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Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Thundershowers likely.
Max/Min temp. 31/23 °C

SHORT TAKES

COMMUTERS MUST WEAR MASK, USE SANITISER

From Page 1

It will be the duty of commuters to wear face masks and use hand sanitisers, etc.

A senior RTC official, requesting anonymity, said that looking at the number of Covid-19 cases in the core city, the authorities were worried about operating in the city. He said operations in peripheral areas, including Rajendranagar, Maheshwaram, Ibrahimpat-nam, Bandlaguda and others should be considered as pilot, since the organisation will study challenges in operating buses in the core city.

The official said it would be an impossible task to operate buses in an organised manner like HMRL considering the revenue aspect.

When asked about commencing the operations of buses in the core city, the official said that a final decision will be taken by the state government and most likely buses will fully operate in a couple of days based on the outcome of the 135 routes pressed into service.

SCR REPORTS RISE IN FREIGHT SERVICES

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

Despite the lockdown, the freight services of the south central railway (SCR) continue to chug on.

According to the general manager, SCR, Gajanan Mallya, there has been an increase in the amount of foodgrains transported in the trains during the Covid-19 pandemic. The SCR managed to run special trains, including parcel cargo express trains, Shramik specials and passenger special trains.

“We transported two metric tonnes during this time last year. This time it has doubled to 4.3 metric tonnes. The southern zone’s performance during the last six months of lockdown, has been above par,” Mallya said. However, its earnings through passenger services are close to ₹4,500-5,000 crore every year. “but this year, we have not made more than ₹500 crore in passenger services,” added Mallya.

This year some major infrastructure work was taken up. This included setting up scissor crossings with pre-stressed concrete (PSC) sleepers at Kazipet and Vijayawada, replacement or reinforcement of 23 bridges and comprehensive track maintenance on the second rail-cum-road bridge on the Godavari River. New work that have been sanctioned in Telangana include a 32 kms line between Manoharabad and Gajwel, a 30 kms double line between Shadnagar and Gollapalli and an 11 kms line between Jaklair and Makhtal.

“There have been requests from some quarters to run Shramik special trains for migrant workers seeking to come back. We will have to get approval from the MHA to take it forward. We are going to get new trains in the future,” Mallya said. On the MMTS front, Mallya added, the SCR is trying to finish all levels of the transportation system.

● **THIS YEAR** some major infrastructure work was taken up. This included setting up scissor crossings with pre-stressed concrete sleepers at Kazipet and Vijayawada, replacement or reinforcement of 23 bridges and comprehensive track maintenance on the second rail-cum-road bridge on the Godavari River. New work that have been sanctioned in Telangana include a 32 km line between Manoharabad and Gajwel.

Quality of teaching suffers as docs not promoted for 10 yrs

Some medical colleges are without regular principals, senior docs

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

With no promotions in the medical and education department of health for the last 10 years, the medical joint action committee has complained to health minister Etala Rajender that it is affecting the quality of education and also creating hurdles for aspiring doctors to continue in government service.

The new medical colleges in Mahabubnagar and Siddipet require

principals and superintendents and senior doctors need to be appointed. But as all hiring is stalled, there are only in-charge positions created. This has hampered the morale of senior doctors in Telangana as their juniors are being appointed as in-charges.

A senior doctor, on condition of anonymity, said “The problems in Nizamabad and Warangal during the pandemic are an indication of how junior in-charge doctors have not been able to take

the pressure and have resigned. The appointment of senior doctors would have helped in this fire-fighting situation and there would have been control measures in place. It is high time the government appoints senior doctors as they are required not only for the new colleges but also existing ones.”

According to the Medical Council of India, doctors older than 58 years of age must not hold administrative posts. Dr Bongu Ramesh,

chairman of the joint action committee for medical education, said “There is a notification issued that they must be promoted and their services must be utilised in medical colleges. But that is not happening. We are seeing a lot of people coming on an adhoc basis and that affects medical education.”

At the same time, with no promotions in the department, morale is affected as there are no incentives to look forward to. Another senior doctor,

on condition of anonymity, explained “The age limit of retirement has increased from 58 to 65 years. As a result, those looking forward to getting promoted as professors now have to wait. In the meantime, juniors are elevated to positions for which they are not eligible. This is leading to a lot of bad blood in the fraternity.” The doctors complain that neighbouring Andhra Pradesh has carried out promotions twice in 10 years while they are still waiting.



ACB sleuths conducted a raid at the residence of Malkajigiri ACP Narasimha Reddy at Mahindra Hills on Wednesday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

ACP involved in land settlements

From Page 1

The ACP’s assets were spread in the city in Nacharam, Habsiguda and Gudimalkapur, and he had acquired 33 acres of land in Ghatkesar, assigned land parcels that spread over five plots, and documents related to 55 more acres

in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.

Preliminary investigations by the ACB, according to the officials, have revealed that the Narasimha Reddy was allegedly involved in many ‘land settlements’ right from the time he was the inspector of police in Uppal.

He had also worked at the Narsingi police station.

In addition to the raids on properties he owned in the city, the ACB teams also raided properties owned by his relatives in Karimnagar, Warangal and Nalgonda.

The raids were led by

teams led by six deputy superintendents of police from the ACB.

The Anti Corruption Bureau officials said that bank lockers rented by Narasimha Reddy or his members of his family, will be opened on Thursday for verifying their contents.

HC seeks centre’s stand on bankruptcy code

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

Telangana High Court has sought the stand of Union ministry of corporate affairs, apart from ministry of law and justice, on a petition challenging the ministry’s notification of November 15, 2019, notifying all provisions relating to “personal guarantors to corporate debtors” under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) 2016 and Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Application to Adjudicating Authority for Insolvency Resolution Process for Personal Guarantors to Corporate Debtors) Rules, 2019 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India.

The division bench comprising Chief

● **THE COURT** issued notices to the Union ministry of corporate affairs and law and justice to respond within four weeks on contentions raised by the petitioner.

Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijayen Reddy was dealing with a petition stating that issuing of notification by ministry of corporate affairs was outside its ambit and is the vice of excessive delegation.

Vikram Posarla, the counsel for petitioner, contended that rules and provisions merely grant the power to notify the date on which provisions of IBC, 2016, come into force, but not to select the class of persons to which the provisions will apply. The

impugned notification selected “personal guarantors to corporate debtors” as a class of persons to which the provisions would apply. But such power was never delegated to the ministry, the counsel pointed out.

He further underlined that the notification creates a situation where the creditor can unjustly enrich itself by making a claim in Insolvency Process of Guarantor without accounting for the amount realised by it in the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process of the Corporate Debtor under Part II of the code. The court issued notices to the Union ministry of corporate affairs and law and justice to respond within four weeks on contentions raised by the petitioner.

No registration till Dharani portal is operational: CM

From Page 1

The Chief Minister, Mr K. Chandrasekhar Rao, said there won’t be any registrations of agricultural or non-agricultural property until Dharani portal is operational.

The Chief Minister also asked people to enrol the details of houses constructed in agriculture fields, near agriculture wells and also farmhouses.

The online mutation,

however, will not be applicable to the houses or structures built on the lands of Wakf, Endowments, FTL and lands under the ULC.

The Chief Minister said that he will hold a meeting with Hyderabad MLAs and mayors of

municipal corporations in the state to finalise the modalities of regularising the sale of property in slum areas made on the basis of declaration through a public notary in Hyderabad.

He also said that the government would give a final chance for the registration of property bought through Sada Bi Nama (paper transactions).

He said the government would issue a maroon-coloured passbook to each non-agriculture property holder in the state, which would render a fool-proof protection to the property and ease transactions through minimising the human interface.

Nearly 2,000 Covid patients on life support

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

Coronavirus continues to make itself felt in Telangana state giving little respite to the people by registering 2,296 more cases. There were also 10 more deaths from the disease taking the fatalities from Covid-19 to 1,062, while the total cases so far reached 1,77,070 in the state.

As many as 6,346 suffering from Covid-19 in the state were in various government and private hospitals in the state as on Tuesday evening, according to the Covid-19 bulletin issued by the health department. An additional 23,527 Covid-19 patients were either in home or institutional isolation.

A majority of the admitted to hospitals — 4,966 — are receiving additional care including ventilator support. As per the data released by the health department among those requiring more hands on care, 824 were on ventilator support while 1,123 were in intensive care units taking those on life support to around 2,000 persons.

● **AS MANY** as 6,346 suffering from Covid-19 in the state were in various government and private hospitals in the state as on Tuesday evening, according to the Covid-19 bulletin issued by the health department on Wednesday.

Another 3,019 patients were on supplementary oxygen support. The rest of 3,327 patients were in regular wards, the department said.

As per the bulletin, the GHMC area registered 321 new Covid-19 cases, the highest in the state for the 24-hour period from 8 pm Monday to 8 pm Tuesday. Ranga Reddy district followed with 217 cases, Medchal-Malkajigiri with 173, Nalgonda with 155, Karimnagar with 136, Warangal Urban with 99, Siddipet with 92, Nizamabad 82, and Sangareddy with 81 cases. Four other districts — Suryapet, Mahbubabad, Kamareddy and Bhadrachalam reported more than 70 cases each. The lowest cases for the day — six — were reported from Narayanpet district.

Bharat Biotech, US varsity sign pact

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

Hyderabad-based vaccine manufacturer, Bharat Biotech, has entered into a licensing agreement with Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis for a novel chimp-adenovirus, single dose intranasal vaccine for Covid-19.

According to a release from the company on Wednesday, the Phase-I trials for the vaccine will take place in Saint Louis University’s Vaccine & Treatment Evaluation Unit. Once Bharat Biotech obtains the required regulatory approvals, it will pursue further stages of clinical trials in India, the company said.



Senior Congress leader Ganga Bhavani (left), AP Mahila Congress president, Ramana Kumari (centre) and former central minister M.M. Pallam Raju (extreme right) felicitate Andhra Pradesh party in-charge Oommen Chandy during the Andhra Pradesh Congress coordination committee meeting on Wednesday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Chandy accuses Centre of letting down AP

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

Former Chief Minister of Kerala and AICC in-charge for Andhra Pradesh Congress affairs Oommen Chandy on Wednesday charged the BJP government at the Centre of betraying Andhra Pradesh in its six years of rule as it had not implemented a single promise made during the bifurcation.

He was addressing a press conference here after a meeting with the AP Pradesh Congress Committee president S. Sailajanath and other senior leaders of the party.

Reminding that the UPA government has assured the special status to Andhra Pradesh, successive governments should not forget the promises made by their predecessors and they have an obligation to honour the assurances.

Stating that during the meeting they discussed national politics, farmers’ issues and also the situation of the party in Andhra Pradesh, he alleged that the BJP government has failed in resolving farmers’ problems. He said that they will strengthen the Congress in Andhra Pradesh by establishing booth-level booth level committees.

Wakf Board seeks funds to pay Imams

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

About 4,000 applications of Imams and muezzins seeking monthly remuneration have been pending with the Wakf Board for more than two years now. Though the Wakf Board is sending reminders for additional funds to the government, it seems like the government is not inclined to oblige.

The state government had in 2015 launched a scheme for giving remuneration to Imams and muezzins following Supreme Court orders and representations from various corners. The government, vide GO Rt. No. 117 (07-07-2015) started

the scheme covering 5,000 masjids. In the beginning, only ₹1,000 was fixed as honorarium and in April 2017 the amount was enhanced to ₹1, 5000. In September 2018, the amount was enhanced to ₹5,000 per month. The Wakf Board achieved a target of 10,000 Imams and muezzins in the same year. Since then, it is receiving applications, which have mounted to 4, 0000. Wakf Board officials said that the Chairman and CEO have addressed letters to the government intimating about the pending petitions and asked to relax the limit of 5,000 Masjids and increase the earmarked amount.

HUGE | SCAM

The agency is probing multi-crore gaming fraud involving Chinese companies

Lax scrutiny by payment gateways to invite RBI ire

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

Lax due diligence by payment gateways like Paytm, Cashfree and Razorpay could invite the wrath of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is investigating the money-laundering angle in the multi-crore gaming fraud involving Chinese companies, is said to be preparing a detailed report on the

role of payment gateways that enabled Chinese companies to smoothly run their pan-India operations. The ED’s report, which is likely to mention the role of HSBC bank in the online gaming fraud, will shortly be submitted to the RBI. It is learnt the Enforcement Directorate has come across hard evidence about payment gateways being lax in their functioning. Highly placed sources

told *Deccan Chronicle* that right at the initial stages of investigation, role of Paytm and Cashfree had surfaced in payments going to the Chinese companies run by Beijing T Power. As the probe deepened, ED summoned top executives of both these firms repeatedly to explain how transactions running into thousands of crores could go unchecked under their watch. In subsequent investigations, it emerged

that one of the Chinese companies had parked Rs. 9 crore with another payment gateway Razorpay. However, no individuals of these payment gateways have as yet been found to have assisted the accused Chinese companies. ED has found that locals were hired and used to open bank accounts with HSBC for payments through Paytm, Cashfree and Razorpay.

“Non-reporting of suspi-

cious transactions to regulatory authorities has helped accused companies to run their operations smoothly,” ED officials maintain.

Analysis of two bank accounts belonging to M/s Dokypay Technology Private Limited revealed that they collected ₹1,268 crore in 2019, out of which ₹300 crore came via Paytm payment gateway and ₹600 crore was transferred out via the same Paytm gate-

way. Examination of M/s Linkyun Technology accounts revealed a similar pattern involving outward foreign remittances of ₹120 crore. There are suspicions that the network of companies indulged in banned activities like online betting as well as hawala transactions.

ED is presently questioning Chinese national Yan Hao and two other accused in the case.

IN BRIEF

Swiggy delivery staff strike on 9th day

Hyderabad: While the strike by Swiggy delivery executives has entered the ninth day, the company is maintaining that 80 per cent of its staff is back at work and only 20 percent are protesting. Swiggy further says it has revised the average payment to ₹85 per order for those taking more orders. The company claims it is not forcing anyone to work and delivery executives are logging in on their own. Meanwhile, the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers (IFAT) has stated that its main demand is pay-out of ₹35 for four kilometers, which remains unfulfilled. The federation alleged that accessibility to the app is not being allowed to those who are protesting which, it says, is unfair.

Urdu Academy to hold training classes

Hyderabad: Urdu Academy, in collaboration with Maulana Azad National Urdu University (Manuu), is organising training classes for Urdu medium teachers belonging to government schools in subjects of maths, physics, biology and social science. Academy president Moulana Mohammed Raheemuddin Ansari said classes will in all probability be held between October 19 and 23. Earlier, the classes were to be held physically. But due to COVID-19, it has been decided that the mode of training will be online. Objective of the training is to educate teachers in technical and pedagogical methodologies of teaching, which will help their pupils to grasp their subjects easily. Academy secretary Mohammed Ghouse said online applications for coaching will be invited next week. Services of the renowned professors of central and state universities will be utilised for training the government Urdu teachers.

ROAD DIVIDERS BEING BUILT IN ADILABAD TOWN

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, SEPT. 23

The Adilabad municipality is trying to regulate traffic on the busy roads in the town by constructing road dividers. The municipality has taken up the construction of road dividers from Ambedkar Chowk to Gandhi chowk which is a busy road. Earlier, roadside vendors used to do business keeping their push carts in the middle of the road. Some of them would sit along with fruits and other items on the ground. This caused inconvenience to commuters and people moving on the road. MLA Jogu Ramanna and municipal chairman Jogu Premender inspected the construction of road dividers under construction at Ambedkar chowk. The roadside vendors who used to do business have asked the political leaders and officials to give them an alternative place to continue their business.

● **EARLIER, ROADSIDE vendors used to do business keeping their push carts in the middle of the road. Some of them would sit along with fruits and other items on the ground.**

RTC buses back on Hyd roads after six months

Commuters have to travel at their own risk, say officials

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) on Wednesday resumed its operations in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits after about six months since the Covid-19 lock down in March.

Though the TSRTC had resumed its operations in districts from June, the state government has asked it to shut in the city citing the number of Coronavirus cases. However, as many 230 buses in over 100 routes in the suburbs hit the roads, though restrictions are still imposed to operate in the core area. Surprisingly, the RTC

● **RTC AUTHORITIES** said that though the department decided to run 230 buses on 135 routes, only 150 buses turned up and with very minimal footfall. Officials said that they expect increased footfall on Thursday since very few were aware of the resumption of services since it was a sudden decision.

authorities were silent on Covid-19 guidelines being implemented in the buses. Officials said that unlike the Hyderabad Metro Rail limited (HMRL), RTC buses in the city cannot assure social distancing norms. They said that commuters will travel at their own risk.

RTC authorities said that though the department decided to run 230 buses on 135 routes, only 150 buses turned up and with very minimal footfall. Officials said that they expect increased footfall on Thursday

since very few were aware of the resumption of services since it was a sudden decision.

Officials said that though they have sanitised the buses, they cannot ensure social distancing in the city.

It will be the duty of commuters to wear face masks and use hand sanitisers, etc.

A senior RTC official, requesting anonymity, said that looking at the number of Covid-19 cases in the core city, the authorities were worried about operating in the city. He said opera-

tions in peripheral areas, including Rajendranagar, Maheshwaram, Ibrahimpatnam, Bandlaguda and others should be considered as pilot, since the organisation will study challenges in operating buses in the core city.

The official said it would be an impossible task to operate buses in an organised manner like HMRL considering the revenue aspect.

When asked about commencing the operations of buses in the core city, the official said that a final decision will be taken by the state government and most likely buses will fully operate in a couple of days based on the outcome of the 135 routes pressed into service.

Despite deaths manholes still open in Hyd



People of Boduppal place a television set on an open pothole to cover it for the convenience of the motorists, in Hyderabad, on Wednesday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

JNTUH exam notice has students in jitters

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

The student community in the state continues to express disappointment with the authorities. In the latest development, the Jawaharlal Nehru Technical University, Hyderabad (JNTUH) released a notice intimating a second and third spell of exams to be conducted from the second week of October.

The notice released on Monday read: "This second spell of semester exams comprises regular and supplementary examinations of all PG courses (including Pharm D) and all I-1, II-1, III-1 and IV-1 supply exams of the B.Tech and B.Pharm courses. All the

I-2, II-2, III-2 (even semester) regular examinations of the B.Tech and B.Pharm courses shall be conducted in the third spell of semester exams, which will commence from last week of October."

Students opposed the University's decision saying this was unjust and put undue pressure on them, already struggling with completion of syllabus through online classes during a raging pandemic as they are.

Several students told *Deccan Chronicle* that the University authorities were not bothered about the impacts such decisions would have on them, including on their health and practical issues such as transportation.

● **STUDENTS OPPOSED** the University's decision saying this was unjust and put undue pressure on them, already struggling with completion of syllabus through online classes during a raging pandemic as they are.

A B.Tech fourth year student who will have to appear for both regular exams and supplementary exams for third year, second semester said, "I tested positive for Covid-19 recently. We are expected to prepare for both sets of exams at such short notice. We are not robots to get ready within a month for the

entire semester course, especially when struggling with online classes for the previous semester."

Another student said the decision caused panic among students, confused about whether to focus on the current semester or to prepare for the previous semester exams. A student from Medchal district said, "The college told us that it will promote all students to the next semester, so I did not carry any books with me. Now I don't know how to arrange for books and resources at such short notice, while focusing on ongoing classes and work assignments."

Final year students who are supposed to appear for supplementary exams

TSBIE TAKES BACK DECISION ON SYLLABUS REDUCTION

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

A day after the Telangana state board of intermediate education (TSBIE) announced a 30 per cent reduction in the first and second years' syllabus for the current year due to the four months of classes lost because of the lockdown, it has hastily took back the decision of cutting down the syllabus in the humanities stream.

In a release, the board said there was no question of removing lessons on national heroes, social reformers and eminent personalities. It said that while the syllabus for maths and science was reduced on the basis of CBSE's recommendation, the 'proposals' for reducing the syllabus in the humanities should be treated as 'under examination.' The intermediate syllabus for the humanities is based on the state syllabus and any reduction in this will have to be approved by a competent authority, which has not been done yet.

The release of these proposals prior to approval of a competent authority is 'unintended and premature' and the reduction of the syllabus in each subject will now be discussed and intimated in due course.

It may be recalled that the board had on Tuesday removed topics like Join India Movement (the freedom movement in Hyderabad state), Telangana Praja Samithi (Separate Telangana state movement-early phase), non-cooperation movements (separate Telangana state movement-later phase) and popular jatras (fairs and festivals of Telangana), other than lessons on liberalism, individualism, communism, GST, etc in the intermediate first and second years' humanities syllabi.

● **IN A RELEASE**, the board said there was no question of removing lessons on national heroes, social reformers and eminent personalities.

BJP's Uma Rani jumps ship, joins ruling party

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC
NIZAMABAD, SEPT. 23

BJP municipal corporator T. Uma Rani joined the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) on Wednesday in the presence of minister for roads and buildings, legislative affairs and housing V. Prashanth Reddy.

Uma Rani represents the 6th division in Nizamabad Municipal Corporation. Speaking on the occasion, minister Prashanth Reddy

said that the opposition party leaders are attracted to the governance of Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao and integrated development in urban areas by the minister K. Taraka Rama Rao. For the integrated development, elected representatives are coming forward to join the TRS, he said. Nizamabad urban MLA Bigala Ganesh Gupta, TRS leaders Pocharam Suresh Reddy, Sujana, Gandhari Srinivas were present.

Two arrested for killing traffic home guard

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, SEPT. 23

The Nekkonda police on Wednesday arrested two persons for killing a traffic home guard.

The deceased Daravath Dushyant Singh worked in the traffic wing of the Warangal Police Commissionerate.

According to the police inspector, Thirumala and SI Nagaraju said, "The accused Daravath Jyothi, 35 and Jilla Sambaraju, 28, were in an illicit relationship for several years."

Dushyant Singh suspected his wife of being in a relationship with someone else and began questioning her. The couple would frequently

fight over the issue.

As a result, Jyothi and Sambaraju decided to kill Dushyant Singh.

On September 14, when Dushyant Singh was drunk and unconscious, the duo strangled him with a rope. They accused put the body of Dushyant Singh in a bag; Sambaraju transported the body in a trolley auto.

Later, Sambaraju with the help of his father Yakaiah and his brother Suresh burnt the body of Dushyant Singh and threw the ashes in a river on the outskirts of Nekkonda.

Dushyant Singh's brother Veeranna filed a missing person's report on September 20 and police began investigating the case.



District Libraries Corporation chairman Gudipudi Naveen Rao addresses the media on Wednesday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

Mahbubabad library gets funds for renovation

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, SEPT. 23

The Mahbubabad district library which has been in a dilapidated condition since the formation of the new district will get a facelift. The state has sanctioned ₹1 crore for renovation works said, District Libraries Corporation chairman Gudipudi Naveen Rao on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters, Mr Naveen thanked Mahbubabad MP Maloth Kavitha and IT minister

K.T. Rama Rao for getting the funds sanctioned.

"Our agenda is to renovate the district library for the tribal population in the district. Though works began long back and ₹60 lakh is already spent, we faced a fund crunch. Ms Kavitha helped us get the required funds to continue the works and it will be ready soon," he said.

District Libraries Corporation directors Nimmala Srinivas, Peddi Saidulu were present among others.

HYDERABAD COPS ARREST DRUG PEDDLER, SEIZE 150 GMS OF OPIUM

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

A drug supplier was nabbed with 150 grams of opium by the south zone task force on Wednesday in the city.

On a tip off, the south zone task force, Hyderabad, along with Nallakunta police apprehended the accused, Dinesh Kumar, and seized 150 grams of opium, a cell phone and a bike from him.

Kumar is a native of Rajasthan, came to Hyderabad six

years ago to work in the steel ward in Nagole as a labourer. He himself is an opium addict. During the lockdown, he lost work and financially became weak. Immediately after the lockdown was lifted, Kumar went to his native place and hatched a plan to sell and supply opium in the city.

In first week of September, he procured 1 kg of opium from Rajasthan which he sold in the city to various clients for 1400 to 1500 hundred a gram.

IN THE FAST LANE

Rules shared by police on Twitter, other social media platforms to make driving easy

Traffic cops take the cricket route for safety on roads

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

It is the IPL cricket season and it is not just the hard-hitting batsmen who have been hitting the ball over the boundary line. The Cyberabad Traffic Police (CTP) too has thrown its hat into the ring and if its initial performance is anything to go by, it is well on its way to hit the ball out of the park.

In a series of posts on Twitter and other social media platforms over the past three days, the CTP shared what it called 'Road Safety Lessons from IPL 2020' using images from the games so far to make telling points about why it is a good idea to follow road rules. And the messages make no bones about what lies in wait for those who ignore traffic rules and safety norms.

"There is no Super Over in our life to get another chance," reads one message. "Follow traffic rules. Save lives," the message superimposed on a screen-grab from the Delhi Capitals and Kings XI Punjab game on September 21. Two more such messages were picked up from subsequent matches.

"The idea is to relate popular trending topics to road safety issues," says Mohammad Khaja, a constable with CTP and part of their three-member social media team adding, "our attempt is to inspire people to pay attention to traffic and road safety rules."

One of the more popular messages Khaja and his teammates developed starred Bollywood actor Nandamuri Balakrishna.

"Even Balakrishna responded to our message saying he liked it and was happy to



Cyberabad Traffic Police's social media team (left to right) Constable Md. Khaja, Sub-Inspector P. Shashikanth Reddy and Constable S. Samrat.

be part of such traffic safety awareness initiatives," Khaja says. "We want to get our messages across that road safety is a priority and in an entertaining manner when possible," he says.

"The team does a tremendous job on this front," says CTP's Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Vijay Kumar, adding "Khaja

is a rare find. He is very well read, very creative and is not common to find someone like him in the force."

"The entire drive of the social media team of CTP is not to get some publicity for ourselves but about finding the best way to connect with people, educate and inform them," Vijay Kumar explains.



Road safety lessons by CTP superimposed on a screen-grab from the Delhi Capitals and Kings XI Punjab game on September. 21.

"Using social media works for both sides for us to get our messages across and for people to connect with us with their grievances, alerts and any requests. The best part is that it is instant communication," the official says.

It is not just entertaining

messages that CTP's social media team focuses on. From time to time, it writes its own news reports about road accidents and posts them highlighting the cause for an accident, the impact with it has left on a family and how a tragedy could have been averted.

AP's recovery rate is 88.26%

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 23

Andhra Pradesh has registered an 88.26 per cent rate of recovery among the Covid-19 infected patients.

The state health authorities in their Covid-19 bulletin on Wednesday reported that the total number of Covid-19 infected patients is 6,46,530, of which 5,70,667 were already discharged from hospitals after recovery indicating the remarkable rate of recovery percentage.

The state saw 7,228 new Covid-19 cases taking the tally to 6,46,530 and 45 deaths taking the death toll to 5,506.

Out of 72,383 samples tested, 7,228 individuals have tested Covid-19 positive in the last 24 hours. Out of a total number of 53,02,367 samples tested in the state so far, 5,70,667 patients have

recovered and 70,357 patients are active with the virus.

Among the daily new infections of confirmed coronavirus, East Godavari continues to top the state with the highest number at 1,112, followed by 962 in West Godavari, 648 in Guntur, 612 in Anantapur, 600 in Kadapa, 536 in Chittoor, 502 in Prakasam, 479 in Nellore, 428 in Krishna, 414 in Visakhapatnam, 387 in Vizianagaram, 319 in Srikakulam and 229 in Kurnool. East Godavari has the highest number of cumulative cases at 90,047, followed by 60,659 in West Godavari, 56,653 in Chittoor, 54,720 in Kurnool, 54,263 in Anantapur, 51,232 in Guntur, 49,163 in Nellore, 47,824 in Visakhapatnam, 43,710 in Prakasam, 40,939 in Kadapa, 36,893 in Srikakulam, 32,597 in Vizianagaram, 24,935 in Krishna.

SHORT TAKES

NCB SUMMONS DEEPIKA, SARA, SHRADDHA

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, SEPT. 22

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Wednesday issued summons to actors Deepika Padukone, Sara Ali Khan, Shraddha Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh in connection with the ongoing drugs probe in Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case.

The actors have been asked to appear before the NCB in three days stated the summons. The agency, meanwhile, grilled Madhu Mantena of KLAN talent management agency after his name cropped up during the questioning of Rajput's talent manager Jaya Saha.

The actors will be grilled based on the witness statements and the chat records that were retrieved by the investigating agencies. While investigating, the NCB found that Sara and Shraddha had visited Rajput's farmhouse in Lonavala and were allegedly part of drug parties there which has also been claimed in statements of witnesses.

Deepika, meanwhile, came on the NCB's radar after chat records between the actor and her manager Karishma Prakash allegedly asking for hashish. The NCB may also grill the duo together at a later stage, officials said.

Deepika is likely to appear before NCB on Friday, whereas Sara and Shraddha would be there for questioning on Saturday, officials said. "The summons has been issued and further probe is underway. Others if found involved may also be summoned as and when needed," said an NCB officer.

FIR LODGED AGAINST ANURAG KASHYAP

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

Mumbai Police have registered an FIR against filmmaker Anurag Kashyap after actress Payal Ghosh accused him of raping her in 2013, an official. Kashyap has dismissed the allegations as baseless. The First Information Report (FIR) was registered at Versova police station on late Tuesday night after the actress along with her lawyer Nitin Satpute approached the police.

The FIR was registered under Indian Penal Code Sections 376 (D) (rape), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 342 (wrongful confinement), the official said, adding that further investigation is underway.

According to the police, Mr Kashyap will be called for questioning in connection with the alleged seven-year-old incident. In her police complaint, the actress alleged that Mr Kashyap raped her at a place on Yari Road in Versova in 2013. The actress and her lawyer earlier approached Oshiwara police station in Mumbai on Monday, but they were asked to go to the Versova police station as the alleged incident took place at the under Versova police's jurisdiction, the official said.

MAHA BUILDING COLLAPSE TOLL INCREASES TO 40

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

The death toll in the building collapse in Bhiwandi in Maharashtra's Thane district increased to 40 on Wednesday with the recovery of 14 more bodies overnight. Twenty-five persons have been pulled out of the debris alive so far and are being treated at hospitals in Bhiwandi and Thane, an official said.

The search operation continued throughout the night despite heavy rains. The bodies recovered from the debris were mutilated and highly decomposed as they had remained there for over 50 hours, the official said.

Even at the time of writing this news more people were feared trapped. Due to heavy rains rescue teams were facing difficulties in rescue operation however they continued rescue operation throughout night. According to NDRF and Thane Municipal Corporation's disaster management cell, the rescue operation will continue as more people are feared trapped under the debris.

Of the 40 bodies recovered so far, 18 were children.



Police use water cannons to disperse supporters of Lok Insaaf Party (Punjab) during a protest over the passage of recent farm Bills and electricity amendment Bill, at Punjab-Haryana border in Ambala district on Wednesday. The Haryana police also on Wednesday used water cannons in Panipat and Ambala on agitators to stop them from proceeding to Delhi to protest against the farm reform Bills.

— PTI

Kerala may challenge farm Bills

Says Centre didn't consult states despite agriculture being state subject

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT. 23

The Kerala government is planning to move the Supreme Court against the farm Bills passed by Parliament recently.

Replying to a question on the feasibility of a state government challenging Bills passed by Parliament, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said a proposal had come before the Cabinet here on Wednesday. "We thought it needs to be examined in detail legally. So we decided to send the proposal to the law department for detailed perusal. That's

what has happened," he said. There were reports that legal advice received by the government stated the passing of farm Bills amounted to violation of states' powers and blatant and serious contravention of Constitutional norms.

According to the CPM-led LDF Government the Bills are anti-farmer and also aimed at promoting the interests of corporates. The Left parties have already announced that they would be taking part in the agitation planned by Kisan Coordination Committee across the country on September 25.

The two Bills - Farmer's Produce Trade and

Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 - have been passed by both Houses of the Parliament.

Earlier agriculture minister Mr V. S. Sunil Kumar had sought legal opinion and he got the advice that the government can go ahead and challenge the legislations in the apex court.

The matter was discussed at the weekly Cabinet meeting on Wednesday and the government was of the opinion that the Bills mounted to interfering with the

powers vested with the state under the federal system. Mr Sunil Kumar who has been tested positive, took part in the Cabinet meeting online.

He pointed out that despite the fact that agriculture fell in the state list as per the seventh schedule of the Constitution; the Centre did not consult even single state before introducing these Bills in the Parliament.

He said the Centre had also not taken the farmers organizations into confidence.

"This goes to show that the Bills will only serve the interests of big corporates who have stake in agriculture sector," he

said. Apart from fighting the Bills legally in the courts, the agriculture department also plans to counter the Centre's move by bringing in agriculture cooperative societies and self help groups on a big scale.

The minister said the Bills had been brought at a time when lakhs of farmers were committing suicide across the country due to agrarian crisis.

The Left parties in Kerala along with many unions and organizations working in the agriculture sector have expressed solidarity with the nationwide agitation called by Kisan Coordination Committee on September 25.

2 PAK SOLDIERS KILLED IN CROSS-LoC SKIRMISHES

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, SEPT. 23

Two Pakistani soldiers were killed in renewed cross-LoC skirmishes in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch area on Wednesday.

The Pakistani authorities said that two of its soldiers Noor-ul-Hassan and Waseem Ali were killed in "intense exchange of fire" in Dewa sector of the Line of Control (LoC).

The Indian Army officials in frontier Poonch town had earlier said that the Pakistan Army violated the ceasefire understanding by resorting to heavy firing and mortar shelling in forward areas along LoC in three sectors of Poonch.

They said that "unprovoked" firing and shelling from across the de facto border started at around 9 am and continued till reports last came in.

A defence spokesman in Jammu while confirming it said, "At about 9 am on Wednesday, Pakistan Army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and intense shelling with mortars along LoC in Kerni, Qasba and Shahpur sectors."

He added that the Indian Army retaliated "befittingly". It was not immediately known if there were any casualties or damage on the Indian side.

According to the Indian authorities, the Pakistan Army has violated ceasefire along the LoC as many as 37 times, so far, this month alone.

They said that last week an Army jawan was killed and two others, including an officer, were injured in Pakistani firing in LoC's Sunderbani sector.

Kashmiris rather have Chinese rule them: Farooq

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, SEPT. 23

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah who, according to his critics, has as a politician grown accustomed to setting off controversies, said in his latest harangue that the people of Kashmir do not feel Indian and do not want to be as such.

"Today Kashmiris do not feel Indian and do not want to be Indian. They are slaves. They would rather have the Chinese rule them," he said in an interview to veteran journalist and television commentator Karan Thapar.

Reacting sharply to the government's doing away with the '1927 State Subject Law' and replacing it with new domicile law in what is now called as the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir; Mr. Abdullah said, "Every Kashmiri believes the new domicile laws are intended to create a Hindu majority. The gap between Kashmiris and the rest of the country is wider than ever before and growing."

He added that alleged attempts to change the

demography of J&K have further embittered the Kashmiri people.

He accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi, of "deceiving" and keeping him in the dark about the Centre's plan to abrogate Article 370 and bifurcating J&K.

He said, "Modi deliberately deceived me in August 2019 but I will fight to restore the dignity of Kashmiris till my last breath. The Abdullahs and Muftis have come together in Kashmir's greater interest and now Mehbooba (Mufti) is politically close to Omar (Abdullah) and me. I speak to her frequently".

Revealing the details of his meeting with the Prime Minister roughly 72 hours before August 5, 2019 when J&K was stripped of its special status and split up into two UTs, he said that he had met Mr. Modi to seek his assurances about the continuation of Articles 370 and 35A.

He said that he asked the Prime Minister why there were so many troops in the Valley and whether this was because of any perceived military threat.

He suggested the Prime Minister deliberately went



● HE SAID, "Modi deliberately deceived me in August 2019 but I will fight to restore the dignity of Kashmiris till my last breath. The Abdullahs and Muftis have come together in Kashmir's greater interest and now Mehbooba (Mufti) is politically close to Omar (Abdullah) and me. I speak to her frequently".

out of his way to give him the impression the massive increase in troops was for security purposes.

He said the Prime Minister did not say a word about Articles 370 and 35A. Consequently, he emerged from that meeting believing the two Articles were not in danger. When asked he agreed that the Prime Minister had misled and deceived him.

The Senior Abdullah who is a member of Lok Sabha representing home constituency Srinagar said in the interview which has been published by *The Wire* alleged that the Kashmiris are being treated like second class citizens and hence are "slaves." He also said that

it was a "complete rubbish" for the BJP to claim that the people of Kashmir have accepted the August 2019 changes just because there have been no protests. He said if the soldiers on every street and Section 144 were to be lifted people will come out in their tens of lakhs.

Asked how Kashmiris view the Central government and, in particular, Prime Minister and Home Minister Amit Shah, Mr. Abdullah said they were deeply disillusioned.

He said they had no trust in the Central government. He added that the trust that once bound Kashmir to the rest of the country has completely snapped.

He said that in August 2019, when the constitu-

Despite protests, RS sees 100.47% productivity

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, SEPT 23

Making an appeal to Rajya Sabha MPs to ensure that the "unseemly behavior" that led to the suspension of eight opposition parties members from the House is not repeated, chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday said to protest is the right of the opposition but the question is how it should be done.

In his valedictory speech before the House was adjourned sine die eight days ahead of schedule due to Covid-19, Mr Naidu informed that the 252nd session of the Rajya Sabha witnessed a productivity of 100.47 per cent, with 25 bills being passed and the session has been satisfying in terms of productivity but there were some areas of concern as well, including for the first time in the history of the Upper House, a notice of motion for removal of the deputy chairman was given.

Mr Naidu said it is "extremely unpalatable" when Bills are passed amid a boycott of proceedings by some sections of the House, but not taking up legislative work in such a situation may legitimise their action as an 'instrument of blocking legislation'.

As many as 15 Bills including the three farm sector related Bills, over which the House, witnessed unruly scenes and suspension of eight members, were passed in the last two days with no Opposition member present in the House as they were boycotting the proceedings.

Expressing concern over the conduct of some of the members, he said it was "deeply painful" and all need to "collectively ponder" over these issues. Over the suspension on the eight members, Mr Naidu said rules

of the House do provide for such action when it becomes inevitable.

"We have to conclude this session eight sittings ahead of the scheduled 18 sittings as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to challenge humankind across the globe even after nine months of its outbreak," said the Chairman.

Referring to the suspension of eight MPs, Mr Naidu said "the developments in the House surrounding this unprecedented move have been deeply painful for all those who hold the stature and the dignity of this august House dear to their hearts."

Earlier during the day, the House bid farewell to 11 members who will retire in November, including civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri, SP's Ram Gopal Yadav, Ravi Prakash Verma, Chandrapal Singh Yadav and Javed Ali Khan, BSP's Veer Singh, Congress's P.L. Punia and Raj Babbar and BJP's Arun Singh and Neeraj Shekhar. Mr Naidu said some of the members will return to the House after re-election.

Meanwhile, BSP supremo Mayawati hit out at the government as well as the Opposition for the ruckus and chaos during the ongoing Monsoon Session, saying their conduct has harmed the dignity of Parliament and the Constitution.

In a tweet in Hindi, the BSP supremo said "Although Parliament is called the temple of democracy, its dignity has been shredded many times. Even during the ongoing Parliament session, the functioning of the government and the behaviour of Opposition in the House are embarrassing for the dignity of Parliament, Constitution and democracy. Very sad!"

statehood. He said he would fight for this - but always peacefully - till his last breath. The former chief minister said that he had faith in the Supreme Court and hoped that they would stop postponing the petition his party has brought and hear it expeditiously. In the interview he, in fact, appealed to Supreme Court judges to hear the constitutional case quickly.

Asked why he had not raised this matter during the present session of Parliament, he said he wasn't given time. He said he had gone to meet the Speaker, along with MPs from Congress,

Trinamool, DMK and the Communist Parties, and the Speaker had assured them time for a discussion would be allocated. But that never happened.

Asked if he believed the government had intervened and told the Speaker not to give time, Mr. Abdullah said he did not know but agreed the Speaker had not kept his word.

He said that in the greater interest of Kashmir the Mufti and Abdullah families have buried their past differences and come together.

said that "people from various districts where I served earlier have been asking me to contest polls but I have not taken any decisions yet. But as far as my interest in serving people is concerned I can do that even without joining politics".

During his interaction with the media in Patna, he praised Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for his effort for state's development and said that "he never compromises on the issue of crime and corrup-

tion". While JD(U) leaders have been maintaining silence on Bihar DGP Guptaeshwar Pandey's early retirement, BJP spokesperson Nikhil Anand in a statement said that "questions should not be raised as he has decided to quit voluntarily. In democracy he has the right to choose his political ideology or party".

Late on Tuesday evening, the state home department issued the notification granting voluntary retirement for Pandey.

FRESH | START

Top cop had failed to get BJP ticket when he tried to contest from Buxar in 2009

Bihar DGP quits, may contest polls from Buxar

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, SEPT. 23

Bihar Director General of Police Guptaeshwar Pandey's early retirement has triggered speculations that he would join politics and contest Assembly polls from Buxar.

This is the second time he is trying his luck in electoral politics, in 2009 he had opted for voluntary retirement to contest Lok Sabha polls from Buxar but he returned to the Police force after he failed

to get a ticket from the BJP.

Sources, however, said that this time Mr. Pandey decided to quit six months earlier than his actual retirement date after he got assurances from the NDA. He was to retire from services on February 28, 2021.

The Bihar government had appointed him as DGP of the state police on January 31, 2019.

Few hours after reports of his voluntary retirement surfaced, a music

● AFTER REPORTS of his voluntary retirement surfaced, a music video went viral on the social media terming Guptaeshwar Pandey as "Robin Hood of Bihar" and "Janata ka hero".

The video went viral on the social media terming Guptaeshwar Pandey as "Robin Hood of Bihar" and "Janata ka hero".

In the video singer Deepak Thakur also praised Mr. Pandey's role

in Sushant Singh Rajput case and how he faced criticism from various political parties for leading a battle for the deceased actor. Guptaeshwar Pandey had hit headlines by taking a strong stand on the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

He had also stoked a controversy by saying that "Rhea Chakraborty doesn't have *aukat* to make any comments on Bihar CM Nitish Kumar".

On Wednesday while talking to reporters he

IN BRIEF

6th term: Belarus Prez takes oath

Kyiv: President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus was sworn in Wednesday to his sixth term in office at an inaugural ceremony that was not announced in advance amid weeks of huge protests of the authoritarian leader's reelection, which the opposition says was rigged. Several European countries used the occasion to reiterate that they don't recognise the results of the election and refused to regard Lukashenko as the legitimate president. The ceremony was held in front of several hundred dignitaries at the ornate Palace of Independence in the capital of Minsk, the state news agency Belta said. Police and other security forces blocked off parts of the city and public transportation was suspended.

Navalny released from hospital

Berlin: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was released from a Berlin hospital after more than a month's treatment for poisoning, with doctors now believing that a "complete recovery" from the Soviet-era nerve agent is possible for him, the hospital said Wednesday. Navalny spent 32 days at Berlin's Charite hospital, 24 of them in intensive care, before doctors deemed his "condition had improved sufficiently for him to be discharged from acute inpatient care." As he was released Tuesday, the 44-year-old displayed his characteristic sarcastic sense of humour. In an Instagram post, he took swipe at Russian President Vladimir Putin, scoffing at reported comments by the Russian leader suggesting that Navalny might have intentionally poisoned himself. He was flown to Germany two days after falling ill on Aug. 20.

UK: Truck lines if no-deal Brexit

London: The British government says there could be lines of 7,000 trucks at the English Channel and two-day waits to get into France immediately after the UK makes its economic break from the European Union at the end of the year. Michael Gove, the minister in charge of Brexit preparations, described that as a reasonable worst-case scenario in a letter to logistics firms. The government letter says that between 30% and 50% of trucks wanting to cross the Channel may not be ready for new paperwork and regulations that will come into effect on Jan. 1. "This could lead to maximum queues of 7,000 port-bound trucks in Kent and associated maximum delays of up to two days," the document said. The UK withdrew from the EU's political institutions on Jan. 31 but remains in a tariff-free transition period until the end of the year.

COURT: NAWAZ ARREST REPORT BY SEPT. 30

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 23

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday directed the concerned representative to submit report on the implementation of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) supreme Nawaz Sharif's arrest warrant through United Kingdom's County Court by September 30. During the hearing of Avenfield and Al-Azizia references conducted by a two-member bench, Additional Attorney General has assured the court that official of Pakistan High Commission will reach the PML-N supreme's residence in London to inform him about court orders. The IHC had issued non-bailable arrest warrant against Nawaz for September 22 and rejected his plea seeking exemption from the hearing. The court had also directed the concerned authorities to initiate proceedings to declare him as proclaimed offender. His petition to continue the case hearings through legal representative was also turned down by the IHC. Nawaz had requested the IHC to nullify its ruling and allow him to become a part of the court proceedings through his representative. He made the request on medical grounds. The IHC had ordered him to surrender and appear on September 10 at any cost in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption reference. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani had said in his remarks, "Nawaz Sharif has to appear before the court for hearing. He may face additional three-year imprisonment if he is absconder in the reference."

Trump: Harris incompetent

Don: US has most powerful weapons ever produced

Washington, Sept. 23: US President Donald Trump has termed Senator Kamala Harris as "grossly incompetent," saying he was surprised when his Democratic rival Joe Biden picked her as his running mate in the November 3 presidential election.

Harris, 55, is the first-ever PoC and Indian-American woman to be the vice-presidential candidate of a major political party. "I was surprised to learn when Biden selected Harris as his running mate. Believe it or not, it's true she is rated the most liberal person in Congress. I think she's grossly incompetent I'll be honest with you," Trump said during a rally in Pennsylvania on Tuesday.

Trump, a Republican, said during the Democratic primaries no one treated Biden as badly as Harris. "Also, Harris was dropped out of the Democratic Party's presidential race as her popularity ratings dipped low," he said. Former vice president Biden has defended Harris, saying she is smart, tested and prepared. "She (Harris) is smart. She is tested. She is prepared," Biden said during a virtual fundraiser event with Harris.

"The way she talks about her mom, her immigrant story that started Indian. It's one of the things that really stood out to me. We both talked about our moms. My mom was all about sacrifice and community and how much they sacrificed for both of us, my mom and hers. And I know the pride you feel in her nomination," Biden said. Harris, who is busy campaigning in various parts of America, on Tuesday distributed yard signs to supporters who drive by parade-style and

CHINA TRAILS U.S. IN DEVELOPING 6TH-GEN CRAFT

Beijing, Sept. 23: China, which in recent years tried to catch up with the US in the design and production of new generation warplanes, is trailing the American air force in the development of the sixth-generation fighter jets by several years, according to a media report. America is leading the world in the sixth-generation fighter jets with the US Air Force saying it has flown a prototype - a milestone that is still years away for China, South China Morning Post reported.

Trump said for decades, American politicians spent trillions of dollars rebuilding foreign nations, fighting foreign wars that never ended, and defending foreign borders. "Instead of endless war, we are forging peace in the Middle East, it's so great. Peace in the Middle East," he said. "We will strike down terrorists who threaten our citizens and we will keep America out of endless, ridiculous, stupid foreign wars," he said at an election rally in Pennsylvania on Tuesday night. "I am just telling you the most powerful weapons ever produced we have and other countries know that and it's a good thing that they know it and I don't think we will ever be using them and I hope we don't, I hope to God," Trump said.

The president said by saying so, he was not leaking any classified information. He said he was allowed to speak about it because he is the president of the United States. Trump said that he has rebuilt the US military. "It was totally depleted when I took over. We built a military, \$2.5 trillion we spent all made in the US saying, the greatest equipment, the greatest planes and rockets and missiles and our nuclear," he said.

He spoke at a voter mobilisation event in Detroit. She also launched Michigan's "Shop Talk" programme at Headliners Barbershop in Detroit. "Everything's

at stake," Harris told a woman as she made a brief stop at a woman-owned cold pressed juice company in Michigan.

Senate GOP plans vote on Don court pick before election

Washington, Sept. 23: Votes in hand, Senate Republicans are charging ahead with plans to confirm President Donald Trump's pick to fill the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Supreme Court seat before the November 3 election, launching a divisive fight over Democratic objections before a nominee is even announced.

Trump said Tuesday he will name his choice Saturday, confident of support. Democrats say it's too close to the election, and the winner of the presidency should name the new justice. But under GOP planning, the Senate could vote October 29. "I guess we have all the votes we're going to need," Trump told *WJBX FOX 2* in Detroit.

"I think it's going to happen," Republicans believe the court fight will energize voters for Trump, boosting the party and potentially deflating Democrats who cannot stop the lifetime appointment for a conservative justice.

The Senate is controlled by Republicans, 53-47, with a simple majority needed for confirmation. The one remaining possible Republican holdout,

WOMAN WROTE 'GIVE UP' IN RICIN NOTE TO TRUMP

Washington, Sept. 23: A Canadian woman accused of mailing a package containing ricin to the White House included a threatening letter in which she told President Donald Trump to "give up and remove your application for this election," according to court papers filed on Tuesday. Pascale Ferrier, of Quebec, was arrested Sunday at the New York-Canada border and is due to make her first court appearance Tuesday afternoon in federal court in Buffalo, New York. She faces a charge of threatening the president.

Mitt Romney of Utah, said Tuesday he supports taking a vote. Still, with early presidential voting already underway in several states, all sides are girding for a wrenching Senate battle over health care, abortion access and other big cases.

2L dead as Don vilifies science, prioritises politics

New York, Sept. 23: "I did the best I could," President Donald Trump said. Huddled with aides in the West Wing last week, his eyes fixed on Fox News, Trump wasn't talking about how he had led the nation through the deadliest pandemic in a century. In a conversation overheard by an *Associated Press* reporter, Trump was describing how he'd just publicly rebuked one of his top scientists — Dr Robert Redfield, a virologist and head of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Redfield had angered the president by asserting that a COVID-19 vaccine wouldn't be widely available until late 2021.

So hours later, with no supporting evidence, Trump called a news conference to say Redfield was

"confused." A vaccine, Trump insisted, could be ready before November's election. Mission accomplished: Fox was headlining Trump's latest foray in his administration's ongoing war against its own scientists. It is a war that continues unabated, even as the nation's Covid-19 death toll has reached 200,000 — nearly half the number of Americans killed in World War II, a once unfathomable number that the nation's top doctors just months ago said was avoidable. Over the past six months, the Trump administration has prioritised politics over science at key moments, refusing to follow expert advice that might have contained the spread of the virus and Covid-19, the disease it causes.

China denies forced labour in Xinjiang

Beijing, Sept. 23: China on Tuesday lashed out at the passage of a bill by the U.S. House of Representatives that threatens sanctions over the alleged use of forced labour in China's Xinjiang region, calling the accusation a lie.

Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the bill "maliciously slandered the human rights situation in Xinjiang" and sought to curb devel-

opment and progress in the region while stirring up ethnic divisions and interfering in China's internal affairs. "The so-called problem of forced labor is totally a lie fabricated by some organisations and personnel in the United States and the West," he told reporters at a daily briefing.

The House voted 406-3 to declare that any goods produced in Xinjiang are

presumptively made with the forced labour of detained Uighurs and other ethnic minorities, and therefore banned from being imported to the US. If enacted into law, it could force companies to avoid a region that produces 80% of the cotton in China, one of the world's top producers of the fiber, as well as tomatoes and manufactured goods.

involved to suggest the student's entry could lead to donations, Howle said. "There's at least another 400 or so students...that were really questionable," Howle said, including some student athletes who didn't appear to have any athletic ability. UC President Michael V. Drake, who took over the job in July, said in a statement that he took the findings and recommendations "very seriously and will do all I can to prevent inappropriate admissions."

"The University will swiftly address the concerns the State Auditor raised. Furth-

ermore, individuals involved in improper activities will be disciplined appropriately," Drake said. The audit recommends that the UC President's office take a more robust role in auditing the admissions processes at the nine campuses and closely examine what is called "admissions by exception," granted for student athletes, artists, or those who have other specific talents that are attractive to a campus.

"We think that the Office of the President and their audit function should be not only looking deeper at these four campuses but looking

at all of the campuses in the UC system," Howle said. The audit was requested last year by state Assemblywoman Tasha Boerner Horvath in response to the national college admissions scandal, which embroiled prestigious universities across the country, athletic coaches and dozens of wealthy parents.

The scandal shed light on the murky world of US college admissions and how the rich and famous exploited it to buy their children's way into top schools with rigged test scores or fake athletic credentials. At the

centre of the scheme was Newport Beach-based college admissions consultant, William "Rick" Singer.

Those investigations, known as Operation Varsity Blues, previously identified at least three students at UCLA and UC Berkeley who were improperly admitted. UCLA men's soccer coach Jorge Salcedo was indicted on charges of racketeering conspiracy for allegedly accepting \$200,000 in bribes from the scheme's mastermind, Singer, in exchange for helping two students gain admission to the school as soccer players.



French police officers secure the bridge leading to the Eiffel Tower, Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2020 in Paris. Paris police have blockaded the area around the Eiffel Tower after a phone-in bomb threat. — AP

Paris police barricade Eiffel Tower following phone-in bomb threat

Paris, Sept. 23: Paris police have blockaded the area around the Eiffel Tower after a phone-in bomb threat.

The Eiffel Tower in Paris was evacuated for two hours Wednesday after an anonymous caller threatened to blow up the great edifice situated in the heart of the French capital, police said.

Police cars and tape surrounded the streets below the tower and the bridge stretching from across the Seine River to the Trocadero Plaza.

Some tourists were still walking in the area, but it was unclear if any were still inside the tower on Wednesday.

Two police officers at the scene told The Associated Press that the operation was the result of a phone-in bomb threat.

Eiffel Tower management did not respond to requests for comment.

After an inspection was carried out, nothing suspicious was found and the Eiffel Tower was able to reopen to visitors.

"A man phoned up,

shouted 'Allah Akbar' and said he was going to 'blow up everything'" at the Eiffel Tower, said a police source, who asked not to be named.

A security cordon was put around the monument, traffic diverted and the Eiffel Tower evacuated at 12:15 pm (10:15 GMT).

Its operator SETE said in a statement that after a thorough search nothing was found and the tower was able to reopen at 2:15 pm.

The 131-year-old tower gets about 25,000 tourists

daily in normal years and about seven million visitors a year, some three-quarters from abroad, but visits are down this year because of Coronavirus travel restrictions.

While the Eiffel Tower is scheduled to be open every day, it occasionally closes because of suicide threats, bomb threats or labour strikes.

The monument had reopened on June 26 after its longest closure since World War II forced by the coronavirus pandemic.

— Agencies

IT'S 'CHINA VIRUS', NOT CORONAVIRUS WHICH SOUNDS LIKE A BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN ITALY, SAYS U.S. PRESIDENT

Washington, Sept. 23: US President Donald Trump has hit out at China for not stopping the Covid-19 pandemic that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives globally, as he yet again used the term "China virus" and urged his supporters not to call it Coronavirus, saying the name sounds like a "beautiful place" in Italy.

Addressing a packed election rally in the battle ground State of Pennsylvania, Trump told his supporters on Tuesday that if re-elected, over the next four years, his administration will make America a manufacturing superpower of the world and will end US reliance on China

MORE CURBS IN HARD-HIT MADRID

Madrid, Sept. 23: Health authorities in Madrid may extend to more communities the restrictions on movement it imposed on areas of the Spanish capital with high Coronavirus infection rates.

About 860,000 Madrid residents already are required to justify trips out of 37 neighbourhoods. The region's deputy health chief, Antonio Zapatero, said Wednesday that a decision on additional measures would be announced on Friday.

— AP

ACADEMIC | ANOMALY

Admission policies and practices from 2013-14 to 2018-19 at 4 campuses examined

Auditor: UC wrongly admitted well-connected students

San Francisco, Sept. 23: The University of California "inappropriately admitted" at least 64 wealthy students over the past six years as "favours to donors, family, and friends," according to an audit released on Tuesday that found hundreds more questionable cases of student athletes accepted to the top UC schools.

"This is a significant problem that the university needs to deal with," State Auditor Elaine Howle said in a telephone interview. The audit examined admission policies and practices

over a six-year period at four of the UC's nine campuses — UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego and UC Santa Barbara. It reviewed the academic years of 2013-14 through 2018-19.

Auditors found that 22 applicants were falsely designated as student-athlete recruits "because of donations from or as favours to well-connected families." These students "had little or no athletic skills," Howle said. "UC Berkeley really had some significant weaknesses in their admissions process," Howle said.

The audit found that the

elite school admitted 42 applicants based on their connections to donors and staff while denying admission to others who were more qualified. Howle said she believes the findings have barely scratched the surface of problems in the UC admissions process.

The 64 students identified as being improperly admitted were based on "definitive evidence," such as emailed communications showing a student was denied admission but then reconsidered and accepted after an athletic coach or the development office got



DECCAN Chronicle

24 SEPTEMBER 2020

With Opp. away, govt sneaks in labour code

The government on Wednesday pushed through a set of key pieces of legislation that will impact the lives over 50 crore people who form the country's workforce. The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, along with the code on wages, which has already been enacted, subsume and replace 29 central laws that governed the country's industrial relations.

The Industrial Relations Code raises the threshold on the number employees needed in an organisation for retrenchment and closure of establishments without government approval to 300 from 100. While the law throws job security of a large number of people into the wilderness, it is welcomed by the industry as it makes hiring and firing easy. It also redefines the sole negotiating union in an establishment as the one in which more than 51 per cent of the workers are members. Establishments now need not listen to the voice of smaller sections of their employees. The Code on Social Security provides for universal social security to all workers, including the unorganised and the gig and platform workers who account for over 90 per cent of the total workforce. The Bill mandates that the governments set up social security funds for them and fixes the maximum hours of work as eight per day. It is to e sen hw th provision to allow women to work in hazardous industries, albeit with safety measures, will benefit them. A redeeming feature is the attention on inter-state guest workers: the government will now have to maintain a database on them online. They can also avail the benefits of the public distribution system either in the native state or the state of employment, and insurance and provident fund benefits available to other workers. Critics have noted an alarming and unusual feature in the bills that gives the government wide powers to frame rules that will form the operational part of the legislation. They include the conditions for increasing the threshold for lay-offs, retrenchment, and closure, for applicability of different social security schemes to establishments, and specifying safety standards, and working conditions to be provided by establishments under the occupational safety code. The government has made its intention clear when it said the purpose of labour reforms is to provide a transparent system to suit the changed business environment. The codes also empower the state government to offer relaxations in provisions on labour security, with an aim to trigger a race to attract capital.

That the codes cleared parliamentary scrutiny in less than three hours of discussion, that too when the Opposition was boycotting the proceedings, reflects the disdain the government has shown towards not only to parliamentary practices but also to the people whose lives they will impact. The government showed a similar high-handedness when it got the farm bills passed. Every trade union, including the Bharatiya Mazdur Sangh affiliated to the Sangh Parivar, has voiced their protest against the anti-labour provisions in the codes. It remains to be seen how the government will tackle the disaffection within India's workforce.

Callous disregard of data

Data, they say, is the new oil. The finance minister had poured scorn on the new maxim in her Budget speech saying it is just a cliché though she did acknowledge the significance of credible data to base decision-making on. The real import of the importance of data in modern administration may have dawned on the government when it confessed in Parliament that it had no data on the deaths of guest workers who were forced by the suddenness of the declaration of the world's most severe lockdown to collectively log millions of miles as they trudged home in distress. This human tragedy, so gut-wrenchingly portrayed when a child was photographed trying to wake its dead mother on a road in Bihar, surpassed even the horrors of the pandemic.

In the absence of credible data gathering, the figure of a crore migrant workers having walked or ferried home by special trains and buses can only be taken as a ballpark figure conjured to satisfy questions tabled in Parliament. If it did not collate any data from different states on the fatalities and the number of returning migrants, the government is guilty of carelessness. But if the real reason is that data is being withheld because of the embarrassment it would cause, the government stands condemned by its own callousness. The suspicion is data — media sources put guest workers' deaths near about 300 — is a tool to be manipulated in the hands of the current dispensation as amply proved in several debates over statistics regarding job losses in a downward spiral of the economy in the last couple of years.

The government also admitted in Parliament that it had no data on farmer suicides in the last three years. The fact that its own national crime database reveals 10,281 farmer suicides in 2019 and 10,357 in 2018, besides counting 42,480 deaths by suicide of farmers and daily wage workers last year, shows up the rulers as shying away from the truth when it comes to keeping people's representatives informed in Parliament. In refusing to address inconvenient data, the government is proving unworthy of the people it governs.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Subhani



Are we ready for 'give & take' with China at LAC?



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray
Reflections

The five teenaged Arunachal Pradesh boys who went missing on September 4 and were later found on the Chinese side of the border highlighted the dilemma that the top Indian and Chinese Army commanders must have faced during Monday's mammoth meeting.

Of course, the boys, who had unwittingly strayed across the border and were later found in China by People's Liberation Army personnel, were close to the extreme northeastern end of the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control between India and China. The meeting of Chinese and Indian commanders at Moldo was on the Chinese side of the LAC's north-western end. This is where, as Jawaharlal Nehru famously told Parliament before the 1962 border war, "not a single blade of grass grows".

In contrast, the Northeast is lush with vegetation and bristling with game. Moreover, as one of the lost boys put it: "We are hunters, we move around a lot." Yet, despite their experience and expertise, they got lost and could not be found for several days. "The borders are not demarcated well", they said. "We can't say which side is which."

It must be even more difficult to do so among the barren rocks and snow-clad heights of Ladakh where there are often no marked borders at all, as narrated in Kyle J. Gardner's forthcoming book, *The Frontier Complex: Geopolitics and the Making of the India-China border, 1846-1962*. This is where India accuses the Chinese PLA of encroaching on Indian territory in early May.

New Delhi and Beijing have been at loggerheads over charges and counter-charges for the past five months, re-enacting the tensions between Washington and Beijing that resulted in the recent menacing Chinese video of an aerial attack on what looks like a fortified American military position in Guam.

A September 6 meeting in Moscow of India's external affairs minister, Subrahmanyam Jai-shankar, and China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, on the sidelines of a gathering of foreign ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation went on for more than two hours. But it did not break the stalemate.

India is in the dual position of being both the aggrieved party and the one which enjoys a slight tactical advantage. It is pressing China to agree to a three-step process of disengagement, de-escalation and de-induction. The basis of the demand is that India now occupies tactical heights on the south bank of the Pangong Tso-Chushul river system.

This is the area that Raja Gulab Singh's general, Zorawar Singh, invaded in 1834. The Chinese, with their much vaunted sense of history, should not forget that the Dogra forces of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir soundly defeated the Qing emperor's Sino-Tibetan army during the Sino-Sikh War of 1841-42.

Ladakh's king, Tshespal Namgyal, was dethroned and exiled and Ladakh incorporated into the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. China's PLA may be trying to regain through backdoor means what the Chinese lost fair and square in a war 178 years ago.

However, it must be admitted that the proposed Johnson-Ardagh line (for Tibet's northern boundary with Chinese Turkistan) and the abortive Macartney-MacDonald Line (to delineate Aksai Chin) were even more inconclusive than the McMahon Line which those Arunachal Pradesh boys so unwittingly transgressed.

One wonders whether either side at the Moldo talks in a fresh bid to ease the months-long standoff remembered Rajiv Gandhi's warning about these mythic lines. India's sixth Prime Minister, who paid an epochal five-day visit to Beijing in December 1988 to meet Deng Xiaoping, reminded everyone that the disputed Sino-Indian border was a thick pencil line on a small-scale map, blurring all physical features. Identifying the border in the ground can't be easy since according to Gardner, the British left large stretches of it without delineation or demarcation.

Indians are indignant about the Chinese intrusion into our sacred motherland only because they have been told about them by their political and military leaders. No one has any direct knowledge of those inaccessible heights. Similarly, when the Chinese complain similarly of Indian encroachments, they are only echoing the PLA and what the *Global Times* prints. Again, there is no independent corroboration.

The Indian delegation for Monday's sixth round of military talks was headed by Lt. Gen. Harinder Singh, the commander of the Leh-based

The protracted campaign which the Chinese call 'wei qi' is hardly best suited for the onset of winter. It's not in anyone's interest to be lost in the uncharted mountains like those five Arunachal Pradesh boys.

14 Corps. Opposite him was the South Xinjian military district chief, Maj. Gen. Liu Lin. The inclusion in the Indian team of an external affairs ministry joint secretary, Naveen Srivastava, made it the first simultaneous military-diplomatic meeting between the two sides.

This was the first meeting between the two corps commanders since their 10-hour August 2 deliberations at Moldo. Indian and Chinese troops have clashed at least twice since August 2, accusing each other of firing warning shots in the air in violation of a long-standing agreement against using firearms within 2 km of the LAC.

It is futile now to reflect that a positive response to Zhou Enlai's suggestion of swapping Aksai Chin for Arunachal Pradesh, which the Chinese call "South Tibet", would have avoided much anguish. But one lost opportunity does not invalidate the underlying give-and-take principle that is so necessary for good neighbourliness. In fact, Russia resolved its territorial disputes with China only by relinquishing its claim to several hundred islands on the Argun, Amur, and Ussuri rivers and approximately 50 per cent of Bolshoy Ussuriysky Island. Now, Japan, Indonesia, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Laos, Nepal, Bhutan, Singapore and even protégé North Korea can solve their problems with China on a give-and-take basis without emulating Pakistan, which bought China's "irreplaceable, all-weather friendship" with a slice of India's Jammu and Kashmir that it had occupied.

The protracted campaign which the Chinese call "*wei qi*" is hardly best suited for the onset of winter. It's not in anyone's interest to be lost in the uncharted mountains like those five Arunachal Pradesh boys.

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

TRS CORPORATOR

Congratulations to Serilingampally police for promptly arresting TRS corporator Ragam Narendar Yadav for assaulting a college student. I hope they will conduct an impartial inquiry into the matter and do justice to the aggrieved student. The corporator should realise that he is not above the law.

P. Sudarshan Reddy
Hyderabad

BOLLYWOOD PICTURE

With Sushant Singh Rajput's unfortunate death, Bollywood's ugly face has come to the fore with allegations of drug consumption and casting couch in the past few days. While it is not correct to use someone's demise to fulfil their personal agendas, few actors have put up a brave face to speak up against this matter. While it remains to be seen how true these allegations turn out to be, it will surely dent the intentions of wrongdoers in the industry. Hope the truth comes out in SSR's case.

Jitesh Mathur
Hyderabad

JNTUH EXAMS

Our state government is not doing much with regard to our education. JNTUH has decided to conduct offline semester exams now. They had started classes and have now all of a sudden announced that they would hold exams. Why doesn't anyone take this matter seriously?

Varen Konakalla
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Podgorny, Giri begin talks

MOSCOW, SEPT. 23. President V.V. Giri and President Nikolai Podgorny began formal talks in the Kremlin today with salies of newsmen who crowded in there for a brief view.

The Soviet President observed that the temperature within the chandelied hall of the seventeenth century Supreme Presidium which was cool and comfortable had suddenly become warm. "Even for us it is extremely hot" said President Giri as spotlights focused on the two Presidents and movie cameras whirled. One President said about the newsmen they are good friends," while the other added," but bad enemies."

Suresh Rajan



Investor visa: A way out of the Covid-19 conundrum?

Eight months after the first human case of the new coronavirus (Covid-19) was diagnosed in the United States, a countless number of dreams and plans have been permanently tabled or put on hold. Businesses have shuttered, some colleges and universities will be starting the fall fully remote, and racial strife is adding to the turmoil in the country.

While "unprecedented times" is now a cliché for describing this time we are in, it's also apropos to describe this year as a time like no other. If someone were to make a movie about the 1918 Spanish Flu, the Great Depression, and 1968 race riots all happening at once, it would look and feel like 2020.

Amid all the uncertainty in the US surrounding public health, job security, unemployment figures, and education, no one wants to put their future on hold. Foreign investors will continue to see opportunities to invest in US businesses and in support of creating more jobs and securing permanent US green cards.

Despite the pressures that the pandemic and surrounding rhetoric have

placed on immigration and some visa programs, the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Programs continues to be a viable, solid alternative to getting a quality US education and becoming US residents.

PRESSURES ON OTHER VISA PROGRAMMES

The topic of immigration has received particular attention from the Trump Administration this summer and has targeted some visa programs but not others.

Mr Trump's June 22, 2020, presidential proclamation effectively shut down L-1 and H-1-B visa channels by suspending visa issuances for workers, their spouses and children. Then, the administration said international students would have to transfer or leave the country if their universities opted for online-only learning this fall; this proclamation was later rescinded after major universities like Harvard and MIT sued.

On August 19, exemptions to the June order were announced for tech and healthcare workers who would be resuming employment with the same employer. Even then, there's an

uncertainty around these visas that cannot be shaken.

As a consequence, we are likely to see renewed interest in the EB-5 program, which provides mutually beneficial arrangements for immigrants and job creators. A one-time investment of \$900,000 for a new US business that creates at least 10 jobs for US workers earns the investors green cards and the ability to achieve permanent residency.

The "at-risk" capital is returned after the permanent green cards are received. Students who take advantage of this program are not limited by the industry they will work in after graduation — unlike other visas — and they do not have to worry about having to re-apply for visas or work permits.

In an average year, about 10,000 EB-5 visas are issued per year, and just under half that figure was used as of June over the course of fiscal year 2020 (which ends September 30), according to department of state visa control chief Charles Oppenheim in a June IIUSA webinar.

He acknowledged issuance has been slowed by the pandemic impacts, and

he predicted the programme could gain at least 4,200 new visas in FY2021. In other words, we could see 14,000 new EB-5 visas next year (starting October 1).

This is good news for residents of countries that have limits on the number of immigrant visas or that tend to have a higher number of EB-5 applicants.

Part of the sluggishness this past year was due to the limitations or resistance to in-person meetings and the increase in the minimum investment from \$500,000 to \$900,000 that became effective last year. Applications for EB-5 could take longer for investors to make if they cannot see projects firsthand.

Another shift we'll see from the pandemic's impacts is the categorisation of Targeted Employment Areas (which are rural or high unemployment areas) toward the end of 2021, as some regions in the US have been hit harder than others.

This could open up or shift opportunities for some investors. Similar to the most recent financial crisis, when stock market return potential has diminished, investors in a strong posi-

tion are likely to turn to real estate for stability, as demand in real estate is increasing.

High net worth investors may also be enticed to put their funds toward other countries, such as Portugal, whose Golden Visa Program is attractive for fast-tracking residency into the European Union.

Taxation in Portugal is considered more favourable and can be an important factor as investors and their families decide where to reside. The country also offers universal health care and affordable yet quality education.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the coming months, businesses are going to be picking up the pieces. Some international students may have opted for a gap year rather than deal with visa uncertainty and the limits of virtual-only learning.

The next year could be an opportune time to plan carefully the kind of future families and investors want to establish for themselves.

The writer is executive chairman and founder of LCR Capital Partners

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37668.42	-0.17
Nifty 50	11,131.90	-0.20
S&P 500*	3,304.65	0.33
Dollar (₹)	73.56	0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	93.25	1.13
Euro (₹)	85.96	0.48
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,697*684	-1.36
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.20	0.48
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.990	-0.021
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.676	0.012

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Hexaware Tech to offer ₹475 per share for delisting

Hexaware Technologies on Wednesday said will offer ₹475 per share as the final price for its delisting offer. The company stated the offer was successful and 8.72 crore equity shares had been validly tendered. The bid process for the delisting offer had started on September 9 and closed on September 16. "The acquirer and promoter have accepted the discovered price of ₹475 per equity share as exit price."

Mobile World Congress will be held in June 2021



The world's biggest four-day telecom assembly Mobile World Congress has been scheduled to start from June 28, 2021, global industry body GSM Association said on Wednesday. The Mobile World Congress is held in the last week of February every year but this year, it was cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic, and after telecom companies one after the other started pulling out of the conference.

Toyota launches Urban Cruiser priced ₹8.4 lakh

Japanese auto major Toyota on Wednesday launched its compact Sports Utility Vehicle Urban Cruiser, which it has sourced from compatriot Suzuki, in India with price starting at ₹8.4 lakh as it looks to use cross-badged products from the latter to draw more customers in the volume segment. The Urban Cruiser is the second model to be launched in India under the global Toyota-Suzuki alliance after premium hatchback Glanza.

Airtel picks up stake in tech start-up Waybeo



Bharti Airtel on Wednesday said it has picked up a strategic stake in Waybeo under its start-up accelerator programme, in line with its strategy to ramp-up cloud offerings. The company did not divulge into the financial details of the deal. Tech start-up Waybeo, focused on deep artificial intelligence-based analytics for cloud telephony, is fifth to join the Airtel Startup Accelerator Program.

Boycott call fails to reduce import of Chinese products

Chinese share in imports rose to 19% as against 14% last year

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 23

Despite the drop in demand post-lockdown and the general resentment towards Chinese products after Ladakh incursion, China has increased its share in imports into India. Imports from the Communist country came down only by 29 per cent between April and August this year compared to 48 per cent decline in overall imports. China's share in India's total imports has gone up to 19 per cent between April and July, up from 14 per cent in the year-ago period. During the lockdown months of April and May and even during the initial months of unlock, the flow of imports in general

FOREIGN DEPENDENCE

- While India's total imports declined by 48 per cent, the country's imports from China have dropped merely by 29 per cent.
- Agro chemicals, medical and scientific instruments, other miscellaneous chemicals, handicrafts and petroleum products have seen rise in imports

and especially those from China had faced several issues. During these months, the shipments of many items got stuck at the ports, consumption was curbed and logistics remained unresolved. Further, the Chinese incursion into Ladakh evoked a strong resentment among Indian consumers and calls to ban

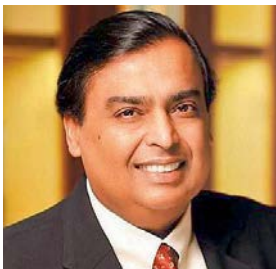
Chinese imports had become loud. Small and medium traders under Swadeshi Jagran Manch and the Confederation of All India Traders had given open calls to boycott Chinese products. This was followed by increased scrutiny of Chinese products at ports and consequent delays. The government also wanted to cut

the Chinese imports wherever possible and promote indigenous production. Certain curbs in the form of increased import duties were also brought in for select items. However, the share of Chinese imports in India's overall imports has gone up to 19 per cent in the period between April and July compared to 14 per cent in the year-ago period. Among the top 50 commodity groups, import of agro chemicals rose from \$321 million to \$377 million, medical and scientific instruments grew from \$200 million to \$205 million, other chemicals from \$212 million to \$240 million, handicrafts from \$156 million to \$168 million and petroleum products from \$60 million to \$68 million.

US PE buys 1.28% stake in Rel Retail for ₹5,550cr

New Delhi, Sept. 23: US private equity firm KKR & Co will invest ₹5,550 crore to buy a 1.28 per cent stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's retail arm as the Mukesh Ambani-run conglomerate extends fundraising spree that has already netted more than \$20 billion.

"KKR will invest ₹5,550 crore into Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd," RIL said in a statement. The investment values Reliance Retail, which runs grocery stores and fashion chains, at a pre-money equity value of ₹4.21 lakh crore. "KKR's investment will translate into a 1.28 per cent equity stake in RRVL on a fully diluted basis" it said. This is the second investment by KKR in Reliance Industries (RIL) units. It had previously



Mukesh Ambani

picked up a 2.32 per cent stake in the digital arm, Jio Platforms for ₹11,367 crore. For Reliance Retail, KKR is the second investor. US private equity firm Silver Lake Partners had earlier this month agreed to buy 1.75 per cent stake in the venture for ₹7,500 crore. Reliance Retail Limited, a subsidiary of RRVL, operates India's largest, fastest-growing and most profitable retail business spanning supermarkets,

consumer electronics chain stores, cash and carry wholesale business, fast-fashion outlets, and online grocery store JioMart. It operates almost 12,000 stores in nearly 7,000 towns. The investment will add fire to Ambani's battle for dominance in the retail market that is also being eyed by Jeff Bezos' Amazon.com and Walmart Inc's Flipkart. In May, Reliance launched an online grocery delivery service JioMart. It has tied up with WhatsApp to connect customers with local kirana stores. Late last month, Reliance acquired the retail and logistics businesses of Future Group for ₹24,713 crore to boost its retail vertical. Founded in 1976, KKR has \$222 billion in assets under management as of June 30, 2020. — PTI

TELECOM STOCKS CRASH AFTER JIO'S POSTPAID PLANS

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Telecom stocks on Wednesday tumbled up to 10 per cent a day after Reliance Jio unveiled its postpaid plans. Vodafone Idea shares plummeted 10.05 per cent to close at ₹9.22 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 14 per cent to ₹8.81. Bharti Airtel also tumbled 7.89 per cent to settle at ₹433.90 after falling 9.99

per cent to ₹423.95 during the day. Bharti Airtel was the biggest laggard in the Sensex pack. "Telco stocks like Vodafone Idea and Airtel plunged after Reliance Jio released a new postpaid tariff plan," said Sumeet Bagadia, executive director, Choice Broking. After unleashing a price war in mobile tariffs and fibre-broadband services,

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio on Tuesday unveiled postpaid plans, bundling up to 500 GB of data and subscription to Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+ Hotstar. JioPostPaid Plus for mobile customers will have a monthly tariff from ₹399 to ₹1,499 with different benefits, the company said in a statement. — PTI

Brokerages to see no Covid impact

Mumbai, Sept. 23: The domestic brokerage industry's revenue will grow up to 12 per cent in FY21 on the back of heightened retail participation in markets, a report said on Wednesday.

The revenue for the industry, which was reeling under pressure because of factors like penetration of tech-led discount brokerages till recently, has grown 34 per cent in the first five months of the fiscal year, rating agency Icrs said.

While the economy has been reeling under the pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic, the trading volumes in the domestic markets have been on an upwards trajectory

— ICRA

The agency said its pool of 11 entities grew their revenue by three per cent in FY20, but the revenue growth has been 16 per cent per annum on a com-

pounded basis since FY16, and added that its outlook on the industry is "cautiously stable". While growth momentum is expected to continue, operational and funding challenges could have a bearing on the performance, particularly for small to mid-sized brokerage companies, it said. "In the current fiscal, the industry aggregate revenues are expected to increase to ₹23,000 crore (Y-o-Y growth of 10-12 per cent)," it said. "While the

economy has been reeling under the pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdowns, the trading volumes in the domestic capital markets have been on an upwards trajectory, reaching an all-time high in July 2020," it said. The option of work from home, limited investment opportunities and attractive valuations have helped drive investor interest to capital markets, Icrs's Samridhi Chowdhary said. — PTI

MONEY | MATTERS

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter agree on common definition, external auditing, standard reporting

Social media, advertisers in deal to curb hate content

London, Sept. 23: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have agreed with big advertisers on first steps to curb harmful content online, following boycotts of social media platforms that advertisers had accused of tolerating hate speech. The agreement comes three months after Facebook was hit by a boycott from major advertisers in the wake of anti-racism demonstrations that followed the death of George Floyd, an American Black man, in police custody.

Advertisers have complained for years that big social media companies do too little to prevent ads from appearing alongside hate speech, fake news and other harmful content. Big tech companies, meanwhile, want to be seen as taking action on the issue to fend off calls for more regulation. Under the deal, announced on Wednesday by the World Federation of Advertisers, common definitions would be adopted for forms of harmful content such as hate speech and

bullying, and platforms would adopt harmonised reporting standards. The platforms agreed to have some practices reviewed by external auditors, and to give advertisers more control of what content is displayed alongside their ads. "The deal comes less than six weeks before a polarising US presidential election. "This is a significant milestone in the journey to rebuild trust online," said Luis Di Como, executive vice president of global media at Unilever, one

Any progress in reducing harmful online content is to be welcomed. However, up to now voluntary action from social media companies has rarely lived up to its initial promises.

DAVID BABBS, Clean Up the Internet

of the world's biggest advertisers. "...Whilst change doesn't happen overnight, today marks an



Depositors and account holders of Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank hold placards during a protest near the Reserve Bank of India in New Delhi on Wednesday. On Tuesday, the central bank said net worth erosion, steep fall in deposits posed serious challenges in finding a workable plan for the revival of the fraud-hit bank. — AFP

Gold price likely to touch record high by November

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 23

The uncertainty around US Presidential elections may see gold making new highs, finds a report by Citigroup. A revisit of the record high levels in the international market will see gold touching ₹56,000 in the Indian market.

Uncertainty over the contest and delays about the outcome may "be underappreciated by precious metals markets," Citigroup said in a quarterly commodities outlook. This could see gold moving up by more than \$200 an ounce from the current levels to cross \$2,070. Gold had touched \$2,070 in the first week of August. But the metal has been witnessing some correction with the movement of the dollar index. The US elections in November would see incumbent Donald Trump pitting against Joe Biden. The election "could be an extraordinary catalyst

Even if gold moves back to the record high levels of \$2,070, at the current rupee levels, gold in the domestic market may move past ₹56,000 per 10 gm towards ₹58,000 levels.

HIMANSHU GUPTA, V-P, Globe Capital

for gold flat price and volatility skew late in the fourth quarter, even though historically there is no clear pattern for gold trading or price volatility into and after US elections," Citi said. "That is one reason why we expect gold prices to hit fresh records before year-end," it added. According to Himanshu Gupta, vice-president and head of commodities and currencies research, Globe Capital, gold went up during the last presidential elections, but due to the lack of support

from the macro fundamentals, it fell later. "However, this time, gold has the support of macro fundamentals. Interest rates are low and are expected to remain lower until 2023. Despite the recent recovery in the dollar index, the greenback is in bearish territory. Further, the global economies are not going to recover any faster," he said. "Our medium term target is \$2,250-\$2,300 levels. Even if gold moves back to the record high levels of \$2,070, at the current rupee levels, gold in India may move past ₹56,000 per 10 gm towards ₹58,000 levels. Even our Diwali target is around those levels," said Gupta. Kedia Commodities has set a 3-month target of \$2200 and a 6-12 month target of \$2400 per ounce. "We lift the 2021 base case gold price forecast by \$300 per ounce versus our early July forecast, to \$2,275," said Ajay Kedia, the MD of Kedia Commodities.

PE flow in realty dips 85% in eight months

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Private equity investment in Indian real estate plunged 85 per cent during January-August period of this year at \$866 million (around ₹6,500 crore) as investors remained cautious due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Colliers International and Ficcip report.

The private equity (PE) inflow stood at \$5,795 million in the corresponding period of the previous year. Data centres segment attracted maximum investment so far this year at 46 per cent of the total inflows. Office segment accounted for 24 per cent of the total PE investment at \$207 million (around ₹1,500 crore) till August of this calendar year. Industrial and warehousing share stood at 12 per cent, hospitality 9 per cent, housing 8 per cent and co-living one per cent. "Investors, both foreign and domestic, are adopting a cautious approach to Indian real estate in the backdrop of the ongoing

pandemic," said the report. *Future India: Captivating Strategic and Private Equity Investments*. "According to Colliers International, through August 2020, overall private equity inflows into Indian real estate stood at ₹65 billion (\$866 million), which is just 15 per cent of the corresponding period in 2019," it added. The report said that newer asset classes such as data centres and rental housing gained prominence among investors. "During 2020 through August, the leading segments have been data centres, driven by demand for cloud infrastructure, as well as offices as, they tend to offer steady rental income," the report said. During January-August 2019, office segment got 47 per cent of the total PE inflows that stood at \$5,795 million. Industrial and warehousing had received 9 per cent funds, hospitality 12 per cent, housing 8 per cent, retail 18 per cent and mixed use development 6 per cent. — PTI

SEBI ENHANCES FINE ON ICRA, CARE RATINGS

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has enhanced penalty imposed on credit rating agencies ICRA and Care Ratings in the IL&FS market from ₹25 lakh to ₹1 crore each, in the wake of serious nature of the threat their ratings posed to the securities market. "The lapses while rating the securities of IL&FS and IFIN have resulted in real and severe financial loss to investors. It has shaken up the investors' faith in the reliability of credit ratings in the context of the corporate debt market," Sebi in the order. "Had the Noticee (Credit Rating Agencies) downgraded the ratings at the appropriate time and thereby forewarned the investors, the impact of the default on investors who invested in AAA rated instruments, could not have been this severe," the market regulator said in its order.

SHORT TAKES

Marsh ruled out, Holder in for SRH

Dubai: Australian and Sunrisers Hyderabad all-rounder Mitchell Marsh was on Wednesday ruled out of the remainder of the Indian Premier League with an ankle injury he suffered in the team's opener against Royal Challengers Bangalore. West Indies captain Jason Holder has been named as Marsh's replacement and is expected to join the Sunrisers squad soon in the UAE. "Mitchell Marsh has been ruled out due to injury. We wish him a speedy recovery. Jason Holder will replace him for #Dream11IPL 2020," Sunrisers posted on its official *Twitter* handle. Marsh came out to ball the fifth over in Sunrisers' opening game against Royal Challengers Bangalore on Monday. However, he could only bowl four deliveries as he twisted his right ankle in the second ball while trying to stop a drive by Aaron Finch in his follow through. — *PTI*

Focus is more on fun, says Stoinis

Dubai: Star all-rounder Marcus Stoinis says carrying the confidence of good BBL performance into the 13th IPL and not putting too much pressure on himself should help him deliver for his new team Delhi Capitals. The 31-year-old made a quick-fire 53 off 21 balls to help his side score 157 for 8 and then snapped two wickets to drag their IPL opener against Kings XI Punjab into a Super Over, where they emerged victors. "I've come in with some confidence through good performances this year, but also maybe putting less responsibility on myself than some other years. My focus is on just having a lot of fun and trust that I'll be good. Everyone who plays cricket at this level, the main reason you play it, is because you love it. That's the main ingredient," said Stoinis. — *PTI*

Murray magic spurs Nuggets

Orlando: Jamal Murray scored 28 points as the Denver Nuggets held off a ferocious late fightback from the Los Angeles Lakers to roar back into contention in the Western Conference finals series on Tuesday. Murray nailed two crucial late three-pointers in the closing minutes as Denver held on for a 114-106 victory in game three to reduce the Lakers' lead to 2-1 in the best-of-seven series. But the Nuggets — who looked in complete control for long periods of the contest — were given a mighty scare by the Lakers in a thrilling fourth-quarter battle. The Lakers had trailed by 20 points with just over 10 minutes remaining but whittled away the Denver lead to just three points with 3min 53sec left on the clock in Orlando. — *AFP*

West hammer Hull amid Covid scare

London: West Ham manager David Moyes and managers players Issa Diop and Josh Cullen tested positive for the Coronavirus just before the Premier League club's 5-1 win over Hull in the League Cup on Tuesday. Sebastian Haller and Andriy Yarmolenko both scored twice and Robert Snodgrass was also on target. West Ham's medical team were informed of the test results while Moyes and his squad were at the Stadium preparing for the third round tie. Diop and Cullen had to withdraw from the line-up. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Kings XI Punjab vs Royal Challengers Bangalore from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

ATP Hamburg European Open: Fourth day's action from 4 pm on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

UEFA Super Cup: Bayern Munich vs Sevilla from 12.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

BASKETBALL

NBA Western Conference Finals (Game 4 of best-of-7): Denver Nuggets vs Los Angeles Lakers from 6.30 am (Friday) on Sony Six

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Mumb high Indians

Blues vault from bottom to top as Rohit cracks whip

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 23: Skipper Rohit Sharma's effortless batting formed the cornerstone of Mumbai Indians' resounding 49-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders in an Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday.

On a big Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Rohit pumelled the KKR bowlers into submission for a 54-ball 80 and powered Mumbai to an imposing 195/5.

The night belonged to Rohit, the great white-ball exponent, whose knock was laced with six sixes.

Then the Jasprit Bumrah-led Mumbai attack did most things right to restrict KKR to 146 for 9.

KKR were never on course for a comfortable chase as they lost openers Shubhman Gill (7) and Sunil Narine (9) cheaply to be in a spot of bother at 25 for two.

One-down skipper Dinesh Karthik (30 off 23) and Nitish Rana (24 off 18) tried to up the ante but they were still playing the catch-up game with 125 runs needed from the last 10 overs.

Kolkata were dealt a double blow in quick succession — first Karthik was trapped by Rahul Chahar (2/26) in front of the wicket and then Hardik Pandya grabbed a running catch on the fence to send back Rana.

Bumrah (2/32) in the 16th over sealed the game for Mumbai as he removed Andre Russell (11), who was bowled, and then forced Eoin Morgan (20) to edge to the wicket-keeper: Pat Cummins (33 off 12) launched into Bumrah with four sixes in a very expensive 18th over, but it was too late for Kolkata.

Kieron Pollard (1/21), Trent Boult (2/30), James



Rohit Sharma of Mumbai Indians plays a shot against Kolkata Knight Riders in their IPL match at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi of United Arab Emirates on Wednesday. — *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Mumbai Indians: Quinton de Kock c Naik b Shivam Mavi 1, Rohit Sharma c Pat Cummins b Shivam Mavi 80, Suryakumar Yadav run out (Sunil Narine/ Eoin Morgan), 47, Saurabh Tiwary c Pat Cummins b Sunil Narine 21, Hardik Pandya hit wicket b Andre Russell 18, Kieron Pollard not out 13, Krunal Pandya not out 1. **Extras:** (lb-2, nb-1, w-1) 14.

Total: (for 5 wickets in 20 overs) 195. **Fall of wickets:** 1-8, 2-98, 3-147, 4-177, 5-180.

Bowling: Sandeep Warrier 3-0-34-0, Shivam Mavi 4-1-32-2, Pat Cummins 3-0-49-0, Sunil Narine 4-0-22-1, Andre Russell 2-0-17-1, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-39-0.

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubhman Gill c Pollard b Trent Boult 7, Sunil Narine c de Kock b James Pattinson 9, Dinesh Karthik lbw b Rahul Chahar 30, Nitish Rana c Hardik Pandya b Pollard 24, Eoin Morgan c de Kock b Jasprit Bumrah 16, Andre Russell b Bumrah 11, Nikhil Naik c Pandya b Boult 1, Pat Cummins c Pandya b Pattinson 33, Shivam Mavi st de Kock b Chahar 9, Kuldeep Yadav not out 1. **Extras:** (lb-2, w-3) 5. **Total (for 9 wickets in 20 overs) 146.**

Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-25, 3-71, 4-77, 5-100, 6-101, 7-103, 8-141, 9-146.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-1-30-2, Pattinson 4-0-25-2, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-32-2, Rahul Chahar 4-0-26-2, Kieron Pollard 3-0-21-1, Krunal Pandya 1-0-10-0.

Gambhir lashes out at Dhoni

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Mahendra Singh Dhoni did not lead from the front by dropping himself down the batting order during a mammoth chase, opined former India batsman Gautam Gambhir, tearing into CSK captain's decision to bat at number seven against Rajasthan Royals.

The former India opener reckons that if any other captain had done this, he would have drawn a lot of flak but since it is Dhoni, people are not even talking about it.

With Chennai Super Kings chasing a massive 217-run target in Sharjah, Dhoni came to bat when they needed 103 runs from 38 balls.

Dhoni sent the likes of Sam Curran, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Kedar Jadhav ahead of him. CSK lost the match by 16 runs.

"I was a bit surprised to be honest. MS Dhoni batting at No. 7? And sending (Ruturaj) Gaikwad, Sam Curran before him. Makes no sense to me. In fact you should be leading from the front," Gambhir told *ESPNCricinfo's* T20 Time Out.

RAYUDU SET TO MISS ONE MORE GAME

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, SEPT. 23

After Covid-19, now it's an injury scare for Chennai Super Kings. M.S. Dhoni's three-time champions are sweating over the fitness of their key batsman Ambati Rayudu and experienced all-rounder Dwayne Bravo.

Rayudu who played a stellar role in CSK's win over Mumbai Indians in the opener is nursing a hamstring injury and is set to miss Friday's encounter against Delhi Capitals. Rayudu didn't play Tuesday's game against Rajasthan Royals as Chennai hit a bump with a 16-run defeat.

K.S. Viswanathan, CEO of Super Kings, said Rayudu's fitness will be assessed on Thursday.

West Indian all-rounder Dwayne Bravo missed the first two games due to a knee injury, but young Sam Curran proved to be a blessing in disguise for CSK. However, Rayudu's prolonged absence from the XI could disrupt the team's balance.

The pull-outs of Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh have already depleted the CSK squad, but the team management hasn't pressed the panic button yet.

"We are not thinking of replacements," Viswanathan said.

Coach Stephen Fleming said there could be some movement in the batting order, suggesting that in-form Faf du Plessis may open the innings.

"Maybe...keeping in mind that we have had a couple of injuries. We already had to shuffle because of Rayudu injury. It's still early days and we are trying to find out who can drive this car. We are playing another game in a quick succession. We have to make sure that we don't panic and we never do," added the Chennai Super Kings coach Fleming.

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QUARANTINE DIDN'T HELP, SAYS DHONI

Sharjah, Sept. 23: The extended two-week quarantine of Chennai Super Kings hampered his preparations as he did not get enough time for batting practice, said captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni after his side lost to Rajasthan Royals by 16 runs in their second IPL game.

Dhoni came in to bat at No.7, sending Sam Curran and Kedar Jadhav ahead of him in a mammoth 217-run chase on Tuesday.

Asked why he came so low in the order, the CSK captain said, "I haven't batted for a long time. 14-day quarantine doesn't help."

Dhoni was not out on 29 off 17 balls with three sixes in the last over.

"With 217 on the board, we needed a very good start which was not the case. Smith and Sanju batted very well. We need to give credit to their bowlers. Once you've seen the first innings, you knew the lengths to bowl," Dhoni said. — *PTI*

Kings XI to lock horns with RCB

Dubai, Sept. 23: Kings XI Punjab will look to put behind the controversial 'short run' decision in their IPL opener and start afresh when they take on Virat Kohli's buoyant Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Thursday.

In their opening game against Delhi Capitals, the square-leg umpire erroneously called KXIP's Chris Jordan for a 'short run' in the third ball of the 19th over, effectively costing his team the closely fought game.

In contrast, RCB opened their campaign on a winning note defeating Sunrisers Hyderabad by 10 runs, raising hopes that things might finally fall into place for them this season.

Devdutt Padikkal started his IPL career on a classy note hitting a sublime half-century and will once again be in focus, while AB de Villers will also look to continue in the same vein following a crucial half-century.

Both Kohli and Aaron Finch looked good on Monday night and would be itching to spend more time in the middle.

Yuzvendra Chahal, as always, will be the key man in the RCB bowling attack. The leg-spinner was instrumental in his team's victory on Monday, triggering a batting collapse.

However, RCB will again miss the services of South African all-rounder Chris Morris who has picked up a side-strain. Morris was bought for a whopping ₹10 crore at the auction.

Umesh Yadav continues to leak runs in the IPL and going by his showing in the first game, he could be replaced by Mohammad Siraj. It remains to be seen if the team can fit in England all-rounder

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 24
- Punjab won: 12
- Bangalore won: 12

MEETING IN 2019

- Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Kings XI Punjab by 8 wickets at Mohali
- Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Kings XI Punjab by 17 runs at Bangalore

FOR THE RECORD

- Mohammed Shami recorded his best bowling for Kings XI Punjab by taking three for 15 in the previous match against Delhi Capitals. He took 22 wickets at an average of 22.00 in 15 matches for Kings XI Punjab in IPL.

- Virat Kohli, who scored 5426 runs at an average pf 37.68 in 170 innings of 178 matches for Royal Challenger Bangalore, is the highest run-getter in IPL. He scored just 14 runs in the first match against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

Moeen Ali in the middle-order.

For KXIP, Mayank Agarwal looked in imperious touch but was gutted to not be able to get his team over the line with just one run required to win.

Rahul, Glenn Maxwell and Nicholas Pooran will be expected to step up as they possess the ability to take away the game from any opposition.

Big hitters Chris Gayle, who was left out of the opener for better balance in the eleven, could be back and batting all-rounder Jimmy Neesham could also be given a chance. — *PTI*

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	2	1	1	0	2	+0.993
Rajasthan Royals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.800
Royal Challengers Bangalore	1	1	0	0	2	+0.500
Delhi Capitals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.000
Chennai Super Kings	2	1	1	0	2	-0.145
Kings XI Punjab	1	0	1	0	0	+0.000
Sunrisers Hyderabad	1	0	1	0	0	-0.500
Kolkata Knight Riders	1	0	1	0	0	-2.450

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

Sanju sharpened during the break

Sharjah, Sept. 23: Convinced that possessing an array of shots is a must to go with power-hitting, wicket-keeper batsman Sanju Samson says he worked on these aspects during the Coronavirus enforced break.

The work done by Samson was there to be seen when he pulverised the Chennai Super Kings on Tuesday night, setting up a Rajasthan Royal's win with his blistering 32-ball 74-run knock, studded with nine sixes and a boundary.

That he is an impact player is a known fact but his clean and elegant hitting earned praise from one and all.

"I think range-hitting is what the game demands in

this generation. I had time to work out in these 5 months, and I think I've increased that ability," Samson said.

"I've been working hard on my fitness, diet and training, and on my strength, because my game relies a lot on power hitting," he added.

Samson, who was adjudged Man-of-the-Match, said his plan is to go and hit all the deliveries in his arc.

With Robin Uthappa and Jos Buttler also in the squad, the Royals are spoilt for choice in the wicket-keeping department.

However, Samson said he is happy to play any role the captain and coach deem fit for him. — *PTI*

Telangana sports quota policy off the mark

MOSES KONDETY | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 23

Telangana has enlisted the priority of achievements to be followed for admissions into various professional courses under the sports quota. It's way off the mark.

Sportspersons from 31 disciplines — including fencing, kho-kho, softball and yoga — have been recognised as eligible for the 0.5 per cent reservation in courses excluding MBBS and BDS but the priorities accorded to competitions are skewed, going by the Government Order dated 22-09-2020.

Perhaps the most glaring error is that the World Championships/ Cups (only every four years) are placed fourth on the list, behind Olympics, Asian

Games and Commonwealth Games, achievements in which are ranked in the following order of priority: individual gold (1), team gold (2), individual silver (3), team silver (4), individual bronze (5), team bronze (6), individual participation (7) and team participation (8).

This means that participation in a team event at the Commonwealth Games (24) will trump a World Championship gold medalist, who languishes at 25 on the priority list!

The GO also states that each candidate is eligible to claim only one highest sports achievement, meaning participation in the Olympics will still beat multiple medals won at the Asian Games or participation in Asian Games will be enough to beat two or

more medals from the Commonwealth Games and even the Worlds.

The Asian Championship, Junior/ Youth World Cup Championships/ Cups/ Youth Olympics, World Universities Championships, Junior/ Youth Asian Championships, World School Games, Junior & Youth Commonwealth Championships/ Games occupy segments 5 to 10 respectively behind the World Championships, ending with a priority rank of 80. South Asian Games, National Games/ Championships, All India Inter Zonals/ Universities, National School Games and South Zone Championships and South Zone Inter Universities are slotted in segments between 10 and 20, ending with a priority



Dutee Chand celebrates her gold at the World University Games last year.

rank of 158. Sub-junior South Zone, Senior State, Khelo India and Inter Collegiate tournaments bring up the rear that ends with a priority rank of 188. According to the GO, a

committee of senior officers from Youth Advancement, Tourism & Culture (Sports) Department formulated the guidelines.

"They have clearly got this wrong," says athletics coach N. Ramesh.

"The World Championships are right at the top along with the Olympics. You need very high standards to even to qualify for them. Allotting points for specific medals at different levels would've been better," adds the Dronacharya Awardee who has coached sprinter Dutee Chand to two silvers at the Asian Games, India's only gold at the World University Games and a qualification at last year's World Championships in Doha.

Renowned coach Bobby George, who mentored wife and long jumper Anju

to India's only medal at the World Athletics Championships back in 2003, cannot stop laughing. "I don't think they've done the homework," he chuckles.

There are too many loopholes. For example, the parameters for tennis are not specified. "How do you rate a Grand Slam?" Bobby asks, before coming up with "How about the World Indoors Athletics? Or a World marathon/ race walking champion?"

"You can't hand out slots to all sports. You cannot rate a Kabaddi World Cup on par with World Athletics Championships purely because of the number of countries participating in those events. This is really sad. It should be a diligent process," Bobby says.

Former athlete P.

Shankar shakes his head. "I can't understand how the World Championships can be slotted below the Commonwealth Games... beats me," says the 4x400m relay silver medalist at the 2006 Asian Games.

Another middle distance runner from Hyderabad, G. V. Dhanalakshmi, termed it off the track. "This is flawed. The World Championships have got to be up there along with the Olympics. There's a benchmark to be achieved to actually take part in the Worlds. I am not aware how the state government is working out priorities," said the athlete who won the 4x400m women's relay silver alongside the legendary P. T. Usha, Shiny Wilson and Saramma at the 1994 Asian Games in Hiroshima.