


# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
HYDERABAD | MONDAY | 21 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 32.2°C  
Min: 22.5°C  
RH: 94%  
Rain: 3.8 mm

Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Rain very likely. Max/Min temp. 32/22 °C

COVID-19 C O U N T

CASES  
(+90,997)  
54,83,663

DEATHS  
(+1,197)  
87,896

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,137)

(+8)

TS: 1,71,306

1,033

(+7,738)

(+57)

AP: 6,25,514

5,359

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,11,56,763

DEATHS

9,63,951

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Adhika-Ashvina Suddha Panchami till 11.45 pm

Star: Vishaka till 8.52 pm

Varjyam: 12.37 am to 2.07 am (Tuesday)

Durmuhurtam: 12.33 pm to 1.21 pm; 2.57 pm to 3.46 pm

Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am

HUIJI CALENDAR

Safar ul Muzaffar 3, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5:05 am

Zohar: 12:19 pm

Asar: 4:30 pm

Maghrib: 6:19 pm

Isha: 7:28 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.12 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.05 AM

MOONSET TODAY 9.51 AM

MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.33 PM

COUNTER POINT



Relax sir, the data connected with your businesses, assets and bank accounts is safe!

SPEAK OUT NOTICE

Dear Readers,  
Speak Out is on a temporary hiatus from today due to pandemic-related issues. We will return, soon.  
— Editor-in-Chief

IN BRIEF

Paytm says Google arm-twisting it

New Delhi: Financial services firm Paytm on Sunday charged internet giant Google of “arm-twisting” and forcing it to roll back a UPI cashback campaign which is legal in India. Google said that offering cashbacks and vouchers alone do not constitute a violation of its gambling policies and in case of repeat violation it may terminate developer accounts.

Corps commanders meeting today

New Delhi: The sixth round of Corps Commander-level talks between India and China will take place on Monday morning at Moldo on the Chinese side along the Line of Actual control (LAC) in the Eastern Ladakh. For the first time joint secretary (East Asia) from ministry of external affairs Naveen Srivastava will be present during the meeting.



**WORLD | 6**  
**Trump to nominate woman judge for SC**



**SPORTS | 9**  
**Captain Kohli begins hunt for IPL title today**

**TABLOID**  
**Payal accuses Anurag of sexual harassment**



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## Schools partially open for seniors with 50% staff

**HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC**  
HYDERABAD, SEPT 20

Some schools will partially reopen for Classes 9-12 on Monday, as per the Unlock 4.0 guidelines of the Centre, but parents, students as well as teachers expressed reluctance to exposing themselves to Covid-19.

Half the staff members will be allowed to work from the school premises, and students, on a voluntary basis and with the consent of their parents, will be allowed to visit the school for doubt-clearing sessions, if needed.

Even as all government school teachers will start taking classes in a staggered manner from the school premises, as per a government order, private schools have decided to carry on with online classes until next month, instead of allowing anyone at the premises.

Glendale Academy has decided to allow management staff and draft a plan to call teachers when required, informed Minu Salooja, assistant director of the school. Meridian School has decided to not

hold any sessions at the school until late next month.

Johnson Grammar School, Nacharam has prepared a timetable to allow students to visit the school for subject-wise doubt-clearing sessions. Private budget schools have decided to not open on Monday.

The decision has been taken considering concerns raised by teachers over exposure to the infection and the potential risk it would pose for their family members. Government school teachers have also requested exemption citing similar concerns. However, in the absence of state government guidelines in this regard, no exemption is likely to be provided, said Chava Ravi, Telangana State United Teachers Federation (TSUTF) general secretary.

Government school teachers from various districts raised concerns with regard to the absence of sanitisation and deep cleaning at the premises.

■ **Page 2: Govt responsible for safety, say teachers**

## Cong says FCRA targeting critics

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT 20

The Opposition led by the Congress on Sunday objected to the provisions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020 which was introduced in the Lok Sabha. It makes Aadhaar mandatory for members of NGOs seeking registration.

A clause in the Bill allows the Centre to hold a summary inquiry and direct bodies with FCRA approval to “not utilise the unutilised foreign contribution or receive the remaining portion of foreign contribution.”

The new legislation seeks to restrict usage of foreign funds by NGOs for administrative purposes to 20 per cent. Currently this limit is 50 per cent. It prohibits any public servant from receiving foreign funds.

The Bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha by minister of state for home Nityanand Rai, faced objections from leader of the Opposition Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, his Congress colleague Manish Tewari and Trinamul Congress’ Saugata Roy, who termed

● **A CLAUSE** in the Bill allows the Centre to hold a summary inquiry and direct bodies with FCRA approval to “not utilise the unutilised foreign contribution or receive the remaining portion of foreign contribution.”

it a means to “crush dissent” and “concentrate powers in the hands of the government”.

Opposition parties said the proposed amendments were a means to “target those who speak against the government.”

The Bill adds, “Provided the Central government, on the basis of any information or report, and after holding a summary inquiry, has reason to believe that a person who has been granted prior permission has contravened any of the provisions of this Act, it may, pending any further inquiry, direct that such person shall not utilise the unutilised foreign contribution or receive the remaining portion of the contribution which has not been received or, as the case may be, any additional foreign contribution, without prior approval of the Centre.”

**GENETICS | WATCH**

## CCMB spots more infectious Covid strain in India

**BALU PULIPAKA | DC**  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

A more infectious strain of SARS-CoV-2, the Coronavirus that causes Covid-19, is now being increasingly seen in India, scientists at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) have said.

Currently, 70 per cent of all Indian and global SARS-CoV2 virus variants fall into this category of the more infectious variety, according to the scientists.

Dr Rakesh K. Mishra, CCMB director, made it clear that despite its more infectious nature, there is no evidence that this muta-

● **THERE IS** no proof that this mutation — A2a clade — is more difficult to deal with clinically.

tion — A2a clade — is more difficult to deal with clinically.

“As expected for a strain which is more infectious, the A2a clade quickly became dominant in India just like everywhere else.”

The similarity in the viral genome globally should be considered positive news, because a vaccine or a drug targeting this mutation will work with the same effectiveness all over the world, Dr

# Voice vote in chaos, book hurled at Chair, mic torn

**Bedlam erupts as 2 key farm Bills passed in Rajya Sabha; RSTV muted**

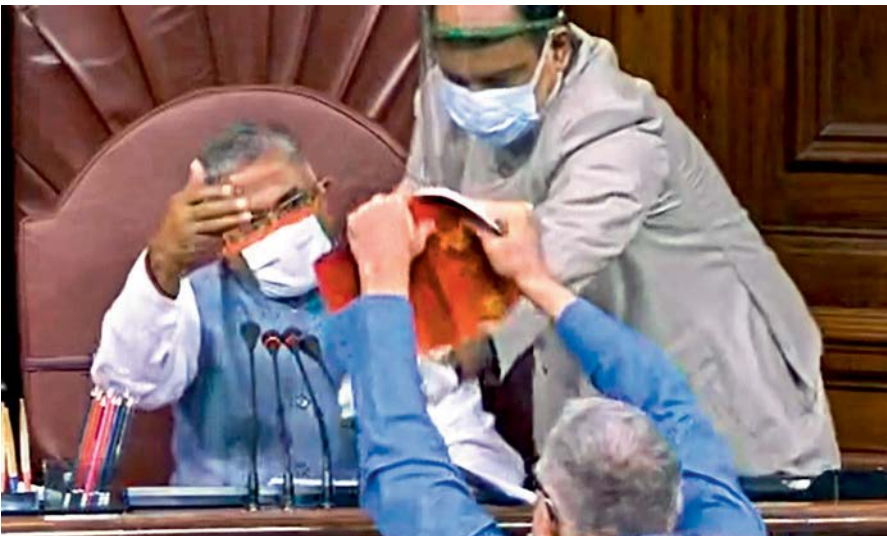
**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
*with agency inputs*  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 20

The Rajya Sabha on Sunday passed two key farm Bills amid utter pandemonium as several Opposition MPs charged towards the presiding officer’s podium, flung the rulebook at him, tore up official papers and heckled him over their demand for a division over the Bills.

The Upper House, which also saw a brief adjournment due to the chaos, later passed by voice vote the Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill 2020, and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill 2020. These Bills have already been passed by the Lok Sabha and will now go to the President for his assent before being notified as laws. A third Bill, the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020, a part of the broader farm liberalisation plan, could not be taken up as the House was adjourned for the day. It will be moved separately later.

The trouble started when the sitting of the House was extended beyond the scheduled time to allow passage of the Bills. The Opposition MPs, who felt such a move should be resorted to only by consensus, rushed into the Well, shouting slogans against the government and accusing it of being anti-farmer. This forced agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar to cut short his reply and deputy chairman Harivansh took up the approval of the Bills.

The Opposition claimed the government did not have the numbers and to cover it up, all rules were violated. “This does not end here,” said Trinamul Congress member Derek O’Brien, terming it a



TMC MP Derek O'Brien attempts to tear the rule book as ruckus erupts in the Rajya Sabha over agriculture related bills, during the ongoing monsoon session, at Parliament House in New Delhi on Sunday.

— PTI

## TRS: New Bills tune agri landscape for corporates

**S. A. ISHAQUI | DC**  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

The TRS charged the Centre with trying to convert India from an agricultural country into a corporate country. The party had opposed and voted against farm Bills in the Rajya Sabha on Sunday.

TRS Parliamentary Party leader K. Keshava Rao, speaking to reporters after the Rajya Sabha passed the farm Bills despite vehement protests by the Opposition, alleged that the BJP government

had bulldozed the legislation with a voice vote despite not having the required strength in the Upper House.

Contending that the Bills will in no way help farmers in getting minimum support price (MSP) for their products, he questioned the BJP government’s stand that the bills will ensure MSP for farmers.

Dr Keshava Rao alleged that the deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha was biased in favour of the ruling party. Because of this, TRS

MPs have signed the no-confidence motion against the deputy chairman. He found fault with the deputy chairman for rejecting all the amendments proposed to the farm bills by Opposition parties.

The TRS Parliamentary Party leader said, “I have never witnessed in my 60 years of political life Bills being passed in such utter violation of legislative rules.”

■ **Page 2: Bills will harm farmers, says TRS**

for further discussion. The trouble intensified as the deputy chairman said that the Opposition’s resolution was negated and moved to pass the Bills by voice vote.

■ **Page 2: Oppn demanded physical voting**

“murder of democracy”. Mr O’Brien later tweeted: “They cheated. They broke every rule in Parliament. It was a historic day. In the worst sense of the word. They cut the RSTV feed so that the country couldn’t see. They censored RSTV. Don’t spread propaganda.

We have evidence.” Incidentally, when the ruckus was going on, the audio of the Rajya Sabha Tele-vision was not broadcast. The Opposition, which lacked the numbers to block the Bills, had demanded that the Bills be sent to a select committee

# Oppn slams Centre’s ad hoc lockdown

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 20

The Opposition on Sunday launched a multi-pronged attack on the Centre during a discussion on Coronavirus pandemic in Lok Sabha, blaming it for unilaterally imposing the lockdown without giving any time for guest workers to return to their native places, thus forcing them to walk hundreds of kilometres to their destinations, leading to deaths of many of them.

Replying to the discussion, health minister Harsh Vardhan said that the Prime Minister should be thanked for announcing the ‘janata curfew’ which gave time to gauge the preparedness to fight the pandemic and then the lockdown was imposed.

Initiating the debate, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said that the government had neither managed to flatten the curve nor improve the plunging economy. He said that many countries had managed to control the pandemic without letting it affect their economy.

India seems to have man-

aged to flatten the wrong curve, he said. India had become the poster child of the worst case scenario.

Tharoor said there was “utter mismanagement” in dealing with the pandemic. The country has witnessed a “fundamental breakdown” in government machinery in the past few months, instead of mature and proactive governance. He said that instead of clearly communicated protocol and comprehensive strategies, the country witnessed a lack of clarity, readiness and preparedness. The ruling

dispensation continued to delay the implementation of a national strategy to stop the spread of the virus. The failure to adequately recognise the scale and complexity of the problem compounded their unwillingness to listen to the voices that warned well in advance of the consequences of ignoring the problem of such magnitude, Tharoor said.

Describing the hardships faced by the common people and the migrants, Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant said, “After the announcement of lockdown,

Mumbai streets saw more people than the number of people who would have come to streets post-Partition. But the government did not start trains. People were mowed down by (goods) trains on railway tracks. Somewhere, we made mistakes.”

The health minister said the ministry had received ₹893.93 crore from the PM-Cares Fund for 50,000 Made in India ventilators. The Centre brought back over 12 lakh Indians stranded abroad and arranged trains for 64 lakh guest workers.

## KAVITHA CLOCKS 1 M FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER

**S.A. ISHAQUI | DC**  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

Kalvakuntla Kavitha, former MP and daughter of CM K. Chandrababbarao has become the first woman politician in South India to clock a million — 10 lakh — followers on Twitter.

Kavitha has run various campaigns on social media which includes #SistersForChange and #GiftAHelmet that saw massive engagement online leading to a national trend annually during Raksha Bandhan.

■ **Full report on Page 4**



## IN BRIEF

**56 arms licences issued in over 2 yrs**

**Hyderabad:** As many as 56 arms licences were issued in Telangana state between January 1, 2018, and September 15 this year, according to Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy. The minister, in reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, said that during the same period, 115 arms licences were renewed in the state. There have been no cancellations of arms licences during this period, the minister said.

**Govt responsible for safety: Teachers**

**From Page 1**  
A teacher on condition of anonymity said, "It is our duty to help the students in whatever way is required of us, but ensuring our safety and safety of children is the responsibility of the government. Even as Gram Panchayats have been taking care of cleaning and sanitation at the school, not every school's safety is being taken care of in various villages." Teachers said the government has not provided masks or sanitisers to students or teachers despite the reopening. "Our safety is in our hands only it seems", said another government school teacher.

**BILLS WILL HARM FARMERS, SAYS TRS**

**From Page 1**

He contended that since the no-confidence notice is pending against him, the deputy chairman should not preside over the House.

Keshava Rao accused BJP of trying to corporatise agriculture. Earlier, participating in the discussion in the Rajya Sabha on farm bills, he expressed concern that both bills will severely harm the interests of farmers in the country. He demanded that agriculture and related issues should continue to remain within the realm of the state government. The Centre should not try to snatch powers of the state governments, he said. TRS leader in Lok Sabha Nama Nageswara Rao said Sunday will be recorded as a black day in country's history.

**WOMAN'S SEVERED LEG FOUND IN NALA**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20**

A severed leg was found floating in the nala at Reddy Colony of Champapet on Sunday. The Saidabad police, who were alerted about the incident, searched the nala upstream for three km but could not find any other part of the body. Police has deposited the leg in the Osmania General Hospital mortuary.

Police pressed in the dog squad and the Clues team. Police believes that the leg belonged to a woman who may have inadvertently fallen into the nala.

The police is reviewing footage of CCTV cameras on the nala road.

**3,681 CHILDREN MISSING IN TS IN THREE YEARS**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20**

There has been no trace of one out of every three children reported missing in Telangana state between 2016 and 2018. Of the 13,424 cases of missing children during the three-year period, only 9,733 have been traced and there has been no progress in finding the other 3,681 children.

In 2016, 4,700 children were reported missing of whom 3,597 were found and there was no information on the rest of the 1,103.

In 2017, 4,304 children were reported missing of whom 2,984 were found and 1,320 were not traced.

In 2018, there were 4,410 complaints of missing children with 3,152 being traced with no information on 1,258 others. In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha on missing children in the country, Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy said 3,46,238 children were reported missing between 2016 and 2018. While 1,97,560 were traced, 1,61,322 could not be found.

**OPPOSITION DEMANDED PHYSICAL VOTING**

**From Page 1**

The Opposition demanded physical voting, pointing out that they were sitting in Parliament. When the Chair refused, they rushed to the Well of the House, tore up the rule-book and tried to snatch the deputy chairman's microphone. House marshals thwarted the move and also blocked a book that was flung towards Mr Hariyansh. An attempt was made to pull the microphones away from the Chair, but the marshals physically stopped that from happening. "Mahabharat has broken out inside Parliament," Congress MP Ghulam Nabi Azad said. The Opposition MPs could be seen recording the moment on the cellphones, drawing repeated rebukes from the Chair.

The House was adjourned immediately for 10 minutes, and after it again resumed, the voice vote took place amid repeated Opposition slogans.

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill 2020 seeks to give freedom to farmers to sell their produce outside the notified APMC market yards (mandis).

This, the government says, is aimed at facilitating remunerative prices through competitive alternative trading channels.

Farmers will not be charged any cess or levy for sale of their produce under this law, according to the government.

It will open more choices for farmers, reduce marketing costs, and help them get better prices. It will also help farmers of regions with surplus produce to get better prices and consumers in areas with shortages at lower prices.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill 2020 seeks to give farmers the right to enter into a contract with agribusiness firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters, or large retailers for the sale of future farming produce at a pre-agreed price.

It seeks to transfer the risk of market unpredictability from farmers to sponsors.

**Leisure time**

People enjoy cool weather in the backdrop of cable bridge at Durgam Cheruvu on Sunday.

— R. PAVAN

**Covid drags TB plan back to 2013 level****Covid fear, lack of diagnostic tools hinder the programme**

**KANIZA GARARI I DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20**

The plan to eliminate tuberculosis by 2025 has suffered a severe setback due to the pandemic, taking the status back to 2013 in terms of diagnosis, notification, timely treatment and controlling deaths.

Covid-19 has hit the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) badly as primary health centres, district hospitals, diagnostic machines and the private health sector are unable to notify tuberculosis patients. The reasons: patients are scared to come to hospitals due to the fear of contracting Covid-19, lack of public transport and financial constraints due to lack of income. Notification in different states has dropped by 30 to 70 per cent since March.

To add to the problem, medical colleges and human resources working for the NTEP have been diverted to Covid-19. The biggest challenge being observed is lack of diagnostic machines. All the

**CHALLENGES AHEAD**

- Global incidence of TB will rise by an additional 6.3 million cases between 2020 and 2025.

- India has reported an increase of 14 per cent in notification of TB in 2019 with 24.04 lakh patients.

- There were 79,144 deaths recorded for 2019 but the World Health Organisation estimates 4.4 lakh fatalities.

- Continuing services for TB in terms of prevention, community care, providing adequate medicines at their doorsteps have to be accelerated.

- Like for Covid-19, proper measures must be taken like contact tracing from active TB patients, social distancing and masking so that the spread of TB is prevented.

testing machines are being utilised for Covid-19, and that is proving to be a major setback in tackling tuberculosis.

Dr Subhakar Kandli, south zone chair for NTEP in the medical colleges of Telangana state, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, said, "Each month taken to return to normal is going to lead to additional unaccounted TB deaths. The lockdown has negated all efforts. We are back to square one in the elimination programme. Till supplementary efforts are put

in place, tracking of missed and unaccounted cases will be a huge challenge."

Deaths in 2021 due to TB are likely to increase to the levels noted in 2013 which were the highest at 5.5 lakh.

There are estimates that each year an additional 50,000 deaths due to TB will be noted till 2025 due to the impact of the pandemic.

The need is to have active tracing of TB and intense community engagement to get over

the fear of and stigma associated with Covid-19. With most healthcare workers and doctors busy with Covid-19, supplementary channels for the restoration of TB will require will from state governments to revive it.

In a paper submitted by Johns Hopkins University where India is featured as the country with highest TB cases, it has been recommended that digital technology must be used to reach out to patients, understand and respond to symptoms and ensure delivery of medicines at their doorsteps. The notifications need to be revived and for that the centres in rural areas and medical colleges must be provided separate pathways which will help them detect cases early.

Dr Mehboob Khan, superintendent of Chest Hospital, says, "We have kept a separate building for TB patients. There was a problem from March to June but since then, patients are coming for treatment and procuring their medicines. Due to Covid-19, we are giving medicines for a month."

**2 interchanges on ORR to be built soon**

**MADDY DEEKSHITH I DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20**

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) has decided to construct two interchanges on the Outer Ring Road (ORR), taking their total to 21. One interchange is planned at Movie Towers on the western side of the road at Kokapet, with a rotary interchange, grade separator or trumpet road. Another interchange is planned at Janwada, which would match with the proposed grid roads on the master plan.

Both these interchanges fall within the busy Financial District and Kollur Road on ORR. Once these projects are completed, commuters will be able to avoid taking the Nanakramguda road and travel directly from Narsingi junction to Shamshabad junction, cutting the distance by 6.8 km. The two interchanges will cater to needs of commuters travelling from TSPA, Kokapet, Kollur, Kismathpur and Manchirevula.

The huge distance between each interchange of the ORR has come under criticism as commuters have to travel 5.7 km extra to enter or exit the ORR. Authorities said to allow a hassle-free

journey to commuters travelling from Narsingi junction to Shamshabad, an overpass will be constructed at the junction, which facilitates commuters to travel directly from Narsingi to Shamshabad.

Likewise, a down pass at the Narsingi junction will be constructed to facilitate commuters travelling from Shamshabad. These will prevent commuters from going to Nanakramguda, which would save 6.8 km on the expressway.

Municipal authorities have decided to construct a trumpet road or a grade separator along with the interchange at an estimated cost of ₹65 crore. They are conducting a feasible study at Janwada interchange since the Kokapet interchange will reduce traffic to a great extent. According to HMDA's preliminary estimates, the interchange would cost anywhere between ₹15 crore and ₹18 crore.

A senior official, requesting anonymity, said Aarvee Associates had been hired as consultant for conducting a feasibility study and designing the interchanges. The interchange at Kokapet will also help develop 513 acres of HMDA's land, which is adjacent to the road.

**Sumedha victim of govt apathy: Dasoju**

**T.S.S. SIDDHARTH I DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20**

Dasoju Shravan, All India Congress Committee spokesperson, on Sunday said the death of 12-year-old Sumedha who fell into a nala Deendayalnagar in Malkajigiri was not an accident but a murder by an incompetent TRS government.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Sumedha's parents and consoling them, Dr Sravan demanded that a case of murder be booked on Mayor Bonthu Rammohan, ministers K.T. Rama Rao and Talasani Srinivas Yadav for the death of the girl. "The government

- The state government should pay ₹1 crore as ex gratia to the bereaved family, the senior Congress leader said.

should also pay ₹1 crore as ex gratia to the bereaved family. It is not just Sumedha's family but many others who have suffered because of the TRS government and the GHMC's incompetency during the recent rains," he said.

The Congress will soon take up a citywide survey to assess the damage due to rains and launch a mass agitation against the TRS government, he said.

**Over 1.7 lakh Covid-19 cases in state so far**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20**

Telangana state has crossed the 1.7 lakh mark of Covid-19 cases with addition of 2,137 Coronavirus patients on Saturday, taking the total to 1,71,306. Eight more people succumbed to the disease, and the toll from Covid-19 now stands at 1,033.

According to the Covid-19 bulletin released by the health department on Sunday, 2,192 Coronavirus patients have recovered between Friday and Saturday evening, taking

- **HYDERABAD CITY and the rest of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area saw 322 more people testing positive.**

the total recoveries to 1,39,700. There continue to be 30,573 active Covid-19 cases, of which 24,019 persons are either in home or institutional isolation.

Hyderabad city and the rest of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area saw 322 more people testing positive. Ranga Reddy district had 184 new cases,

Medchal-Malkajigiri 146, Karimnagar 132, Nalgonda 124, Siddipet 109, while Khammam and Warangal Urban reported 90 fresh cases each.

As on Saturday evening, 2,512 Covid-19 victims remained admitted in 42 government hospitals, while the number of such in-patients in 222 private hospitals was 4,042. As many as 725 of the patients in government hospitals were in the ICU while another 1,425 were on supplementary oxygen. In private hospitals, these numbers are 821 and 1,897 respectively.

**90 Covid cases every hour in Sept.**

**BALU PULIPAKA I DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20**

A slowdown in fresh Covid-19 cases in August that promised some relief from the disease in Telangana state, appears to have been wishful thinking with the rate of new cases picking up again this month.

On August 25, senior health department officials, addressing a press conference, had offered the promise of a return to 'normal lives' by the end of September.

The first 19 days of September have seen at least 90 people contracting Covid-19 every hour in the state, up from 53 in August. The August num-

ber was lower than what occurred in July which saw a rate of 63 people testing positive every hour.

While July saw a total of 47,429 new Covid-19 cases, August witnessed 39,080. This month, till Saturday, the number of new cases was 40,717, indicating that September may yet be one of the worst months as the state struggles to cope with the pandemic. With an average daily case rate of 2,143 in the first 19 days of September, the state could be looking at adding anywhere between 23,000 and 24,000 cases in remaining 11 days of the month if the trend continues, taking the month's caseload

- **WHILE JULY saw a total of 47,429 new Covid-19 cases, August witnessed 39,080. This month, till Saturday, the number of new cases was 40,717, indicating that September may yet be one of the worst months as the state struggles to cope with the pandemic.**

to around 64,000.

Within the 650 sq. km of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits, Hyderabad city which occupies 217 sq.km has seen 6,159 cases at an average of 325 per day till September 19, which works out to around 14

new cases being found every hour.

In August, the GHMC area saw 12,096 cases averaging 390 new cases a day at the rate of 16 new cases every hour. If the current average of daily cases in the GHMC continues till the end of this month, the total could be around 9,700 for September.

The total 47,429 cases in July were found after the state conducted 3,65,796 tests during the month. In August, 39,080 cases were found against the 9,46,051 tests conducted while till September 19, the number of tests conducted was 10,04,953 with 40,717 new Covid-19 cases being found.

**Mainstreaming social protection amidst cascading risks**

**Edmond Fernandes & Delma Coelho**



One of the starkest stories of our era belongs to the year 2020 where the novel coronavirus has disrupted normalcy, hijacked social protection from a policy standpoint, and crippled the achievements towards sustainable development goals and the 2030 agenda. This came at a time when the Asia Pacific Region is going through cascading risks from a proliferating economy, a global pandemic and regular disasters

which have the potential to make regional development a watershed moment.

**Social Protection for sustained development & health coverage**

While universal social protection can be viewed from a rights-based approach, it must assume a policy-based approach which brings forth a new algorithm into all sectors of work and social life at large. The pandemic has exposed the fault lines of

health systems around the world and in the wake of this realisation, universal health coverage will pose a greater challenge than ever before. While countries around the world have made appreciable progress towards social protection and better health systems, yet billions around the world do not benefit from social protection as it lacks inclusivity and gets altered with political tones. If countries need to meet the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, no one must be left behind and especially vulnerable communities must be lifted out of poverty, inequality bridged and social policy measures to protect them be implemented in heart and spirit.

- **VULNERABLE GROUPS of people, who are natural victims to poverty-based diseases, are taken for granted by employers, and continue to suffer and co-exist in the same ecosystem that must protect them.**

**GAPS IN SOCIAL HEALTH ACROSS ASIA**

Health is not just stethoscopes and pills. Unless health is viewed from a social dimension, efforts in singularly shaping healthcare will collapse. This essentially means that we address poverty and health, we address culture and health, well-being and health, labour laws and health, doctor and

patient relations, preventive health and community development.

Health workers working in challenging environments need to be paid well and, importantly, paid on time. Income protection is directly linked to workplace motivation and satisfaction. Labour market policies in the healthcare sector do not link low-wage health workers and their healthcare needs. What is importantly needed, be it health or non-health occupation, is social protection from a social health perspective.

Vulnerable groups of people, who are natural victims to poverty-based diseases, are taken for granted by employers, and continue to suffer and co-exist in the same ecosys-

tem that must protect them. When selected sectors fail to address inequality and glaring gaps exist, the responsibility to protect her citizens falls back on nation-states. Failing which we will not just see inequity in the ecosystem thriving, but also have direct implications to crime rates going up, happiness index deteriorating and political opportunism multiplying.

**A STRATEGIC WAY AHEAD**

Cascading risks call for long-term social protection to strengthen community resilience and household resilience towards multi-pronged vulnerability that co-exists. While many countries have

introduced relief measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to safeguard jobs, mitigate commercial losses and facilitate a floating health system with research and development, this solution is ad-hoc and simply limiting. The way forward will be to create a shock-responsive social protection, while protecting human rights and also simultaneously increasing fiscal space for inclusive social policy safety nets towards securing and achieving the 2030 agenda and universal thematic desires on various fronts.

**Dr Edmond Fernandes is a physician and CEO at CHD Group and Delma Coelho is Head-special projects & admin at CHD Group**



## SHORT TAKES

AIRPORT GETS  
ACI'S HEALTH  
ACCREDITATIONT.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

The Hyderabad International Airport has secured Airport Council International's (ACI) airport health accreditation. Hyderabad is among the first airports in the Asia Pacific region to have received the accreditation.

The accreditation follows an assessment of the airport with regard to health measures in terms of the ACI's aviation business restart and recovery guidelines and the recommendations of the council aviation recovery task force of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Pradeep Panicker, CEO, GHIAL, which operates the airport, said the airport had been adaptive to the latest regulations and norms to ensure taht operations were running even during the lockdown.

MAOISTS KILLED  
IN ENCOUNTER  
IDENTIFIEDPILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC  
KUMARAMBHEEM ASIFABAD,  
SEPT. 20

The two Maoists killed in an exchange of fire with the police in Kadamba forests in Kagaznagar Rural mandal in Kumarambheem Asifabad district late on Saturday were identified as Chinnalu of Chokkalu of Bheejapur district of Chhattisgarh and Jugunaka Badirao of Addala Thimmapur in Neredigonda mandal in Adilabad district.

Police seized a 9 mm automatic weapon, a 12 bore weapon and two kit bags from the scene.

Police sealed the borders with Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh along the river Pranahitha and suspended the operation of country boats to prevent the escape of Maoists who reportedly managed to flee from the exchange of fire. Police have intensified combing operations in the forests along the Pranahitha.

V. Satyanarayana, Ramagundam police commissioner and incharge SP of Kumarambheem Asifabad district, said the Maoists were focusing on fresh recruitments to strengthen their base in the district. Police had intensified combing operations to catch Maoist state committee member Mylarapu Adellu alias Bhaskar and his team members.

Satyanarayana said a police team combing the area had noticed the Maoist team in the Kadamba forest and asked them to surrender. The Maoists opened fire against the police indiscriminately.

He said the police opened fire in retaliation and the exchange of fire went on for one hour. After the firing ceased, the police found the two bodies in the area. Local police, special police parties and Greyhounds police participated in the combing operations. Mancherial DCP Udaykumar Reddy was present.

Post-mortem examination on the bodies of Chinnalu and Badirao was performed at the government hospital in Sirpur (T). Badirao's body was handed over to his mother Chinnu Bai while Chikkalu's body was preserved in the hospital.

College staff become captive  
vote bank for graduates poll

Some managements link salaries to staff voting for their favourite parties

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

Political parties are leaning on college managements to get their staff to vote for them in the forthcoming election to the Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahbubnagar graduates constituency seat of the Legislative Council.

Cutting across party lines, the managements of colleges, many of which are directly controlled by influential political leaders, are asking the graduates among their staff to submit their voter identity and Aadhaar cards. Some managements are learnt to have linked salaries to

the staff's voting behaviour.

Between them, the colleges, including engineering colleges, most of which are situated near the city, have thousands of graduates who form a sizeable vote bank.

Rajeev Majumdar (name changed), senior faculty at a popular college in Kompally, said the management had assured them of full salaries if they voted in a particular manner after March next year. In case they did not do so, they would be sacked.

Pavitra (name changed), a teacher at a well-known college in Ranga Reddy district,

● **CUTTING ACROSS** party lines, the managements of colleges, many of which are directly controlled by influential political leaders, are asking the graduates among their staff to submit their voter identity and Aadhaar cards.

said that she should continue in her job from the voter registration to the conclusion of the Legislative Council poll which would likely be held in March after the conclusion of the GHMC polls.

She said that the management had said the staff should continue

working at 25 per cent of their salaries until the notification for voter registration. Post notification, salaries will be enhanced to 50 per cent and after March the graduates will receive their full payments if they vote as the management says.

Similar claims made by staff in other colleges. It appears to be the situation with 95 per cent of the colleges in the three districts, especially engineering colleges.

Reacting to this, Prof. Balakrishna Reddy, president of the Telangana Technical Institutions Employees Association, said that the issue had come to their notice and

the association would campaign against political parties which had made such threats. Prof. Reddy said that the association will submit a representation to prevent linking of voting to salaries. "It's atrocious on the part of college managements to threaten teaching staff. On behalf of my organisation, I request teaching staff not to vote for such political parties," he said.

According to sources in the Election Commission, the notification for voter enrolment for the MLC graduates constituency election will be released in October.

## Heavy rain forecast till tomorrow

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

Heavy rains lashed several parts of the state on Sunday. While tanks and water bodies are brimming due to heavy rains, many roads in the city were inundated, affecting free flow of traffic.

As of 7 pm, the highest amount of rainfall in the state was recorded at the Bhavaninagar Community Hall in Hayatnagar. The area received 79.3 mm of rainfall. According to Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the current spell of rains is due to presence of a low-pressure area in the Bay of Bengal. "The system, which formed on Sunday morning, is expected to bring rain all over the state," an official of the local weather department said.

The IMD has issued a heavy rainfall warning till Tuesday. It said thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are very likely to occur at isolated places over Telangana, including the erstwhile districts of Adilabad, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Warangal and Khammam.

As a result, officials of the state government said there are chances of flood-



The road at Moosarambagh is waterlogged Due to the heavy rain on Sunday, making it difficult for motorists to traverse the stretch. — P. SURENDRA

ing and water-logging in low-lying areas.

In light of heavy rainfall in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits during the last 96 hours, disaster response teams on the field are attending to com-

plaints of fallen trees and clearing stagnant water, apart from dealing with other issues.

In the last four days, civic officials have cleared 203 complaints of water stagnation, tree falls and building or wall collapses.

After September 17 — when five feeders had tripped — no more incidents have been reported, according to officials of the Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL).

## Garden View Wakf mall floods again

ATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

The rains over the past few days have completely flooded the basement of the under-construction Garden View Wakf mall, a property owned by the Wakf Board at Nampally. The building, located opposite the Public Garden and adjacent to the Haj House, has been under construction since 2009.

The lower of the two basement levels was flooded a month ago and no steps were taken to clear the water. The upper level was inundated following the recent rains. The flooding of the basement, it is feared, could pose additional danger to



The flooded basement of the under-construction Garden View Wakf mall in Hyderabad.

the seven-floor building.

The structure is meant for commercial use and is aimed to increase the revenue of the Wakf Board.

There is confusion over how the structure will be used. The Wakf Board wants to lease the building to big companies

while the government and public representatives want to shift all organisations working under the minorities' welfare department to this building. Every year, water enters the basement during the rainy season. It has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes as the rainwater stagnates in the basement for months. GHMC authorities refuse to drain out the water as it needs heavy motors.

Last year, it was announced that the TS Police Housing Corporation will finish the remaining construction works of the complex but clearly that has not happened as yet.

MINIMISE RAIN  
DAMAGE, CM  
TELLS OFFICIALSS.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

With the meteorological department warning of heavy rainfall over the next couple of days, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Sunday reviewed the situation with Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar and directed him to take steps to prevent any loss of life and property.

The Chief Secretary has directed all police superintendents and collectors to be alert to the unfolding situation caused by heavy rainfall.

All the officers were directed to be available at their headquarters. Kumar directed them to strictly follow the flood protocol com municated to them earlier.

The meteorological department had warned that there might be heavy to very heavy rainfall over isolated parts of the state, especially in the erstwhile districts of Adilabad, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Warangal and Khammam.

The weather department also cautioned that massive flooding and waterlogging could occur in low-lying areas.

Falling of trees and electric poles can happen leading to the disruption of normal activities. Reservoirs, tanks and streams may overflow causing inundation of low-lying areas and cause low bridges and causeways to overflow, posing threat to traffic and people.

● **THE CHIEF** Secretary has directed all police superintendents and collectors to be alert to the unfolding situation caused by heavy rainfall. All the officers were directed to be available at headquarters.

Immunisation falls  
31% as Covid keeps  
parents from hospsKANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

From April to June this year, there has been a drop by 31 per cent in immunisation of children in the country due to lockdown and fear of Covid-19. This was disclosed in the Lok Sabha by the central ministry of health and family welfare.

Immunisation schedules could not be followed as there was no information on whether children's hospitals, public health centres and government children's hospitals were open and conducting the immunisation programmes.

Many skipped their children's schedules and a lot of cases of delayed immunisation are noted in children up to five years of age.

Dr Ravi Kumar, professor and senior paediatrician at Niloufer children's hospital, explained: "Government hospitals and public health centres for immunisation were open but many people were not aware of it. Many others did not have the transport facilities to reach the centres. Hence only those in and around the hospitals came for immunisation. We have a separate section for them so that safety pathways are maintained."

Those residing on the outskirts of the city areas are dependent on paediatricians in their locality and faced a major challenge as these small clinics did not function. Many small clinics are not operational even now as they cannot afford the costs of protection gear and the safety protocols to be followed for Covid-19.

With the doctors not available and guidelines released by the World Health Organisation, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the state government, there was confusion among doctors and the public at large.

From March till April 15,

immunisation saw a sharp drop as there was no movement at all. It was only when concerns were raised by WHO that a rise in non-Covid 19 diseases is imminent if immunisation is not followed that new guidelines were issued by ICMR and state governments.

This also led to private hospitals following up with patients via tele counselling on safe vaccination programmes at home and hospitals.

Dr Preeti Sharma, senior paediatrician at KIMS hospital, told *Deccan Chronicle*, "Till date, it is taking a lot of convincing to assure parents of the safety of their children and the immunisation doses. Many of them are not willing to give the doses as they are not sure if hospitals are safe. For this reason, home vaccination programmes have started but still the takers are very few."

Cost is one of the major factors as an ambulance and healthcare workers have to be sent home. This is a deterrent for those who cannot afford it.

Many private hospitals have developed a separate out-patient section for immunisation. Dr Faisal Nahdi, senior pediatrician at Rainbow hospitals stated "From April 15, after the fresh guidelines were issued, we have made a dedicated effort to reach out to maximum people and give them confidence in a safe immunisation programme. There is a separate section for these children and maximum care is taken. This has given confidence to parents and they are coming forward to opt for immunisation."

Delayed cases are being redressed now but the schedules have seen a delay of three to six months. The missed cases will be known only as when diseases are reported, which will provide a clear picture.

OGH'S GENERAL SURGERY OPERATION  
THEATRES TO BE FUNCTIONAL TODAYDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

Operation theatres for the general surgery department in Osmania General Hospital will be functional from Monday, but they will not be as big as in the heritage building.

Postgraduate doctors said that they are also working with the administration as they want the operation

theatres to be functional soon.

There are 12-bed and 32-bed post-operative wards set up in the new building for general surgery. Dr B. Nagendra, superintendent of OGH, said, "We have made arrangements and the department will now be able to function properly."

Interestingly, the heritage building has not been flooded despite the heavy rains.

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**HAR EK KAAM DESH KE NAAM**

## Illegal miners destroy hillock

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KOTHAGUDEM, SEPT. 20

Illegal mining of soil is continuing unabated in Kothagudem. Bodagutta. A small hillock in Chunchupalli mandal will disappear if officials do not check the unrestrained mining of soil.

The soil is used at real estate ventures. Though the miners claim that the soil was shifted to use for government works, the soil ends up at private projects. According to an estimate, nearly 10,000 tonnes of soil was mined illegally and shifted to the private projects. There are also allegations that the leaders of the ruling party were behind the mining. The value of illegal mining is around ₹2 crore.

Two small hillocks in the area have been mined to the ground due to soil mining. However, nonchalant mining officials have been looking the other way for the last five years. K. Venkaiah, a local, said the soil was being illegally mined at his area for

the last two months and roads were damaged due to the continuous plying of tractors transporting the soil.

On the complaint of locals, the police raided the place and recovered the vehicles.

On Sunday, Chunchupalli sub-inspector Aruna seized eight tractors and a JCB machine at the Bodagutta hillock. As per police investigation, about 12 tractors were used for illegal mining of soil from Bodagutta.

Apart from soil, sand and teak are also smuggled from Bhadradi district.

The new sand beds — having up to three lakh tonnes of sand — are formed every year after monsoon along the river Godavari in the district. However, there is no proper check on the utilisation of such rich minerals.

The forest area of Bhadradi district has also become a haven for smugglers. So far, teak worth of crores of rupees was shifted illegally to Hyderabad and other cities.



The road at Venkateswara Colony is damaged by tractors carrying away soil from Bodagutta.

Bandi questions  
KCR over farm BillS.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20

Finding fault with the TRS for opposing the Centre's farm bills, BJP state unit president Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Sunday asked if Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao would oppose over 1,000 new market yards which are going to be set up in Telangana state as part of the Bills that the TRS had opposed in the Rajya Sabha.

The TRS on Sunday voted against the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill.

In a letter to the Chief Minister, Sanjay claimed that the two Bills fit with the state government's plans for food processing, warehousing and open market policies.

"As everyone knows, farmers of the nation have been facing

insurmountable problems in terms of getting a fair price for their produce, owing to fluctuating weather conditions, unpredictable markets, and bureaucratic regulations. The result is that they are not able to get a suitable price that matches their produce and toil," he wrote.

Maintaining that the new Bills will create a free and fair environment for farmers as well as traders to sell their produce in a bigger market, he said, "This day will be scripted in golden letters in the history of India, as it has ensured the redemption of farmers from rigid regulations."

He said the two legislations will end the restrictions on the movement of agriculture produce and remove inter-state restrictions. These bills will also allow farmers to be directly involved in the marketing of their produce, thereby removing middlemen from the supply chain completely, Sanjay said.

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## IN BRIEF

**Gutka, tobacco worth ₹2L seized**

**Hyderabad:** The South Zone Task Force and Bhavaninagar police raided a house at Amannagar under Bhavaninagar police limits and seized gutka and chewing tobacco worth ₹2 lakh and arrested one Mohd Abdul Rizwan. The raid and arrest followed a tip-off that the police had received. City police commissioner Anjani Kumar said gutka and other banned tobacco products were bad for health and requested citizens to inform the police if they notice the trade of such substances.

**MUV overturns on PVNR expressway**

**SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20**

A speeding multi-utility vehicle (MUV) with five persons on board hit the restraining wall of the P.V. Narasimha Rao expressway and overturned on Saturday morning. The occupants of the vehicle sustained minor injuries and were treated at a nearby hospital, the Rajendranagar police said. The vehicle was travelling from Mehdiapatnam to the Shamshabad airport. Police said it was not clear who was at the wheel at the time of the accident and whether that person had a driver's licence.

**AP GETS 3 FAKE CM RELIEF FUND CHEQUES**

**MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 20**

The Andhra Pradesh revenue department has lodged a complaint with police against unidentified persons who tried to withdraw ₹117.15 crore from banks using forged cheques purportedly issued by the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF). Thullur deputy superintendent of police Y. Srinivasa Reddy registered a case on Sunday based on the complaint filed by P. Murali Krishna Rao, assistant secretary, revenue.

According to Rao, the banks had received three cheques from different states. Bank officials inquired about the cheques with the department and stopped the payment after finding them to be forged.

The first forged cheque, (694499) for ₹52.65 crore, was drawn in favour of Advaita V.K. Hollow Blocks and Interlock and presented at Mangaluru in Karnataka on September 9. Another cheque (792896) for ₹39,85,95,540 was presented by Sharma Forging in Delhi on September 7 and the third cheque (792893) for ₹24.65 crore was in favour of Mallabpur People Rural Development Society in Magrahat of West Bengal on September 14.

Generally, the revenue department issues cheques of small amounts from CMRF to the poor for the purpose of medical reimbursement and financial assistance. When the cheques for huge sums were presented at the banks for payment, it raised the suspicion of the bank officials. Rao said cheque 694499 was issued in favour of K. Rataiah for ₹16,000 on November 8, 2019, 792896 was for ₹45,000 in favour of K. Hymavathi of Reddygudem, and the third cheque was issued in favour of P. Ramya Sri of Ibrahimpatnam on June 29, 2020.

# Kavitha sees Twitter as empowering tool

**TRS leader 1st woman politico in south to hit 1M on Twitter**

**S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 20**

Kalvakuntla Kavitha, former MP and daughter of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has become the first woman politician in south India to clock a million — 10 lakh — followers on Twitter.

Kavitha has run various campaigns on social media which include #SistersForChange and #GiftAHelmet that saw massive engagement online. Scores of common people and celebrities joined the #GiftAHelmet initiative that leads to a national Twitter trend every year during Raksha Bandhan.

Kavitha's latest campaign, #Thank-YouWarriors, to thank Covid-19 frontline warriors has been well received.

Kavitha had joined the statehood campaign in 2008 after returning from the US, and launched the NGO Telangana Jagruthi to connect the spirit of Telangana with the movement. She joined Twitter in 2010 and used the platform to represent the interests of the statehood movement. She has since tapped



K. Kavitha

into the power of social media to connect with Telangana natives across the world through Telangana Jagruthi. Her efforts at highlighting the Bathukamma festival earned national attention for the festival.

Delighted at hitting a million, Kavitha, told *Deccan Chronicle*: "All I can say is that the followers on Twitter have been very kind."

She said her efforts to reach a large number of people was to not just spread ideology but to help those distress. "My intention and endeavour is to serve society and it has always been reflected on my social media handles."

"I can say that it is due to the social media that we have been able to offer free meals to the needy in my constituency (Nizamabad) for the

last three years. It gave me an opportunity to serve a number of people during the Covid-19 crisis and extend a helping hand to students, migrants and people in distress stuck abroad and within national borders and bring them back to their home state," Kavitha said.

Of her team, Kavitha said they had been together since the Telangana movement. "A few people have been assigned certain jobs. At the end of the day, it is the TRS karyakartas and Jagruthi workers at the ground level who coordinate and deliver a lot of the work," she said adding, "Whoever comes up with any request, my office and I try very sincerely to address their concerns."

Explaining the deeper dimension of her engagement on Twitter, as she sees it, Kavitha said, "The more space we give on social media and the more interaction takes place with public representatives and authorities, I believe the requirement to reach out to the people will be fulfilled. This is the ultimate goal for any system and we will be a true democracy." On resolving the

grievances of people with government departments, Kavitha said it is all about coordinating and making sure the work is done, with a great deal of follow-up.

She explained: "Suppose somebody has an issue with their land patta. They would simply give an application to a public representative and have no clue what else to do. The rest of the procedure is taken care of by my office."

Kavitha said, "What has happened is that people have understood that in this state leaders react on social media, like my brother K.T. Rama Rao who is very active on social media and responds to requests quite often. I have seen many women creating social media handles and sending me special requests and we address the same."

"What is seen on social media is like a public request," she explained. "There are many requests which directly come to us, which are hidden requests. We follow them up too. They are actually tenfold to what you see. So that's much richer. So, I believe that in a way it is an empowering tool for the women too."

# Khammam farmers worry over Centre's new farm bill

## Minister Talasani vows to fight against Centre

**RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KHAMMAM, SEPT. 20**

In spite of the Narendra Modi government's claims about two agricultural Bills that were passed by the Rajya Sabha on Sunday, farmers in Khammam do not seem to have pinned hopes about them.

Though the farmers admit that the current farm markets have become exploitation centres, they feel the new legislations will do no good to them.

"Instead of small traders, corporates would benefit with the new Bill. There is no guarantee that the farmers will be paid more price for their produce than the Minimum Support Price (MSP)," summed up K. Krishna Rao, an oil palm grower in Dammapeta.

The Narendra Modi government claims the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation Bill), 2020, would give freedom to farmers to sell their produce wherever they want and in the process, their income would double.

The farmers in Khammam district, however, feel that the claim of the BJP government that the new Bill would promote barrier-free and interstate trade of farm produce is false.

**PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, SEPT. 20**

Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav said on Sunday that the TRS government would fight against the Centre for adopting anti-people policies and for introducing Bills that would deprive states of their rights.

Speaking at a press meet at the residence of minister Gangula Kamalakara here, Srinivas Yadav, the animal husbandry minister, said TRS MPs will fight against the Centre for introducing the GST and agriculture Bills. He said TRS MPs will stage protests at Parliament along with those of other parties against the BJP government.

Referring to the Electricity Act, he said the Centre was

trying to hand over power utilities to private companies. As part of this strategy, the BJP government was imposing unnecessary restrictions on supply of electricity, so that it would become difficult to give free power supply to farmers, the minister said.

"The state government faces around ₹18,000 crore loss due to GST. When the Bill was introduced the Centre said that it would compensate states if the faced losses. Now, it is asking the states to take loans. Without giving proper guidelines, the Centre announced a ₹20-lakh crore package which is of no use to the states. A lot of differences will occur between states and the Centre in future because of these Tughlaq-like decisions," Srinivas Yadav said.

faraway places where there was a good price? There are no safety nets provided to the farmers in the Bill at all. No priority was given to the farmers other than corporates in the Bill."

## No Covid safety measures



Hundreds of Shia Muslims participate in the Jhula-e-Ali Asgar procession from Noorkhan Bazaar to Miralam Mandi in the Old City on Sunday. Covid-19 preventive measures were ignored. — P. SURENDRA

## Agri needs help: Farmer's body

**D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL SEPT. 20**

The agriculture sector is a big saviour of the economy during the coronavirus pandemic as it was the only sector contributing to the GDP, said P. Chengal Reddy of the Consortium of Farmers Association. He said the sector, however, suffered from lack

of seed technology and Investments. He said the Agriculture bills passed in Parliament on Sunday would make the farmers empowered.

He said the farmers welcomed the reforms in the APMCs (agricultural produce market committees) initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and

Facilitation) Bill and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill give the farmer the liberty to sell at attractive market prices, he said. Farmers markets are controlled by middlemen and commission agents, Chengal Reddy pointed out, adding that there were no elections to

market yards in the past 35 years.

"These agriculture reforms would usher in a new revolution as farmers can focus on marketing of their produce. They can enter into agreements with food processing industries, export markets and can have long-term supply agreements with super markets and retail malls," he said.

## TTD in trouble over 'declaration form'

**AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, SEPT. 20**

The board of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has landed in a controversy following the statement of its chairman Y. V. Subba Reddy regarding signing the 'declaration form', which a non-Hindu must sign professing faith in Lord Venkateswara before entering TTD temples.

In a statement, Subba Reddy had said, "There were a few instances in the past where non-Hindu political personalities visited Tirumala and had darshan without signing the declaration form. There are also instances to show that AP Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has immense faith in Lord Venkateswara. Hence, I just said that AP CM need not sign a declaration to prove his faith in Lord Venkateswara."

Though the TTD chairman later clarified that he never suggested that the rule mandating signing of declaration form be with-

● As per TTD Rule No.136, only Hindus are allowed to have darshan at TTD temples.

● As per Rule No.137, non-Hindus wishing to have darshan have to declare the same in a form.

● According to a memo issued by the state government in 2014, if anyone is found to be a non-Hindu, TTD authorities can ask them to fill the declaration form.

● The rule says there can be no objection to admission of non-Hindus into TTD temples, provided they furnish a declaration.

drawn, Opposition parties and Hindu rights activists have found fault with the statement, which they say is in complete reversal of the temple body's decades-old rule.

There have been several instances in the past wherein several foreign dignitaries, top politicians and bureaucrats have signed the declaration form during their visits to Tirumala temple, among them the then President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

Controversies have also arisen in the past several non-Hindu politicians did not sign the form. The TTD chairman himself had noted that neither

Congress chief Sonia Gandhi nor late Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy had ever given such a signed declaration during their visit to Tirumala.

"Citing a few names of noted personalities, I said AP CM, who will be presenting silk vastrams to Lord Venkateswara, need not sign the declaration form for non-Hindus because he has already expressed his faith in the Lord of Seven Hills", the chairman maintained in his statement.

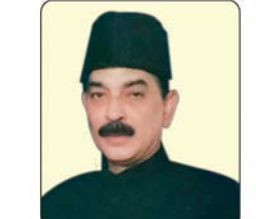
Royalaseema Porata Samithi convener P. Naveen Kumar Reddy opposed the statement. "Do Pedda Jeeyar Swamy

and Chinna Jeeyar Swamy of Tirumala temple, TTD priests, Mathadhipathis, Peetadhipathis and IAS officers in TTD support TTD chairman's statement? Or do they oppose it," he asked.

"Non-Hindus, who are in constitutional positions, must sign the declaration and stand as a role model for other people. In a similar way, Jagan Mohan Reddy, who did not sign the declaration when he was in the Opposition and even after becoming AP CM, should at least now sign the declaration and stand as a role model for continuing the decades-old rule in keeping with sentiments of Hindu devotees", Naveen Kumar Reddy said.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, C.S. Rangarajan, archaka of the Chilkur Balaji Devasthanam of Hyderabad said, "A properly constituted AP Dharmika Parishad, with eminent devotees truly representing the Hindu temple worship sampradaya, should be taking decisions on such matters".

### OBITUARY



**Syed Izzathullah**

Regret to inform the Sad demise of Syed Izzathullah Son of late Syed Majeedullah on the 19th of September 20. Request for prayers, may the Almighty grant him Paradise. Ameen!

### OH, GREAT MASTER | 24th ANNIVERSARY



**J. WILSON (1916-1996)**

Founder-Elder Zion prayer Hall, Sanathnagar, Founder-Palms Edn. Inst., Hyd., Royal Air-Force Personnel & a Retd. Officer, Indian Airlines. "Lead us, that we may lead; Feed us, that we may feed; Teach us, that we may teach; Fill us fully now, with all thy fullness". Inserted by: Management, Staff & Students of PATMOS Educational Institutions, Hyderabad. (CA-3423)

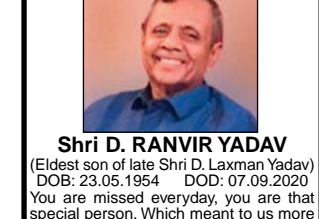
### 10th DAY CEREMONY



**K. LALITHA BAI**

DOB: 08-12-1942 DOD: 12-09-2020 You left us beautiful memories; your love is still our guide. Although we cannot see you, you're always at our side. 10th Day Ceremony on 21-09-2020 (Monday) at H.NO: 40/EWS, B.K. GUDA, S.R. NAGAR, HYDERABAD. INSERTED BY: FAMILY MEMBERS Ph: 9246506707

### 13th DAY CEREMONY



**Shri D. RANVIR YADAV**

(Elder son of late Shri D. Laxman Yadav) DOB: 23.05.1954 DOD: 07.09.2020 You are missed everyday, you are that special person. Which means to us more than anything else in the world. 13th Day ceremony, a memorial service for our beloved on September 21st (Monday) at 6:00 PM Surya Avenue Indian Airlines Colony, Trimighery, Secunderabad. From: DEORATTY FAMILY Radha, Rahul, Rohit, Reshma, Jaiveer, Indu, Sadhana, Yojana. Contact: 9949179998, 9179969774 (S/2021/D00612)

### Birthday Remembrance



**MANCHALA MATTHEW JAYA PRAKASH**

DOB: 21.09.1947 DOD: 25.04.2016 From Sunrise to Sunset every moment would have been more Wonderful if you were with us. Your Memory is stored in our Hearts & Minds. Inserted by: Wife & Manchala Family Ph: 9885903018

### IN LOVING MEMORY OF



**T. HEMALATHA**

Retd. Nursing Superintendent. D.O.B: 12-02-1953 D.O.D: 21-09-2018 Love is bond that death can not part. Gone from our lives, but still held in our hearts. Inserted by: Beloved Sister MARY, P. JEEVAN & Family, Sisters & Brothers Ph: 9396203071/9618579138

### 1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY



**Mrs. MAGDALENE JOSEPH**

St. Ann's High School, Sec'bad Kindergarten Section 25.06.1943 DOD: 21.09.2019 We miss you everyday. Deeply loved & Missed by: Son, Daughter, Grand Sons & Grand Daughter & Son-in-law Ph: 9848054289 (S/2021/D00608)

### 60th DEATH ANNIVERSARY



**SAMPATH BABIAH SAMPATH SHANTAMMA**

Inserted by: Sampath Sreekishan (Son), S. Bharathi (Daughter-in-law), Kamala Bai (Daughter), G. Balraj (Son-in-law), Grand Children & Great Grand Children. (S/2021/D00568)



## SHORT TAKES

INDIA COVID-19  
CASES CROSS  
54 LAKH MARKDC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 20

As overall cases of Coronavirus crossed 54 lakh in India with 92,605 fresh cases in last 24 hours, Minister of state for health Ashwini Kumar Choubey told Rajya Sabha on Sunday that the overall number of cases and deaths per million population due to Covid-19 in the country is much lower compared to similarly affected countries. On Sunday, 1,133 fresh deaths were recorded taking overall fatalities to 86,752.

Choubey said trying to develop herd immunity against Covid-19 in the absence of established pharmaceutical interventions may have disastrous consequences in terms of morbidity and mortality. In a written reply in Rajya Sabha, he said in the initial phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, countries that thought of developing herd immunity through a natural process of allowing the disease transmission had very high morbidity and mortality and therefore, "had to abandon the strategy".

The minister was responding to a question on whether state governments are following herd immunity measures to fight the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said "no significant or drastic mutations" have been found in strains of SARS-CoV-2 in India till now and added that ICMR has been conducting large-scale sequencing of nationally representative strains of SARS-CoV-2 virus collected over the past several months over different time-points and detailed results on mutations and evolution of the virus will be available in early October.

106-YEAR-OLD  
WOMAN RECOVERS  
FROM COVID-19SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 20

A 106-year-old woman from Dombivli has become the oldest survivor of Covid-19. The woman was discharged from the treatment facility set up by the Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation (KDMC) on Sunday after 10 days of hospitalisation.

At the time of discharge the lady happily showed her discharge certificate to the media and her family was also happy to see her getting discharged from hospital after recovering from the disease.

According to the women's daughter-in-law no hospital was initially ready to admit her due to her age following which she was admitted to Covid-19 facility set up by the KDMC at Savlaram Krida Sankul (sports complex), 10 days ago.

Later, she was admitted to the facility and doctors and medical teams there took proper care of her. She thanked the Centre's medical staff for giving her mother-in-law proper treatment.

MAHA BJP LEADER  
TESTS POSITIVE  
FOR COVID-19BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 20

After the two-day session of the state legislature held early this month, there has been a marked rise in the number of ministers and legislators testing positive for Coronavirus in Maharashtra. The latest to fall prey to the virus is senior BJP MLA Sudhir Mungantiwar, whereas five ministers in the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government have tested Covid-19 positive this month so far. Mungantiwar on Sunday informed on Twitter that he had been detected with Coronavirus infection. He said, "I have isolated myself after my reports come on Saturday evening." He further requested those who had come in contact with him over the past few days to get themselves tested.

The 58-year-old MLA from the Ballarpur constituency in Vidarbha was the finance and forest minister in the previous Devendra Fadnis-led BJP government.

On Saturday, minister of state for school education Bacchu Kadu had tested positive for the Coronavirus. The Prahar Janshakti Paksh leader, who is Shiv Sena's ally, shared the information on his official Twitter handle and urged all those who had come in touch with him in the last few days to get tested.

Yashwant Sinha vows UDA  
will work for a better Bihar

Ex-minister says it is reliable alternative for those suffering under NDA misrule

Former Union finance minister Yashwant Sinha, who returned to active politics six years after quitting the BJP, tells *Nayyar Azad* that his political front, the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), will provide a credible alternative to people who have suffered for 15 years because of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and NDA government's misrule in Bihar.

*Excerpts from an interview:*

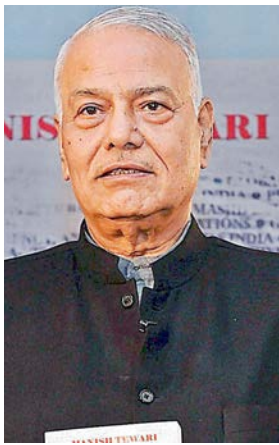
**What is the idea behind launching a new political front — the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) — ahead of the Assembly elections in Bihar?**

Our agenda is clear — *Badlo Bihar; Banao Behtar Bihar* (Change Bihar, Make a better Bihar). With

no industrialisation, lack of infrastructure and large-scale migration, the state has failed to make any progress in the last fifteen years. Available data shows that Bihar farmers and workers are the poorest in the country. Adding to that, there has been no employment generation despite tall claims by the state government. Corruption is rampant and the law and order scenario is worsening. Unless these are addressed and duly rectified you cannot think of development and industrialisation. There are attempts to mislead people and hide the government's failure ahead of Assembly elections.

**Now that you have returned to active politics, what are your immediate plans?**

I have been trying to for-



Yashwant Sinha

## DC Interview

mulate a front of various political parties and have also been in touch with leaders who are not part of the ruling alliance in the state. There are about 19

political parties, who have come on-board to take on to the present government. There are many who may approach us after we start distributing tickets but we have our benchmark. We will not join hands with any criminals in the state.

**How many seats are you planning to contest?**

The matter is being discussed with all partners in the United Democratic Alliance. We are planning to field candidates in all 243 seats and an announcement towards this would be made soon.

**What will be your poll agenda?**

Our United Democratic Alliance (UDA) is a movement for a better Bihar. Our effort is to get rid of present ills and initiate visionary schemes

for the overall development of the state. People want better law and order, corruption-free society, industrialisation, infrastructure development, quality education and health system.

**Almost all political parties have been holding virtual rallies in the state. Have you been in touch with people?**

We have covered almost 90 per cent of the districts and the message has by and large gone to the people regarding our political front. We will continue to meet people and take their feedback. We are committed to provide a credible alternative to the people of the state, who have suffered for 15 years under Chief Minister Nitish Kumar NDA government's misrule.

NIA finds tunnel  
in house of  
accused in WBRAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, SEPT. 20

A day after arresting nine Al-Qaeda members from West Bengal and Kerala for their alleged terror plot nationwide, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has zeroed in on their connections with an Indian affiliate of the global terror group after detecting their contacts and communication through social networking platforms.

On scanning the cell-phones of the nine accused, the NIA found that they were members of a WhatsApp group titled Ghazwat-ul-Hind, which had around 22 members, official sources told this newspaper. All the conversations were deleted before September 19, sources added.

The name of the WhatsApp group of the accused looks similar to that of the Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, an Indian affiliate of the Al-Qaeda, which was found by the central intelligence agencies to be active in Jammu and Kashmir in the past two

three years, a senior NIA officer disclosed on condition of anonymity. There might be a link between the two, he added.

The central agency also blew the lid off the terror module's communication channel via the Dark Web. It was used by two of the accused, Murshid Hasan and Mosharaf Hossein, to maintain contacts with their handlers in Pakistan, the sources added.

Meanwhile, the NIA has unearthed a long tunnel during a search at the residence of Abu Sufiyan, one of the accused, in Murshidabad of West Bengal. The concrete tunnel was found at backyard of his home at Kalinagar village in Rainagar of the district from where he was caught early on Saturday during a raid.

The NIA suspects that the tunnel was built to stockpile arms, ammunition and explosives. It has also learnt that the 44-year-old tailor, who also used to work as a lathe machine operator for extra income, planned to escape after anticipating his arrest.

Forces successfully  
curb Pak infiltrationDC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 20

Security forces have not just managed to check Chinese movement along the LAC in the Ladakh sector but have had huge success in containing infiltration along the Indo-Pak border, according to a detailed analysis of data.

Security forces managed to keep infiltration low even during the summer months which is the peak time for infiltration by subversive elements from the Pakistan side.

In March, three infiltrations were made which rose to 23 in April of which 18 were successful. Following this, corrective measures were taken by the security forces while

ensured that in May only eight infiltration attempts were made and four succeeded.

There was no infiltration attempt in June in the wake of increased security deployment along the Indo-Pak border.

"It is largely due to the fact that security forces could stop major infiltration attempts during the peak summer that a direct impact is being witnessed on the security situation in the Valley. Since we could stop militants from coming in, the number of terror incidents has also witnessed a drop," a senior security official said.

Officials claimed that a multi-pronged and more stringent strategy was adopted.

home affairs told this newspaper that talks with the NSCN (I-M) have been completed on all issues.

Pointing out that the government had assured that the option was open for talks on the demands of a flag and Constitution even after signing of the accord, security sources said that NSCN (I-M) leadership had been told categorically about the deadline of September to conclude the peace process.



Members of various farmers organisations burn an effigy in Amritsar on Sunday during a protest over agriculture related ordinances.

— PTI

BJD opposes farm Bills, says they fail  
to protect small, marginal farmersAKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 20

Joining the bandwagon of the Opposition parties in the state, Odisha's ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD), which in the past extended its support to the NDA on the floor of the Parliament to pass many "controversial" bills, on Sunday opposed the farm Bills moved in the Rajya Sabha by Union agriculture and farmer welfare minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

The regional party said that the two legislations — the Farmers' and Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 — fail to provide adequate protection to small and marginal farmers and sharecroppers.

"The farm Bills are largely good in intent but the problem is in implementations and there is a possibility of cartelisation. Are the bills only for big traders?" asked BJD MP Amar Patnaik in Rajya Sabha, urging the Union government to consider sending these two

bills to the Select Committee.

The Farmers' and Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020 were passed in Lok Sabha on September 17.

The passage of these Bills in Lok Sabha saw protests across the nation with Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal resigning from the Union Cabinet on Thursday in protest against the "anti-farmer" Bills.

The Sunday's Biju Janata Dal opposition comes as a stark contrast against the regional party's unflinching support to the NDA on previous occasions.

In the past the Biju Janata Dal supported the Narendra Modi government in passing the Goods and Services Tax Bill, 2017; Triple Talaq Bill, 2019; Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019; and Jammu and Kashmir (Reorganisation) Bill, 2019.

'Oppn's conduct  
in RS shameful'

New Delhi, Sept. 20: The top brass of the Central government on Sunday flayed the Opposition over its members' "unruly conduct" in Rajya Sabha during the passage of the two farm Bills, condemning their behaviour as "extremely shameful" and unprecedented in Parliament's history.

Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Prakash Javadekar, Pralhad Joshi, Piyush Goyal, Thawarchand Gehlot and Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi held a press conference to hit out at Opposition members, with Singh asserting that such conduct was not expected in a healthy democracy.

Singh also reassured the farmers on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC). "I want to assure farmers that minimum support price and APMC will continue. These will never be removed at any cost," he said.

MP to hold virtual  
Assembly sessionRABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, SEPT. 20

In a first of its kind in the country, Madhya Pradesh Assembly is going to hold a physical-cum-virtual session on Monday.

The one-day monsoon session of the house is scheduled to be held with physical presence of a minimum number of members, as required for quorum, while other members will take part in the proceedings online, state legislative Assembly secretary A.P. Singh said on Sunday.

This decision was taken at an all party meeting here keeping in view the worsening pandemic situation in MP, which has so far claimed 1,903 lives.

It has also been decided to curtail the three-day session to a single day, assembly speaker Rameswar Sharma said.

According to Sharma, as many as 57 members, chosen by their respective

parties, are scheduled to be physically present in the house to take part in the proceedings.

The government has made provisions for other members to take part in the business of the house online from National Informatics Centres (NIC) in their respective districts. "Since it will be difficult to enforce social distancing during the proceedings of the house, political parties have been asked to select a minimum number of legislators to be present in the house to take part in the business", the speaker said.

Necessary financial and legislative businesses are scheduled to be completed after mentions and tributes to departed souls are taken up when the house meets for its one-day monsoon session on Monday. Total 750 questions had been received from members for discussion in the house during Question Hour.

'WATERSHED  
MOMENT' FOR  
AGRI SECTOR: PM  
ON FARM BILLS

New Delhi, Sept. 20: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday described the passage of two farm sector bills as a "watershed moment" in the history of Indian agriculture, asserting that they will ensure a complete transformation of the farm sector and empower crores of farmers.

In a series of tweets after Rajya Sabha passed the bills by voice vote amid din created by protesting Opposition members, Modi said these proposed laws will liberate farmers from numerous adversities as he noted that peasants were for decades bound by various constraints and bullied by middlemen. He again assured farmers that the existing government support system for them will continue.

Modi asserted, "I said it earlier and I say it once again: System of MSP will remain. Government procurement will continue. "We are here to serve our farmers. We will do everything possible to support them and ensure a better life for their coming generations." — PTI

SUKHBIR BADAL  
URGES PREZ NOT  
TO GIVE ASSENT

Chandigarh, Sept. 20: SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal on Sunday urged the President not to sign the farm Bills, passed by the Rajya Sabha, and also requested him that they be returned to Parliament for reconsideration. The Shiromani Akali Dal chief said the passage of the Bills marks a "sad day" for the "country's millions and for democracy". "Democracy is not majority oppression but about consultation, conciliation and consensus," Badal said.

"All three democratic virtues were ignored in today's proceedings. This distortion can only be corrected with a presidential intervention," he said. — PTI

## PEACE | TALKS

Centre sticks to stand on which agreement was made, is open for talks after signing of accord  
Govt rejects NSCN-IM's demand for flag, constitutionMANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, SEPT. 20

The government in its ongoing informal talks with the NSCN (I-M) has made it clear that it was not going to concede to the demand for a separate flag and Constitution.

Asserting that the government was going to stick to its stand on which an agreement was made on October 31, 2019, security sources in the ministry of

home affairs told this newspaper that talks with the NSCN (I-M) have been completed on all issues.

Pointing out that the government had assured that the option was open for talks on the demands of a flag and Constitution even after signing of the accord, security sources said that NSCN (I-M) leadership had been told categorically about the deadline of September to conclude the peace process.

● **SECURITY SOURCES** say the NSCN (I-M) started becoming uncomfortable with Nagaland Governor and interlocutor R.N. Ravi soon after his hard-hitting letter to the state govt about 'parallel governments' being run by underground groups and accusing them of extortion.

● **IN NAGALAND** demands for an early resolution have been growing from civil society organisations and tribal heads.

Admitting that a joint council meeting of the NSCN (I-M) held at its Hebron camp in Dimapur recently reiterated the

demand for a separate flag and Constitution to be the part of the final settlement, security sources said that the issue came up

for discussion during the ongoing informal talks through the officers of the Intelligence Bureau but it was subsequently turned down.

Security sources said that the NSCN (I-M) started becoming uncomfortable with the Nagaland Governor and interlocutor R.N. Ravi soon after his hard-hitting letter to the state government about "parallel governments" being run by underground

groups and accusing them of extortion. It is significant that Ravi's letter came after reports of corruption and extortion started creating unrest in the civil society of Nagaland.

Though, now NSCN-IM has claimed that the talks were running smoothly, in Nagaland demands for an early resolution have been growing from civil society organisations and tribal heads. All these bodies

have also made it clear that a final agreement without a separate flag and constitution is acceptable to the public.

The conglomerate of seven insurgent groups indigenous to Nagaland — the Naga National Political Group (NNPG) has already announced that they have concluded the peace-deal with the Centre and now prepared to sign the peace accord any day.



## IN BRIEF

**Canadian ex-PM  
Turner dies at 91**

**Toronto:** John Turner, a Liberal party politician who served stints as Canada's justice and finance ministers before a very brief turn as the country's 17th prime minister, has died at age 91, his family reported Saturday. Marc Kealey, a former aide speaking on behalf of Turner's relatives as a family friend, said Turner died peacefully in his sleep at home in Toronto on Friday night. Turner failed to live up to the great expectations of his early career, serving as prime minister for just 79 days in 1988.

**4 terrorists  
killed in Pak**

**Islamabad:** At least four terrorists were killed by security forces in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, the Army said. The security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in the central Makran range of Awaran district on Saturday, the Army said in a statement. "Terrorist hideouts including logistic base destroyed while (a) large cache of arms, ammunition and communication equipment recovered," it said. Multiple hideouts and administrative camps of terrorists have also been destroyed, it said.

**Five injured in  
Houthi attack**

**Calao:** Five civilians were injured when a military projectile launched by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis hit a village in Saudi Arabia's southern Jazan region, state media reported on Saturday. State news agency SPA quoted a civil defence spokesman as saying three cars were damaged in the border village and that the five civilians suffered minor injuries from shrapnel. There was no confirmation of the attack by the Houthi group, which has been battling a Saudi-led coalition in Yemen for more than five years.

**Afghan airstrikes  
kill 24 civilians**

**Kabul:** Government airstrikes in the north of Afghanistan killed 24 civilians, including children, and wounded six others, witnesses said on Sunday. The two witnesses said that most of those killed in Saturday's airstrikes, which struck the village of Sayed Ramazan in northern Kunduz province, were civilians. The Khanabad district in the province where the village is located is Taliban controlled. The Afghan Defence Ministry, however, said the airstrikes killed 30 Taliban fighters, but added an investigation was being held into claims that civilians were among those killed.

**POMPEO ENDS  
LATAM TOUR  
IN COLOMBIA**

**Bogota, Sept. 20:** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Saturday wrapped up a tour of four South American countries — three of them neighbours of Venezuela, whose socialist government is under intense US pressure.

After a meeting with Colombian President Iván Duque on Saturday, the two vowed to deepen ties — including US investment in the country's struggling economy — and Pompeo praised Colombia's tough stance against Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro. Pompeo said Colombia's backing of opposition leader Juan Guaidó "and the democratic transition for a sovereign Venezuela free of malign influence from Cuba, from Russia, from Iran, is incredibly valued". "You are a true leader for the region and the dignity of all of its people," he said at a news conference.

In a separate statement, Pompeo announced an additional \$348 million in aid for Venezuelans, including the some 5 million who have left the crisis-ravaged nation.

His office said that new funding now brings the total amount of US humanitarian and development assistance toward the Venezuela crisis to more than \$1.2 billion since 2017.

Pompeo's three-day trip to the region comes as the US presidential election nears, with Florida — which has hosted an expanding Venezuelan diaspora — a key battleground. Duque highlighted a report by the UN's top human rights body accusing Maduro's government of crimes against humanity, including torture and killings carried by security forces.

# Thai protesters call for royal reform with 'People's Plaque'

## The mass student-led rally that began Saturday is the largest this year

**Bangkok, Sept. 20:** Anti-government demonstrators occupying a historic field in the Thai capital on Sunday installed a plaque symbolising the country's transition to democracy to replace the original one that was mysteriously ripped and stolen three years ago, as they vowed to press on with calls for new elections and reform of the monarchy. The mass student-led rally that began on Saturday is the largest in a series of protests this year, with thousands camping overnight at Sanam Luang field near the royal palace. On Sunday, they began marching to an undisclosed location, saying they want to hand over a petition to the king's adviser.

A group of activists drilled a hole in front of a makeshift stage in Sanam Luang and laid down a round brass plaque, commemorating a 1932 revolution that changed Thailand from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. "At the dawn of September 20, here is where the people proclaim that this country belongs to the people," read part of the inscription on the plaque. In April 2017, the original plaque vanished from Bangkok's Royal Plaza and was replaced by one praising the monarchy.

"The nation does not belong to only one person, but belongs to us all. Therefore, I would like to ask holy spirits to stay with us and bless the people's victory," student leader Parit "Penguin" Chirawak said.

Another activist, Panusaya Sithijirawattanukul, said their demands do not propose getting rid of the monarchy. "They are proposals with good intentions to make the institution of the monarchy remain graciously above the people under democratic



Student Union of Thailand spokesperson Panusaya "Rung" Sithijirawattanukul (C) makes the three-fingered Hunger Games salute as she and other anti-government protesters take part in a pro-democracy rally in Bangkok on Sunday. Thousands of protesters cheered as activists installed a new plaque declaring that Thailand "belongs to the people" — the boldest show of defiance in a youth-led movement which has questioned the unassailable monarchy's role in the kingdom.

rule." Still, such calls took the nation by surprise.

Protesters' demands seek to limit the king's powers, establish tighter controls on palace finances and allow open discussion of the monarchy. Their boldness was unprecedented, as the monarchy is considered sacrosanct in Thailand with a harsh law that mandates a three- to 15-year prison term for defaming it. Organisers had predicted that as many as 50,000 people would take part in the weekend's protest, but AP reporters estimated 20,000 people were present. "By holding their protest on Sanam Luang, the protesters have won a significant victory," said Tyrell Haberborn, a Thai studies scholar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

— AP

## More than 300 detained at Minsk women's march

**Kyiv (Ukraine), Sept. 20:** Police in the capital of Belarus cracked down sharply Saturday on a women's protest march demanding the authoritarian president's resignation, arresting more than 300 including an elderly woman who has become a symbol of the six weeks of protest that have roiled the country.

More than 2,000 women took part in the march in Minsk. Such anti-government marches have become a regular feature of the unprecedented wave of

large, persistent protests that began after the Aug. 9 presidential election. Officials said President Alexander Lukashenko won a sixth term in office with 80 per cent support in that vote but opponents and some poll workers say the results were rigged.

During Lukashenko's 26 years in office, he has consistently repressed opposition and independent news media. Large demonstrations have been held in cities throughout the country and some Sunday protests in Minsk have

attracted crowds estimated at up to 200,000 people.

The human rights group Viasna said more than 320 people were arrested in Saturday's march. "There were so many people detained that lines formed at the prisoner transports," Viasna member Valentin Stepanovich said.

Among those detained was Nina Bahinskaya, a 73-year-old former geologist whose defiance and tart tongue have made her a popular figure in the protests.

— AP

## IRAN DISMISSES US EFFORTS AT UN SANCTIONS

**Tehran, Sept. 20:** Iran dismissed US efforts to restore all UN sanctions on the country as mounting economic pressure from Washington pushed the local currency down to its lowest level ever on Sunday.

Iran's currency dropped to 272,500 to the US dollar at money exchange shops across Tehran. The rial has lost more than 30 per cent of its value to the dollar since June as sweeping US sanctions on Iran continue to crush its ability to sell oil globally.

Iran's currency was at 32,000 rials to the dollar at the time of Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which was signed by the Obama administration but which the Trump administration pulled the US out of.

As the currency plummeted, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh slammed the Trump administration's declaration Saturday that all UN sanctions against Iran have been reimposed because Tehran is not complying with the nuclear deal. The US move has been rejected as illegal by most of the rest of the world.

— AP

## Scientists identify new drug with potential to mitigate severe Covid

**Los Angeles, Sept. 20:** Scientists have found that a new drug has the potential to prevent or mitigate severe consequences of Covid-19, an advance that may lead to the development of novel therapeutics for the Coronavirus infection.

The researchers, including those from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in the United States, assessed how the drug 4-Phenylbutiric acid (4-PBA) modulates the inflammatory response produced in severe cases of Covid-19 in animal models. According to the study, published in the journal *Cytokine and Growth Factors Review*, the inflammatory process identified in severe cases of Covid-19 causes an uncontrolled and excessive release of cytokines — molecules in charge of organising the body's defence.

The scientists said this excessive release could even trigger blood vessels to become hyper permeable and also lead to multi-organ failure. They added that controlling such a cytokine "storm" is essential to treating the severe forms of the disease.

"When cells are stressed by infection, they call the

## French min among 13K new infections

**Paris, Sept. 20:** Coronavirus infections tipped the scales again in France on Saturday with nearly 13,500 new infections in 24 hours. Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire is among them. He announced on Friday in a tweet that he had tested positive with no symptoms and was working during self-isolation.

The high-profile Le Maire is the fourth French minister to test positive since March. It was the second day in a row that new Covid-19 cases in France were above 13,000. The French health agency said Friday's big jump was the result of one hospital in the Essonne region south of Paris

belatedly reporting numerous cases. It wasn't clear whether that kind of add-on effect was at play on Saturday.

For health authorities, it is clear that France needs to worry about the spread of the Coronavirus, with over 1,000 clusters detected. There have been 31,274 deaths since the start of the pandemic — among the highest death tolls in Europe — and 26 deaths in the last 24 hours. In Paris, the Prefecture de Police warned that there will be no more tolerance for bars and restaurants where rules to counter the virus aren't respected.

— AP

cytokines, and the more stressed they are, the more persistent they become, provoking this uncontrolled inflammation. Hence, one possible treatment for Covid-19 is to reduce cellular stress," said study co-author Ivan Duran from the University of Malaga in Spain.

Duran said repurposing the 4-PBA anti-stress drug, approved for clinical use against other diseases could modulate such cellular stress, which is also present in pathologies like diabetes or aging, which are classified as Covid-19 risk factors.

— PTI

## UP TO £10,000 FINE FOR VIRUS BREACH IN UK

**London, Sept. 20:** The UK government on Sunday announced new rules, which make it a legal requirement for people with Coronavirus to quarantine, with fines of up to £10,000 imposed on repeat breaches of the stipulated 14-day self-isolation period to control the spread of the virus.

Downing Street said the new requirements, which will be enforced from September 28, also come with support payments of £500 for those on lower incomes who cannot work from home, such as construction workers, and stand to lose income as a result of the mandatory self-isolation due to Covid.

The rules come in as Prime Minister Boris Johnson considers further tougher measures after he warned that the UK may now be seeing a "second wave coming in" of the deadly virus, with the number of cases continuing to rise.

— PTI

## Don to nominate woman judge to Supreme Court

**Washington, Sept. 20:** President Donald Trump has said he will next week nominate a woman to replace the late US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, escalating a political row with the Democrats over her successor weeks before the presidential election.

"I will be putting forth a nominee next week. I could say most likely it would be a woman. I think I can say that. If somebody were to ask me now I would say that a woman would be in first place," Trump told supporters at an election rally in North Carolina on Saturday.

Ginsburg, a history-making jurist, feminist icon and a champion of women's rights and social justice, died of cancer on Friday. She was 87. She was the second woman ever to serve as a justice on the nation's highest court. Trump said he is within his rights to fill the vacancy in the US Supreme Court, a move that has infuriated Democrats, who fear Republicans will vote to lock in a decades-long conservative majority on the country's top court.

"We have great respect for the process. This has happened numerous times and every time there was a nominee as you know. There's been many occasions where frankly it turned out to be during a presidential year," he told reporters. "I think we're going to start the process extremely soon."

● **TRUMP SAID** he is within his rights to fill the vacancy in the US Supreme Court, a move that has infuriated Democrats, who fear Republicans will vote to lock in a decades-long conservative majority on the country's top court.

We will have a nominee very soon," he said, adding that there about 45 people on his list, but he does have a "short list" for potential nominees.

During the rally, Trump asked his Republican supporters whether the nominee should be a man or a woman. The crowd cheered loudly for a female candidate. "That's a very accurate poll (crowd reaction) because that's the way I feel. I actually like women much more than I like men. I have to say. It would be a woman. A very talented, very intelligent woman," the president said, adding that a final name had not been zeroed in on. He also discussed how he has the power to fill the vacant seat in the Supreme Court where justices serve for life or until they choose to retire. "So, Article 2 of the Constitution says that the President shall nominate justices of the Supreme Court. I don't think it can be any more clear, can it?" he underlined.

— PTI

## Nawaz, Zardari vow to send govt packing

**SHAFQAT ALI | DC  
ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 20**

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and former President Asif Ali Zardari Sunday vowed to send the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI)-led government packing.

Speaking at an opposition's All Parties Conference (APC) Nawaz Sharif, who is in London and has been declared absconder by the Pakistani courts, said the primary reason for the current problems were those people who 'hijacked the people's mandate by putting inexperienced people in power' in 2018.

He said Pakistan had become a laboratory of "such experiments" and every child knows that no prime minister has been allowed to complete five years in power.

"It's not even taken into account that the democratic structure of the country is demolished due to such tactics and the public loses faith in the system," he said marking his political comeback after more than a year.

The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) supremo said that democracy was in danger and he agrees with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazal) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman that "we need to make this conference purposeful or people will be disappointed. If we don't do it (take a step) today, when will we?"

He also repeated opposition's allegation that the

## SHEHBAZ SON SUMMONED FOR INTERROGATION

**Islamabad, Sept. 20:** Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Sunday summoned Salman Shehbaz, son of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) President Shehbaz Sharif, for questioning about a massive deposit he made to an employee's account.

Salman has been summoned on September 25 at the FIA office in Lahore. One of the topics he will be questioned about will be a Rs9.2 billion deposit he made into an employee's account. Salman already has warrants out for his arrest in a money laundering case.

National Accountability Bureau (NAB), with the connivance of PTI, was carrying out only "selective accountability".

Former President Asif Ali Zardari, in his address said that they will send the government packing to restore democracy and save the country. Foundation of a country is laid on democracy, after which prosperity follows, he added. Zardari thanked Nawaz for accepting PPP's invitation and said that Benazir Bhutto signed charter of democracy with Nawaz and both parties cooperated to remove Musharraf from office.

— AFP

## COVID | CURBS

## The UK govt warns that a 2nd nationwide lockdown could be imminent as virus cases surge Shut UK nightclubs worry about not seeing light of day

**London, Sept. 20:** Inside a former London newspaper printing factory turned nightclub, a roaming urban fox has replaced throngs of dancers shut out by the coronavirus pandemic.

Six months after Covid-19 turned off the music and lights at London's Printworks and similar dance venues across Britain, there is no knowing when they will reopen.

The UK government on Friday warned that a second nationwide lockdown could be imminent as virus cases surge once more.

Britain has been the worst-hit country in Europe

by the pandemic, with nearly 42,000 deaths from the virus. Numbers of new cases are meanwhile reaching levels not seen since April, with some attributed to illegal raves.

"We're fighting for our survival," Printworks' co-founder Simeon Aldred said from the nightclub that just a few months ago welcomed up to 5,000 clubbers an evening.

Aldred is unsure whether he and business partner Bradley Thompson will have to let go 400 staff working across all their venues or plan for reopenings, possibly early next year.

"We've been burning our own (cash) resources," he said, while deploring what he sees as a lack of government visibility.

"It won't go back exactly the way it was but I think people will still want to come together, eat together, pray together (and) dance together," Peter Marks, the chief executive of Deltic, one of Britain's largest nightclub groups with 53 venues, fears bankruptcy.

"We've come from a very successful healthy company to one brought to its knees," he said, noting the closures are still costing it millions of pounds in rent and other

● **THE BRITISH** government has been paying the bulk of wages for millions of workers during the pandemic. However its furlough scheme is set to end in October, with analysts forecasting a surge in unemployment as a result.

fixed costs. This is despite government support with paying staff wages and thanks to tax cuts during the pandemic.

According to the Night Time Industries Associati-

on, UK nightclubs together with bars, pubs, restaurants and theatres generate 66 billion (71 billion euros, \$84 billion) annually and employ about 1.3 million people.

While the British government has been paying the bulk of wages for millions of workers during the pandemic, its furlough scheme is set to end in October, with analysts forecasting a surge in unemployment as a result. "We know this is an incredibly difficult time for nightclubs, but they will need to remain closed for now in line with current scientific advice to control the virus," said a government

statement.

"We continue to engage with industry representatives and listen to their concerns." While acknowledging the risks, Marks believes the clubs can reopen safely. "We don't want to cause a spike (in virus cases) but we think we can have a way to come back with protocols to reduce the risks," he said.

Britain is meanwhile not alone in shutting nightclubs, with Berlin's famous Berghain venue transforming into a sound exhibition.

In the UK, for artists like DJ and music producer Nabihah Iqbal, the pandemic has had a "catastrophic

effect". "Normally I'm really busy touring and playing all around and now everything has stopped," Iqbal said from her home as she mixed tunes for radio inspired by music from around the world.

Last week, she performed in a bar for the first time since March but fears the return could be short-lived given the current virus spike in Britain.

DJ Shosh and her group 24H Garage Girls meanwhile lament at missing out on the chance to perform at the famous Glastonbury music festival.

— AFP



IN BRIEF

Rising sea creates Fiji ghost towns

**Suva:** There's no escaping the reality that the Earth's temperature is rising, however the effects of climate change are felt more keenly in some parts of the world. The Pacific island nation of Fiji produces less than 1% of the globe's carbon emissions, yet rising sea levels, coastal erosion and intense storm surges are having a dramatic effect on the country. Villages near the sea are becoming abandoned as creeping tides submerge homes and resources, forcing residents to move inland to higher, safer ground.

Dominica shaken by gas explosion

**Castries, St. Lucia:** An explosion of steam and gas in the mountains of the remote, jungle-clad Caribbean island of Dominica has shaken residents, who are fearful it is a harbinger for renewed seismic activity in a nation that is home to nine volcanoes. The Dominica Office of Disaster Management and the Seismic Research team said the activity in the Soufriere area on Wednesday was likely the result of a landslide, followed by subsequent geological adjustments. In a statement, the office's coordinator Fitzroy Pascal said there had been no volcanic earthquakes recorded in the area associated with "the strong steam degassing." "It is possible that the area may still be unstable and that additional landslides may occur with continued steam degassing," Pascal said. Dominica last suffered major phreatic or steam-drive volcanic eruptions in 1997, and before that in 1880. Soufriere resident Lynthia Bellot said that residents were worried by the activity.

Law to save poor from pollution

**New Jersey:** A landmark environmental justice bill stalled for over a decade became law in New Jersey on Friday. Signed by Democratic Governor Phil Murphy, the legislation seeks to curb new sources of pollution, including sewage treatment plants, landfills and incinerators that have affected certain communities more than others. Seeing the law enacted was a long-fought dream for Ana Baptista, an assistant professor at The New School in New York City. "When this bill was finally passed, I had a moment where I just had to shed a tear of disbelief," said Baptista, who grew up in Newark, where the polluted Ironbound neighbourhood is located. The Ironbound is home to New Jersey's largest garbage incinerator and more than 100 sites ironboundcc.org/our-community contaminated by dangerous chemicals, including dioxin and pesticides. The passage of New Jersey's law comes as the Democratic Party has elevated the issue of environmental justice, tying it to proposed policies to combat climate change and economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. Neighbourhoods like the Ironbound populated by low-income, immigrant or minority communities have historically faced disproportionate environmental hazards.

WILDERNESS THE SIZE OF MEXICO LOST IN 13 YRS

**Queensland, Sept. 20:** Wilderness across the planet is disappearing on a huge scale, according to a new study that found human activities had converted an area the size of Mexico from virtually intact natural landscapes to heavily modified ones in just 13 years. The loss of 1.9m square kilometres (735,000 sq miles) of intact ecosystems would have "profound implications" for the planet's biodiversity, the study's authors said. Using mostly satellite imagery, 17 scientists across six countries examined the human footprint across the globe and how it had changed between 2000 and 2013. Almost 20% of the earth's surface had deteriorated, the study found, while human pressure had eased on only six per cent of the planet. Russia, Canada, Brazil, and Australia held the largest intact areas, together responsible for 60% of the world's most untouched places. Some 1.1m sq km (425,000 sq miles) of wilderness identified from imagery in 2000 had some human impact 13 years later. Tropical savannahs and grasslands lost the most area to human pressure, the study, published in the journal *One Earth*, found.



The Bobcat Fire burns in Juniper Hills, California as firefighters work to put out the flames. The Bobcat Fire erupted on September 6 in the Angeles National Forest and has scorched 91,017 acres at 15% containment, with full containment estimated by October 30. — AFP

Homes burned as winds push California fire into desert floor

Blaze in mountains northeast of LA for two weeks, evacuation ordered

**Juniper Hills (US), Sept. 20:** Strong afternoon winds intensified a wildfire burning for nearly two weeks in mountains northeast of Los Angeles, prompting authorities to issue new evacuation orders on Saturday for desert communities that lost some homes a day earlier. Meanwhile, officials were investigating the death of a firefighter on the lines of another Southern California wildfire that erupted earlier this month from a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender. The death occurred on Thursday in San Bernardino National Forest as crews battled the El Dorado Fire about 75 miles (120 km) east of Los Angeles, the US Forest Service said in a statement. In northern Los Angeles County, firefighters focused on protecting homes Saturday as increasingly erratic winds pushed the Bobcat Fire toward foothill communities in the Antelope Valley after churning all the way across the San Gabriel Mountains. An evacuation order was issued Saturday for all residents in that zone as the fire burned toward Wrightwood, a mountain community of 4,000, said fire spokesman Andrew Mitchell. The fire grew to 142 square miles (368 square km) on Saturday when winds pushed the flames into Juniper Hills. Some residents fled as blowing embers sparked spot fires, hitting some homes but sparing others. Bridget Lensing feared her family's house was lost on Friday after seeing on Twitter that a neighbour's house three doors down went up in flames. The house stood when she made her way back Saturday afternoon but her neighbours' houses in the remote community were burned to the ground. "Everything around us is gone," she said. The extent of the destruction in the area about 50 miles (80 km) northeast of downtown LA wasn't immediately clear. But, Los Angeles

County park officials said the blaze destroyed the nature centre at Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area, a geological wonder that attracts 130,000 visitors per year. No injuries were reported. On the south side of the Bobcat Fire, firefighters continued to protect Mount Wilson. County park officials said the blaze destroyed the nature centre at Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area, a geological wonder that attracts some 130,000 visitors per year. No injuries were reported. On the south side of the Bobcat Fire, firefighters continued to protect Mount Wilson, which overlooks greater Los Angeles and has a historic observatory founded more than a century ago and numerous broadcast antennas serving Southern California. The fire that started September 6 had already doubled in size over the

last week. It is 15% contained. Officials said the fire has been challenging because it is burning in areas that have not burned in decades, and because the firestorms across California have limited resources. There were about 1,660 firefighters on the lines. The name of the firefighter killed in the nearby El Dorado Fire was being withheld until family members are notified. The body was escorted down the mountain in a procession of first-responder vehicles. No other information was released about the circumstances of the death. A statement from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said it was the 26th death involving wildfires besieging the state. A new blaze sparked by a vehicle that caught fire was growing in wilderness outside Palm Springs. To the north, a fire burning for nearly a month in Sequoia National Forest roared to life again Friday and prompted evacuation orders for the central California mountain communities of Silver City and Mineral King. More than 7,900 wildfires have burned more than 5,468 square miles (14,164 square km) in California this year, including many since a mid-August barrage of dry lightning ignited parched vegetation. The El Dorado Fire has burned more than 34 square miles (89 square km) and was 59% contained, with 10 buildings destroyed and six damaged. Cal Fire said earlier this month that the El Dorado Fire was ignited September 5 when a couple, their young children and someone there to record video staged the baby gender reveal at El Dorado Ranch Park at the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains. The device was set off in a field and quickly ignited dry grass. The couple frantically tried to use bottled water to extinguish the flames and called 911. Authorities have not released the identities of the couple. — AP

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Welcome to the jungle: Plants overrun Chinese apartment

**Beijing, Sept. 20:** An experimental green housing project in a Chinese megacity promised prospective residents life in a "vertical forest", with manicured gardens on every balcony. All 826 apartments were sold out by April this year, according to the project's estate agent, but instead of a modern eco-paradise, the towers look like the set of a desolate, post-apocalyptic film. The problem? The mosquitoes love the plants too. Only a handful of families have moved into Chengdu's Qiyi City Forest Garden because of an infestation, state media have reported. The project in the southwestern city was built in 2018, with every private balcony designed to provide space for plants to grow, according to local media reports. Without any tenants to care for them, the eight towers have been overrun by their own plants — and invaded by mosquitoes. Plants have almost entirely swallowed up some neglected balconies, with branches hanging over railings all over the towers, footage shot this month showed. Paper was seen taped over some of the windows that were still visible

behind the overgrown plants. But some residents appeared to have braved the mosquitoes — a handful of balconies had pruned plants and outdoor furniture, and lights turned on inside the apartments. Only about 10 families have moved in, according to the state-run *Global Times* newspaper. — AFP



Plants at Chengdu's Qiyi City Forest Garden have overrun the towers. — AFP

Dismay as chunk of Greenland's ice cap breaks off

**Copenhagen, Sept. 20:** An enormous chunk of Greenland's ice cap has broken off in the far northeastern Arctic, a development that scientists say is evidence of rapid climate change. The glacier section that broke off is 110 square kilometers (42.3 square miles). It came off of the fjord called Nioghalvfjordsfjorden, which is roughly 80 kilometers (50 miles) long and 20 kilometers (12 miles) wide, the National Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland said on Monday. A trove of internal documents show oil companies knew from at least the 1960s that burning oil and other fossil fuels would cause the global temperature to rise, triggering heatwaves and causing the seas to rise due to rapidly melting glaciers. Charleson's lawsuit claims that by obscuring these findings and funding a campaign of misinformation, the oil companies are liable for damage caused due to deception. — Agencies



Photo shows surface melt water rushing along the surface of the Greenland ice sheet through a supra-glacial stream channel, in South of Ilulissat, Greenland. — AP

shelf has lost 160 square miles (62 square miles), an area nearly twice that of Manhattan in New York, since 1999. "We should be very concerned about what appears to be progressive disintegration at the Arctic's largest remaining shelf.," said GEUS professor Jason Box. "Another massive chunk of vital sea ice has fallen into the ocean," said Greenpeace spokeswoman Laura Meller who is aboard the organisation's ship Arctic Sunrise at the edge of the sea ice. "This is yet another alarm bell being rung by the climate crisis in a rapidly heating Arctic." Last week, Ruth Mottram, an ice scientist at the Danish Meteorological Institute in Copenhagen, said, "again this year, the ice sheet has lost more ice than has been added in the form of snow." "What is thought-provoking is that if we had seen this meltdown 30 years ago, we would have called it extreme. So in recent years, we have become accustomed to a high meltdown." — AP

Storm Beta now crawling toward Texas, Louisiana

**Oklahoma City, Sept. 20:** Tropical Storm Beta on Sunday was making a slow crawl to the shores of Texas and Louisiana, casting worries about heavy rain, flooding and storm surge across the Gulf Coast. Beta was one of three named storms swirling in the Atlantic basin during an exceptionally busy hurricane season. If the system makes landfall in Texas — which forecasters predict it will either late Monday or early Tuesday — it would be the ninth named storm to make landfall in the continental US in 2020. Colorado State hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach said that would tie a record set in 1916. Coastal communities began preparing for Beta over the weekend, with both the city of Galveston and Galveston County on Saturday issued voluntary evacuation orders. The city of Seabrook to the north of Galveston did, too. Mayor Pro Tem Craig Brown said in a statement that high tides and up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) of expected rainfall would leave roads impassable, especially along the city's west end and low-lying areas. County Judge Mark Henry said during a Saturday news conference that his concern is also based on rising waters creating a storm surge and that a mandatory evacuation is not expected. "If you can survive in your home for three or four days without power and electricity, which we're not even sure that's going to happen, you're OK," Henry said. "If it's uncomfortable or you need life support equipment, maybe go somewhere else." — AP

TWO KILLED IN HURRICANE-LIKE GREECE STORM

**Athens, Sept. 20:** Two people were found dead and another person was missing on Saturday after central Greece was lashed by a rare hurricane-like storm known as a "medicane". Hundreds of people had to be rescued from flooded buildings as heavy rain and high wind wrecked homes, shops and warehouses in regions north of the capital Athens. Mediterranean cyclone Ianos forced flights and ferries to be cancelled on Friday as it barrelled across Greece's western islands. By Saturday afternoon it was heading south towards Crete but losing strength. Emergency teams were still searching for a boat carrying 55 migrants on Saturday after receiving a distress signal a day earlier, but the coast guard said the vessel may have changed direction after receiving no help. — AFP

Mexico Prez to help retrieve miners' bodies

**Mexico City, Sept. 20:** The Mexican government announced plans on Monday to fulfill a long-standing promise to retrieve the bodies of 63 coal miners killed in a 2006 mine collapse — and get some coal to burn at the same time. The agreement with victims' relatives is likely to reinforce President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's reputation as a fan of fossil fuels, at a time when much of the world is turning away from them. The Mexican utility still operates power plants that burn coal and heavily polluting fuel oil. The CFE recently made it harder for private renewable energy companies to bring wind and solar facilities some already built online, arguing they had been given unfair advantages in pricing and transmission. Some observers say the decision was influenced by Mexico's need to get rid of fuel oil it produces as part of refining. Lopez Obrador has also made building new refineries and finding more oil a central part of his economic plan. Three previous administrations decided not to try to recover the bodies of the miners, saying it would be too dangerous and costly, with no guarantee of success. But victims' relatives have continued to press authorities on the issue and Lopez Obrador had promised them he would try.

● THE AGREEMENT with victims' relatives is likely to reinforce President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's reputation as a fan of fossil fuels, at a time when much of the world is turning away from them.

PERFECTLY PRESERVED ICE AGE CAVE BEAR FOUND IN ARCTIC RUSSIA

**Sakhalin Island, Sept. 20:** Reindeer herders in a Russian Arctic archipelago have found an immaculately preserved carcass of an Ice Age cave bear, researchers said on Monday. The find, revealed by the melting permafrost, was discovered on the Lyakhovsky Islands with its teeth and even its nose intact. Previously scientists only had been able to discover the bones of cave bears that became extinct 15,000 years ago. Scientists of the North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk, the premier center for research into woolly mammoths and other prehistoric species. In a statement issued by the university, researcher Lena Grigorieva emphasized that "this is the first and only find of its kind - a whole bear carcass with soft tissues." "It is completely preserved, with all internal organs in place, including even its nose," Grigorieva said. "This find is of great importance for the whole world." A preliminary analysis indicated that the adult bear lived 22,000 to 39,500 years ago. "It is necessary to carry out radiocarbon analysis to determine the precise age of the bear," the university quoted researcher Maxim Chepasov as saying. — AP



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,845.82	-0.34
Nifty 50	11,504.95	-0.10
S&P 500*	3,319.47	-1.12
Dollar (₹)	73.45	0.27
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.39	-0.007
Euro (₹)	87.07	-0.12
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,672.224	0.42
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.15	00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	0.697	-0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.697	0.00

\* As of Friday/Saturday

## PSBs report over ₹19,964 crore frauds in Q1

Public sector banks reported frauds worth over Rs 19,964 crore in 2,867 cases during the April-June quarter, RBI's reply to an RTI query said. Of the 12 PSBs, SBI reported 2,050 fraud cases involving Rs 2,325.88 crore in Q1. Bol took the biggest hit with Rs 5,124.87 crore in 47 cases, followed by Canara Bank Rs 3,885.26 crore (33 cases), BoB Rs 2,842.94 crore (60), Indian Bank Rs 1,469.79 crore (45) and IOB Rs 1,207.65 crore (37).

## 5% import duty on open cell used in TV from Oct. 1



A 5 per cent customs duty will be reimposed on the import of open cell for TVs from October 1 following the end of one year exemption period, a finance ministry source said. The Centre had last year exempted customs duty on open cell, a key component of TV, for a year till September 30 as the domestic industry had sought time to build capacity. With the exemption coming to an end, 5 per cent duty would be reimposed.

## Internet user base rises to 743 mn in March quarter

The number of internet subscribers in India increased to over 743 million in the March 2020 quarter, clocking a growth rate of 3.4 per cent on a sequential quarter basis, showed Trai data. Reliance Jio led the chart, grabbing 52.3 per cent of the overall market share, followed by Bharti Airtel (23.6 per cent share). Vodafone Idea held the third position with 18.7 per cent market share.

## Vistara CEO says no layoffs; salary cut review in Jan.

Vistara, which has implemented various cost-saving measures amidst the pandemic, will review salary cuts in January but has not laid off any of its nearly 4,000 employees. Vistara's CEO Leslie Job said, "There have been no job cuts at Vistara, and therefore, the staff strength remains the same as earlier nearly 4,000 employees." Many airlines globally have resorted to salary cuts, layoffs and furloughs in recent months.

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## ■ Less than 2% gets assistance in hand Street vendor loans begin to trickle down

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 20

The micro credit scheme for street vendors under the stimulus package has till now reached only 7 per cent of the 50 lakh targeted beneficiaries. As on September 10, loans have been approved for 3.68 lakh street vendors. Of this, 99,000 persons, or less than 2 per cent, have been disbursed the loans, as per data provided by the Ministry of Finance in Parliament.

The government had announced the PM Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi scheme as part of the stimulus package and had launched it on July 1. The scheme intends to support 50 lakh street vendors whose business have been affected by the pandemic with working capital loans.

The Rs 5,000-crore scheme would provide a loan of Rs 10,000 to street vendors, repayable in 12 monthly installments. "After the government subsidy of 7 per cent, the effective rate of interest charged by micro finance institutions comes to 12 to 13 per cent. Further, the customer gets a cash-back of Rs 100 for digital repayment of the installments. At 12 per cent interest rate, a cash-back of Rs 100 every month for 12 months makes the scheme almost free of cost," said Manoj Nambiar, chairperson of the MicroFinance Institutions Network (MFIN).

However, till now only 3.68 lakh vendors, or 7.3



## VIVAD SE VISHWAS GARNERS ₹9,538 CR

New Delhi, Sept. 20: The government has collected Rs 9,538 crore revenue from the Direct Tax Vivad Se Vishwas scheme, Parliament was informed on Sunday.

Minister of state for finance Anurag Singh Thakur said as many as 35,074 declarations have been filed under the scheme till September 8. "The revenue generated till date through the

(Direct Tax Vivad Se Vishwas) Act is Rs 9,538 crore. This figure does not include the payments made by the taxpayers who are yet to file their declarations under the scheme," Thakur said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

In March, Parliament passed the Direct Tax Vivad Se Vishwas Act. The scheme is valid till December 31, 2020. —PTI

per cent of targetted beneficiaries, have received loan approvals, whereas those who have received the loan amount in hand is less than 2 per cent at 99,000.

"Only those vendors who are registered with urban local administration are eligible for the scheme. Most of the vendors are not registered with the civic bodies and hence stay out of the purview of the scheme. Though registra-

tion is an ongoing process, many vendors have apprehensions about it," said Nambiar. Many also find that once they get a licence for street vending, they will not be able to operate any other business.

Further, the banks and micro finance institutions prefer street vendors who are largely stationary at a certain place. A borrower moving from one place to another is considered as a risk factor.

## GST shortfall: 21 states accept ₹97,000 cr borrowing plan

New Delhi, Sept. 20: As many as 21 states, mostly ruled by BJP or parties which have supported it on various issues, have opted to borrow Rs 97,000 crore to meet the GST revenue shortfall in the current fiscal, sources said on Sunday.

The states and union territories (UTs) which have intimated their decision to the Centre are Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Karnataka, MP, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand and UP.

Finance ministry sources said Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and West Bengal are yet to respond to the GST Council proposal to decide their options.

The states which do not submit their borrowing options before the due GST Council meet on October 5, will have to wait till June 2022 to get their compensation dues, subject to the condition that the GST Council extends the cess collection period beyond 2022, the sources said.

The GST Council with full presence of states and UTs needs, as per the GST Act, only 20 states to pass any resolution, in case a voting is required.

—PTI

## FPIs turn cautious, inflows thin this month

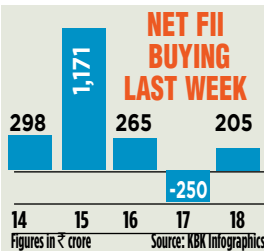
RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 20

Foreign portfolio investments in equities have seen a major drop in September so far, with net buying of just Rs 1,766 crore compared with the previous month in which FPIs had invested over Rs 47,000 crore.

August had seen record FPI investments at Rs 47,080 crore, but in September FPI inflows have been subdued and consistency is missing, with large amounts of net selling observed on some days, shows NSDL monthly data.

The sharp fall in India's first quarter GDP by -23.9 per cent, announced on August 31, did trigger selling by foreign portfolio investors by Rs 2,356 crore in a day.

"Sharper than expected



fall in growth calls for supportive measures from both the RBI and the Ministry of Finance," said Aastha Gudwani and Indranil Sen Gupta, analysts, Bank of America Global Research.

Last week, major FPI participation was witnessed in the weekend anchor investors allotment of shares in Computer Age Management Services (Cams) IPO, worth Rs 666.56 crore, proving FPIs appetite for Indian equi-

ties to be alive. Whether the remaining days in September will make up for the subdued flows is anybody's guess. The caution in the market ahead of another earnings season and the big US event, of presidential election on November 3, seems in line with the global market trends.

The change in trend particularly pronounced in the US market. All-time-high US stock market indices are turning volatile of late and market experts are predicting a reversal in trend either near to or post the US elections.

Last week, the Dow Jones Industrial Average and technology stock index Nasdaq registered third straight weekly losses for the first time this year.

## GST cut will help 2-wheeler market: Honda

New Delhi, Sept. 20: Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) has supported calls from various industry quarters for reduction in GST on two-wheelers, saying the move would act as a 'tailwind' for reviving the sector which has been facing challenging business environment.

In an interview with PTI, a senior official of the Japanese two-wheeler major said the sector has been currently facing various headwinds due to economic slowdown that has hampered the growth of the sector.

"We are also confident

that any such move that will increase affordability for the buyer and which adds to their savings, why not (bring it)," HMSI director sales and marketing Yadvynder Singh Guleria said.

He was replying to a query whether the reduction in GST on two-wheeler segment would be helpful in reviving the sector.

"It will definitely help and act as a tailwind for the industry against what we are seeing today, the headwinds from multiple sides," Guleria noted.

Elaborating on the situation, he said that people want to preserve cash

these days due to economic slowdown related uncertainties. Despite that they are still willing to take personal mobility options due to the Covid-19 situation and it will help if affordability of owning a two-wheeler improves, he said.

For long, the two-wheeler industry has been demanding a reduction in GST on two-wheelers from 28 per cent to 18 cent. They argue that a two-wheeler is basic necessity for transportation of medium income group households.

Last month, even the finance minister said the segment merits a GST revision. —PTI

## TikTok owner seeking \$60 billion valuation in US deal

ZHEPING HUANG SEPT. 20

China's ByteDance Ltd is seeking a valuation of \$60 billion for TikTok as Oracle Corp and Walmart Inc take stakes in the short-video app's business to address US security concerns, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Oracle and Walmart have rights to buy 12.5 per cent and 7.5 per cent, respectively, of a newly established TikTok Global under an agreement that won the approval of President Donald Trump, the person said, asking not to be named about discussing private negotiations. The two companies would pay a combined \$12 billion for their stakes if they agree to that asking price.

The final valuation price

## TRUMP WANTS \$5 BN FROM DEAL FOR HISTORY PROJECT

Sept. 30: President Donald Trump said on Saturday he wants \$5 billion from companies creating a new US-based TikTok venture directed toward teaching American children "the real history."

Trump said he had approved a transaction between Oracle Corp, Walmart Inc and ByteDance Ltd to create a new company called TikTok Global to run the US video-sharing app. As part of the arrangement, Trump told reporters at the White House the companies agreed to con-

tribute \$5 billion to an education foundation.

Later, during a campaign rally in Fayetteville, North Carolina, Trump said "we're going to be setting up a very large fund for the education of American youth."

He told his rally audience that in conversation with leaders of the companies, he said "Do me a favour, could you put up \$5 billion into a fund for education, so we can educate people as to real history of our country—the real history, not the fake history."

On Thursday, Trump

delivered a speech at the National Archives in Washington, in which he attacked the 1619 Project, a school curriculum created by the *New York Times* that orients American history from the date the first slaves arrived in the country. Trump said that in response, he would create "a national commission to promote patriotic education" that he calls the "1776 commission."

The next day, Trump phoned Oracle chairman Larry Ellison and WalMart CEO Doug McMillon. —Bloomberg

had not been set as the parties worked out the equity structure and measures for data security, the person said.

ByteDance was pressured into a deal for TikTok when Trump threatened to ban the app in the US over national

security concerns. After Microsoft Corp made a proposal for a full buyout of the service, ByteDance instead turned to Oracle's

offering in which the Chinese parent will maintain a solid majority stake.

"I approved the deal in concept," Trump told reporters on Saturday as he left the White House for a campaign rally in Fayetteville, North Carolina. "If they get it done, that's great. If they don't, that's OK too."

ByteDance and Oracle representatives didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

ByteDance may end up owning as much as 80 per cent of TikTok Global, which would include the app's operations in the US and the rest of the world excluding China.

Under the current proposal, there will be five seats on the board of TikTok Global. Walmart's CEO Doug McMillon will become a director, the retailer said. —Bloomberg

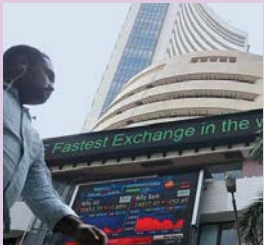
## New tailwind for EM stocks

NETTY ISMAIL, SIMON FLINT, SYDNEY MAKI & ROBERT BRAND SEPT. 20

Emerging markets are poised to enjoy a fresh tailwind at an auspicious moment.

President Donald Trump's weekend approval of Oracle Corp's bid for the operations of TikTok—a move that may take some of the heat out of Washington's standoff with Beijing—looks poised to give markets a lift as the new week gets underway, extending last week's gains in developing-nation assets.

Record low interest rates, rising commodity prices and improved mobility data are buoying expectations of a recovery in the world's developing economies even as investors cast a wary eye toward the US presidential election in November. Yet for all those points—and any small boost provided by a gentler geopolitical backdrop—it's rate differentials



that are sustaining much of the investor demand. Bond funds extended their longest streak of inflows since a 12-week run in the fourth quarter of 2017, according to EPFR Global.

"Even though policy rates in emerging markets have come down a lot, many of them show meaningful relative interest-rate advantages versus the dollar now," said Morgan Harting, a New York-based money manager at AllianceBernstein who oversees about \$2.8 billion. "This could support ongoing capital flows to emerging markets, which would be good for stocks and bonds." —Bloomberg

## Parents shouldn't wait to pass down their wealth

ERIN LOWRY SEPT. 20

In the coming decades, a Great Wealth Transfer will be upon us. Gen Xers and Millennials are expected to inherit a huge fortune. In the US, for example, some estimates say as much as \$68 trillion will be passed down from Baby Boomers.

For parents (or other family members) who indeed plan on leaving behind a financial legacy, it can be far more effective to gift early instead of waiting for the triggering event of your death to transfer wealth. This idea tends to elicit a negative reaction. After all, the risk of passing on money too early, or at all, is it will lead to spoiled kids and little motivation for them to be successful. It's a valid concern, but gifting early could also help someone flourish and build their own legacy, as access to capital creates more opportunities.

A common refrain when discussing generational wealth is, "The first generation makes it, the second generation builds it and the third generation blows it." Such idioms

come into existence because they have a kernel of truth. Family fortunes have been built and lost in just a few generations, which may be why some parents are reluctant to pass down their wealth too early.

There's a strain of the "bootstrap" narrative that pervades in this thinking: The concept is that if you withhold an inheritance, your child will be forced to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and make something of themselves on their own merit. They'll be less likely to overindulge and loaf around.

Or perhaps parents think, "No one handed me seed money or bought my first home, and look what I did." Is that true, though? Can everyone replicate your level of success? Is it not perhaps a confluence of timing, talent and a dash of luck (or a strong labour market, affordable housing, etc.) that propelled you forward?

Tough love can be a motivating tactic for some, but it doesn't guarantee successful children. Instead of withholding an inheritance from a child



Money musings

until your death, when the child may be in their 40s, 50s or even 60s, why not gift early to encourage your children to start building their own financial freedom?

See the impact of your legacy. One benefit to beginning the gifting process early is being alive to see how your children benefit. You can watch and advise them on taking risks, making key purchases (like owning a home or an investment property) and enriching their lives.

Access to resources and

capital has long made a huge difference in the ability to build and innovate. Many of the currently notable wealthy men and women in this country had seed money from a family member or a free place to live while building a business or access to a network and resources. And yet we still often herald these people as "self-made." They're not. Yes, there are outliers and expectations to the rule, but they're rare.

We often fixate on the ultra-wealthy, but there are many ways to pass on legacy. Not all legacies have to be about passing on a fortune. Some are simply about reducing economic struggle. Providing support like paying off part of debts or setting aside money for grandchildren's educational expenses are ways to pass on your legacy that often aren't framed as gifting early.

Not ready to gift early (or at all)? Be open about it. It's a parent's prerogative on how they plan to spend and gift their wealth. It can all be donated to an important or beloved cause, given to a

specific family member r spent entirely before death. Someone simply being your child doesn't buy them the entitlement to your money in their adulthood.

However, if you plan to leave your child with nothing, it's wise to tell them - particularly if your child is aware of your wealth and assumes they'll inherit at least some of that money. Listen, I get that your child should not be counting coins that aren't theirs too early, but it's important to ensure that their financial planning isn't built upon an assumption of inheritance.

Should you plan to pass on wealth in a trust or in your will after your death, then you may want to have a discussion about that with your children so they can actually incorporate that into their financial futures. It could make a difference in the level of career or investing risk they're willing to take today, how they save and invest for their own lives or even if or when they'd start a family of their own.

—Bloomberg



SHORT TAKES

Carlsen, So share top spot; Hari 7th

**Chennai:** A below-par performance in Blitz-2, in which he managed only three points from nine rounds, saw Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna finish joint seventh in the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament.

World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen and American Wesley So finished joint winners. Harikrishna's solitary win on the final day of the tournament came against American Jeffrey Xiong, the lowest rated player in the field, as he suffered four losses to go with three draws. He was tied for seventh place with Xiong.

The India No. 2, who had pulled off an upset win over Carlsen in Blitz-1, could not reproduce the good form and went down to the Norwegian world champion in the sixth round of Blitz-2 in a 47-move encounter. — *PTI*

Red Devils off to dreadful start

**London:** Manchester United's Premier League season got off to a dreadful start as Wilfried Zaha scored twice against his former club to hand Crystal Palace a 3-1 win at Old Trafford. The Eagles have now won their first two games of a Premier League season for the first time and on their last two visits to United.

After Andros Townsend opened the scoring early on, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men felt aggrieved with the nature of Palace's second from the penalty spot as Victor Lindelof was harshly punished for handball and David De Gea's save from Jordan Ayew's spot-kick was ruled out by VAR before Zaha converted the retaken penalty. But they could have no complaints about the result as they looked way off the pace in their first match of the new campaign. — *AFP*

Nadal bows out, Djokovic in semis

**Rome:** Clay court king Rafael Nadal crashed out of the Italian Open on Saturday, falling to a straight sets defeat to Argentine Diego Schwartzman in a tournament the Spaniard had won nine times.

Iyer launched into Gowtham for a massive six, first of the innings, in the ninth over, taking the run-rate to a modest five-an-over.

— *PTI*

Eight-seeded Schwartzman meted out a punishing 6-2, 7-5 loss in Nadal's final warm-up before his bid for a 13th French Open, and record-equalling 20th Grand Slam in just over a week. Top men's seed Novak Djokovic also stumbled on the Roman clay but recovered to win through 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 against German qualifier Dominik Koepfer.

"It was not my night at all," said Nadal, who had won all nine previous meetings against 28-year-old Schwartzman. — *AFP*

**Celtics strike back with win over Heat**

**Miami:** The Boston Celtics hit back on Saturday, leading wire-to-wire in a 117-106 victory over the Miami Heat that cut the gap in the NBA Eastern Conference finals to two games to one. Jaylen Brown scored 26 points and Jayson Tatum added 25 points and 14 rebounds for the Celtics, who avoided falling into an 0-3 hole from which no NBA team has rallied to win a best-of-seven playoff series. After their 17-point lead slipped away in a game-two loss on Thursday — the second straight game they surrendered a double-digit lead in defeat — Celtics players could be heard exchanging heated words in their locker room. But they were all on the same page on Saturday, displaying a sense of purpose in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando. — *AFP*

STONISHING!

Marcus' all-round feat ensures Super Over win for Delhi

**Dubai, Aug. 20:** Marcus Stoinis' last over star turns with both bat and ball was beautifully complemented by Kagiso Rabada's brilliant Super Over that ensured a thrilling opening round IPL victory for Delhi Capitals over Kings XI Punjab on Sunday.

Stoinis first blasted his way to a 21-ball-53 as his late assault ensured a decent 157/8 for Capitals with 57 coming off last three overs. Stoinis hit seven fours and three sixes.

In reply, Capitals were in control for 15 overs before Mayank Agarwal 89 off 60 balls nearly won it for KXIP before Stoinis came into the picture again with opposition needing one off three balls.

The first one was a dot followed by wickets of Agarwal and Chris Jordan as match ended in a tie and went into Super Over.

Rabada, a Super Over specialist then removed K.L. Rahul and Nicholas Pooran off successive balls to keep an easy three run target off one over. Rishabh Pant got a couple and Mohammed Shami bowled a wide as Capitals got their hard earned two points.

Earlier, Shikhar Dhawan (0) was run out to a horrible mix-up and the scoreboard was not a pleasant sight for the Delhi side at 13 for 3.

However, skipper Shreyas Iyer (39) and Rishabh Pant (31) respected the conditions to raise 73-run stand for the fourth wicket while Stoinis' knock towards the end put Capitals in a psychologically advantageous position.

Iyer launched into Gowtham for a massive six, first of the innings, in the ninth over, taking the run-rate to a modest five-an-over.

— *PTI*



Marcus Stoinis of Delhi Capitals acknowledges cheers after scoring a half-century against Kings XI Punjab in their IPL match in Dubai on Sunday. — *BCCI/IPL*

Delhi Capitals:		Kings XI Punjab:	
P. Shaw	c Jordan b Shami 5	K.L. Rahul	b Mohit Sharma 21
S. Dhawan	run out (Rahul/K Gowtham) 0	Mayank Agarwal	c Shimron Hetmyer b Marcus Stoinis 89
S. Hetmyer	c Agarwal b Shami 7	Karun Nair	c Prithvi Shaw b R. Ashwin 1
S. Iyer	c Jordan b Shami 39	Nicholas Pooran	b R. Ashwin 0
R. Pant	b Bishnoi 31	M. Stoinis	(run out) 53
A. Patel	c Rahul b Cottrell 6	R. Ashwin	c Shami b Cottrell 4
K. Rabada	(not out) 0	A. Nortje	(not out) 3
<b>Extras:</b> (b-1, lb-0, w-6, nb-2) 9	<b>Total: (for 8 wks, in 20 overs) 157.</b>	<b>FoW:</b> 1-6, 2-9, 3-13, 4-86, 5-87, 6-96, 7-127, 8-154	<b>Bowling:</b> S. Cottrell 4-0-24-2, Md Shami 4-0-15-3, Chris Jordan 4-0-39-0, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-22-1

Scorecard

**Kagiso Rabada** 21, **Chris Jordan** c Kagiso Rabada b Marcus Stoinis 5, **Mohammad Shami** (not out) 0. **Extras:** (fb 1, w 1, b 0, lb 5) 7. **Total: (for 8 wks, in 20 overs) 157.**

**FoW:** 1-30, 2-33, 3-34, 4-35, 5-55, 6-101, 7-157, 8-157.

**Bowling:** A. Nortje 4-0-33-0, M. Sharma 4-0-45-1, K. Rabada 4-0-28-2, R. Ashwin 1-0-2-2, A. Patel 4-0-14-1, M. Stoinis 3-0-29-2.

**Super Over:** Kings XI Punjab (2/2 in .3 over) lost to Delhi Capitals (3/0 in .2)

Kohli's hunt for IPL title begins

**Dubai, Sept. 20:** Virat Kohli will begin his quest for an elusive IPL title when perennial under-achievers Royal Challengers Bangalore take on David Warner's low profile but consistent Sunrisers Hyderabad in their opening IPL encounter here on Monday.

Both teams possess dangerous batsmen who can single-handedly take the game away from the opposition.

Kohli has always led from the front but he knows his search for a maiden title will remain incomplete if the team doesn't perform in all departments.

The addition of Australian limited overs captain Aaron Finch to the squad gives the star-studded batting line up more firepower. Expectations are also high from highly rated young opener Devdutt Padikal.

On the other hand, Warner, whose exploits in the IPL include winning the 'Orange Cap' thrice and leading his side to a maiden title triumph in 2016, will once again pair up with the dangerous Jonny Bairstow.

The formidable opening duo, that shattered multiple records including the highest opening partnership in IPL history against RCB last season, will hope to emulate the previous

● **Kohli has always led from the front but he knows his search for a maiden title will remain incomplete if the team doesn't perform in all departments.**

edition's exploits. Sunrisers also have the batting prowess of Kane Williamson, Manish Pandey, Mitchell Marsh and Fabian Allen.

Following a nightmarish 2019 season when they finished last, RCB seem to have much better balance but there ability to hit late in the innings is yet to be tested.

Sunrisers' blind spot also lies in the lack of depth in their batting order. The franchise has invested in youngsters like Virat Singh, Abhishek Sharma, Priyam Garg, and Abdul Samad and the management in the hopes that one of them could become the vital cog in the middle order.

A team that is known for its depth and variation in bowling, Sunrisers' core unit remains unchanged. Bhuvneshwar Kumar will spearhead the pace department with Sandeep Sharma, Siddarth Kaul and Basil Thampi playing secondary roles. — *PTI*

NUMBERS GAME — SRH vs RCB

HEAD TO HEAD	
<b>OVERALL:</b>	5,412 runs at an average of 37.84 in 169 innings of 177 matches for Royal Challenger Bangalore is the highest run-getter in IPL.
● Matches: 14	
● Hyderabad won: 7	
● Bangalore won: 6	
● Tied: 1 (SH won in super over after match ended in a tie.)	
MEETING IN 2019	
● Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by 118 runs at Hyderabad.	
● Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 4 wickets at Bangalore.	
<b>FOR THE RECORD</b>	— <i>S. PERVEZ QAISER</i>
● Virat Kohli, who scored	● David Warner with 4,706 runs in 126 innings of as many matches for Delhi Capitals and Sunrisers Hyderabad is the fourth highest scorer in IPL behind Virat Kohli (5,412 runs in 177 matches) and Suresh Raina (5,368 runs in 193 matches) and Rohit Sharma (4,910 runs in 189 matches).

Warner puts onus on young blood

**Dubai, Sept. 20:** Sunrisers Hyderabad captain David Warner is hoping the team's young recruits "translate their talent into performance" in the 13th IPL and said gaining early momentum would do themselves a world of good.

The Sunrisers open their campaign in the 13th IPL with a game against the Virat Kohli-led Royal Challengers Bangalore on Monday, and Warner's message to his team is to go out and play freely without worrying too much about the result.

"We will try our best for that and if it doesn't happen, will re-work our strategies and hope to go the distance in the IPL," Warner said during a virtual media interaction.

"Every team has a perfect mix of world-class overseas players and quality Indian players. Ours is a pretty good balanced side in all departments.

"The boys have to just go out there and have fun, not take it too seriously. Like if you get angry you will tend to repeat the mistakes."

Warner also spoke about the team's youngsters.

"Yes, it is good to have a lot of youngsters in the middle-order. They bring a lot of enthusiasm and show the right kind of attitude, too. I hope they translate their talent into performances."

The Australian is happy to have the presence of experienced campaigners such as Kane Williamson in the Sunrisers ranks.

"We have plenty of experience with the likes of Kane, (Jonny) Bairstow, Vijay Shankar to name a few. We got a job on our hand for sure," he said.

Speaking about his opening partner Bairstow, Warner said, "We know when to take those calculated risks and it is time to go this year again." — *PTI*



Chennai Super Kings' Lungisani Ngidi (left) celebrates the wicket of Kieron Pollard of Mumbai Indians with M.S. Dhoni in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

DHONI PRAISES CHENNAI 'DADS ARMY'

**New Delhi, Sept. 20:** Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni stood out with his bulging biceps on his return to the cricket field after more than a year on the sidelines.

The veteran wicketkeeper-batsman, who retired from international cricket last month, last played for India in their semi-final loss to New Zealand in the 2019 World Cup.

Fans swooned at their idol's body, with one user tweeting: "Dhoni looks WWE ready".

— *AFP*

Dads Army" by the media, Chennai have a number of players over the age of 35, including Dhoni, Australia's Shane Watson, du Plessis and South African Imran Tahir.

But Dhoni said that kind of experience would always be an asset to any team, with the perfect side needing the "right mix of youngsters and the experienced players".

"What really helps youngsters in (the) IPL

is the fact senior cricketers (come) from... different countries and they have their own experience," said Dhoni.

"So that way we are blessed to have the senior cricketers who are part of the team."

Dhoni added that players with more than 300 one-day internationals under their belt have built up the kind of experience that is difficult to accumulate.

— *AFP*

Shaking off rust is going to be key feature of IPL



Hemant Kenkre  
Silly Point

**B**rijesh Patel never got an opportunity to play at Sharjah. Cricket in the emirate, the third largest in United Arab Emirates (UAE) started a few years after the dapper middle order batsman and brilliant fielder had finished his career as an Indian international. Patel who is now Chairman, Governing Council, of the Indian Premier League (IPL) was seen sitting quietly in the VIP section as India's most loved, tournament kicked-off bringing a glow of light

into gloomy Indian homes.

Having taken the position during the last elections of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Patel knew the challenges, once the pandemic went viral across the globe. When Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Rohit Sharma went out for the toss at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Saturday, a small part of him must have relaxed, the feeling similar to that when a batsman faces the first ball of his innings with confi-

dence. Even as the cameras focused on other important VIP's from time to time, the man sitting in the hottest seat in the BCCI must be a bundle of nerves as Chennai Super Kings (CSK) beat their nemesis Mumbai Indians (MI) in the last over of the match.

There were many take-aways post the first fixture of the IPL. The biggest being that most players (barring a few) looked bulky and far removed from what they would have in happier times. To stay away from actual cricket for five plus months and then get corralled in a (forced) enclosed environment for almost a month is bound to show on the players. And it did. A slight bulge in the belly, sloppiness abounding while

fielding and the line and length going a bit awry were proofs of the absence of the 'real' thing — match practice.

Shaking off the rust is going to be the key feature of the IPL at this stage and the earlier teams do it the better for their chances as the tournament progresses. Fans would do themselves a favour if they manage to hold on to their (high) expectations as it will take nothing less than three to four matches for the players to come back to their own in the new normal. For now, not only are they trying to get back to their peak, in term of fitness and play, they are faced with the prospect of doing so on unfamiliar pitches they cannot predict.

Fitness and lack of

match practice may be the bugbear of the players but the CSK vs MI game showed that the IPL fans are fit and raring to go. CSK's victory meant that 'Thala' Dhoni is back in business and fans were watching every move made by the most experienced skipper of the tournament.

Man of the match, Ambati Rayudu's match winning essay of 71 of 48 balls not only made him an unlikely hero but gave fans the ammo to shoot at the Indian selectors of the immediate past and the team management of their 'folly' in not picking him for the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup last year.

With fans getting back their mojo and the die being cast with the start of

this important tournament, BCCI is reported to have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Emirates Cricket Board. The MoU could make the Arab country a back-up option in case the pandemic situation in India does not subside and may well see India play its home series against England, next year as well conducting IPL 2021 once again in the desert. The vision of those who started the Cricketers' Benefit Fund Series (CBFS) in Sharjah (in the early 80s) has achieved fruition today with two more top class venues in the Emirates available.

The IPL bio-bubble is 'full' even as the tournament tries to pick up its speed taking the attention

of a million fans away from the harsh realities of living in the new normal. The BCCI has taken all the necessary steps to ensure its smooth flow from appointing health partners, negotiating with the local authorities to give comfort to the franchisees and monitoring betting irregularities through a recently appointed agency.

The IPL juggernaut has started to roll in the heat and dust of the UAE. And, going ahead (till November 3) there will be many more challenges that Patel and his efficient team will face. Watching them during the first game, it does look like they have put aside the initial hiccups and are hell bent on executing one of the toughest tournaments in these difficult times.

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Royal Challengers Bangalore from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

England Women vs West Indies Women: First T20 from 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Aston Villa vs Sheffield from 10.30 pm; Wolverhampton Wanderers vs Manchester City from 12.45 am (Tuesday) on Star Sports Select 2

Italian League: AC Milan vs Bologna from 12.15 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

TENNIS

ATP Hamburg European Open: First day's action from 2 pm on Sony Six, HD

Rome Masters: Men's final from 8.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

WWE RAW

Bouts from 5.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD





## SHORT TAKES

## Tvesa stumbles, finishes T-10th

**Bordeaux, France:** India's Tvesa Malik faltered in the final round to finish tied 10th at the Lacoste Open de France here on Sunday.

She was disappointed but preferred to look at the positives.

Tvesa, whose previous best on the Ladies European Tour was a tied sixth finish at her home event — Hero Indian Open last year — has now registered her best result outside of India. After four birdies on the first day and five on the second, Tvesa failed to land any birdies on the final day. Also she gave away four bogeys for a card of 4-over 75 and dropped from 4-under for 36 holes to even par for the final 54 holes. Swede Julia Engstrom, overnight leader, shot 1-over 72 on the strength of a good front nine. Julia won her second LET title of the season with a narrow one-shot victory over home favourite Celine Herbin and Argentinian Magdalena Simmermacher. — PTI

## Wolff seizes lead at US Open golf

**New York:** Matthew Wolff has the chance for a historic US Open victory, but the 21-year-old American copes with his nerves by keeping his golf success in perspective.

Wolff fired a five-under par 65 on Saturday to grab a two-stroke lead at Winged Foot, making him the youngest 54-hole US Open leader since 1975. He could become first player to win his US Open debut since amateur Francis Ouimet in 1913, with Sunday marking the 107th anniversary of that historic feat.

And after his share of fourth in his major debut at last month's PGA Championship, there are few doubters that Wolff's early success is well earned.

"It's really early in my career, but I feel like I have the game to win," Wolff said.

"That's just awesome golf. Everyone knows how talented Matt is and he played great at Harding Park in the last major," four-time major winner Rory McIlroy said of Wolff. — AFP

## MAN U MAULED!

## Zaha scores brace to power Palace past United

**London, Sept. 20:** Manchester United suffered a miserable start to their Premier League campaign as Wilfried Zaha fired Crystal Palace to a shock 3-1 win at Old Trafford, while Arsenal struck late through substitute Eddie Nketiah to beat West Ham 2-1.

On the second weekend of the new campaign, United were playing for the first time after being given an extra week of rest due to their involvement in the latter stages of last season's Europa League.

But Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's lethargic side were well below their best and Palace took full advantage thanks to Andros Townsend's seventh minute strike and Zaha's double against his former club. There was a hint of controversy about Zaha's first goal as VAR ruled Victor Lindelof had handled Jordan Ayew's shot even though the ball was hit with force at him from close quarters.

David De Gea saved Ayew's spot-kick, but VAR intervened again to order a retake as United's keeper had strayed off his line and this time Zaha converted from the spot.

United's only close-season signing Donny van de Beek came off the bench and the former Ajax midfielder reduced the deficit with a debut goal in the 80th minute.

But Zaha, who endured a difficult spell at United before rejoining Palace, showed why the Eagles are so keen to keep him amid speculation over his future as the Ivory Coast winger lashed home in the 85th minute.

For the first time in six years, United were beaten in their opening league game. — AFP



Son Heung-Min (left) of Tottenham Hotspur in action during the English Premier League football match against Southampton at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, southern England, on Saturday. Tottenham won 5-2. — AFP

## Son's blitzkrieg spurs Tottenham to big win

**Southampton, Sept. 20:** Son Heung-min destroyed Southampton with a four-goal blitz as Tottenham earned their first Premier League win of the season with a 5-2 victory at St Mary's on Sunday.

Just 24 hours after Tottenham signed Gareth Bale, South Korea forward Son delivered a virtuoso display that showed Jose Mourinho's side already have plenty of firepower.

Bale has returned to Tottenham on a season-long loan from Real Madrid seven years after he left the north London club for a then world

● **Son Heung-Min of Tottenham Hotspur scored four goals which were well complemented by Harry Kane's brace to get better of Southampton 5-2 in the English Premier League.**

record 85 million (\$109 million) fee.

But the Wales forward will not be available until mid-October as he recovers from a knee injury, so Mourinho needs Son and Harry Kane to carry the

attack until then.

No one would question the quality of that pair and they underlined the point with superb performances that ripped Southampton to pieces.

Danny Ings put Southampton ahead in the first half, but Son equalised before the break and scored three more in the second half.

Kane, who netted brace, capped a swaggering display with his second goal of the season. Kane and Son have now combined for more Premier League goals (24) than any other duo in the competition since August 2015. — AFP

## MORENO MAGIC EKES OUT WIN FOR VILLARREAL

**Barcelona, Sept. 20:** Ten months after he was fired by Arsenal, Unai Emery was back to winning ways with his first victory as Villarreal coach in the Spanish league.

Gerard Moreno scored once and set up Paco Alcacer for another goal in Villarreal's 2-1 comeback win against Elbar on Saturday.

Emery is back in Spain after frustrating stints at Paris Saint-Germain and, most recently, Arsenal, where he lasted 18 months before being fired last November after the club's worst winless run in 27 years.

The Spanish manager's best spells have come at home. He spent four successful seasons at Valencia and guided Sevilla to three Europa League titles.

Emery had Spain striker Moreno to thank for Saturday's comeback.

Moreno canceled out Kike Garca's first-half opener when he cut back in the 63rd minute to shake off his marker and score from a tight angle.

Moreno passed for Alcacer to round the goal-keeper and slot home for the winner in the 70th in Villarreal's stadium.

Moreno also scored in last weekend's 1-1 draw against Huesca, the official debut of Emery at the Yellow Submarine.

The aim for Villarreal is to crack the top four to earn a Champions League spot after finishing fifth last season and going to the Europa League. — AP



Marcus Smart (left) of Boston Celtics leaps to the basket for a shot during the NBA Eastern Conference finals play-off game against Miami Heat in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, on Saturday. Celtics carved out a 117-106 victory. — AP

## Boston's Brown scorches Heat

**Miami, Sept. 20:** The Boston Celtics hit back on Saturday, leading wire-to-wire in a 117-106 victory over the Miami Heat that cut the gap in the NBA Eastern Conference finals to two games to one.

Jaylen Brown scored 26 points and Jayson Tatum added 25 points and 14 rebounds for the Celtics, who avoided falling into an 0-3 hole from which no NBA team has rallied to win a best-of-seven playoff series.

After their 17-point lead slipped away in a game-two loss on Thursday — the second straight game they surrendered a double-digit

lead in defeat — Celtics players could be heard exchanging heated words in their locker room.

But they were all on the same page on Saturday, displaying a sense of purpose in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida, and maintaining their poise as the Heat narrowed a 20-point fourth-quarter deficit to five with less than a minute to play.

Center Bam Adebayo led the Heat with 27 points, 16 rebounds and three steals. But Boston outscored Miami 60-36 in the paint and held the Heat to 38.8 percent shooting from the floor. — AFP

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