

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 18 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 29.7°C
Min: 21.6°C
RH: 97%
Rain: 32.4 mm

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Rain likely. Max/Min temp. 29/22 °C

NATION | 4

BSY in Delhi to discuss Cabinet expansion

WORLD | 5

Trump names India as big drug transit centre

SPORTS | 8

Only 36-hour quarantine for IPL players from UK

COVID-19 COUNT

| CASES | DEATHS |
|-----------|----------|
| (+93,332) | (+1,138) |
| 52,05,760 | 84,346 |

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

| | |
|--------------|-------|
| (+2,159) | (+9) |
| TS: 1,65,003 | 1,005 |
| (+8,702) | (+72) |
| AP: 6,01,462 | 5,177 |

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

| |
|------------------------------------|
| 3,02,30,511 |
| DEATHS |
| 948,226 |
| COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES |
| 213 |

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Adhika-Ashwayuja Shuddha Padyami till 12.50 pm
Star: Uttaraaphalguni till 6.59 am; Hasta till 4.06 am (Saturday)
Variyam: 2.22 pm to 3.47 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.21 am; 12.34 pm to 1.22 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HILARI CALENDAR
Muharram 29, 1442 AH

PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.05 am
Zohar: 12.21 pm
Asar: 4.31 pm
Maghrib: 6.22 pm
Isha: 7.30 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.15 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.04 AM
MOONSET TODAY 7.17 PM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.17 AM

COUNTER POINT

What can I do? It's an act of God!

IN BRIEF

CENTRE LETS 74% FDI IN DEFENCE ON AUTO ROUTE

New Delhi: The government has permitted foreign direct investment (FDI) of up to 74 per cent under the automatic route in the defence sector with a view to attracting overseas investors, according to a press note issued by the DPIIT on Thursday. However, foreign investments in the defence sector would be subject to scrutiny on the grounds of national security and the government reserves the right to review any foreign investment in the sector that affects or may affect national security, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade said in the note. As per the current FDI policy, 100 per cent overseas investments are permitted in the defence industry — 49 per cent under the automatic route, while beyond that government approval was required. — P/TI

New RS member dies of Covid-19

Bengaluru: Newly elected Rajya Sabha member Ashok Gasti, who was admitted to a private hospital after testing positive for the novel coronavirus, died on Thursday night, the hospital said. Fifty-five-year-old Gasti, who was admitted to Manipal Hospital on Old Airport Road on September 2 and diagnosed with severe Covid-19 pneumonia, passed away at 10.31 pm. — P/TI

Battleground Srinagar



Kashmiri protesters clash with the police after a gun battle between militants and security forces at Batamaloo of Srinagar on Thursday. Police used tear gas shells and pellet guns to disperse protesters. — H.U. NAQASH

YSRC to use Parliament's immunity to attack courts

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 17

In an unprecedented manner, the executive and judiciary in Andhra Pradesh are on a collision path, openly targeting each other.

An uneasy calm that prevailed for months has ended and the ruling YSR Congress on Thursday launched a direct attack against the AP High Court.

Apparently following instructions of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, the ruling party floor leaders in both Houses of Parliament, P. Mithun Reddy and V. Vijayasai Reddy, sought to draw the highest law-mak-

ing body's attention to what they described as injustice meted out in the hands of judiciary.

"The AP judiciary is not impartial and it has to be stopped," said Vijayasai Reddy in the Rajya Sabha. Though he was taking part in a debate on Covid, the YSRC Parliamentary party leader went on to describe the "onslaught of judiciary" on his party's government.

Party MPs also staged a dharna in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue on Parliament premises, demanding a CBI probe into the Amaravati scam, a plea that had been rejected outright by the High Court. "It is unfortunate that courts are hindering

the investigation into scams. As lawmakers, we have the right to raise the issue in Parliament and speak about the functioning of the judiciary in AP," he told reporters.

Back in Vijayawada, senior YSRC leader and municipal minister Botsa Satyanarayana termed the gag order of the High Court as unfair and wondered how courts could announce that incumbent governments have no right to probe the policy decisions their predecessors particularly when the people in power had got pecuniary benefits out of those decisions.

■ Page 2: AP HC unhappy with YSRC's criticism

1.16 crore people lose jobs after Covid-19 lockdown

SANGEETHA G. | DC CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

Around 1.16 crore people — 66 lakh white-collar professionals and 50 lakh industrial workers — have lost their jobs post lockdown, as per the data from private think-tank CMIE. The government, however, has not yet come out with data on job losses caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown.

As per the analysis of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), based on the data from its 20th wave of Consumer Pyramids Household Survey, white-collar pro-

fessional employees witnessed the biggest loss in terms of jobs among the salaried class. These include engineers including software engineers, physicians, teachers, accountants among others. This does not include qualified self-employed professionals.

Employment in the category of white-collar professional employees and other employees had been rising steadily since 2016 when the survey began tracking them. An estimated 1.25 crore professional employees were employed during the survey of January-April 2016.

During May-August 2019, their employment peaked at 1.88 crore. It remained almost stable at 1.87 crore in the next survey of September-December 2019 and then fell to 1.81 crore during January-April 2020. This survey contained a partial impact of the lockdown.

Professional jobs fell steeply to 1.22 crore during the survey of May-August 2020. This is the lowest employment of the professionals since 2016, wiping out all jobs created in the past four years.

■ Page 7: Industrial jobs declined 26%

No power can stop India from patrolling LAC: Singh

Says face-off with China after LAC patrols were disrupted

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday asserted in the Rajya Sabha that no power on earth could stop the Indian Army from patrolling.

"Patrolling patterns are traditional and well-defined. No force on earth can stop our soldiers from patrolling and our soldiers have sacrificed their lives for that. There will be no change in the patrolling pattern," he said on the stand-off with China at the Line of Actual Control.

"Face-offs happened because the patrols were interrupted," Singh said. He said he could not say more due to operational sensitivities.

Singh was responding to a question from former defence minister A.K. Antony. Cutting across party lines, members in the Upper House expressed solidarity and support to the armed forces and the government in the stand-off. Singh said the country had fought many wars and, "however big the challenge, we stand united."

He said that China had made "provocative military manoeuvres" on August 29/30 in an attempt to change the status quo in the south bank of the Pangong Lake at a time when the two sides were engaged in talks to de-escalate tensions. He said there is a mismatch

U'khand villagers told to relocate

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

As India and China continue to be locked in a stand-off along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh and a "war-like" intent being displayed by China, massive deployment of forces and increased supplies of arms and ammunition are not the only preparations underway in India.

In a clear indication of the tense situation prevailing between the two countries, residents, particularly women and children, of at least five border villages along the LAC in Uttarakhand have been advised to go to safer locations — a first since the

between what China says and does. "Unki kathani aur karni alag hai (their actions are at variance with their words)."

The minister said India and China were yet to resolve their boundary question. "China does not accept the customary and traditional alignment of the boundary between India and China," he said.

He also appraised the house that China continues to be in illegal occupa-

1962 war with China. For the villages in Dharchula of Pithoragarh district in the hill state, not one but two enemies are at their doorstep — China and Nepal.

Sources in Dharchula disclosed to *Deccan Chronicle* that the local administration had recently issued an advisory to the gram pradhans, or village heads, of the border villages of Kuti, Nabhi, Raung Kong, Napalachchu and Gunji, advising them to move the women and children from the respective villages due to the grave situation along the border.

■ Page 4: Men decided to stay back and assist Army

tion of about 38,000 square kilometres of Ladakh. Besides it also holds 5,180 sq km of Indian territory in Pakistan occupied Kashmir that Pakistan had illegally ceded in 1963.

On the latest situation, he said India has noticed a build-up of troops and arms by China in the border areas adjacent to Eastern Ladakh since April.

■ Page 2: China did not keep its word: Singh

CHINESE HACKERS HAD HIT INDIAN GOVT SITES: U.S.

Washington, Sept. 17: The US Justice Department has charged five Chinese citizens with hacking over 100 companies and institutions in America and abroad, including the Indian government's networks, and stealing software data and business intelligence.

Deputy US Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen on Wednesday announced that three indictments had been unsealed in the matter that collectively charge five Chinese nationals with computer hacking and two Malaysians nationals with helping some of those hackers target victims and sell the fruits of their crime.

The Malaysians were arrested on Sunday and the Chinese nationals have been declared fugitive. Rosen severely criticised the Chinese government. "The Department of Justice has used every tool available to disrupt the cyberattacks by these Chinese. Regrettably, China has chosen a different path — of making China safe for cybercriminals so long as they attack computers outside China," he said.

■ Page 5: Hackers targetted sites in US, UK, HK, Vietnam

HARSIMRAT QUILTS MODI CABINET OVER FARM BILLS

DC CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

In a major embarrassment to the NDA at the Centre, Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal resigned from the Cabinet over two contentious farm Bills passed in the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

"Proud to stand with farmers as their daughter and sister," Harsimrat Badal, who held the food processing industries portfolio, said in a post on Twitter.

Harsimrat Badal is the only representative of the Shiromani Akali Dal in the Modi government. The party is the oldest BJP ally.

■ Full report on Page 4

Parties observe merger of Hyd, Liberation Day

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

The TRS, Congress, BJP, Telugu Desam, CPI and CPM, among other parties, marked the 72nd anniversary of Hyderabad's merger with the Indian Union on Thursday by hoisting the National Flag and paying tributes to freedom fighters. Each party staked its own claim on the day.

While the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS), the Opposition Congress and other parties celebrated the occasion as Hyderabad Merger Day, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) commemorated it as Hyderabad Liberation Day.

TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao hoisted the National Flag at Telangana Bhavan. He garlanded the statues of

Telugu Talli and Telangana ideologue Professor A. Jayashankar. TPCC chief Uttam Kumar Reddy unfurled the Tricolour at Gandhi Bhavan. Addressing the gathering, he alleged that the BJP, TRS and MIM were trying to distort and communalise the history of Hyderabad's merger with the Indian Union.

Only Congress and Communist parties had struggled for Hyderabad's merger with Indian Union, said Reddy, stating that BJP or its predecessors did not participate in the struggle against the Nizam's rule. He pointed out that the BJP did not even exist at the time. But, today, BJP leaders were trying to communalise Hyderabad's merger by calling it 'Liberation' and distorting history, he said.

Maintaining that the TRS and MIM were trying to communalise the history for political gains, the state Congress chief said "They are trying to make an issue out of Hyderabad Merger Day celebration while the fact is that the Congress has been celebrating the occasion since 1949 without any hue and cry."

Hyderabad merged with India thanks to the efforts of then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and home minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, said Uttam Kumar Reddy, adding that it has also merged Hyderabad with India.

Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy hoisted the National Flag at his residence in New Delhi to mark the occasion.

Bund to be build to save 20 habitations

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KOTHAGUDEM, SEPT. 17

A total of 20 habitations of Aswapuram, Manuguru, Charla and Dummugudem mandals will be protected by a bund from the River Godavari as part of the Sitammasagar project that proposes to store 37 tmc ft of water. The bund should be built at the height of 80 feet to protect the habitations from the river water.

The government has begun land acquisition in the four mandals.

The Sitammasagar will store water for the Sitarama lift irrigation project. About 6.74 lakh acres will be irrigated under it.

The storage of 37 tmc ft may cause submersion of habitations in the two ma-

ndals. A bund on both sides is proposed to protect these habitations from the backwaters of the project.

A survey was taken up in the three mandals and completed in one village in Charla mandal.

The anicut will be built at 69 metres against 43 meters of the Godavari river level. About 358 acres in Manuguru, 293 in Aswapuram, 419 in Dummugudem and 747 acres in Charla would be acquired.

The Sitammasagar, which is a river reservoir, will come up 200 metres upstream of the Sitarama lift irrigation project. The project cost is estimated at ₹2,600 crore. The officials plan to complete the land survey within two months.

■ Full report on Pg3

SHORT TAKES

HC UNHAPPY
WITH YSRC
CRITICISM

FROM PAGE 1

The ruling party outbursts came a day after the High Court stalled the probe into the alleged Amaravati land scam in which some influential people, allegedly privy to confidential information, had acquired lands in proposed capital region for a cheaper price.

The AP High Court was unhappy over the ruling party leaders criticising its judgments and even its sympathisers hurling abuses against judges. At one stage, the Registrar General highlighted in her affidavit in a case that the state government was not happy with the judgments. Later, she amended the affidavit replacing the word “government” with “some ruling party leaders”.

CROCODILE COUNT
IS GROWING IN
MUSI, SAYS VET

From Page 1

“The ones we caught and brought to the zoo were about two or three feet long,” Dr M. Navin Kumar, former chief veterinary officer and deputy director of the zoo, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

From the pictures of the crocodile, it appears that it might be about three or four feet long and could be about five years of age.

“There are crocodiles in the Musi and they are also breeding, despite the water quality in the river,” he said.

The Musi muggers are very likely from the stock that escaped over the years from the zoo, he said. Some years ago, a retaining wall along a breeding pond collapsed and some of the crocodiles got scattered through the zoo.

It is possible that some of the younger ones may have made their way to the river from under the zoo compound wall through openings that are designed to allow excess water to flow out to the Musi that runs past the zoo, he said.

“Mugger crocodiles are great wanderers,” B.C. Choudhury, a former professor at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, told *Deccan Chronicle*. “They can easily cover distances of 20 km to 30 km a day,” he said.

Choudhury ran the crocodile breeding centre in the zoo in the 1980s and 1990s, from where young crocodiles were released in the wild as part of the crocodile conservation programme. However, Musi was not one of the water bodies where the crocodiles were released.

In 2017, a baby crocodile was caught at Azampura in the city.

KVRS HOLDS
20TH ANNUAL
CELEBRATIONSHARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

A virtual oration on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the K.V. Rao Society (KVRS) celebrations and annual science awards function was held on Tuesday evening.

The event takes place every year to celebrate excellence in science by school students and researchers, and this year it saw the participation of hundreds of scientists, students, research scholars online from across India.

The theme of the oration was, ‘Design and development of catalysts for green and economical processes for chemical industry’.

During the virtual meeting, 14th Science Quiz Awards; 14th School Talent awards, 9th Spark Innovation awards, KVRS CCBM Spark Innovation awards, KVRS Spark Ganitham awards and 20th Research awards were presented to the winners.

Highlighting the importance of science in running the world, Anil Kumar Kitty, president of KVRS, said, “Every child is a born scientist. They want to know everything about everything”.

KVRS, which till now has been a forum to spot talent and recognise students, will expand to mentoring the students. “We have already started various activities in this direction with concept teaching in math, then physics,” he said.

Many scientists who spoke observed science continue to save the world.

An e-book in the 20 years journey of the KVRS was also unveiled on the occasion.

State revises land
regularisation rates

Under new rates, govt forms seven slabs instead of four

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

The state government on Thursday revised the rates of land regularisation under the Telangana Regularisation of Unapproved and Illegal Layout Rules.

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Thursday issued orders amending certain clauses in the rules under Government Order No. 135, dated September 16. Under the revised rules, the government provides seven slabs instead of the four proposed in GO No. 131, dated August 31, like in the old LRS scheme of 2015.

Under the new slabs, the government prescribes the regularisation charges in accordance with market value of the plot as of August 26, 2020 (sub-registrar value).

Regularisation charges for sub-registrar value of less than ₹3,000 per square yard will be 20 per cent, between ₹3,001 and ₹5,000 30 per cent, between ₹5,001 and ₹10,000 40 per cent, between ₹10,001 and ₹20,000 50 per cent, between ₹20,001 and ₹30,000 60 per cent, between ₹30,001 and ₹50,000 80 per cent and above ₹50,000 per square yard sub-registrar value will be 100 per cent.

The revised rules specified that if 10 per cent open space is not available in the unapproved layout, prorata open space charges at 14 per cent of the plot value

HC notice to TS on validity
of regularisation of landVUJJINI
VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

The Telangana High Court issued notices to the Chief Secretary, principal secretary, panchayat raj, and rural development, and the commissioners of GHMC and the HMDA, directing them to respond to a petition questioning the constitutional validity of Government Order (GO) 131.

The GO issued by the municipal administration department provides for regularisation of unapproved layouts spread across the state.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijayen Reddy was dealing with the PIL filed by Forum for Good

Governance (NGO) represented by its general secretary, M. Padmanabha Reddy.

Senior counsel S. Satyam Reddy, appearing for the petitioner, informed the court that GO 131 containing the Telangana Regularisation of Unapproved and Illegal Layout Rules is in strict violation of Section 58 of the Telangana Urban Areas Development Act, 1975, the GHMC Act, the HMDA Act, the Municipalities Act, the Panchayat Raj Act and the Telangana Urban Areas Development Act.

Counsel said that the state government was forcing people to cough up regularisation amounts. Because of this, people were facing problems in making payments towards

the land regularisation scheme. Further, senior counsel insisted that the court pass an interim direction stating that the decision of the government would be subject to the outcome of the result in the PIL.

Chief Justice Chauhan observed, “if the PIL petition is allowed and the GO is set aside, the GO will go... so let us hear from the state as to what is its stand.” He said that because the bench was convinced of the PIL the court needed to know the stand of the government on this issue.

Advocate General B.S. Prasad informed the bench that since this PIL requires a final hearing, he sought two weeks to file counter-affidavits. The hearing was adjourned to October 8.

prevailing as on the date of registration of the plot will be collected, instead of the prevailing rate as on August 26, 2020.

In the amended GO, the LRS regularisation charges include the NALA fee (for conversion of agricultural to non-agricultural

land use) and no separate NALA fee is to be paid by LRS applicants.

After issuing GO No 135, Kumar said that the rules had been revised in view of a number of requests stating that the regularisation charges were very high when compared to those in

the LRS scheme of the year 2015.

This issue was also raised by MLAs in the Assembly on Wednesday and minister K.T. Rama Rao said the LRS regularisation charges will be revised to make them similar to the ones in the LRS scheme of 2015.

DEADLINE TODAY FOR APPLICATIONS TO MAHINDRA UNIVERSITY’S B.TECH COURSE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

The last date to apply for admission to the four-year BTech programme at the Hyderabad campus of Mahindra University’s

● **ELIGIBLE STUDENTS** will be counselled online on the branches available to them.

Ecole Centrale School of Engineering is September 18, the university has stat-

ed. Eligible students will be counselled online on the branches available to them and offers will be rolled out, it said.

Admission will be granted on the basis of JEE Mains (eligibility to write

JEE Advanced 2020) or Valid SAT subject test scores or ACT scores or Class 10+2 exams result (80 per cent or equivalent grade cumulatively in mathematics, physics and chemistry in 10+2 from any board).



Motorists skid and fall off the bike and injure themselves near Parade Grounds in Secunderabad on Thursday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Heavy rains continue
to batter twin citiesT.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

Heavy rains lashed the city for the second day in a row and the ordeal of waterlogged roads, fallen trees and inundated areas that began on Wednesday continued on Thursday as well.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said that the weather will remain the same for the next 48 hours. For the city, it has issued a heavy rainfall warning lasting four days, till September 21.

While the rains were heavy in the Old City and the newer parts of the city on Wednesday, the situation was reversed on Thursday. Many parts of Secunderabad received

heavy rainfall.

As of 8.30 pm, the highest rainfall was recorded at Balanagar at 71.5 mm. This was followed by Malkajigiri at 54.5 mm. In the state, Bejaon in Gadwal district received the highest rainfall measuring 86.8 mm.

Following the IMD warning, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) commissioner Lokesh Kumar asked the monsoon emergency and disaster response teams to be on their toes.

Due to the rainfall, boulders from a hillock fell on the fourth lane (Rajendranagar Exit-16) on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) Wednesday night. It was removed by officials of the Hyderabad Growth Corridor Limited and ORR on Thursday noon.

The GHMC received 205 complaints of rain-related issues, from waterlogging to the uprooting of trees, from building to wall collapses.

While the highest number of complaints between Wednesday and 6 pm on Thursday were those pertaining to waterlogging (126), those pertaining to damage to roads (45) followed.

On the electricity front, officials of the Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL) said that five feeders had tripped due to the rains in Vengalrao Nagar, Falaknuma, IDPL, Balanagar and Machabolarum. “The feeders were all repaired within 15 minutes,” an official said.

China did not keep its word: Singh

From Page 1

“In early May, the Chinese side had taken action to hinder the normal, traditional patrolling pattern of our troops in the Galwan Valley area, which resulted in a face-off,” he said. Even as this situation was being addressed by the Ground Commanders, in mid-May the Chinese side made several attempts to transgress the LAC in other parts of the western sector.

This included Kongka La, Gogra and the north bank of Pangong Lake. “These attempts were detected early and consequently responded to appropriately by our armed forces,” Singh said. “We made it clear to the Chinese side both through diplomatic and military channels that China was, by such actions, attempting to unilaterally alter the status quo. It was categorically conveyed that this was unacceptable,” Singh said.

Giving details of the talks held with China to de-escalate tension, the

Covid tests



Employees await their turn for tests at its headquarters — Rail Nilayam — which saw a spike in Covid-19 cases, in Secunderabad, on Thursday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Doctors seek permanent
jobs on state cadre basisKANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

Recruitment of healthcare workers must be on a permanent basis and not on contract, the Telangana Junior Doctors Association (TJDA) and the Healthcare Reforms Doctors Association (HRDA) have urged. In a meeting with Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Thursday, doctors insisted that permanent recruitment must be made based on state cadre and not on zonal systems. The zonal system has been applied to give preference to doctors of the particular area or district. But the problem noted in Telangana state is that there are not enough doctors in all the zones for the posts.

Three new medical colleges, one each in Suryapet, Mahbubnagar and Siddipet, and the

● **THE ZONAL system** has been applied to give preference to doctors of the particular area or district. But the problem noted in Telangana state is that there are not enough doctors in all the zones for the posts.

Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (TIMS) in Hyderabad have vacant posts but within their local area a sufficient number of applications have not been received. Fewer applications are also due to the contract clause which the doctors do not want. Many of them are looking at permanent posting in the government sector and are willing to wait for them.

Dr G. Srinivas, resident doctor and member of HRDA, explained, “Contract recruitment is

not preferred as once a doctor goes on contract, there is only renewal but no permanent job. If this policy is not changed, these new medical colleges and TIMS will not have doctors joining them.”

The post of assistant professors is vacant but there are very few coming forward due to the contract clause. Similarly, there are not enough specialists joining medical colleges when the clause of the district-wise recruitment is applied. For this reason, the demand is that state cadre be given preference and appointments must be based on that factor alone.

There is a major shortage of healthcare workers in rural and urban areas, the HRDA said and demanded that recruitment must be done a priority and must be carried out soon.

● **THE GOVERNMENT** said it will do everything to protect sovereignty. What does it mean, you have to clarify. Is there status quo ante as on April,” asked former defence minister A.K. Antony. He added, “Galwan Valley was never a disputed site. But even there our soldiers are not being allowed to patrol.”

minister said India had pressed for three key principles — strictly respecting the LAC, not attempting to alter the status quo unilaterally, and abiding by all agreements and understandings between the two sides.

Given the growing friction along the LAC, the senior commanders of the two sides in a meeting on June 6, 2020, had agreed on a process of disengagement that involved reciprocal actions. “Both sides also agreed to respect and abide by the LAC and not undertake any activity to alter the status quo,” he said. “However, in violation of this the Chinese side created a violent face-off on June 15 at Galwan. Our brave soldiers laid down their lives and also inflicted costs including casualties on the Chinese side,” he said.

Indian armed forces have during these provocative actions maintained “sayyam” (restrain) and displayed “shaurya” (valour) to protect the territorial integrity of India, he said. “I would like to emphasise, that India remains committed to resolving the current issues in our border areas through peaceful dialogue and consultations,” he said, referring to his meeting with his Chinese counterpart in Moscow on September 4. “I conveyed in clear terms our concerns related to the actions of the Chinese side, including amassing of large number of troops, their aggressive behaviour and attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo that were in violation of bilateral agreements.”

Several Opposition leaders expressed solidarity with the armed forces. “Two words, Jai Hind!” said Trinamul leader Derek O’Brien. Congress members asked the government to clarify the end-game strategy. “The government said it will do everything to protect sovereignty. What does it mean, you have to clarify. Is there status quo ante as on April,” asked Antony.

The former defence minister added, “Galwan Valley was never a disputed site. But even there our soldiers are not being allowed to patrol.”

Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad said, “On behalf of my party, I would say at least on this China issue, we stand with the government. There should be no compromise. They should go back to the position where they were in April.” Some members such as Prasanna Acharya of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Sanjay Raut of the Shiv Sena cautioned the government while entering into any agreement with China over the present situation.

Ensure transparency
in 2BHK project: KTRDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

K.T. Rama Rao, municipal administration and urban development (MA&UD) minister, has directed officials to ensure transparency in identification of beneficiaries for allotment of double bedroom houses (2BHK).

Rama Rao had announced in the Assembly on Wednesday that the government had taken steps to complete construction of one lakh 2BHK houses in GHMC limits and allot them to beneficiaries by the end of December.

Rama Rao was reviewing the progress of 2BHK houses in Geater Hyderabad along with roads and buildings minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy on Thursday. Officials informed the ministers that the construction work was nearing com-

● **RAMA RAO** was reviewing the progress of 2BHK houses in Geater Hyderabad along with roads and buildings minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy.

pletion. The ministers asked the GHMC commissioner to coordinate with district collectors in the GHMC limits while finalising the list of beneficiaries. They instructed the officials to ensure that the names of those who have already received houses did not appear in the latest list.

Rama Rao asked the officials to plant saplings right away to increase greenery at the 2BHK housing sites. Principal secretaries Arvind Kumar (MA&UD) and Sunil Sharma (housing), and GHMC commissioner.

Talasani takes CLP
chief on tour of sitesDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

Animal husbandry minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav triggered a political drama by visiting Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and taking him along on a tour double bedroom houses being constructed by the government in the GHMC limits.

During a short discussion in the Assembly on Wednesday on infrastructure works in the GHMC and other municipalities, Mallu Bhatti had alleged that despite the TRS being in power for six years, the government had not fulfilled its poll promise of its first term of providing houses to the poor.

Mallu Bhatti said that during the last GHMC elections, the ruling pa-

rty had promised 2BHK houses to the poor. This time again, TRS leaders are trying to bluff the poor in the name of 2BHK houses in the coming GHMC elections.

Alleging that the Congress leader was lying, the minister said “I am requesting him: Tomorrow at 10 am, I will visit his house and take him to the double-bedroom sites wherever the construction is happening, if he wants.”

Keeping his word, the minister along with mayor B. Rammohan descended on Mallu Bhatti’s residence and took him in his car to the construction sites at Jiyaguda, Ghode ka Khabar, Indira Colony, Kattal Mandi, Bansilapet and Marredpally where 3,428 2BHK units are coming up.

They later held a press conference.

OTHER STORIES

COVID DEATH TOLL
CROSSES 1K MARK
WITH 9 NEW DEATHSKANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 17

The number of deaths due to Covid-19 crossed the 1,000 mark in Telangana state on September 16, with nine persons dying due to Covid-19, the state health department stated on Thursday.

The state had recorded its first Covid-19 case on March 2, and first fatality due to the disease on March 29.

The first 100 cases were recorded on June 4. The toll crossed the 500-mark on July 30, about four months after the first death was registered. From there, it has taken just about 50 days for the toll to double.

The state stands 13th with regard to the number of Covid-19 deaths in the country. Many of the deaths were attributed by experts to delayed diagnosis caused by fear of the disease and patients reporting late to hospitals. Many suspected Covid-19 positive persons are still not willing to get themselves tested when they get the symptoms.

Yet others have not understood the symptoms of loss of taste and smell, the initial possible indicators for Covid-19. These issues, apart from the co-morbid conditions are the main causes of the deaths.

Controlling death is the main target of the medical fraternity as antiviral drugs are aiding in recovery of patients. But those who come too late often succumb within a few hours in hospitals.

New cases of Covid-19 in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits and districts have been consistent in the month of September, with 2,159 recorded on September 16, the health department stated.

New cases in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits on Wednesday were 318: Medchal-Malkajigiri 121, Ranga Reddy 176, Karimnagar 127, Siddipet 132 and Warangal Urban 98. These districts have been consistently recording high cases since the beginning of the pandemic in the state. The total cases in the state stand at 1,65,003.

A ground survey carried out by a non-governmental organisation in the GHMC limits and districts has found that those reporting early to hospitals are experiencing only mild to moderate infection.

Thirty-eight per cent of patients were symptomatic while 62 per cent were asymptomatic of the 2,000 patients surveyed in the state.

From this group, only six per cent required hospitalisation. Fifty-eight per cent exposed to the virus were in the age group of 21 to 50 years.

● **NEW CASES** in GHMC limits on Wednesday were 318.

● **MEDCHAL-MALKAJIGIRI:** 121

● **RANGA REDDY:** 176

● **KARIMNAGAR:** 127

● **SIDDIPET:** 132

● **WARANGAL URBAN:** 98

● **THESE DISTRICTS** have been consistently recording high cases since the beginning of the pandemic in the state.

● **THE TOTAL** cases in the state stand at 1,65,003.

● **A GROUND** survey carried out by a non-governmental organisation in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits and districts has found that those reporting early to hospitals are experiencing only mild to moderate infection.

Parties unite, celebrate
Telangana Liberation day

KCR slammed for ignoring sacrifice of nearly 4,500 people

PULI SHARATH
KUMAR | DC
KARIMNAGAR, SEPT. 17

The leaders of various political parties, along with the members of several peoples' organisations, observed September 17 as 'Telangana liberation day' and remembered the martyrs who sacrificed their lives during the armed struggle against the Nizams in Karimnagar district.

Speaking on the occasion, CPI district secretary, Kedari, alleged that when the state of Hyderabad was under the rule of the Nizams, Left leaders like Ravi Narayana Reddy, Baddam Yellareddy and Makhdoom Mohinuddin had given a call for an armed struggle movement in 1947 on September 11 against the Nizam, the Razakars and the Deshmukhs which continued until September 17, 1948.

Around 4,500 people sacrificed their lives during the movement against the Nizam before Hyderabad state was merged with the Indian union. Because of their sacrifices, the Left leaders were able to re-distribute about 10 lakh acres of land to the poor, he said.

The BJP is trying to give the wrong definition to the armed struggle. The leaders of the BJP must study history first before they talk about it. People are watching every move of the political parties and will teach a befitting lesson if they are misguided or betrayed, Kedari warned.

CPI leaders, Koyyada Srujan Kumar, B. Ashok, K. Buchanna, B. Mahendar, K. Manikanta Reddy, B. Sada Shiva, Ganesh, K. Surender Reddy, G. Satyam, Srinivas, Nikhil, Ramesh and Naresh were among those present.

Ambati Joji Reddy, president of the Karimnagar parliament segment of the TD, alleged that Chief Minister,

K. Chandrasekhar Rao, was intentionally trying to hide the history of Telangana fearing he may lose power if people come to know about the armed struggle and was trying to divert the attention of the people. It is a shame that he ignored the sacrifices of thousands of people who lost their lives fighting against the cruel Nizam rulers and Razakars, Reddy said.

Not celebrating September 17 as 'Telangana liberation day' is an insult to the people living in this region. It is the minimum responsibility of any government to hand over the great history of that particular region to the coming generations. But the



BJYM members hoist the National Flag in the 22nd division in Karimnagar on the occasion of Telangana Liberation Day on Thursday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

BJP had no role in
struggle: CongressANUDEEP
CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, SEPT. 17

Liberation was achieved due to the sacrifices of many between 1946 and 1948, but the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has nothing to do with it, said Warangal District Congress Committee President Naini Rajender Reddy.

The BJP is twisting history to turn the issue into a Hindu-Muslim fight and gain political mileage, Mr Rajender Reddy added.

Speaking after hoisting the National Flag at the NRR Bhavan in Hanamkonda on Thursday, he emphasised the role of the Congress in the Indian freedom struggle and from freeing Telangana from the clutches of the Nizam rule and for creating a sepa-

rate Telangana state.

"While all the political parties and people of the state are celebrating 'liberation day,' the state government is insulting the people by not celebrating the day officially. Mr Chandrasekhar Rao's rule reflects the tyrannical rule of the Nizams. Despite fighting for a separate state, the people need to go a long way in bringing a democratic government in the state," he said.

Mr Rajender Reddy observed that family rule continues in the state and requested the people to come together to put an end to this feudal rule. Former MP of Sircilla Rajaiah, former corporator Thota Venkanna, secretary Meesala Prakash, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) leaders were present along with others.

TRS government is not in a mood to include the armed struggle movement in the school syllabus, Reddy said.

TD leaders K. Agaiah, A. Venkataiah, V. Srinivas Reddy, S. Rajesham, R. Sridhar, P. Ravinder, B. Karunakar Reddy, T. Manohar, E. Vineeth, S. Rajamallaiiah, Dr Ch. Narasimhachary and M. Srinivas were among those who were present at the celebrations.

Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) district president, Boinapalli Praveen Rao, hoisted the national flag at the celebrations organised by BJYM state executive member, Katakam Lokesh, in the 22nd division.

Praveen Rao alleged that K. Chandrasekhar Rao, while leading the Telangana movement, had criticised the previous government for not celebrating September 17 as 'liberation day.' After coming to the power, Rao, for the sake of vote bank politics, is not celebrating it officially.

He demanded that the TRS government observe September 17 as 'liberation day' and celebrate it officially every year to bring peace to the souls of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in liberating the Telangana region from the Nizam rulers.

BJYM leaders D. Sampath, Avinash, J. Nikhil, S. Nagaraju, R. Rakesh,



BJP leaders, led by Rambabu, felicitate Sunkarasetti Sambasiva Rao, a native of Bhimavaram village, in Vemsoor mandal on the occasion of Telangana Liberation day on Thursday. Sambasiva Rao, as a 16-year-old boy along with his father had defended the village and stopped the razakars from entering his village. Sambasiva Rao is acclaimed for his skill in wielding a spear. Rambabu said that the razakars used to raid the village and lift sheep, cattle and chicken. Sometimes, they would also kidnap girls from the village. "I participated in the struggle against the Nizam and protected the villagers," he said.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

Bund on Godavari set
to save 20 habitationsRAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KOTHAGUDEM, SEPT. 17

A total of 20 habitations of Aswapuram, Manuguru, Charla and Dummugudem mandals will be protected by a bund from the River Godavari as part of the Sitammasagar project that proposes to store 37 tmc ft of water. The bund should be built at the height of 80 feet to protect the habitations from the river water.

The government began land acquisition for the purpose in the four mandals. The Sitammasagar is being built to store water for the Sitarama lift irrigation project. About 6.74 lakh acres will be irrigated under it.

The storage of 37 tmc ft may cause submersion of

habitations in the two mandals. A bund on both sides is proposed to protect these habitations from the backwaters of the project.

A survey was taken up in the three mandals and completed in one village in Charla mandal. The anicut will be built at 69 metres against 43 meters of the Godavari river level. About 358 acres in Manuguru, 293 in Aswapuram, 419 in Dummugudem and 747 acres in Charla would be acquired for the bund.

The Sitammasagar, which is a river reservoir, will come up 200 metres upstream of the Sitarama lift irrigation project.

The project cost is estimated at ₹2,600 crore. The officials plan to complete the land survey within

two months.

The bund is also a relief to the people of these habitations from regular floods in the Godavari. These villages are inundated every monsoon.

From the Sitarama project, about 9,000 cusecs of water will be lifted every day through four pump sets during the monsoon and about 70 tmc ft will be sent to the canals in the season.

The people in the 20 habitations are happy over the construction of a bund on the Godavari.

N. Appaiah, a farmer from Aswapuram, said "Not only habitations but also the crops will be saved from the floods with the bund construction. We are welcoming the land acquisition for the purpose."



Sattupalli MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiiah organised a 25 km tractor rally in Vemsoor mandal hailing the new revenue act on Thursday. The rally commenced at Beerapalli and ended at Marlapadu village. Speaking on the occasion Sandra Venkata Veeraiiah said that the new revenue act is a boon to the farming community as their lands will be protected. "Without the biometric thumb impression of the farmer lands cannot be transferred. Details of lands will be available in the Dharani website and tehsildars will be given powers to register the farm lands. He said that the survey numbers will be given through satellite survey to the farmers," the MLA said.

Not all farmers
are getting crop
loans or waiversDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, SEPT. 17

Are the banks issuing loans following the crop loan target in the present Kharif? Are banks not showing interest to issue targeted loans due to the economic slowdown in the time of Covid-19? Are there any other reasons for it?

One may have doubts if one were to analyse the volume of crop loans issued so far in Khammam district. The bankers committee identified 1,61,741 farmers eligible for crop loans worth ₹1,516.28 crore. Only 51,326 farmers had their loans renewed by the banks worth ₹498.26 crore so far. Two thirds of the farmers are visiting the banks for the loans but in vain.

The process of renewal of crop loans used to commence in April and the farmers would get the loans in May and June. This did not happen in the present Kharif. There are various reasons for it. Firstly, banks are not issuing loans to all eligible farmers. The farmers were asked to take up less volume than that sanctioned. Further, various queries are being put up on these loans.

Secondly, some farmers are anticipating the announcement of a loan waiver by the state. The farmers put hopes on the state-

ment of Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao, who said that there will be surprise news soon. The farmers are considering the surprise news as a loan waiver.

The banks give 18 per cent of its deposits as loans to people, particularly farmers. But the banks are not maintaining that volume. According to one estimate, the banks are issuing loans to the farmers below ten per cent.

The process of renewal of crop loans used to commence in April and the farmers would get the loans in May and June. This did not happen in the present Kharif. There are various reasons for it. Firstly, banks are not issuing loans to all eligible farmers. The farmers were asked to take up less volume than that sanctioned. Further, various queries are being put up on these loans.

The farmers are hoping that the loan waiver be implemented before October 31 this year. Farmer leader, M. Sudhakar, said that the banks are not giving loans to all the eligible farmers and it should speed up the crop loans issue.

GIRLS MUST ENROL
FOR VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION: MAYORDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, SEPT. 17

Mayor of Greater Warangal, Gunda Prakash Rao, on Thursday launched a signature campaign on Economic empowerment and vocational skills development for young women at the mayor's camp office in Warangal. The campaign was taken up by Abhyudaya Seva Samithi and Girls Advocacy Alliance.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Rao said Vocational education leads to economic development and national development. Parents should pay special attention to the education of girls in our society and the schemes implemented by the Telangana state government should be reach the poor SC, ST, BC and minority welfare hostels.

"Girls should take advantage of vocational education and help the in development. Warangal in particular is a child-friendly city and all government departments should work in coordination to make the district a child marriages-free district," he said calling for special focus on education for girls, as well as an extensive campaign for women's education by NGOs and SHG women's groups.

Erstwhile Warangal District Child Welfare committee chairperson M a n d a l a Parashuramulu said, "For the development of girls' education, the Union government should allocate more funds and give higher priority to vocational education in particular. Women should protect girls from committing feticide as well as be careful not to commit abuses." Child protection officials and Anganwadi teachers have demanded that the Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao programme introduced by Prime Minister Modi be widely publicised. Warangal Urban district Child Line nodal coordinator MD Iqbal Pasha and others were present.

ADORABLE | BUT TOUGH

Her life changed when she began acting in short films and was soon a sensation on YouTube

60-year-old Gangavva is the 'storm' in Bigg Boss house

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, SEPT. 17

The scene of Bigg Boss Telugu house was transformed in the fourth season with the entry of the oldest contestant and YouTube sensation, Milkuri Gangavva, who hails from Lambadipally village in Jagtial of erstwhile Karimnagar district.

The Bigg Boss fourth season in Telugu started amid

the Coronavirus pandemic with 60-year-old Gangavva grabbing the attention of youth and elders from rural to urban areas.

She is giving all contestants, including actors, directors and television celebrities, a run for their money while entertaining the audiences like no other.

Gangavva began life by tiling and sowing seasonal produce besides working in other fields as farm labour.

● **SHE** began life by tiling and sowing seasonal produce besides working in other fields.

But her life changed completely when she entered the web world through YouTube channel acting in short films in her village.

Initially she made occasional appearances in the video series, which was shot and directed by Srikanth

Sriram who belonged to the same village. Even though Gangavva is illiterate, the team taught her delivering punch-lines in satirical take on village life.

Netizens loved the way she reported local news with a typical Telangana accent. In no time, she had 40K followers on Instagram.

The manner she faced the camera, her adeptness and straightforward behaviour helped her steal the show

soon after entering the Bigg Boss house. She received constant support and encouragement from fellow-participants.

Having garnered a large number of votes from the audience in the first week of elimination, Gangavva is set to give a tough fight to other contestants. The host Nagarjun made it clear that Gangavva can leave the BB house when the audience wants to.



Gangavva reads on her way to work in the fields in her village Lambadipally in Jagtial of erstwhile Karimnagar district.

SHORT TAKES

2 BOYS BEAT MOTHER TO DEATH IN ODISHA

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 17

Two minor boys, apparently fed up with continuous torture, beat their mother to death in an apartment at Sundarpada under Airfield police station here on Wednesday night. The deceased was identified as Binodini Mishra. An altercation reportedly broke out between the mother and her sons late Wednesday night over some family issue. In a fit of rage, the two minor boys aged 12 and 15 years started beating Binodini, 40, with an iron rod killing her on the spot. Later, they kept the body in the bathroom and went outside after locking the flat. On Thursday morning, the security guard of the apartment called up Airfield police, who reached the spot and found the body lying in the bathroom. The police seized the body and sent it for post-mortem. The cops also detained the two accused for interrogation. Police sources, quoting the boys, said the deceased had been torturing her children under the influence of liquor. Fed up with this, the two children beat their mother to death. The deceased's husband, an employee posted in Rourkela, was informed about the incident.

BSY IN DELHI TO DISCUSS CABINET EXPANSION

New Delhi, Sept. 17: Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa arrived in the national capital on Thursday to discuss cabinet expansion in the state with the BJP top brass. During his two-day visit, the chief minister is scheduled to call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP national president J.P. Nadda as well as Union Ministers to discuss the state's issues. "I have come to Delhi to discuss with several Union Ministers about developmental works of the state. At the same time, I will also discuss the cabinet expansion with the party leaders to ascertain their views," Yediyurappa told reporters here. He is likely to meet Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday, and Modi, Nadda and other Union Ministers on Friday. The chief minister's son and BJP state vice-president BY Vijayendra is accompanying him. Yediyurappa is under pressure to expand Karnataka's cabinet at the earliest to appease disgruntled legislators although he is not keen to make any such changes right now.

MP MANTRI THRASHES CONGRESSMAN

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, SEPT. 17

A video showing a senior minister in Shivraj cabinet thrashing a Congress worker in Gwalior on Thursday went viral causing huge embarrassment to the ruling BJP. State energy minister Pradyumna Singh Tomar was caught on camera advancing menacingly towards a group of Congress workers who were shouting slogans against BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia at Phulbag square in Gwalior. He was then seen in the video clip delivering punches on a Congress worker. The incident took place on Wednesday. According to official sources, the Congress workers were staging a demonstration in Gwalior to protest against the move by Gwalior Municipal Corporation to remove hoardings featuring Congress veteran and former chief minister Kamal Nath erected at some places in the city. The demonstrators stopped the minister's cavalcade and then started shouting slogans against Mr Scindia provoking Mr Tomar to disembark from his vehicle and confront the Congress workers. He first had heated exchanges with them and later gave blows to Mr Khan while snatching the Congress flag from him. Mr Tomar was known to be a staunch loyalist of Mr Scindia. He was among 22 former Congress MLAs who resigned from assembly as well as Congress in March to pull down the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government.

A bit different this time



A devotee performs rituals on the occasion of Mahalaya Amavasya at Marina Beach in Chennai on Thursday. Mahalaya is an auspicious occasion celebrated at the end of Pitri Paksha, a 16-day period when Hindus pay homage to their ancestors. It is believed that it is the time when goddess Durga descends from Kailasha to the earth, her maternal home. On Mahalaya, the sculptors usually draw the eyes of Devi Durga, a ritual known as 'Chokkhu Daan'. However, it did not happen this year as Durga Puja starts over a month later. Durga Puja will begin on October 22 instead of the traditional seven-day gap from Mahalaya as the Bengali month of Kartik starting on Friday is a 'mala mash' or lunar month, considered inauspicious for any religious or social festivity.

— PTI

Old trick: PLA borrows leaf from 2,200 years old battle

Chinese troops play Punjabi songs on loudspeakers at the LAC

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17:

While Indians are amused over Chinese troops playing Punjabi songs on loudspeakers at Line of Actual Control (LAC) at Eastern Ladakh where for the first time in 45 years shots have been fired, it seems PLA is using the tactics employed by Chinese Han generals some 2,200 years ago during so called "Battle of Gaixia". In this battle, Han King Liu Bang beat his Chu rival Xiang Yu and established the Han Dynasty in China. Chinese state run *Global Times* on Thursday talking about Chinese army playing Punjabi songs at LAC said that the Indian army is in a situation of "hearing the Chu songs on four sides." The *Global Times* said that the move of playing Punjabi songs sends a message to India that the Indian army is isolated and besieged on all sides. "Hearing the Chu songs on four sides" is a Chinese idiom, which is said to have originated from the supposed "Battle of Gaixia". After the fall of the Qin Dynasty, the state of Chu and the State of Han fought for control of China around 206 BC to 202 BC. As per the legends around 202 BC, Chu king Xiang Yu was trapped and surrounded by the rival Han forces in hills at Gai Xia. The legends say to weaken the morale of the Chu forces and King Xiang

● **IT SEEMS** foolish if PLA assumes that Punjabi songs played at the LAC will have the same impact on a professional and battle hardened Indian Army as what happened with Chu soldiers some thousands of years back.

who was a ferocious fighter, Han soldiers started singing Chu songs from all sides. After listening to these songs, Chu soldiers thought that Han people had captured their homeland and brought Chu people to the battlefield. As per these stories, Chu soldiers became worried about their family members, homesick and lost the will to fight. Many Chu soldiers deserted. Even Chu King is said to have become desperate after listening to the Chu songs and is said to have cried. Xiang Yu committed suicide after his forces tried to break the trap. However, it seems foolish if the PLA assumes that Punjabi songs played at the LAC will have the same impact on a professional and battle hardened Indian Army as what happened with Chu soldiers some thousands of years back. Only last week Indian army's Sikh Regiment observed the 123rd Saragarhi Day where 22 soldiers of 4 Sikh in a famous 'last-stand' fought thousands of Pathans in North West Frontier Province on September 12, 1897.

Men have decided to stay back and assist the Army

From Page 1

The move comes even as the Army and ITBP soldiers are being deployed ahead of these villages in large numbers. The villages, located at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, are not very far away from Mount Kailash, close to where the People's Liberation Army of China is said to have deployed surface-to-air missiles. People belonging to these villages live there for about six months, between May and November. Once the winter gets harsh when temperatures fall below minus-20° Celsius, they move to the lower reaches in Dharchula town by November or December. The five villages are located a few kilometres from the tri-junction between India, China and Nepal. "The villagers have been informed about the advisory and some of them are packing up and will leave soon. We have requested that women and children be sent down as early as possible. In case the situation takes a turn for the worse, most men have decided to stay back and assist the Army and the ITBP," one of the village heads told this newspaper. These villages used to be pit stops for trekkers,

- **OF THE FIVE** villages in Dharchula of Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand, Kuti has a population of about 365 people living in 115 houses.
- **NABHI HAS** 78 people and 32 houses, Raung Kong about 120 living in 35 houses, Napalachchu 74 in 25 houses and Gunji about 335 in 194 houses.
- **LOCATED AT** an elevation of about 10,000 feet, locals stay there for six months every year and then migrate to the plains
- **ALL THE** villages are few kilometres away from the tri-junction between India, China and Nepal
- **CHINA HAS** deployed surface-to-air missile near Mount Kailash — not very far away from the villages
- **ABOUT 975** people including 395 females reside across the five border villages, leading tough lives.

tourists and those travelling to Adi Kailash; they would be offered homes-

tays by the locals. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the people have been hit hard. Most of them sell various products including herbs which they painstakingly collect from mountains at the annual trade between India and China but even that did not take place this year. "Our main earnings are through the trade every year. When we return from China, we buy some products which we sell when we go down to the town. This time around, we do not know how to survive," said a local. The villagers are worried that if tensions continue to rise between India and China, they will permanently lose their source of income and in the worst scenario, even their houses. About 975 people including 395 females reside across the five border villages, leading tough lives. "During the 1962 war, our ancestors assisted the Indian Army and stood by them in the most difficult times. We even gave our rations to them and transported their equipment, arms and ammunition on our backs. We will do the same even now if there is a repeat of 1962," Virendra Singh Nabiyal, a local of Nabi village, said.

Harsimrat quits as mantri as LS passes farm Bills

DC CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17



Harsimrat Kaur Badal

In a major embarrassment to the NDA government at the Centre, Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal resigned from the Cabinet over two contentious farm Bills passed in Lok Sabha on Thursday. "I have resigned from Union Cabinet in protest against anti-farmer ordinances and legislation. Proud to stand with farmers as their daughter and sister," Badal, who held the food processing industries portfolio, tweeted. The resignation was, however, first announced by her husband and MP Sukhbir Singh Badal in Lok Sabha during discussion before the passage of the two Bills that seek to liberalise the agriculture sector. While announcing the SAD's decision to withdraw their minister from Narendra Modi's Cabinet, Badal said the SAD would continue to support the government and Bharatiya Janata Party, but will oppose its anti-farmer policies. Badal is the only SAD representative in the Modi government. The party is the oldest BJP ally. The SAD was under tremendous political pressure after the Congress government in Punjab passed a resolution in the Vidhan Sabha against the ordinances, prompting the NDA ally to fiercely oppose the Bills after initially supporting it.

The Badals — party patriarch Parkash Singh Badal, former deputy CM Sukhbir Badal and Badal — had not opposed the government's move in June when it had brought ordinances for the same. The SAD, sources said, had told the BJP that they will not be able to support the Bills as there is massive unrest among farmers in Punjab. The Bills in question are the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, which were passed on

- **THE SAD** president said the Bills, including the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, which has been passed by Lok Sabha, are going to affect 20 lakh farmers and 15-20 lakh farm labourers in Punjab alone.
- **THE STATE** with 2.5 per cent of the country's landmass produces nearly 50 per cent of food grains for the country, he added.

Thursday. The two Bills were passed by a voice vote. Minister of agriculture and farmers welfare Narendra Singh Tomar while replying to the debate said that as claimed by Opposition the Bills were farmer friendly and would be revolutionary for the agriculture sector. Opposing the legislation, Congress Party said the BJP government is hell bent on destroying the "Anndata" farmer to benefit a handful of crony capitalists. "62 crores farmers and farm labourers are agitating across India. Over 250 farmers organisations are sitting in dharna, on hunger strikes and demonstrating across the length and breadth of India. Drunk with power and determined to serve crony capitalists friends, Prime Minister Narendra Modi continues to be blind to the agony of the farmers and suppress every voice of protest. Modi government is dictatorially subverting the voice of farmers' representatives inside the Parliament and has unleashed a draconian 'Lathi-Danda Regime' on protesting farming community," the party said in a statement.

India: No progress in Jadhav's case

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

India on Thursday said that the Pakistan government has not been able to fulfill its obligations to implement International Court of Justice (ICJ) orders in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case and is yet to address the core issues which include allowing India to hire a counsel of choice to defend Jadhav in Pakistani courts. "The government of Pakistan has not been able to fulfill its obligations on implementation of the ICJ judgment in letter and spirit. It has

not yet addressed the core issues, which includes provision of all documents related to the case, providing unconditional and unimpeded consular access to Jadhav and appointment of an Indian lawyer or a Queen's counsel to ensure free and fair trial," spokesperson for ministry of external affairs Anurag Srivastava said. India has proposed to hire Harish Salve, who is also the Queen's counsel lawyer, to defend for Jadhav during the review of his death sentence in Pakistan. Pakistan is yet to respond to India's proposal.

Chart your own course: What one can learn from Modi's life

SYED ZAFAR ISLAM



their lives. The common thing that I see is the stark confusion people have about what they wish to do going forward. There is always this dilemma that today's youth has in their minds. Should they follow what they feel like doing or should they follow popular trends? To those young citizens of our country, I always say that one should study the life of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi and derive an important lesson — must follow the path that

you truly believe in, and do not get distracted by the fashionable trends of the day. At a time and age in his life when most people around him would have been thinking of securing prized government jobs or even looking to become lawyers, doctors or teachers, Narendra Modi decided to be his own man and work for society. While the methods may vary in today's day and age, what Narendra Modi did is today fashionably called a sabbatical. He paused to think of what he wanted to do in his life and the path that he wanted to traverse. One must therefore learn the important lesson to take away from this incident - clean the cobwebs of your mind so that you can think rationally and clearly. Pause, even take a break

if necessary, to figure out exactly what you want to do with your lives. Choose after detailed deliberation the path that you can put your heart into, I repeatedly tell the youth of today. Mr. Modi's life teaches us a lot about this important aspect of life. One sees the sharpness of mind and the intellect of the man and wonders — what if the man had charted a different, perhaps more conventional trajectory in his life? Would we have witnessed him as India's Prime Minister today? It is clear by now that Mr. Modi is among the sharpest minds around, and that he could have been a successful person in any other field. And yet, he chose something that was very different from prevalent trends. He dared

to be different because he pursued something with passion and vigour, and today's youth can draw inspiration from this just as much. The path should be one that gives your heart joy and utmost satisfaction, just as Narendra Modi chose to serve the people of India for it satiates his soul to no end. Life, like in politics, often sees people dragging you down. You will see people mocking your initiatives when it starts, only to realize their own follies later. However, that should not deter you from sticking to the path. Had Mr. Modi hesitated to pursue his goal of making India open defecation free or to roll out the world's largest financial inclusion program of the Jan Dhan Yojana, the successes we see today on the

two fronts would not have manifested themselves. Do not be swayed by the gimmickry of these naysayers in life; instead, view their gimmickry for what it is - a gimmick. Because they do not truly believe in anything that they say necessarily; they are instead seeking perceived momentary benefits without seeing the larger picture. Their myopic vision should not be allowed to overpower your ambition and desires ever. Let your work speak for itself, even as you may face opposition similar to what Mr. Modi has seen coming at him for believing and holding onto his way of doing things. Just like Mr. Modi, you may be called names, may be misrepresented deliberately and attacked as well. However, do not fear

attacks and face them bravely, and see how the malevolent force crumbles by itself just as the opposition has scattered into the wind when faced resolutely by Mr. Modi. Doing your own thing can make you stand out of the crowd in life just as in politics, and people will try to imitate you. These days, some people have rediscovered their roots even in politics, and think they can benefit by being imitators. Some of them suddenly started visiting temples like Mr. Modi, while some others suddenly start chanting shlokas to show that they are perhaps bigger Hindus than Mr. Modi. Never forget though that imitation is the best form of flattery. Take this copycat behaviour in your own stride as a compliment and brush

off the emotional baggage that such imitators bring along with them. Notice how Mr. Modi does not imitate anyone, and is his self - always - be your true self just like that. We can go on and on about Mr. Modi's life as an example for the youth of New India. Being his own man comes naturally to Mr. Modi much like it is a feature of New India and its youth, a key reason why the two gravitate towards each other so naturally. To sum up though, Mr. Modi has only done what Frank Sinatra meant when he sang - I did it my way. (The writer is a BJP's Rajya Sabha MP, its national spokesperson and former Managing Director, Deutsche Bank, India)



SHORT TAKES

WORLD LEADERS
GREET PM MODI
ON HIS 70TH B'DAY

Moscow/London, Sept. 17: Russian President Vladimir Putin, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and German Chancellor Angela Merkel were among the world leaders who extended greetings to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 70th birthday on Thursday and lauded his personal contribution to the strengthening of ties with their countries.

Prime Minister Modi, born on September 17 in 1950, turned 70 on Thursday. In a letter to Modi, Putin praised him and said his activity as India's head of the government has earned him the well-deserved respect of compatriots and high international prestige.

WORLD'S SMALLEST
ULTRASOUND
SENSOR DEVELOPED

Berlin, Sept. 17: Scientists have developed the world's smallest ultrasound detector, which is 100 times tinier than an average human hair, and can visualise features that are much smaller than previously possible, an advance that may lead to better ways of studying ultra-fine details in tissues and materials

According to the researchers from the German Research Center for Environmental Health, the core detection technology for these very low frequency sound waves has for decades focused on using piezoelectric detectors which convert the pressure from sound waves into electric voltage. They said the imaging resolution achieved using this process depends on the size of the piezoelectric detector employed, with reduction in size leading to higher resolution and an improved ability to discriminate features in the imaged tissues.

U.S. TO DECLARE
UN SANCTIONS ON
IRAN ARE BACK

Washington, Sept. 17: In defiance of overwhelming opposition, the United States is preparing to declare that all international sanctions against Iran have been restored. Few countries believe the move is legal, and such action could provoke a credibility crisis at the United Nations.

Virtually alone in the world, the Trump administration will announce on Saturday that UN sanctions on Iran eased under the 2015 nuclear deal are back in force.

But the other members of the UN Security Council, including US allies, disagree and have vowed to ignore the step. That sets the stage for ugly confrontations as the world body prepares to celebrate its 75th anniversary at a coronavirus-restricted General Assembly session next week.

The question is how the Trump administration will respond to being ignored. It already has slapped extensive sanctions on Iran, but could impose penalties on countries that don't enforce the UN sanctions it claims to have reimposed.

UK DEFENDS BREXIT
DEAL AS BIDEN
SLAMS MOVE

London, Sept. 17: The British government struggled on Thursday to overcome American opposition to its plans to breach the Brexit withdrawal agreement with the European Union, after Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden became the latest US politician to express alarm.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's move to break parts of the EU divorce deal relating to Northern Ireland has triggered fears it could undermine the 1998 Good Friday peace accord that ended decades of violence between Irish nationalists and British unionists. "We can't allow the Good Friday Agreement that brought peace to Northern Ireland to become a casualty of Brexit," Biden tweeted.

"Any trade deal between the US and UK must be contingent upon respect for the Agreement and preventing the return of a hard border. Period," he wrote. Britain and the EU jointly promised in the Brexit agreement to ensure there are no customs posts or other obstacles on the Northern Ireland-Ireland border.

The open border is key to the stability that underpins the peace settlement. British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab is in Washington this week.

Second wave in Czech Republic



People wearing face masks ride an escalator in subway in Prague, Czech Republic, on Thursday. The Czech Republic has been facing the second wave of infections. The number of new confirmed Coronavirus infections has been setting new records almost on a daily basis, currently surpassing 2,000 cases in one day for the first time. — AP

Defying China, top US
official visits Taiwan

Taiwan Prez to host dinner for American delegation today

Taipei, Sept. 17: A top US diplomat landed in Taiwan on Thursday, the highest-ranking State Department official to visit in 40 years, in a further sign of Washington's willingness to defy China and its campaign to isolate the self-ruled island.

Keith Krach, undersecretary of state for economic growth, energy and the environment, is visiting to attend a memorial service for late president Lee Teng-hui on Saturday, the US State Department said.

The trip, the second high-ranking US visit in as many months, sparked an immediate rebuke from China, which balks at any recognition of Taiwan and has mounted a decades-long policy of marginalising the demo-

cratic island.

Beijing considers Taiwan part of its territory, to be absorbed into the mainland — by force if necessary.

"China strongly opposes this," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters on Thursday, saying the trip "encourages the arrogant attitude of Taiwan independence separatist forces".

Relations between the United States and China are at their lowest point in decades, with the two sides clashing over a range of trade, military and security issues, as well as the Coronavirus pandemic.

Washington's increased outreach to Taiwan under US President Donald Trump has become yet another flashpoint between the

two powers.

"The United States honours President Lee's legacy by continuing our strong bonds with Taiwan and its vibrant democracy through shared political and economic values," spokeswoman Morgan Ortigas said in a statement announcing Krach's trip.

Taiwan's foreign ministry said Krach, accompanied by assistant secretary Robert Destro, would also discuss "how to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation" during his three-day visit.

It described him as the highest-ranking State Department official to visit Taiwan since 1979, when Washington switched diplomatic recognition to Beijing

from Taipei.

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen will host a dinner for the US delegation on Friday.

"We look forward to more exchanges and discussions between Taiwan and the US to solidify the foundation for further collaborations, including economic cooperation, through undersecretary Krach's visit," her office said in a statement.

Beijing discourages any official exchanges with Taiwan but in recent months Washington has dramatically increased its outreach.

Last month, US cabinet member and health chief Alex Azar visited to highlight Taiwan's widely praised efforts to stop Covid-19. — AFP

Fierce storm hits Finland,
80,000 homes powerless

Talinn, Estonia, Sept. 17: A fierce fall storm has battered Finland, leaving over 80,000 households without electricity, disrupting ferry traffic on the northern part of the Baltic Sea and prompting authorities to issue a warning for citizens to stay inside.

The storm, dubbed 'Aila', first hit the Nordic nation's west coast late Wednesday and swept on Thursday through the central and southwestern parts of the country

of 5.5 million, causing trees to fall and other material damage complete with heavy rain and winds of up to 125 kph (77 mph).

The storm is expected to move further south later Thursday, reach the Finnish capital, Helsinki, in the afternoon and move further across the Baltic Sea to neighboring Estonia where strong winds of up to 115 kph (71 mph) have already been recorded in coastal areas.

Estonian authorities said more than 3,500 households had power cut off as of midday. The Baltic country's weather service also issued a warning of extremely strong winds for Thursday.

Ferry companies operating between Finland and Sweden in the Gulf of Bothnia, the northernmost arm of the Baltic Sea, and Finland and Estonia had canceled most departures on Thursday. — AP

Chinese hackers breached Indian government servers

From page 1

"In about 2019, the conspirators compromised Government of India websites, as well as virtual private networks and database servers supporting the Government of India. The conspirators used VPS Provider servers to connect to an open VPN network owned by the Government of India," the indictment said.

In the attacks, the conspirators installed 'Cobalt Strike' malware on Indian government-protected computers, it added.

According to the charges, the computer intrusions affected over 100 companies in the United States and abroad.

The victims ranged from software development, computer hardware, telecommunication, social media and video game companies. Non-profit organisations, universities, think-tanks, foreign governments, pro-democracy politicians and activists in Hong Kong

were also targeted. Security researchers have tracked the intrusions using labels like APT41, Barium, Winnti, Wicked Panda, and Wicked Spider. These intrusions facilitated the theft of source code, software code signing certificates, customer account data, and valuable business information, the researchers said.

These intrusions also facilitated the defendants' other criminal schemes, including ransomware and crypto-jacking schemes, the latter refers to the group's unauthorised use of victim computers to mine cryptocurrency.

The Chinese hackers targeted government computers and networks of Vietnam and the United Kingdom. The hackers were not successful in compromising the government computer networks in the United Kingdom.

The racketeering conspiracy pertained to the three defendants' conducting the affairs of Chengdu 404 Network Technology

Chengdu 404), a Chinese Government company, through a pattern of racketeering activity involving computer intrusion offenses affecting over 100 companies, organisations, and individuals in the United States and around the world, including in Australia, Brazil, Chile, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam, the justice department said.

It will also revisit the 59-year-old Democratic leader's approval of a May 2011 raid in which Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan.

A release date for the second volume has not yet been set, Penguin Random House said.

Rich nations buy half of
promised vaccine stocks

Washington, Sept. 17: Rich nations representing a fraction of the global population have already bought up over half the promised Covid-19 vaccine stocks, a study showed, as US President Donald Trump pledged to begin inoculating Americans within weeks.

Big pharma is racing to produce an effective jab to counter a virus that has now killed more than 9,35,000 people around the world and infected almost 30 million.

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday warned against "vaccine nationalism" that she said could put lives at risk by depriving the most vulnerable in poorer nations of immunity.

But a study released by Oxfam showed a group of wealthy countries representing just 13 percent of the world population has already secured the lion's share of doses.

"Access to a life-saving vaccine shouldn't depend on where you live or how much money you have," said Robert Silverman of Oxfam America.

"Covid-19 anywhere is Covid-19 everywhere." The five leading vaccine candidates currently in late-stage trials will be able to supply 5.9 billion doses, enough to inoculate

Alarm across Europe
over virus surge: WHO

Copenhagen, Sept. 17: The World Health Organization on Thursday warned of "alarming rates of transmission" of Covid-19 across Europe and cautioned against shortening quarantine periods as countries in the region scrambled to find ways to reduce infections without resorting to new lockdowns.

The WHO's regional director for Europe Hans Kluge said a September surge — Europe set a new record last week, with some 54,000 cases recorded in 24 hours — "should serve as a wake-up call for all of us." "Although these numbers reflect more comprehensive testing, it also shows alarming rates of transmission across the region," he told an online news conference from Copenhagen.

In Britain, new restrictions will take effect Friday, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson warning that pubs may have to close earlier to help avoid a "second hump" of Coronavirus cases.

Residents of northeast England, including the cities of Newcastle and Sunderland, will no longer be allowed to meet people outside their own homes or immediate social circles.

The government already imposed rules across England on Monday limiting socialising to groups of six or fewer, as daily cases reached levels not seen since early May.

Britain has been Europe's worst-hit country, with the government registering nearly 42,000 deaths. — AFP

about three billion people, the Oxfam report said.

Some 51 percent of those jabs have been snapped up by the wealthy world, including the United States, Britain, the European Union, Australia, Hong Kong and

Japan, Switzerland and Israel.

The remaining 2.6 billion have been bought by or promised to developing countries including India, Bangladesh, China, Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico. — AFP

Gilgit-Baltistan
to be full-fledged
province in Pak

Islamabad, Sept. 17: Pakistan has decided to elevate Gilgit-Baltistan's status to that of a full-fledged province, a Pakistani media report on Thursday quoted a senior minister as saying. India has clearly conveyed to Pakistan that the entire union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of the country by virtue of its fully legal and irrevocable accession.

According to a report in the Express Tribune, Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Ali Amin Gandapur, on Wednesday said that Prime Minister Imran Khan would soon visit the region and make the formal announcement to elevate Gilgit-Baltistan to the status of a full-fledged province with all constitutional rights.

Gandapur also said that work on the Moqondass Special Economic Zone would begin under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is the flagship project of Beijing's ambitious multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). — PTI

al government has decided in principle to give constitutional rights to Gilgit-Baltistan," the minister told reporters. India has said the Government of Pakistan or its judiciary has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it.

India completely rejects such actions and continued attempts to bring material changes in Pakistan occupied areas of the Indian territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Instead, Pakistan should immediately vacate all areas under its illegal occupation, the Ministry of External Affairs said in May while protesting Islamabad's efforts to bring material change in Pakistan occupied territories.

Gandapur also said that work on the Moqondass Special Economic Zone would begin under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is the flagship project of Beijing's ambitious multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). — PTI



Barack Obama

OBAMA'S MEMOIR
'PROMISED LAND'
TO BE RELEASED IN
NOVEMBER

Washington, Sept. 17: Former US president Barack Obama on Thursday announced the publication in November of the first half of his memoirs, "A Promised Land" — two weeks after the election pitting Donald Trump against Joe Biden.

Publisher Penguin Random House said the book will be released in 25 languages simultaneously on November 17.

"There's no feeling like finishing a book, and I'm proud of this one," Obama tweeted.

"In A Promised Land, I try to provide an honest accounting of my presidency, the forces we grapple with as a nation, and how we can heal our divisions and make democracy work for everybody." Obama, America's first black president, served two terms in the White House from January 2009 through January 2017, when he was succeeded by Trump.

The book will reveal Obama's thoughts during the global financial crisis and his take on Russian President Vladimir Putin, the statement from Penguin Random House says.

It will also revisit the 59-year-old Democratic leader's approval of a May 2011 raid in which Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan.

A release date for the second volume has not yet been set, Penguin Random House said.

SPACE | ODYSSEY

A year on Jupiter-sized planet quickly whipping around is only 1.4 days

Giant planet found orbiting dead star

Washington, Sept. 17: Scientists have, for the first time, discovered a Jupiter-sized planet orbiting a white dwarf or a dead star located about 80 light years away.

The finding, published in the journal *Nature*, shows the likely presence of the planet, named WD 1856 b, orbiting the smaller star remnant every 34 hours. "This planet is roughly the size of Jupiter, but it also has a very short orbital peri-

od — a year on this planet is only 1.4 days, so it's quickly whipping around its white dwarf star," said Ian Crossfield, assistant professor at the University of Kansas in the US.

A white dwarf is the vestige of a star that has ballooned into a red giant then collapsed back into a dense, dim core that is often about the size of Earth, so this planet is much larger than what is left of its star, the

researchers said. The process usually devours orbiting planets — but not in the case of WD 1856 b, which appears somehow to have avoided destruction, they said. "This tells us white dwarfs can have planets, which is something we didn't know before," Crossfield said. "There are people who now are looking for transiting planets around white dwarfs that could be potentially habitable.

It'd be a pretty weird system, and you'd have to think about how the planets actually survived all that time," he said. The researchers noted that this finding proves that some kinds of planets can survive and be found around white dwarfs. At first, WD 1856 b captured astronomers' interest when they noticed a possible transiting object with NASA's TESS Space Telescope survey. — PTI



Picture of the first time, discovered a Jupiter-sized planet orbiting a white dwarf. — NASA

DECCAN Chronicle

18 SEPTEMBER 2020

Covid shot: Cautious hope, but policy key

For a month now, India has been consistently recording the highest daily infection rate in the world for the Coronavirus pandemic. Thursday's tally of 97,894 topped all such records and by an unfortunately thin margin, adding to the prevailing atmosphere of fear and anxiety. The death toll is 83,198. The virus has reached the heartlands and ICMR's recently released sero-survey results suggest that for every infection spotted India missed 81 cases.

Independent trackers are reporting a slightly higher death tally than the health ministry. According to Worldometer, India has 5,118,253 confirmed cases and 83,230 people have died due to Covid-19. This is in addition to an independent estimate of 906 people who lost their lives amid a poorly enforced lockdown. The government has denied data on this last count, even as families of these individuals in greatest distress pinned their hopes on relief arriving in the form of a financial compensation.

There will be no financial compensation. The economy has shrunk massively and the government is struggling to pay states GST compensation. West Bengal finance minister Amit Mitra alarmingly opined that the shrinkage is 32-33 per cent rather than 23.9 per cent as stated.

The only hope for citizens lies in the quick discovery and distribution of a Coronavirus vaccine. On this account, Hyderabad-based drug maker Dr Reddy's Laboratories is ready for clinical trials of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine while AstraZeneca has resumed trials for the "Oxford vaccine" in India and the UK. In the US, it is Pfizer that has assumed the lead in the vaccine race, which is now nearing its finish line, even as numbers at home stack up overwhelmingly. Though experts believe a vaccine will at best have 40-50 per cent efficacy, it will lead to the building up of herd immunity, which has now emerged as the best bet for our hapless populations. India needs a comprehensive Coronavirus vaccine strategy that will mobilise its fairly successful pharmaceutical industry to mass produce shots so that their price — initially astronomical — comes down and they can be administered to the last man quickly and efficiently, after first covering the elderly and most vulnerable. With a crashing economy and a collapsing healthcare, this strategy will be tricky not only to formulate but also to implement. Advance planning can perhaps save the day, advises the Opposition, and the government must pay heed. It cannot afford to while away its time and needs must take its bitter lessons from its failure to build capacity during its very costly lockdown.

Science and politics are being conflated in a sickeningly familiar manner in India as also elsewhere. It is hype and wordplay against fact and smart decision-making. A day after Union health minister Harsh Vardhan said a vaccine against the Coronavirus disease would be ready by early next year, Adar Poonawalla of the Serum Institute which is participating in the AstraZeneca vaccine trials rightly warned that there won't be enough doses till 2024. Over in the US, an election-bound Donald Trump contradicted his own expert by declaring that a vaccine will reach his country's population by about the same time. But even if a vaccine for Covid-19 were released now, it would take six to nine months for enough people to receive it to create immunity, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director, Robert Redfield, has held. Amid the gloom and doom, a tiny glimmer, that governments need to rally.

As Neros fiddle

So in another 21 months India will have a new Parliament? Well, not a new set of members but a modern building that will replace the over 90-year-old monumental circular edifice. Coming up at the cost of a whopping ₹861.9 crore, quite close to the existing 144-column structure, the new Parliament is indeed a grandiose plan of the present-day government. When the country is going through a dark patch, economically and otherwise, if a government is keen on moving parliamentarians to a new House with modern amenities, it only reveals a mix up in priorities.

The ostentatious project, which will be given concrete shape by Tata Projects Ltd, also brings to memory stories of ancient monarchs who revelled in building fanciful structures even when their subjects suffered in penury and hunger. In recent times, too, democratically elected leaders had displayed such grandiosity, costing only the exchequer needlessly. The swanky state capital, envisaged at Amaravati, for Andhra Pradesh is one example of one chief minister's grand plan not getting the grants from the next, thus leaving the capital idea remaining an unrealized dream for six years. It had been worse in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, where a resplendent highrise, designed with care by a chief minister to house the Secretariat and Assembly, was turned into a multi-specialty hospital, where Coronavirus patients are now being treated with care. That, however, was not the first new secretariat project in the state that went bust since successive chief ministers had been unsuccessfully trying to shift out of the historic Fort St George for long.

Hope such a fate doesn't befall the new Parliament that the Tata's would build in 21 months, perhaps before another government takes charge. We also hope that Parliamentary Democracy regains its lost vigour and verve in the new premises, ushering in better times for the country with parliamentarians protecting people's rights.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

ADITYA SINHA
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234
Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285
Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208
Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904
Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chermudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Adv: Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325
Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552
Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph : 0422 2231255
Kochi: No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloorkadavanthara Road, Emakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408
Thiruvananthapuram: St.Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thycad (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014
Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax : 0495 4019 018
Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Subhani



Kashmiris respond to Centre with 'Gupkar II'

Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

On August 5, 2019, the Narendra Modi government embarked on a dangerous and destabilising course by tearing up the delicate arrangement Free India entered into with Maharaja Hari Singh on the morrow of Independence. The compact, in the shape of Article 370 of the Constitution, gave Kashmir considerable autonomy (as is now being negotiated with the Nagas). On August 22 this year, just 12 months after constitutional havoc was wreaked, accompanied by unremitting repression, Kashmir announced its riposte.

The riposte was resoundingly peaceful. It was contained in a document that its authors called "Gupkar Declaration II". The manifesto, which holds the promise of a fightback by ordinary people in Kashmir, relying only on constitutional means, if the parties that are signatory to it can hold their nerve in the face of both repression and allure, the twin instruments that go with the orchestration of tyranny.

Not to put too fine a point on it, the basis of the promise of Gupkar II is, as of now, no more than a piece of sophisticated political imagination. Its defining feature can be summed by a phrase in it: "nothing about us without us", which seems to constitute a direct challenge to the militaristic, semi-fascistic, style of governance in Kashmir. On the practical side, Gupkar II underscores that all political activities to be undertaken by the six signatory parties will be "subservient" to the restoration of Kashmir's autonomy as captured in Article 370. At this stage, there is nothing specific about public participation in taking the Gupkar II message forward.

The fundamental rea-

son for this is the disdain for mainstream parties that has developed among ordinary people since the August 5, 2019 crackdown. These parties are now held guilty of having sided all these years with New Delhi which trifled with Kashmir's dignity — indeed, even putting mainline politicians themselves in jail in the same manner as the separatists and the extremists, as if to the BJP rulers they were all the same.

It is the irony of the situation that is sought to be underlined, and it is an irony which, subtly conveyed by interested actors, transmutes into disgust for New Delhi, which gets easily transferred to those who are seen as having represented it in the Valley.

For all that, however, a very negative mood against the BJP sweeps the Valley, and it is this that is likely to sway people's behavior when Assembly elections are held — whenever they are held, and especially if the authorities perversely go on delaying it.

The BJP was once a welcome name in Kashmir due to former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's solicitude toward it. The goodwill was transferred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi until his party's true colours were revealed, ending in the stripping of J&K's autonomy and Kashmir's downright derogation and false depiction — for communal motives — as a land of Pakistan-inspired terrorists.

In the past three decades, Kashmir has seen extremist and terrorist violence, principally an aspect of Pakistan's covert and overt war against India, but also lately developing an indigenous component. But now, if Gupkar II can take off, New Delhi could face two very separate battlefields in Kashmir — one constituting the extrem-

ist-terrorist-separatist variety and, in addition, the newly created second front comprising mainstream political parties.

The latter campaigning for the restoration of Article 370, and not only J&K's statehood, are likely to get to be quite a handful unless, in the coming weeks and months, they are forcibly prevented from campaigning. So there could be greater repression, helping the extremist cause psychologically and politically, and, indirectly, Pakistan, in the process infusing greater strategic uncertainty into a region already beset with hostile Chinese military activity.

Should this materialise, few will miss locating its origins in the ideology-laden hubris which has been the hallmark of Modi, Shah & Associates, a partnership that has been so blind as not to see that the mainstream parties of Kashmir have been made victims of terrorist violence because they were seen as accomplices of Indian democracy, which has shown up in Kashmir in badly faded colours.

Gupkar II was preceded by the original Gupkar Declaration of August 4, 2019, enunciated just a day before the constitutional stripping of J&K. Leaders of the mainline Valley parties, who intuitively knew that the omens were all bad, had assembled at the Gupkar Road residence of National Conference chairman Farooq Abdullah, although they were regional rivals of the NC. They resolved, just before being imprisoned, that they would remain "united" to preserve Kashmir's constitutional status.

Gupkar II is a reaffirmation and a resolve for further action. But its distin-

A few days later, the CPI in Kashmir extended unqualified support. This makes Gupkar II not only a document of Kashmir but a document for the nation. This makes it unique in Kashmir's annals.

guishing feature is that in addition to the regional parties that had met in 2019, two national parties — Congress and CPI(M) — also joined them at Dr Abdullah's residence on August 22 this year. A few days later, the CPI in Kashmir extended unqualified support. This makes Gupkar II not only a document of Kashmir but a document for the nation. This makes it unique in Kashmir's annals.

It is instructive that its arch opponents are the BJP and the Narendra Modi government, the suave professionals who spread the Jamaat-e-Islami narrative in the Kashmir Valley, and Pakistan's military establishment if the signals are read right. This is an impressive array of foes for a group that espouses peaceful and constitutional means to return to the old normal.

Can history be re-injected? It is hard to say. But it is worth remembering that the official move to break Kashmir's spirit constitutionally was stoutly opposed in Parliament in August 2019 by the Congress leadership, the Left parties, the DMK, RJD, and Trinamul Congress. The BJP's important Bihar ally, the JD(U), also opposed it. Another BJP ally, Akali Dal, spoke against the bill but was obliged to vote with the government.

This is an impressive number of parties standing up with Kashmir in Parliament. In addition, the principal sections of the mainline media too disapproved of the government's action. The Forum for Human Rights in Kashmir, comprising a retired Supreme Court judge, several retired high court judges, a retired home secretary, a retired foreign secretary, and retired military officers published a sharply critical report on the ending of Kashmir's autonomy and the government's subsequent actions in Kashmir. And yet, regrettably, there seems a concerted effort in some quarters in the Valley to spread the disinformation that India slept soundly through the process of Kashmir's belittling by the Modi government.

LETTERS

DOMESTIC HELPS

Many domestic workers, including mine, are not prepared to wear mask and follow Covid protocol (*Domestic workers' protest on Sept. 24, DC, Sept. 16*). My domestic help abruptly left without notice protesting that she will not wear a mask. Hence, I feel their protest of losing jobs is fake.

Carmen

Secunderabad

AMBEDKAR HOSPITAL

When the Osmania General Hospital is presently in a dilapidated condition putting the lives of both caregivers and patients at risk, the Telangana state government has announced construction of a Ambedkar statue near the Hussainsagar by spending ₹140 crore (*Govt unveils ₹140 crore Ambedkar statue project, DC, Sept. 17*). This money can instead be used to construct a new government hospital with modern equipment which can be named after Dr B.R. Ambedkar as a fitting tribute. At this difficult time, this is the need of the hour.

Dr Prasad Chitra

Secunderabad

SHAME ON GOVT

Even after 7 decades of Independence, no government could give people proper roads, drainage system or basic amenities (*Swachh city can't take heavy rain, DC, Sept. 17*). The waterlogging and submerged vehicles speak volumes about the callousness and irresponsible governments and civic authorities.

Shahbaz Husain

Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Fierce fighting erupts in Jordan

BEIRUT, Sept. 17.

Fierce fighting erupted in Jordan today between King Hussein's army and Palestine Commandos, with both sides claiming immediate successes in conflicting versions of the struggle.

But Beirut observers believed the numerically stronger and better armed Royalist army had had the better of things in the initial stages of what seemed to be a final showdown for control of the Hashimite Kingdom.

As army tanks swept into Amman, Syria came out on the guerrilla's side, appealed to Royalist troops to mutiny against their officers, and warned that it would not stand idly by while the Fedayeen were crushed.

M. Mohibul
Haque



The curious case of Urdu in NEP 2020

The Union Cabinet approved the new National Education Policy 2020 (hereafter NEP 2020) on 29 July, which proposes drastic changes in the Indian education system. While there are several changes, reforms and policies that are being widely appreciated there are many ambiguities, gaps and contradictions that are creating apprehensions in the minds of many in general and linguistic and religious minorities in particular.

NEP 2020 has given birth to apprehensions in the minds of Urdu lovers due to its unique status. It should be borne in mind that Urdu is a pan-Indian language but it lacks the patronage of any state as official language. Strangely, Urdu has not been mentioned anywhere in the 66 pages NEP 2020 released by the Union government. This conspicuous absence of Urdu drew widespread criticism across the country.

The government tried to alley the apprehensions of Urdu lovers and Secretary of Higher Education is reported to have said: "Para 4.12, 22.6

and 22.18 of NEP 2020 talk of all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which includes Urdu. Incidentally, what is being deliberately and mischievously suppressed is that the paras do not talk of Hindi also, rather all languages of the Eighth Schedule are mentioned". Despite clarifications by the government the controversy is not dying. It calls for analysis of the NEP 2020 from the perspective of the status of Urdu.

NEP 2020 declares that "wherever possible, the medium of instructions until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language" (para 4.11, p.13) This emphasis on the mother tongue arouses hopes that many languages of India facing the challenge of survival due to deliberate design of the colonial masters and later on the apathy of the successive governments may be saved from extinction.

Under the sub-heading, Multilingualism and the Power of Language, the government recognises the fact

that "young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts more quickly in their home language/mother tongue". While emphasis on primary education in mother tongue is praiseworthy the determination of home-/local language will be problematic because the NEP 2020 does not mention what will be the unit of determination of local or home language. For example, what is the home language of the people living in cities like Lucknow, Delhi, Moradabad, Meerut or states like UP, Bihar, Telangana, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and so on is indeed very difficult to determine. Under these circumstances, the role of the central and state governments will become crucial in implementation of the three-language formula and Urdu in the absence of patronage and lacking job opportunities will certainly be marginalised.

Another important dimension of the language policy under NEP 2020 is the promise that "there will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula, and no language will be imposed on any state. The three

languages learned by children will be the choices of states, regions, and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India." (para 4.13, p.14) However, determination of a 'region' for the purpose of the implementation of the three-language formula needs clarification. Besides, three entities — states, regions and students — are created for exercising the freedom of choice in selection of three languages to be taught. The question is what will happen if there is a clash in choice between states and students. For instance, a group of Urdu speaking students want to study Urdu while state emphasizes on Hindi, Sanskrit, Bangla, Odia, etc. The apprehensions of Urdu-lovers are not unfounded because NEP 2020 besides especially promoting Sanskrit makes reference to other classical languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian and Prakrit but Urdu is not mentioned as a classical language as it seems that only ancient and not the medieval language/languages

are recognised as classical under NEP 2020.

While the allegation of deliberate exclusion of Urdu is doing the rounds the government decided to introduce the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill 2020 in Parliament under which Urdu is set to lose its status of the sole official language of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The anxiety can also be understood from the fact that according to Census of India 2011 Urdu is showing a steady decline as mother tongue since 1981(5.25), 1991(5.18), 2001 (5.01), and 2011(4.19). Unlike other languages of the Schedule 8 of Indian Constitution whose speakers enjoy strong regional or state backing, people who speak Urdu are spread all over the country and therefore, it needs special consideration by the government for its survival and promotion.

The writer is a professor of political science at Aligarh Muslim University

quick BITES

| INDICATORS | | % |
|------------------------|------------|--------|
| Sensex | 38,979.85 | -0.82 |
| Nifty 50 | 11,516.10 | -0.76 |
| S&P 500* | 3,341.83 | -1.29 |
| Dollar (₹) | 73.65 | -0.16 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 95.38 | -0.56 |
| Euro (₹) | 86.96 | 0.34 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 52,463*608 | 1.15 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 43.35 | 1.13 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 6.033 | 0.041 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 0.663 | -0.024 |

ESIC members can file for jobloss benefit

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) subscribers who lost their job due to the Covid-19 situation can claim unemployment relief of 50 per cent of wages under the Atal Bimit Kalyan Yojana. The claims can be made online along with submission of the physical claim with an affidavit, photocopy of Aadhaar card and bank account details to the designated ESIC branch office by post or in person.

ALL bags large order from fuel distributor



Ashok Leyland said it has bagged orders for 1,400 intermediate commercial vehicles (ICVs) from a logistics start-up company, Procure Box. The ICVs will be utilised by Procure Box for its fuel distribution business across 750 districts in the country. The order encompasses Ashok Leyland's most successful product, the Ecomet, and will be executed in the next five-six months, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Israeli and Dubai diamond bourses sign trade pact

The Israeli and Dubai diamond exchanges said they had struck a deal to boost trade, days after Israel signed breakthrough agreements with UAE and Bahrain. Israel remains a major leader in the polishing of large diamonds. The Israeli Diamond Exchange will open an office in Dubai, while the Dubai Multi Commodities Center, an economic free zone, will set up shop in Ramat Gan, Israel, the base of the Israeli exchange.

Skoda Rapid automatic priced at ₹7.49 lakh

European car maker Skoda launched the automatic transmission version of its TSI-powered Rapid at a starting price of Rs 7.49 lakh (ex-showroom) ahead of the festival season. Skoda India had rolled out Rapid with TSI in manual version only in May this year. A TSI (turbocharged stratified injection) engine is a compact, high-powered and uses less fuel while cutting fuel consumption and CO2 emissions.



■ Irdai panel wants to cover MSMEs first ₹75K-cr pandemic pool suggested

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEPT. 17

A working group formed by the insurance regulator to study the feasibility of setting up a 'pandemic risk pool' to cover business losses arising due to pandemics and epidemics has recommended setting up a Rs 75,000 crore pool with public-private partnership to cover the business losses of MSME workers in the first phase.

The reinsurer, GIC Re, which has experience of managing the Indian Terrorism Pool and Indian Nuclear Pool, would be an apt administrator for the proposed pandemic pool, the group has said.

Pointing to the need for a pandemic pool, the group said some estimates suggest that the current business interruption premiums in some markets would need to be collected for over 100 years to cover two months of Covid-19-related business interruption costs.

"The working group believes that for the pandemic pool to have an adequate purpose, it needs to cover at least 4-5 crores MSME workers in the first phase and to accomplish that, the assurance from the government to provide a backstop is necessary... the backstop triggers only at the event of pandemic striking and the total loss payouts are higher than the capacity garnered by the local insurance/reinsurance and international market. Globally all pan-



demie pool (including USA, France, Germany) proposals are heavily hinged on their national government's support in the form of similar backstop and are at different stages of approval. The working group has proposed a government backstop of appx. Rs 75,000 crores," said the report.

"The quantum of loss due to an epidemic/pandemic risk event is huge and hence is beyond the capacity of public and/or private companies and/or government alone. Hence a risk pooling mechanism with public-private-government participation would be an appropriate resolution to address this similar concern in future," said the report.

The report said the participation shall be mandatory for the sectors which have been covered under the pool. "This can be with as a standalone product providing coverage for the event or as an add-on with the existing products."

The pool shall provide coverage in a phased man-

ner. As MSME and the unorganised sector are the worst affected segments of society during the current Covid-19 pandemic in India, the first phase of the pool shall cover income losses due to non-damage business interruption resulting from a future pandemic event and subsequent lockdown.

Pandemic losses are covered under currently available health insurance products, hence the coverage for losses in the health segment caused due to a pandemic event, beyond a threshold, may be covered under the pool in the second phase. The coverage under the pool may be expanded to the life insurance segment also in the later phases, said the report.

The pool premium collection is proposed to be invested in government securities or specifically designed bonds by the government. The premiums accumulated over the years and the investment surplus would help in gradually reducing the government backstop.

Advance tax mop-up falls 25.5% in Q2

Mumbai, Sept 17: Advance tax collections fell 25.5 per cent to Rs 1,59,057 crore in the second quarter of the fiscal, an income tax official said on Thursday.

However, there was improvement over the first quarter ended June, when advance tax revenue had plunged 76 per cent to a tepid Rs 11,714 crore as the whole economy was under a stringent lockdown.

During the year-ago period to September 15, 2019, total advance tax collection had stood at Rs 2,12,889 crore, down from Rs 3,70,652 crore a year ago.

"Total advance tax collection in the second quarter fell by 25.5 per cent to Rs 1,59,057 crore from Rs 2,12,889 crore YoY. While corporates paid only Rs 1,29,619.6 crore in advance tax, down by 27.3 per cent in the reporting quarter, personal income tax collection stood at Rs 29,437.5 crore, down 15 per cent from Rs 34,632.9 crore.

"However, TDS (tax deducted at source) fared better at Rs 1,38,605.2 crore, down by 5.6 per cent from Rs 1,46,792.4 crore," the tax official from the Mumbai zone told PTI.

Advance corporate tax mop-up had plummeted by 79 per cent to Rs 8,286 crore in the June quarter, from Rs 39,405 crore in the June 2019 quarter. Advance personal income tax collection in Q1 had declined 64 per cent to Rs 3,428 crore from Rs 9,512 crore. —PTI

Civil aviation revenues dip 85%; over 18,000 jobs lost

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, SEPT. 17

Revenues of the civil aviation sector dropped by 85 per cent since the lockdown even as the sector lost more than 18,000 jobs.

The Covid-19-induced lockdown had reduced the air traffic to a fraction of what it was before. The regulatory restrictions on flight operations had led to severe curtailment in operations and sub-optimal aircraft utilisation.

As per the ministry of civil aviation data, domestic traffic fell close to 80 per cent from 5.85 crore during March-July 2019 to a mere 1.20 crore in March-July 2020.

International traffic too reduced by 87 per cent from 93.45 lakh to 11.55 lakh during the period.

This led to a steep decline in revenues in the June quarter. The aggregate revenue of Indian carriers came down by 85 per cent from Rs 25,517 crore in the June quarter of 2019 to just Rs 3,651 crore during April-June 2020. Air India's revenue fell to Rs 1,531 crore from



Rs 7,066 crore in the same quarter last year.

Aggregate revenues of airport operators too shrunk from Rs 5,745 crore in the June quarter of 2019 to Rs 894 crore in the June quarter of 2020, a drop of 84 per cent.

Reduced revenues saw more than 18,000 employees losing jobs across airlines, airports, ground handling agencies and cargo operators. As many as 5,298 employees of airlines lost jobs by the end of July while 3,246 people at airports, 4,866 people with ground handling agencies and 1,017 employees with cargo operators lost their jobs between March-end and July-end.

"The fall in domestic air travel demand has been much sharper than the

capacity cuts imposed for the industry. The pick-up in domestic passenger volume since end-May 2020 has been slow, with traffic increasing by only 6 per cent in July from the previous month. We think volume growth will remain in the single digits over the next few months, as the pandemic continues to spread in India and people forego non-essential travel," says Fitch Ratings.

Covid-19 has also adversely impacted the financials of the Airports Authority of India and it is likely to see losses this fiscal. In order to meet the working capital requirements, the AAI has taken 'fund-based working capital' facility of Rs 1,500 crore. Delhi and Mumbai airports were given a three-months deferral, up to July 15, on monthly fee payment against their annual fee obligation. Bangalore and Hyderabad airports have also been granted deferral of four months from July 1 for payment of concession fee to the central government.

SC refuses to resume Ambani insolvency case

UPMANYU TRIVEDI SEPT. 17

The Supreme Court rejected a petition by State Bank of India to allow a personal bankruptcy case against tycoon Anil Ambani to resume.

A three-judge panel headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao ruled that the bankruptcy case against

A m b a n i

will remain suspended and directed the Delhi High Court to decide on Ambani's challenge to provisions of insolvency law.

The case is among the first high-profile ones after



Anil Ambani

rules were set for personal bankruptcy last year. Bankers and investors in stressed assets are keenly watching the case as its final outcome may decide the power of lenders in taking action against founders who guaranteed repayments of loans by companies that later went bankrupt.

—Bloomberg

Covid proves a losing business for insurers

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17

Health insurance may be a fastest growing business for the general insurance sector in the pandemic season, but a significant surge in the number of claims and their immediate settlement have led to companies incurring heavy losses on health cover.

Since the Covid-19 outbreak, the health insurers have earned revenue of Rs 450 crore through the sale of corona-specific products, but they have settled a large number of claims on Covid-19 during the period, paying out Rs 1,430 crore, almost over three times the premia they have earned. This was revealed by Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India chairman S.C. Khuntia during a CII virtual summit on Thursday.

"There has been a surge in health insurance claims relating to Covid-19 with a total of 2.38 lakh

claims. Of these, 1.48 lakh claims amounting to ₹1,430 crore have already been settled," Khuntia said, adding that the sector has still witnessed a positive growth of 2.4 per cent between April and August end 2020 as compared to a year ago.

The Irdai is working on a risk-based solvency margin system for the insurers in the next three years' time. "As of now, insurers are supposed to maintain solvency margin to the tune of 1.5 times of their total premium. As the risk varies segment-wise, the regulator is working on varying solvency margins for various segments," he said.

Khuntia said the Irdai is working on standard products for insurance of dwelling units and term insurance as well.

He asked all insurers to ensure repeat purchase and renewal of health-related policies. The Irdai is monitoring the persistency levels (volume of business retained) of life insurance companies.

Global stocks dip on lack of Fed action

Beijing, Sept. 17: Global stocks and US futures sank on Thursday after the Federal Reserve indicated its benchmark interest rate will stay close to zero at least through 2023 but announced no additional stimulus plans.

Indexes in London, Frankfurt and other European markets dropped after Shanghai, Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, India all closed lower.

The Fed said Wednesday it won't raise interest rates until inflation reaches 2 per cent, which the US central bank's own projections say won't happen until late 2023. Chairman Jerome Powell promised the Fed we will not lose sight of unemployed Americans but gave no indication of new stimulus.

Markets hoped for the Fed to put policy money where the mouth is but "ended up a tad disappointed, Mizuho Bank said in a report. The Fed was long on talk and short on action. Also Thursday, the Japanese and British central banks left their interest rates unchanged.

—AP

Industrial jobs in India declined 26%

From Page 1

Another group to have suffered big job losses among the salaried class is industrial workers. Around 50 lakh industrial workers lost their jobs post lockdown, translating to a 26 per cent fall in employment in the group over a year. The decline in employment of industrial workers is likely to be largely in the smaller industrial units. This job loss also reflects the dis-

tress in the micro, small and medium industrial units in recent times.

The government has been evasive to the queries by members of Parliament about the post-Covid job losses. The latest data available with the government with regard to unemployment across different sectors is from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the National Sample Survey Office in 2017-18.

When asked by MPs on

whether the government has done any assessment of the job loss among migrant workers due to the Covid-19 crisis, minister of state for labour and employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar on September 14 had said that "no such data is maintained".

Responding to another query on Thursday, the external affairs ministry said that over 3 lakh Indian nationals working abroad have returned due to the pandemic.

DELISTING: VEDANTA SEEKS NOD FOR REVERSE BOOK BUILDING

New Delhi, Sept. 17: After mobilising \$3.15 billion to fund the delisting of its Indian subsidiary, Vedanta Resources Ltd has approached the Securities and Exchange Board of India for approvals to start the reverse book building process, sources said.

The company had in May announced plans to delist Vedanta Ltd from the Indian stock exchanges by buying out non-promoter shareholding.

Sources said the firm is expecting to receive Sebi approvals by early next



week, after which it will launch reverse book building and invite bids from public shareholders.

The reverse book building process is likely to be open for five days and will allow public shareholders to effectively discover the

price for the delisting.

The 'final exit offer price' will take the shareholding of Vedanta Resources to at least 90 per cent in Vedanta Ltd. The public shareholding in Vedanta Ltd is currently at 49.49 per cent. "Vedanta Resources is looking to complete the entire exercise in the next two-three weeks," the source said.

When contacted, a Vedanta spokesperson said that the company is working to take all 'necessary approvals' for the reverse book building.

—PTI

Babus say taxes are fair, but royalty payments are high

New Delhi, Sept. 17: Auto companies should cut costs by reducing royalty payments to their parent companies abroad instead of asking the government to reduce GST, finance ministry sources said on Thursday, responding to criticism on high taxes in India.

Most globally established companies in the sector have flourished in the current taxation and regulatory regime, which is evident from the huge royalty payouts made by Indian partners to their foreign parent firms, they added.

Toyota Motor Corp is not looking at further expansion in India due to the country's high taxes, the firm's vice chairman of India unit Shekar Viswanathan had said in an interview this week.

Finance ministry



sources said India's tax policy on the automobile sector has been quite consistent for the last three decades, in the form of allowing foreign investment and incentivising domestic manufacturing.

GST rates on automobiles are less than what VAT and excise duty rates used to be in the pre-GST times. All of a sudden, dissent in some quarters on tax rates on automobiles is surprising, they added.

"These companies shou-

ld cut down their costs of manufacturing by cutting down the royalty payments to their parent companies abroad instead of asking the government to reduce GST," a source said.

Taxes on automobiles are in the highest bracket across the globe without much exception, the sources said.

Japan currently has three types of taxes on automobiles—once on the purchase, then an annual automobile tax based on engine size, and finally a weight tax at inspections required once every two years. Over and above this, there is GST at the highest end of the applicable rates, they said.

Also, in the EU, the base rate for VAT/GST on automobiles ranges from 20 per cent to 25 per cent.

The UK charges vehicle

excise duties which vary with car emission norms and has 14 rate slabs.

Besides, there are road usage charges. High parking charges are common across the globe, they said.

Sources said vehicles, based on their high pre-GST incidence, were placed in the 28 per cent GST slab.

Passenger vehicles also attract compensation cess ranging from 1 to 22 per cent. But even with this, the tax rate has not gone beyond pre-GST levels, except in few cases which were enjoying certain duty concessions, they added.

"Most of the countries provide certain concessions to electric vehicles. Given this, it would be unfair to claim that the GST rates are a demand dampener," one source said.

—PTI

Toyota Kirloskar takes a U-turn

New Delhi, Sept. 17: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) on Thursday said it remains deeply committed to the Indian market and its national objectives, refuting once again the claims by a senior company official earlier that it would stop further expansion in India due to high taxes.

The automaker said it has firm belief in the core strength of India's economic growth potential and is fully committed to continually work towards contributing to economic development.

Keeping in sync with the vision of 'Grow India Grow with India, during the past two decades, the

company has worked tirelessly to invest in creation of a world-class talent pool and for building a strong competitive local supplier ecosystem in line with the "Skill India" and the "Make in India" initiatives, TKM managing director Masakazu Yoshimura said in a statement.

Toyota's operations in India are an integral part of its long-term global strategy. "As part of these efforts, Toyota Group is targeting to invest over Rs 2,000 crore in India in the coming years on technology and electrification, both for the domestic and the exp-orts market," he said.

—PTI

New Delhi, Sept. 17: Dr

Reddy's Laboratories on Thursday said it has settled a litigation with a unit of Bristol Myers Squibb related to patents for Revlimid (lenalidomide) capsules, used to treat various kinds of cancer.

The Hyderabad-based company has settled litigation with Celgene, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bristol Myers Squibb, Dr Reddy's Laboratories said in a statement.

In settlement of all outstanding claims in the litigation, Celgene has agreed to provide the company with a licence to sell volume-limited amounts of generic lenalidomide capsules in the US beginning on a confidential date after March 2022 subject to regulatory approval, it said.

The agreed-upon percentages are confidential, Dr Reddy's said.

The drug maker is already licensed to sell generic lenalidomide capsules in the US without volume limitation beginning on January 31, 2026, Dr Reddy's said.

"We are pleased with the settlement agreement, and look forward to bringing a generic version of lenalidomide to market soon subject to regulatory approval for the benefit of patients," Dr Reddy's Laboratories North America generics CEO Marc Kikuchi said.

Revlimid, a trademark of Celgene, is used to treat multiple myeloma and myelodysplastic syndromes.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Hari slips, Carlsen roars into lead

Chennai: Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna slipped to fifth spot from a share of lead after a win-less day at the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament, where he lost to Ian Nepomniachtchi and world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen. Harikrishna, who shared the lead with Lev Aronian after three rounds, lost the fourth round of the Rapid event to Nepomniachtchi, then drew with Armenian Aronian before losing the sixth to Carlsen. Meanwhile, Carlsen bounced back after a below par opening day to record three wins and jumped to sole lead with nine points. The Norwegian outplayed the India No.2 in 31 moves to wrap up a successful day on which he also defeated Aronian and Leinier Dominguez (USA). Hari held Aronian to a draw in 58 moves after a 45-move defeat at the hands of the Russian. — PTI

NSFs gets SC nod for recognition

New Delhi: The Sports Ministry on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court's go-ahead to it on grant of recognition to National Sports Federations (NSFs) and said it would intimate the court about the process in a week's time. The Supreme Court said the ministry and the Indian Olympic Association are not required to seek the nod of the Delhi High Court before granting recognition to sports federations in the country. The apex court was hearing the sports ministry's appeal against the High Court order which prohibited it from taking decision on granting recognition to NSFs without its prior approval. A total of 57 NSFs were rendered de-recognised because of the HC order. "As per the Honourable Supreme Court's order today, the sports ministry can now give recognitions to NSFs which will help in the preparations for our Olympic-bound athletes," a source said. — PTI

Fed Cup named after Billie Jean

London: The Fed Cup is changing its name to honour tennis great Billie Jean King, the woman whose lifelong battle for equality and social justice laid the foundation for generations that followed. The Billie Jean King Cup will become the first major global team competition to be named after a woman, the International Tennis Federation said Thursday. "I'm still in shock, the 76-year-old King said of the tribute. It's really a privilege, and it's also a responsibility. It's wild, it's great, it's wonderful." The rebranding follows earlier changes to bring prize money in line with the men's Davis Cup and coincides with the 50th anniversary of King's pioneering effort to launch a women's pro tennis circuit. "We feel it's long overdue," ITF president David Haggerty said. — AP

Djoker, Nadal off to winning starts

Rome: Defending champion Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic made winning returns at the Italian Open on Wednesday with the top two men's seeds easing into the third round of the clay-court tournament in Rome. Nine-time winner Nadal swept aside fellow Spaniard Pablo Carreno Busta 6-1, 6-1 in his first match in over six months, played behind closed doors at the Foro Italico. The world number two has not played since winning in Acapulco at the end of February, opting to skip the US hard court tour amid coronavirus concerns. Earlier, Djokovic eased past Italian wild card entry Salvatore Caruso 6-3, 6-2 after his unbeaten record this season was ended with a US Open last 16 default for accidentally striking a line judge with a ball hit in frustration. — AP

Live on TV

TENNIS

Rome ATP Masters: Matches from 2.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

Spanish League: Getafe vs Osasuna from 12.30 am (Saturday) on LaLiga page on Facebook

WWE SMACKDOWN

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

BASKETBALL

NBA Western Conference Finals (Game 1 of best-of-7): Los Angeles Lakers vs Denver Nuggets from 6.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Six, HD

WRAP AND ROLL

MI look for more finishers to reduce Hardik's load

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 17: Monitoring comeback man Hardik Pandya's workload is paramount for Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene as he intends to groom a "few more finishers" for the upcoming edition of Indian Premier League starting here on Saturday.

Defending champions Mumbai Indians will take on last year's runners-up Chennai Super Kings in the opening encounter on Saturday, which will be Hardik's first game in a year having undergone back surgery for stress fracture last year.

"Hardik is coming back from an injury. So we will have to be mindful of that but he is looking very good in the nets. Both the players (Pandya brothers) have been fantastic for MI over the last three or four years. It brings a lot of energy to the group," Jayawardene said during MI's virtual media conference on Thursday.

The Sri Lankan legend was asked whether Hardik will again be assigned the finisher's job.

"We have used him (Hardik) in different roles in the past and we will look into that. We will have quite a number of other players who can fix into that role as well, so whenever the opportunity is there we ask anyone to finish the game off," said the former Sri Lanka captain.

"It doesn't just fall on Hardik but it is one of his responsibilities, so we want to try and challenge players in different ways in this camp, so we will continue to do that," he said.

Australian dasher Chris Lynn is an opening option but Jayawardene made it clear that Rohit Sharma-Quinton de Kock opening pair wouldn't be tinkered with.

"Having options is always great. Chris Lynn is a great addition to the squad but the combination of Rohit and Quinton has been there for us, last season they complement each other well," he said.

The MI coach is also aware that Jasprit Bumrah's workload management, just like Hardik's, need to be precise, considering that India will be playing a gruelling four-match Test series against Australia Down Under later in the year. — PTI



David Warner

Maxwell, Carey hit tons as Oz clinch series

Manchester, Sept. 17: Glenn Maxwell and Alex Carey both hit brilliant hundreds as Australia sealed a dramatic series win over world champions England in the third one-day international at Old Trafford on Wednesday. Australia, chasing a target of 303, were all but out of the game at 73-5 when Maxwell came to the crease.

But an Australia record sixth-wicket stand of 212 between Carey (106) and Maxwell (108) helped give the tourists a 2-1 success as England suffered their first home ODI series defeat in five years.

Earlier, Jonny Bairstow had revived England from the depths of 0-2 with a superb hundred that saw them to 302-7 after the opener watched from the

other end as left-arm quick Mitchell Starc removed Jason Roy and Test captain Joe Root with the first two balls of the game.

Sam Billings (57) and Chris Woakes (53 not out) also hit valuable fifties.

Maxwell's hundred was just his second century in 113 matches at this level, with Carey's innings the wicketkeeper's maiden century in his 39th ODI.

But when Maxwell holed out off leg-spinner Adil Rashid, Australia still needed 18 off 15 balls. That became 10 off six when Carey, whose century came off 106 balls, was superbly caught by a diving Mark Wood at third man off Jofra Archer.

New batsman Starc, however, hit his first ball, from Rashid, for six and



Mumbai Indians' Hardik Pandya at a net session in Abu Dhabi.

Malinga will be missed, rues Rohit

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 17: Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma on Thursday conceded that "incomparable" Sri Lankan pace legend Lasith Malinga, who has opted out of this year's IPL, will be severely missed by his defending champion team given his "unbelievable" past performances.

The 37-year-old Malinga, who is IPL's highest wicket-taker with 170 scalps to his credit, has pulled out

citing personal reasons in a major blow to the four-time champions. MI will take on the Chennai Super Kings in this season's lung-opener on September 19 here.

"I don't think it is easy to come and fill his boots. He has been a match-winner for Mumbai. I have said it many times, whenever we sort of find ourselves in trouble, Malinga was the one to bail us out from that," Rohit said in an online press conference.

"His experience will be missed, what he did with MI is unbelievable and it is unfortunate that he is not a part of the team this year."

"We have got likes (James) Pattinson, Dhawal Kulkarni, Mohsin (Khan) and these are the names that we are looking to replace Malinga with. But obviously what Malinga did for Mumbai, it is not just comparable," he added. Talking about his own

role, Rohit said he will continue to open.

"I opened the entire tournament last year and I will continue to do that. Again I keep all the options open, whatever the team wants, happy to do that."

"Even when I play for India, message from my side to the management has always been the same 'do not close any doors' keep all the options open and I will do the same here as well." — PTI

Archer, Jos Buttler will arrive in the UAE late on Thursday night (UAE time) from the UK and on arrival will undergo RT-PCR test for Covid-19.

"They have undergone one rapid test before boarding (the flight) and will undergo another on arrival. Otherwise, the robust testing protocols will be followed as usual. The rationale behind the move is that all the players are entering from one bio-bubble to another," the veteran BCCI official said. — PTI



Australia's Glenn Maxwell (left) celebrates with Alex Carey after scoring a century during their third ODI against England in Manchester on Wednesday. — AP

sealed victory with two balls to spare with a four. "It probably wasn't the

ideal situation when I came in but being the last batter, I suppose I had a

FRENCH | LEAGUE

Draxler gifts PSG season's first win

Paris, Sept. 17: Julian Draxler scored in added time on Wednesday night to give depleted Paris Saint-Germain their first league win of the season, 1-0 at home against Metz.

PSG, shorn of many stars before kick off, were playing with nine men when Draxler pounced on a rebound to nod home PSG's first goal of the league season.

"I'm very proud, it's incredible, honestly. I still have to think about it because I still can't believe it," PSG coach Thomas Tuchel said after the game.

PSG, who started the game seriously depleted, were reduced to 10 men after 65 minutes when central defender Abdou Diallou collected a second yellow card and his club's fourth of the season.

In the dying seconds, defender Juan Bernat, a 63rd minute replacement, limped off with a knee injury, leaving PSG, who had used all their replacements with nine men.

"All the fans can be proud, we still deserved to win, at 9 against 11," said Tuchel.

While the game was in progress, the French league announced bans of two games for Neymar and

● **PSG, shorn of many stars before kick off, were playing with nine men when Draxler pounced on a rebound to nod home PSG's first goal of the league season.**

Leandro Paredes and six games for Layvin Kurzawa after their red cards during a home loss to Marseille on Sunday that ended in a brawl.

Another star attacker, Kylian Mbappe, remains in coronavirus quarantine while Thilo Kehrer and Marco Verratti are injured.

But striker Mauro Icardi, centreback Marquinhos and goalie Keylor Navas returned after spells in quarantine.

"We made a lot of effort, we had a lot of changes, we used a lot of players who have not trained for a while...With players who haven't played for a long time," said Tuchel. "But the effort is still there."

PSG had opened the season with two defeats for the first time since 1984/85, losing by one goal to Lens and then Marseille. — AFP

Messi brace takes Barca past Girona

Barcelona, Sept. 17: Lionel Messi scored twice on Wednesday as Barcelona beat second-division Girona 3-1 in a preseason friendly.

Messi helped set up Philippe Coutinho, back from his loan at Bayern Munich, for the first goal after 21 minutes.

The Argentine scored his first after 45 minutes, spinning on the edge of the penalty area and drilling a shot in off the base of the far post. He scored his second, with a deflected shot, after 50 minutes.

He went off after an hour. Messi only returned to training at the start of last week after saying he wanted to leave the club.

Messi started Barcelona's first friendly on Saturday, playing 45 minutes without scoring in a 3-1 victory over third-tier Gimnastica Tarragona.

Earlier on Wednesday, La

Liga president Javier Tebas said he was pleased Messi had stayed at Barcelona.

"Messi is important for our competition," said Tebas, at an event to promote the Liga sticker collection. "He is a player who was born in our competition... And hopefully he will finish his career in our league."

Barcelona used 20 players in Wednesday's game at the club's training centre but neither Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez nor Chilean midfielder Arturo Vidal appeared.

Manager Ronald Koeman said after the game he had talked to Suarez and acknowledged Barcelona might not be able to sell him.

"If finally he does not find a team and ends up staying, he will be one more player for the squad," said Koeman. — AFP

BELGIUM TOP FIRST FIFA CHART SINCE SHUTDOWN

Zurich, Sept. 17: The first FIFA men's world rankings for five months were still led by Belgium on Thursday after the shutdown of European teams during the coronavirus pandemic ended in September.

Belgium lead an unchanged top four nations from 2018 World Cup winners France, Brazil — who have yet to play in 2020 — and England.

Portugal, the reigning European and Uefa Nations League champions, rose two places to No. 5.

Rankings after the November international break will decide seedings when FIFA draws the European qualifying groups for the 2022 World Cup in early December. The 10 highest-ranked European teams will be top-seeded in groups where only the winners will advance directly to the finals tournament in Qatar. Three more teams will qualify through playoffs scheduled in March 2022. — AP

Leeds, Saints crash out of League Cup

London, Sept. 17: Leeds and Southampton were the Premier League casualties in the second round of the League Cup on Wednesday as League One Hull won a Yorkshire derby 9-8 on penalties at Elland Road, while Saints lost 2-0 at home to Brentford.

On their first appearance in the top-flight for 16 years, Leeds were unlucky not to hold Liverpool to a thrilling draw at Anfield on Saturday, but Marcelo Bielsa's decision to make 11 changes backfired as his side were far less clinical against a team two divi-

sions below them.

Mallik Wilks's early deflected effort gave the Tigers something to hold on to and, despite handing club Spanish international forward Rodrigo his first start, Leeds failed to muster a response until deep into stoppage time when Ezgjan Alioski fired home.

A marathon shootout followed with both sides missing just one of their first eight penalties before Jamie Shackleton's spot-kick was saved and Alfie Jones sent Hull into round three. — AFP

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajigiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Aditya Sinha