from the past [with former investors Quess]. I am sure everybody will become more mature now," he hoped.

Bhutia also said if East Bengal do play the ISL this season, he would be eagerly waiting to see them and arch-rivals ATK-Mohun Bagan lock horns. "I am very excited to see the derby in the ISL. I can assure you that East Bengal and Mohun Bagan coming to the ISL will bring more charm. It will lift the tournament."

Talking about the I-League, Bhutia stressed it will continue to do well despite missing Mohun Bagan -- and possibly East Bengal, if they join the ISL bandwagon. "I-League will continue to do well. They will still have ambition that clubs could qualify for the ISL in a few years time when relegation and promotion starts."

Navjot hopes he'll be best finisher in world

New Delhi (IANS): Forward Navjot Kaur harbours hopes of being the best finisher in the world. Navjot has over the years become an integral part of the Indian women's hockey team and has been part of some of their biggest moments.

"The finisher's role is very crucial for any hockey side and I am delighted that I have been given the opportunity to execute the chances created by my teammates. There is certainly a lot of pressure that comes with the job, but I have certainly enjoyed the challenge so far," the 25-year-old said.

"I want to keep working hard on the techniques of finishing and hopefully, I will become the



best finisher in the world one day. It's amazing to be in a position to convert goal-scoring opportunities for the team."

Navjot said that 2019 has been one of the crucial years for the team. India finished top of the table in Pool A and thus qualified for the Olympic qualifiers where they beat the USA 6-5 in two legs to qualify for Tokyo 2020.