


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
RAJAHMUNDRY | TUESDAY | 8 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER

 **Max:** 34.0°C
Min: 25.0°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Humid and Overcast.
Max/Min temp. 34/25 °C

COVID-19 CUNT



CASES	DEATHS
(+76,411)	(+1,146)
42,76,777	72,809

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,802)	(+9)
TS: 1,42,771	895
(+8,368)	(+70)
AP: 5,06,493	4,487

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

 **2,73,93,864**
DEATHS
 **8,94,606**
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
 **213**

worldometers.info/
coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Bahula Shasthi till 12.01 am (Tuesday)
Star: Bharani till 8.24 am
Varjyam: 9.48 pm to 11.35 pm

Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.22 am; 11.03 pm to 11.50 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Muharram 19, 1442 AH
PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)

Fajar: 5.00 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.00 pm
Maghrib: 6.35 pm
Isha: 8.30 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.10 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.50 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 11.22 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 10.12 PM

COUNTER POINT



They want to seek votes on their achievements... at least one!

BRIEF

Varavara Rao's kin get notice

Mumbai: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) sent legal notices to two relatives of Telugu poet Varavara Rao, currently in custody over a case filed in connection with Elgar Parishad. The relatives were identified as two of Rao's sons-in-law: Prof. Satyanarayana of the EFLU and a journalist with an English business daily. They were served with notice to appear for questioning on September 9. Satyanarayana said he had no knowledge of the Elgar Parishad case.

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China may expel US journalists



BUSINESS | 7

Rajan says fall in GDP alarming



SPORTS | 8

Stokes may miss first part of IPL



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Leh bound



An Indian Army convoy moves towards Leh on the Manali-Leh road, near Manali on Monday.

— PTI

HC stays CID probe into SEC's purported letter to home ministry

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 7

The AP High Court directed the Crime Investigation Department (CID) not to proceed further in its probe at AP State Election Commission and also on its assistant secretary M. Samba Murthy.

Justice D. Ramesh held a hearing on Monday on two quash petitions filed by state election commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar and assistant secretary M. Samba Murthy following a case booked on SEC and also on its official in the backdrop of the SEC letter to the Union home min-

istry about threat to his life and seeking security.

AP State Election Commission's senior counsel D.V. Sitaram Murthy informed the court that the independence of SEC was under attack by the state government through the CID as the investigation agency harassed its employees on April 18 and later an FIR was registered on April 21. The counsel said that the CID transgressed the settled process of law and added that the FIR filed against SEC and its employees was illegal.

SEC's assistant secretary M. Samba Murthy's coun-

sel N. Ashwani Kumar argued that as an individual, Samba Murthy was not connected to the CID probe and informed the court that Murthy was subjected to harassment and mental agony. He further informed the court that the FIR did not specify the reason for involving Murthy and said that invocation of Section 67 of Information Technology Act, was absurd and untenable in law.

However, the government pleader Ch. Sumon appearing for the CID argued that the state government had the power to investigate the SEC in

case such an official position was compromised. He also raised objection on maintainability of the writ petition filed by Ramesh Kumar as he was a stranger because his name was not mentioned in the FIR (first information report) filed by the CID.

The court directed the CID not to proceed further in its probe and called for a complete record to be produced before it.

The government pleader informed the High Court that the state government would file a counter affidavit on the issue and the court posted the case for hearing on September 14.

LJP MULLS CONTESTING AGAINST NITISH

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 7

A crucial Parliamentary Board meeting of the Lok Janashakti Party (LJP) here saw members venting their anger against alliance partner Nitish Kumar, the Janata Dal (United) president and Bihar Chief Minister, with some even asking party chief Chirag Paswan to explore the option of putting up candidates against the JD(U).

The meeting also passed a resolution empowering Paswan to take a call on whether to continue with the alliance with JD(U) in the Bihar elections or pull out of it.

The party said that it would fight in 143 seats of the 243 Assembly seats.

Explosive chemical still stranded off Vizag port

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 7

Manufacturers of explosives, include Indian Detonators Ltd and Special Blasts, are frequently calling up authorities of the Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT) on the status of two ships carrying around 33,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, which remain stranded at the anchorage off Vizag since August 11.

The State Pollution Control Board has written to port authorities asking them not to allow the ships to berth and unload until further orders.

"There is utter confusion over the issue. A committee from the Central Pollution Control Board, which was to visit the port

and warehouses, has not turned up till Monday," said the technical manager of a popular warehousing company that has exclusive permission to receive and clear ammonium nitrate. He said no permission has so far been granted to clear the existing stock of 5,000 tonnes of nitrate lying in their warehouse since the Beirut blast.

Meanwhile, companies manufacturing explosives are putting pressure on the government and making frequent calls to the port.

A port official said operations at Coal India Ltd (CIL) will come to a halt without the nitrate. CIL purchases explosives worth ₹2,000 crore annually. India needs 11 lakh

tonnes of ammonium nitrate annually. Smartchem Technologies, which has factories all over the country, including the one in Srikakulam, produces six lakh tonnes of the product and a government unit manufactures another two lakh tonnes. Rest of the requirement is imported, sources said.

Mining companies, led by state run Coal India, are the biggest consumers of ammonium nitrate, which is used in explosives that they use for blasting purposes at mines. The chemical is imported in bulk through Central government-run VPT by 15-odd manufacturers of explosives located in the eastern states, including the mineral belts of Orissa and Bihar.

Jagan rolls out 2 diet schemes

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 7

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday launched two nutritious diet supply schemes, YSR Sampoorna Poshana and YSR Sampoorna Poshana Plus, which will benefit 30.16 lakh pregnant women, lactating mothers and children at an estimated cost of ₹1,863.11 crore at his camp office here.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the two schemes have given him satisfaction as they augured well for the beneficiaries.

He said that earlier nobody ever bothered about whether children were healthy and their height and weight matched their health status and none was concerned about lactating mothers despite knowing that a healthy body develops a healthy mind.

Justifying the launch of two nutritious diet schemes, he criticised the previous regime for failing to allocate more funds to maintain anganwadi centres and providing supplementary nutrition to beneficiaries like pregnant women, lactating mothers and children. He

lamented that a mere Rs 500 crore was allocated for the purpose.

He said that his government endeavoured to bring children out of their poverty and help them grow healthy with good education.

He bemoaned that several parents and their children were denied access to nutritious diet and added that the two new schemes would effectively address the shortcoming and ensure that they do not fall prey to anemia and other illnesses.

He said that 53 per cent of pregnant women were suffering from anemia while 31.9 per cent children were born underweight and were victims of malnourishment.

He said YSR Sampoorna Poshana-I will be implemented in plain and non-tribal areas in the state; 26.36 lakh pregnant women, lactating mothers and children would get nutritious diet at 47,287 anganwadi centres.

YSR Sampoorna Poshana-II will be implemented in tribal areas covering 3.8 lakh pregnant women, lactating mothers and children at 8,320 anganwadi centres in 77 tribal mandals.

TS TO OVERHAUL REVENUE LAW, VROs SUBMIT LAND PAPERS

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 7

In a sudden move towards enacting the New Revenue Act to revamp the revenue system, the state government on Monday declared a holiday for land registrations from Tuesday.

Village revenue officers (VROs) were asked to hand over land records to the tahsildars concerned before 3 pm on Monday.

These orders make it clear that the government has decided to abolish the VRO system.

Chief Minister K. Chandrabab Naidu, while addressing a meeting of the TRS Legislature Party, is said to have disclosed that the New Revenue Act will be introduced in the Assembly on Thursday.

Stating that the objective of bringing the new Act was to provide quality, transparent and corruption-free land-related services to citizens including registration of property documents, Mr Naidu asked the MLAs and ministers to explain its objective to the people and weed out misconceptions.

The CM is said to have told the legislators to celebrate the new law by firing crackers in villages across the state when the Bill is introduced in the Assembly.

As far as the order of declaring the holiday of registrations concerned, Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar in the government order said the orders had been issued under the Registration Act, 1908.

The authorities stopped booking slots for registrations and sale of revenue stamps. Only those who had booked slots on Monday, were allowed to get their lands and other properties registered.

Earlier, the Chief Secretary directed collectors to instruct VROs to hand over all land records to tahsildars.

OFF | TARGET

World No. 1 tennis player hits ball at line judge's throat, gets thrown out of US Open championship

No-Whack, Djokovid: Djoker is laughing stock

MOSES KONDETY | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 7

World No. 1 tennis player Novak Djokovic is known for his killer instinct on court. On Sunday, he went straight for the throat, of a lady line judge, and got thrown out of the US Open. Worse, he has been fined all his prize money and docked the ranking points accrued for making the fourth round of the Grand Slam in New York.

Frustrated at his service being broken by Spanish rival Pablo Carreno Busta to go 5-6 down in the first

set, Djoker hastily whacked the ball which hit the official in the throat, throwing her to the ground gasping.

Subsequently, the Serb pleaded not guilty but tournament referee Soeren Friemel threw the rule book at him, disqualifying him for "intentionally hitting a ball dangerously or recklessly within the court or hitting a ball with negligent disregard of the consequences."

That meant US Open lost perhaps the only big name remaining in the men's draw.

The 33-year-old stormed



Novak Djokovic, of Serbia, pleads with the umpire after hitting a line judge with a ball during the US Open tennis championships in New York on Sunday.

— AP

off the tournament venue but later posted an apology

on his Instagram page. "I need to go back within and

 **I NEED to go back within and work on my disappointment and turn this all into a lesson for my growth and evolution as a player and human being. I apologise to the @usopen tournament and everyone associated for my behaviour.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC,
World's No. 1 tennis player

work on my disappointment and turn this all into a les-

son for my growth and evolution as a player and human being. I apologise to the @usopen tournament and everyone associated for my behaviour," he wrote.

It's been a bad year for the biggie. Djoker made laughing stock of himself when he organised tennis exhibition events followed by mask-free parties in Croatia in June, which led to several players including himself testing positive for Covid-19. The incident triggered a furious backlash on social media and earned him an unwanted sobriquet — Djokovid.

Last month Djokovic was touted as divisive as he floated a rival players association, which did not find support from the tennis big two of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal and was also criticised by tennis governing bodies.

Novak has also been blasted for questioning equal prize money in tennis, suggesting male players should earn more than their female counterparts because they "attract more attention, spectators and sell more tickets." Well, not when you hit underhand shots like the one on Sunday No-whack.

SHORT TAKES

FICCI WEBINAR
ON TAXPAYERS
ON SEPT. 11DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 7

The FICCI Telangana State Council will organise an interactive webinar, "Transparent Taxation — Honouring The Honest TaxPayers", on September 11. The programme, scheduled to begin at 4 pm, will be streamed live on Webex and YouTube. The event is the fourth in a series of programmes organised by FICCI as part of its 'dialogue for actionable insights'.

Among those scheduled to speak at the event are Mallika Arya, Chief Commissioner of Hyderabad GST & Customs Zone, and J.B. Mohapatra, Principal CCIT, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Region.

Those interested in joining the webinar can register at <https://webinar.ficci.com/fidai/>, FICCI said in a news release. More details can be obtained from contacting FICCI at ficci@ficci.com or its assistant director K.N. Chandra Sekhar Rao at k.rao@ficci.com, or via phone at 9818255944.

GOV: NEP HELPS
EQUITABLE
ACCESS TO EDUDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 7

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan has opined that the National Education Policy 2020 is a progressive and future-oriented initiative to offer equitable access to higher education.

The Governor was taking part in the Governors' Conference on the 'Role of the National Education Policy 2020 in transforming higher education' through video conference from Raj Bhavan on Monday. He stated that the state government was planning to implement NEP-2020 in its entirety, considering the state's specific needs to achieve quality in higher education in the state. He said that the state government was planning to set up a state-level research board to promote multidisciplinary and multi-institutional research with linkages to industry and also to national and international funding agencies. He also said that the state government was also developing 'Learning Management System' to promote online education to the rural and disadvantaged students by setting up eLearning Communities to bridge the digital divide between the urban and the rural and remote areas. He also said that a committee was constituted to study the recommendations of NEP-2020 and suggest measures and guidelines for its implementation in the state.

STEEP RISE IN
PRICE OF
VEGETABLESPATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, SEPT. 7

The steep increase in the cost of vegetables compared to the previous month has been causing jitters to the consumers.

The rise in the prices is being attributed to the price hike at the wholesale markets in Kolar of Karnataka and Rayalaseema districts, the main source for vegetables to vegetable traders in Nellore.

The cost of brinjal, tomato, mirchi and carrot has increased by 40 to 50 per cent during the last week. For instance, tomatoes are being sold for ₹ 60 per kg as against ₹20 last week. Mirchi is being sold for ₹80 per kilo as against ₹40 to ₹50 last month.

Even locally grown vegetables such as lady's finger are being sold for ₹40 per kilo as against ₹20 a few weeks back.

A wholesale trader M. Madhusudan Reddy said that vegetable rates are generally less in Nellore district compared to other districts because they obtain English vegetables from the wholesale markets in Kolar and other vegetables from Rayalaseema districts.

He said that there was a sudden jump in the prices in Kolar and the impact is felt in Nellore during the last ten days. Referring to the sudden increase in the cost of tomatoes, he said that they are buying 25 kg baskets for ₹1,000 now in wholesale, causing the retail price to go upto ₹60 per kg.

"We have been buying brinjal for ₹30 in the wholesale market in Rayalaseema. The rates of mirchi, brinjal and other vegetables will come down in the coming days," Mr Reddy said.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy interacts with mothers and children after launching the YSR Sampoorna Poshana at the camp office in Vijayawada on Monday.

YSR Poshana will increase
nutritional levels: Speaker

Around 3.8 lakh pregnant women are being benefited in the state

DC CORRESPONDENTS
SRIKAKULAM/KAKINADA/
KADAPA, SEPT. 7

The new health schemes YSR Sampoorna Poshana and YSR Sampoorna Poshana Plus will increase the nutrition level of newborn children, maternal mothers and pregnant women in the state, said Speaker Tammineni Sitaram, who was present at the launch of these schemes at the collector's office on Monday.

Talking to the reporters after the launch, the Speaker said that the scheme would benefit women, children and pregnant women in 77 tribal mandals of the state.

Around 3.8 lakh pregnant women are being benefited in the state, and the total expenditure incurred would be around ₹305.75 crore.

According to East Godavari District Collector D. Muralidhar Reddy, there are 3,28,466 beneficiaries of YSR Sampoorna Poshana and YSR Sampoorna Poshana Plus, out of which 33,052 are pregnant women, 39,604 lactating women, 93,338 kids in the age group of six to 36 months and 1,62,472 children in the age group of three to six years.

The collector said that the scheme was being implemented in 16 tribal and sub-plain mandals

According to East Godavari District Collector D. Muralidhar Reddy, there are 3,28,466 beneficiaries of YSR Sampoorna Poshana and YSR Sampoorna Poshana Plus, out of which 33,052 are pregnant women, 39,604 lactating women, 93,338 kids in the age group of six to 36 months and 1,62,472 children in the age group of three to six years.

and also 48 plain areas at ₹16.98 crore per month.

The BC welfare minister Ch. Srinivasa Venugopala Krishna said that the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan

Mohan Reddy would succeed in eliminating poverty from the society.

West Godavari District Collector Revu Muthyala Raju said that the YSR Sampoorna Poshana Scheme would be implemented to 2,28,170 beneficiaries from 3,889 Anganwadi centres in eight tribal mandals and also 1,96,868 beneficiaries of 46 plain areas. The scheme would be launched in the West Godavari District on September 9 by the State women and child welfare minister Taneti Vanitha.

In Kadapa, the schemes would benefit 2,20,564 pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants who would receive nectarine

nutrition at 3,621 Anganwadi Centres in the district.

Of these, 23,928 are pregnant, 21,285 postpartum, 1,02,935 children aged six months to three years and 72,436 children aged three to six years.

Deputy Chief Minister and minority welfare minister S.B. Amjad Basha said that the YSR holistic nutrition scheme was a boon for pregnant women. On Monday, the Deputy Chief Minister handed over the complete nutrition kits to the pregnant women under the aegis of the Department of Women and Child Welfare at the Urdu Primary School on Brahmana Street, Kadapa.

OPPN AGAINST
SMART METERS
FOR PUMP SETSNAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, SEPT. 7

Leaders of all political parties in Kadapa district on Monday warned that they would intensify their agitation if the state government does not withdraw its G.O. No. 22 stipulating installation of electricity meters for agricultural pump sets.

A Congress delegation led by APCC working president Tulasi Reddy submitted a petition to district collector Chevuri Harikiran seeking withdrawal of the G.O. Speaking to reporters at the collector's office, Tulasi Reddy said fitting meters to farm pump sets was like putting a halter around the farmers' neck. He said it was the Congress government in 2004 that extended free power supply to agricultural pump sets, which TD chief Chandrababu Naidu and others had criticised.

The Congress leader said installation of meters for agricultural pump sets would harm the interests of farmers and should be withdrawn immediately.

CPI district secretary G. Eshwaraya, TD district general secretary Balisetty Hari Prasad, RCP leader Ravi Shankar Reddy, BSP leader Gurappa, CPM district leader Rammohan Reddy and farmers' leaders spoke at a protest meeting held at the CPI office in Kadapa on Monday.

They said Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's cash benefit transfer scheme will put an end to free electricity in the state.

It was only a move towards gradual privatisation of power supply.

The opposition leaders said farmers of Rayalaseema, Prakasam and Nellore districts would be severely affected if this policy was implemented.



Members of Navya Andhra Sadhana Samiti stage a sit-in protest against the government demanding three capitals for AP State near GVMC Gandhi Statue Junction in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

EoDB rank on performance
of Jagan government: MantriDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 7

Minister for industries Mekapati Goutham Reddy stated that AP had got first place in 'Ease of Doing Business' based on the performance of the state government under the leadership of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and slammed the Telugu Desam for claiming credit for it.

The minister said here on Monday that, they had released ₹4,000-₹5,000

The minister said here on Monday that, they had released ₹4,000-₹5,000 crore worth dues to the industries and also revived nearly 10,000 MSMEs by rescheduling their loans.

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Referring to the previous TD regime's claim that they had entered into MoUs worth of ₹32 lakh

crores with various industries, he slammed it by saying that not even Rs 50,000 crores were invested in the state.

Concerning the EoDB survey, the minister said that the whole exercise of the survey took place from April 2019 to March 2020 and asked as to which party was in power during that time in the state.

He said that he had wondered after seeing the tweet of TD MLC N. Lokesh claiming credit for AP getting the first rank in EoDB.

Take action against land mafia, says BJP

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 7

The BJP city wing leaders came out strongly against the land mafia, which they said was spreading its tentacles in the temple city of Tirupati, and demanded the state government to take stringent action against those who resort

to such illegal activities. They staged a demonstration in front of the RDO office on Monday.

Speaking to the media, the BJP state spokesperson Mr Samanchi Srinivas alleged that some anti-social elements in the city had been actively involved in land grabbing and other land encroachment activities by taking the support

of the ruling party leaders.

"AP CM Jagan Mohan Reddy should intervene and sort out the issues

regarding land grabbing and encroachment activities being done in the city and its suburbs with the help of ruling party leaders. A transparent investigation should be done in all the land mafia cases that are registered in and around Tirupati," he demanded.

Urging the police to take legal action against the

Cops intensify
investigation on
chariot incidentVADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, SEPT. 7

The police are intensifying the Antarvedi Temple Chariot gutted incident. The Eluru Range DIG K.V. Mohan Rao and East Godavari Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi camped in the Konaseema area and are closely monitoring the investigation. Five police teams have been formed for the purpose. Mr Asmi said that the special teams are on the job to trace out the culprits. It is learnt that the police officials have concluded that short-circuiting is not the cause of the incident.

Meanwhile, the forensic team members from Amaravati came to Antarvedi and collected some evidence like water bottles, gutted cloth pieces, sticks, gunny bags and others to make forensic tests. The police personnel brought experts in unearthing honey from beehives on the trees and other places in the village and the vicinity of the village and recorded their statements. The personnel also questioned the sanitation workers and employees of the temple. It is said that the sanitation workers told the police that they were on day-shift and weren't aware of the incidents happening at night.

Meanwhile, some of the pandits led by the Andhra Pradesh Purohit Brahmana Federation took out a procession in Amalapuram and Antarvedi, expressing

It is learnt that the police officials have concluded that short-circuiting is not the cause of the incident

Devotees are not ready to buy the theory that this was a freak incident of fire from the honey hunters were using torches to scare the bees

concern over the incident. Leading the agitation, the Federation East Godavari president Mr Bhallamudi Diwakar Sastry said that the incidents like gutting of chariots, destroying the idols of goddesses at Pithapuram in recent times has created suspicions of attacking Hindu religion intentionally by a few groups. He alleged that the government was showing negligence towards the Hindu temples. They demanded the government should find out the real culprits in the incident.

The Temple's Protection Movement convener C.S. Rangarajan feels that crores of devotees are not ready to buy the theory that this was a freak incident of fire from the honey hunters were using torches to scare the bees. He said that the devotees are asking valid questions as to why only ancient temple Chariots are burning. He demanded the government should have a safety audit of other temple chariots and take adequate precautions so that such instances don't recur.

TD demands CBI
probe on mishapDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, SEPT. 7

The Telugu Desam

demanding the state government should make a probe on Antarvedi Temple chariot incident with CBI to reveal the facts. TD National president and the former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu appointed a fact-finding committee comprising of the former deputy chief minister and the former home minister Nimmakayala China Rajappa, the former minister Gollapalli Surya Rao, TD leaders Nagidi Nageswara Rao and Bonam Nageswara Rao. The Committee led by Mr Rajappa, visited the incident spot at Antarvedi on Monday. Mr Rajappa told the reporters that TD took the matter seriously as the incident has pushed lakhs of devotees into anxiety and tension and that they feel that their sentiments and feelings

have been damaged with the incident. He refuted the argument of short-circuiting.

He blamed that after the YSRC party assumed the power, attacks were made on Hindu temples and he cited the examples of gutting the Chariot of Lord Prasannanjaneya Swamy temple in Nellore district, damaging the tens of Goddess idols at Pithapuram and in some places Goddess Kanakadurga temple and Lord Temples in various villages. He said that there is a glorious history to the Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Antarvedi in East Godavari District and the people believed that God saved them from various natural disasters even in the 1996 cyclone. The ancestors of the temple made the Chariot to God in 1958. He said that nobody believed that psychologically disturbed persons committed the act.

A-G ASKS ON MAINTAINABILITY OF
WRIT PETITION FILED BY TD ON SITDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 7

State advocate-general S. Sriram has argued on the maintainability of a writ petition filed by TD leader Varla Ramaiah and another party functionary pleading to set aside the Special Investigation Team set up, to probe on all major activities taken up by the previous Telugu Desam regime from 2014-19, stating that the writ had no public interest nor any person was affected.

Attending the hearing held in the High Court on Monday, the AG pointed

out that the petitioners were not presenting the facts before the court. He said that the power to review the past governance would help learn from the past and added that such authority was implicitly and inherent to any government.

The AG said that the petitioners failed to show if they were parties to the decisions taken up by the previous TD regime from 2014-19 as they were being reviewed and added that a stranger to these proceedings could not challenge them in the court of law.

The court adjourned the hearing to Tuesday.

IN BRIEF

Mobile crematorium launched in Nellore

Nellore: The Red Cross obtained a mobile crematorium at an estimated cost of ₹6.1 lakh on Monday to cremate the bodies of Covid-19 patients in Nellore. Hitherto, those succumbed to the virus were only buried because there was no electric crematorium in the city. According to the Indian Red Cross Society, Nellore unit chairman, P. Chandrasekhar Reddy, the gas-based mobile crematorium was made in Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu using one tonne of stainless steel at the instance of district authorities. The equipment, which can incinerate a body at 750 centigrade within 60 minutes, will be kept at the main graveyard in Bodigadi-thota in the city. It is easy to operate, and no risks are involved, Mr Chandrasekhar said that they would get one more machine is necessary.

Sanitation workers protest

Kakinada: Sanitation workers in Government General Hospital at Kakinada staged a dharna and also took procession in front of the hospital on Monday under the leadership of CITU demanding the government to implement minimum wages to them. They gave an ultimatum to the officials they would go on strike, unless the hospital implements minimum wages to them within 10 days. CITU leader P. Veerababu said that the sanitation workers are doing their work in the hospital under the supervision of a private agency. The company reaches agreement with the workers every year and when the agreement is expired, the company should reach fresh agreement by increasing the salaries than the previous year.

3 held for cheating fuel consumers

Nellore: Legal Metrology officials, along with Nellore II Town police, arrested 3 persons working in a petrol bunk- 'General Automobile Pump' at Mypadu gate centre in Nellore on Monday. The petrol bunk was found delivering only 970 ml of fuel as against 1000 ml (litre) to the consumers by using cable chip after fixing the same at the reading point of the motherboard in the fuel dispenser machines. According to Nellore DSP J. Srinivasa Reddy, leaseholder of the bunk, Mannem Srinivasulu, obtained two cable chips for ₹60,000 from one Basha of Hyderabad and fixed them in February this year. He convinced bunk managers Inala Vamsi Krishna, Inala Srinivasa Rao and Jammigu-mpula Sambasiva Rao to cooperate with him by offering amounts in addition to their salary. Police seized the chips and took the three persons into custody. They have launched a search for Mannem Srinivasulu and Basha. SP and DSP appreciated II town CI K. Vema Reddy and his team for bringing the fraud into light.

DC | IMPACT

CHARGES FIXED FOR AMBULANCE VEHICLES

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 7

Transport department has fixed hire and driver charges for transportation of Covid bodies and non-Covid following stories published in these columns in *Deccan Chronicle* on the exploitation of patients by the ambulance operators.

As per the directions of the collector, Deputy Transport Commissioner held a meeting with the owners of Tata Magic/Tempos/Ambulance vehicles on transport charges for dead bodies of Covid and non-Covid from hospital, mortuary to patient house or burial ground in Nellore district.

The charges for 0 to 10 km for Omni/LMV/Toofan is ₹1,600 for non-covid and ₹2,600 for Covid bodies.

The rate will vary depending on the distance. For instance, ₹4,200 will be charged for non-Covid and ₹5,200 for Covid bodies on Omni-LMV vehicles and the cost is ₹400 more for Tempo-Toofan for distance ranging from 101 km to 150 km.

The transport cost will be ₹20 per km beyond 150 km and driver charges will be ₹300. The driver charges would be ₹600 for distance beyond 300 km. The waiting charge would be ₹500 per hour if the waiting is more than 2 hours.

Joint Collector N. Prabhakar Reddy said they would also fix the rates for taking patients to hospitals in Chennai or Bangalore shortly.

He appealed to the public to lodge complaints through District Covid Control Room numbers 9618232115, 0861-2349991-2-3, 1077 if any excessive rates are demanded by ambulance operators.

Covid testing

Medical staff collect swab samples from women for Covid testing at a community hall at Resapuvanipalem in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

AP's cases dip to 8,368, 70 deaths recorded**Rate of recovery among Covid patients is good in EG**

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 7

Giving the much awaited relief, Andhra Pradesh has registered a slight dip in number of new Covid-19 cases with 8,368 as it has been reporting over 10,000 cases every day in the last several days.

The state health authorities issued Covid-19 bulletin here on Monday reporting that out of 58,187 samples tested, 8,368 individuals have been tested Covid-19 positive taking tally to 5,06,493. Seventy infected patients have died, rising toll to 4,487. Out of 41,66,077 samples tested so far, 4,04,074 patients have been discharged after recovery while 97,932 patients are active with the

virus and are undergoing treatment at various hospitals in the state.

East Godavari has topped the list of new confirmed Coronavirus infections with 1,312 followed by 950 in West Godavari, 949 in Nellore, 875 in Chittoor, 765 in Guntur, 594 in Vizianagaram, 584 in Anantapur, 559 in Srikakulam, 447 in Kadapa, 419 in Prakasam, 405 in Visakhapatnam, 316 in Kurnool and 193 in Krishna.

Among total Covid-19 positive cases, East Godavari continues to register the highest number with 68,260 followed by 48,702 in Kurnool, 45,884 in Anantapur, 43,853 in West Godavari, 43,436 in Chittoor, 41,192 in Visakhapatnam, 40,900 in Guntur, 38,227 in Nellore, 31,928 from Kadapa, 29,493

in Prakasam, 28,543 in Srikakulam, 24,505 in Vizianagaram, 18,675 from Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery among the Covid-19 infection patients has been good in East Godavari with 53,889 followed by 43,081 in Kurnool, 40,567 in West Godavari, 39,527 in Anantapur, 34,587 in Visakhapatnam, 34,043 in Chittoor, 32,730 in Guntur, 31,500 in Nellore, 23,683 in Kadapa, 21,382 in Srikakulam, 15,728 in Krishna, 15,323 in Vizianagaram, 15,139 in Prakasam, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Prakasam has registered death of 10 Covid-19 infection patients in the last 24 hours followed by nine in Guntur, eight in Chittoor, seven each in Kadapa and West Godavari, five each in Krishna and Nellore, four each in Anantapur, Kurnool, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam and three in East Godavari.

Chittoor has registered the highest number of 481 cumulative death of Covid-19 infected patients followed by 430 in East Godavari, 428 in Guntur, 399 in Kurnool, 371 in Anantapur, 360 in West Godavari, 347 in Nellore, 330 in Prakasam, 324 in Visakhapatnam, 313 in Krishna, 267 in Srikakulam, 257 in Kadapa, and 180 in Vizianagaram.

The state health authorities have discharged 10,055 Covid-19 infected patients after recovery in the last 24 hours.

SVU non-teaching staff call for pen-down strike

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 7

Members of the non-teaching staff of Sri Venkateswara University (SVU) observed a pen-down strike and sat on a dharna following a call given by their joint action committee here on Monday.

The employees were protesting against the alleged non-chalant attitude of the authorities in giving departmental promotions as per the seniority of the staff. It is said that though talks were going on between the non-teaching staff and the varsity registrar Sridhar Reddy on the issue for the past few days, it wasn't resolved till date and it led the staff to go for the pen-down strike.

Addressing the protest-

■ The employees were protesting against the alleged non-chalant attitude of the authorities in giving departmental promotions as per the seniority of the staff

■ It is said that though talks were going on between the non-teaching staff and the varsity registrar Sridhar Reddy on the issue for the past few days, it wasn't resolved till date and it led the staff to go for the pen-down strike

leaders into consideration, which sparked a fresh row now.

"The union has already requested the varsity authorities to award promotions on the basis of seniority. But they ignored the request and gave promotions as per their choice, which is a clear violation. Following this unfortunate development, the union has given a call for a pen-down strike from Monday," Mr Subramanyam said.

Demanding the varsity authorities to quickly resolve the issue, Mr Subramanyam made it clear that the pen-down strike will be continued until the issue was resolved and also warned that they will intensify the strike, if there is any delay in this matter.

ing employees, Non-teaching Association president P.K. Subramanyam alleged that the varsity authorities have issued promotion orders two days without taking the advice of non-teaching employees union

Temple gold: Woman cheated for ₹1.44 crore

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 7

A woman having a shop atop Simhachalam made her friend believe that she had secured gold from the Narasimha Swamy temple when it was put up for auction and offered to sell the same to her. However, the woman having the shop cheated the victim after collecting the money from her.

Believing in the woman's words, the victim transferred ₹1.44 crore to the woman having the shop atop Simhachalam. The victim, Maddadu Sravani, 28, hails from Sullurpeta in Nellore district.

However, after knowing that she was cheated, Sravani lodged a complaint against the accused woman, Kona Hymnavathi, at Sullurpeta police station

on September 5.

Sources in the temple said Sravani and Hymnavathi became friends and the former often came to the temple for darshan. During the first week of August, Hymnavathi told Sravani that she could get Simhachalam temple gold through auction for a low price.

Trusting her, Sravani sent her ₹1.44 crore in instalments and waited for the gold.

In her complaint to the police, Sravani said she called her on August 22 stating that the money belonged to her relatives and there was pressure from them for the gold. Hymnavathi called back on the same day and said she started for Sullurpeta by a car carrying gold.

In the early hours, the following day, Hymnavathi called again and said that the driver was tired and

sleeping and would start at 7.30.

A little later, she said she was kidnapped by unknown persons and switched off her phone.

The case file from Sullurpeta was shifted to commissioner of police office in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

Endowment officer of Simhachalam, V. Trinadha Rao, who met the commissioner to discuss the case, told reporters that Hymnavathi was not an employee of the temple and she had no links with the administration.

However, her brothers Madhu and Sekhar have been working in the temple administration on a temporary basis and their role was being investigated by the temple officials.

The EO also said only ₹5 lakh could be traced online and the remaining payment mode was being verified.



A priest offers prayers to Lord Shiva after the deity was decorated as Draksharamam Bhimeswara Avataram in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

— DC

Hostellers take home belongings

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 7

Universities are permitting students to take back their clothes and material stuck in the hostels for five months during the lockdown. The students who had left hostels immediately after the lockdown was declared during the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak.

Engineering college hostels and other blocks in Sri Krishna Devaraya University had recently permitted students to take back their belongings following the repeated representations by the students.

Similarly, the students from the Padmavati Mahila University of Tirupati are permitting students to take back their belongings in the hostel rooms. "Our clothes and other material including books are left in the hostel room after the lockdown was announced," a student from Anantapur recalled

and added that they were attending online classes but couldn't get back valuable material including clothes and books from the hostel rooms. After five months, the students were permitted by the varsity authorities to take back their belongings.

Sri Krishnadevaraya university authorities have begun annual examinations for degree students by taking all necessary measures. The examination centres are being sanitised to avoid contamination. Further, the JNTUA has to wait to start new academic year and also to conduct of examinations in the colleges of university in Rayalaseema region.

The Central University of AP which is located in buildings of JNTUA campus, was also closed since lockdown, and students from various parts are awaiting for further directions from the varsity.

GOOD MORNING RAJAHMUNDRY LAUNCHED

DC CORRESPONDENT
RAJAHMUNDRY, SEPT. 7

'Good Morning Rajahmundry' programme was launched on Monday in 38th ward in the city. BC Welfare Minister Ch. Srinivasa Venugopala Krishna, Kapu Corporation Chairman Jakkapudi Raja, the former MLA Rowthu Surya Prakasa Rao, YSRC leaders S. Sivarama Subrahmanyam and A. Veerraju and RMC commissioner M. Abhishikth Kishore participated in the programme. Mr Venu said Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was chalking out a plan for eradicating poverty in the society and as a part of it, the YSRC leaders and the officials are visiting the city in the name of 'Good Morning Rajahmundry' programme.

4 PERSONS INVOLVED IN KIDNAP HELD

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 7

Police apprehended a 4-member gang involved in the kidnap attempt against an 8 years old boy on September 3 at Nellore City.

The prime accused, identified as Manda Hareesh Reddy, 28, was a resident of Mangali Street in Nawabpeta at Nellore and he is living at Teachers Colony in Kavali town now.

He was involved in several crimes in the past. He devised a plan to abduct children of affluent people to get rich fast and targeted the 8-year-old N. Akshith living at 11th Road in Magunta Layout at Nellore.

2 BOYS KILLED, 3 INJURED IN LIGHTNING STRIKE

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 7

In a severe thunderstorm activity across the Chittoor and Nellore district, two boys were killed and three sustained injuries due to lightning strikes on Monday. The incident occurred when the victims were taking cover beneath a neem tree in an agriculture field located near a remote village - Kodumbatta in Sullurpeta mandal of Nellore district.

According to Varadaiahpalem mandal tahsildar Venkata Ramana, five boys including three teenagers and two adolescents, hailing from the bordering villages of Varadaiahpalem mandal in Chittoor district, went to the fields in Kodumbatta on Monday morning to play cricket.

Seeing the rain coming on, they took cover under the neem tree, which was struck by lightning. In the tragic incident, two boys identified as Muni Raju (8) and Kamal (17) were killed on the spot.

QUENCH | THIRST 45-50 animals roaming in packs of 10 in search of water**Elephants found at Tummalabailu forest**

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, SEPT. 7

Forest officials have identified a herd of elephants, comprising 45 to 50, roaming in the Tummalabailu area of the Seshachalam forest under Rajampet Forest Division. Officials said the animals may return to Tummalabailu for want of water. They are expected to roam around Balapalle and Railwaykoduru areas as well.

Authorities pointed out that the elephants are roaming in groups of ten each. There is a likelihood of them entering the agricultural lands in nearby villages like Obulavaripalle and Gadela.

Elephants usually roam Seshachalam forest from November to March because of the availability



Elephants dung found near S.R. Palem in Kadapa district.

of water at Kalyan Dam near Thirumala. They are in the forest in Kadapa district from March to October. Tummalabailu has plenty

of water in the nearby ditches. Seasonally they wander off the path as they enter a new forest area. In this instance, they are likely

to come into the farms of nearby villages to the forest and create havoc.

Ramapuram Narayana,

forest range officer, Rajampet speaking to Deccan Chronicle said that the staff has already alerted the villagers adjacent to the forest area. Usually the elephants will search for water sources and go there every year. He said that they are identifying the movements of the elephants in the forest through base camp staff and striking force. He said arrangements were being made to send the elephants back into the forest by making noises when they come near the villages.

Narayana explained that recently wild elephants have been spotted in areas under SR Palem Beat and Tummalabailu Beat. He said that they have cautioned the villagers adjacent to Tummalabailu forest area and urged them against visiting Manchalamma temple, which is deep in the forest.

SHORT TAKES

RHEA FILES
PLAINT AGAINST
SSR'S SISTER

Mumbai, Sept. 7: Actress Rhea Chakraborty, who is accused of abetting the suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, has filed a complaint with Mumbai Police, accusing Rajput's sister Priyanka Singh and a Delhi-based doctor of forgery and preparing a "fake" prescription of medicines for anxiety.

In her complaint sent to the Bandra police here on Sunday, Chakraborty sought that Priyanka Singh and Dr Tarun Kumar, working with Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Delhi, be booked under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code for forgery, the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and the Telemedicine Practice Guidelines.

The 28-year-old actress in her complaint said Rajput was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and was undergoing treatment for various other mental health issues.

However, Rajput was not disciplined in following the treatment and would often abruptly stop his medications, she further said in the complaint.

"On June 8, 2020, Rajput showed me the messages he and his sister Priyanka had exchanged in which Priyanka sent him a list of medicines to take. I explained to Rajput that he has already been prescribed medicines by doctors who are treating him," Chakraborty said in her complaint.

"He (Rajput), however, disagreed with me and insisted that he would only take the medicine his sister was prescribing," she said.

On the same day, Rajput asked Chakraborty to leave the house as his sister Meetu Singh was coming to stay with him for a few days, according to the complaint.

INDIA ENTERS
INTO HYPERSONIC
REGIME

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 7

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Monday demonstrated its hypersonic air-breathing scramjet technology with the flight test of Hypersonic Technology Demonstration Vehicle (HSTDV) at 11. 03 am from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Launch Complex at Wheeler Island, off the coast of Odisha.

With this successful demonstration, the country enters into the hypersonic regime paving way for advanced hypersonic vehicles.

The hypersonic cruise vehicle was launched using a proven solid rocket motor, which took it to an altitude of 30 km, where the aerodynamic heat shields were separated at hypersonic Mach number.

"The cruise vehicle separated from the launch vehicle and the air intake opened as planned. The hypersonic combustion sustained and the cruise vehicle continued on its desired flight path at a velocity of six times the speed of sound i.e., nearly 02 km/second for more than 20 seconds. The critical events like fuel injection and auto ignition of scramjet demonstrated technological maturity. The scramjet engine performed in a text book manner," DRDO said.

C'GARH OPPOSES
NATIONAL DIGITAL
HEALTH MISSION

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, SEPT. 7

Chhattisgarh health minister T.S. Singhdeo on Monday expressed strong reservation about Centre's National Digital Health Mission, fearing that the policy may be used as a tool for surveillance on citizens by an 'authoritarian state'.

In a letter to Union health minister Harsh Vardhan, Singhdeo cautioned that the policy can be 'misused by an authoritarian state for surveillance purposes' and also can be misused to manipulate the sensitive personal information for the purpose of 'overt coercion'.

The National Digital Health Mission, draft policy of which was announced by National Health Authority functioning under Union health ministry on August 26, seeks to digitize the personal health records of citizens of India by developing a digital health ID, using Aadhaar, the 12-digit unique identification number linked to a person's biometric details.



Army soldiers carry the mortal remains of martyr Nyima Tenzin who laid down his life in a face-off with China on Aug 30, during his funeral in Leh on Monday.

For high altitude warfare,
ponies, mules are crucial

Equines can walk non-stop for 30 kms and carry loads upto 150 kg

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC
HYDERABAD SEPT. 7

Tough, intelligent and naturally cautious, they have braved bullets, air strikes, harsh weather and proved their mettle by serving in some of the most treacherous tracks and ridgelines in high altitudes across the world. From World War II to the operations in Jammu and Kashmir during 1947-48, the wars of 1962, 1965, 1971 and the Kargil war in 1999, they have played a key role in mountain warfare, delivering last-mile logistics to soldiers along the LoC and LAC.

As massive deployment of forces is underway across the LAC from Ladakh to Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh following the stand-off between the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army of China, the humble mules and ponies are back in action. Known for endurance and showing more patience under the pressure of heavy weights, these animals work alongside the soldiers, transporting mortars, guns and ammunition and other essentials needed to keep the soldier fighting fit.

Sources told *Deccan Chronicle* that though the use of equines in mountain warfare has been minimal over the years except at a few places in the Kashmir Valley, where they are used to transport weapons and essentials for the Army, the stand-off with China and the massive deployment and men and material across the LAC has led the forces to rely heavily on the equines, which are best suited for the mountains. Even the special forces of the US and NATO have used the animals in the rugged terrain of Afghanistan.

Though helicopters and all-terrain vehicles have replaced animals over the years, ponies and mules are indispensable when it comes to high-altitude warfare. Army and ITBP personnel, who are being deployed in large numbers along the LAC in different states, rely heavily on them.

"Animals have always been an integral part of



EQUINES & THE ARMY

- During World War II, British ships were modified especially to carry a total of 4,179 mules from the US to India for use by British and Indian troops operating in Burma

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riding and animal management skills are a pre-requisite for even Special Forces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equines are called by their hoof numbers The Indian Army has recognised the contribution of the equines 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLA also uses equines and Yaks, which have huge lungs which are perfect for high altitude 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ponies are many breeds like the Zanskar ponies of Ladakh, Manipuri ponies, Spiti ponies and Bhutia ponies 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mules and ponies are used to transport mortars, grenades, guns, ammo, kerosene and food among other material. 		

the Army's logistics and there cannot be a substitute to it. High altitude regions experience hostile weather, heavy snow and rainfall in winters besides low visibility. In some areas along the LAC, there is thick vegetation and these conditions restrict the movement of helicopters which disrupts surveillance. These animals have been loyal to us at all our frontiers," sources said, adding that it is essential not to waste manpower during war time.

The PLA uses mules, ponies and even yaks, which not only transport material but also provide warmth when soldiers sleep next to the animals. The animals were used for evacuating the injured besides carrying artillery

guns. The Pakistan Army uses mules on its borders. The equines, which have natural resistance to diseases and insects, can walk non-stop for 25 to 30 km and carry loads between 75 and 150 kg. Just before the Kargil war, there was a proposal to disband the animal transport units that function under the Army Service Corps but it was shelved. The Remount and Veterinary Corps later established the Zanskar pony breeding and training centre in Ladakh, which is the highest stud farm in the world. This unit is currently providing strong and hardy Zanskari ponies for use by the Army in high altitude for its adaptability to extreme climatic conditions.

Efforts on to
secure release of 5
abducted youths

MANOJ ANAND | DC
with agency inputs
GUWAHATI, SEPT. 7

The Indian Army has begun efforts to secure the release of five villagers from Arunachal Pradesh who were reportedly abducted by the People's Liberation Army of China from Sera-7 area below the McMahon Line in Upper Subansiri in Arunachal Pradesh.

Disclosing that the Indian Army has made contact at the commander level and sent a hotline message to its counterpart in Eastern frontier of Arunachal Pradesh, sources said that local villagers have been assured that no stone will be left unturned to secure their release.

But reports quoting state-run *Global Times* quoted Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian as saying, "China's position on the eastern section of the China and India boundary and China's southern Tibet is consistent and clear. We have never recognised the so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally established on the Chinese territory."

He also refuses to give details on five civilians who were abducted by the Chinese Army from Arunachal Pradesh.

"We have no details to release yet about the question on Indian army sending a message to PLA about five missing Indians in the region," he said.

The five youth, who have been missing since September 3, were part of a group of porters who carried supplies for the Army through an area without a motor-able road or mobile connectivity.

Union minister Kiren Rijiju had on Sunday announced that the Indian

● THE FIVE youths, who have been missing since September 3, were part of a group of porters who carried supplies for the Army through an area without a motor-able road or mobile connectivity. Parents of the abducted youths have expressed confidence in the Army.

● THE INDIAN Army has already sent a hotline message to the counterpart PLA establishment at the border point in Arunachal Pradesh. Response is awaited

KIREN RIJIJU,
Union minister

Army has sent a hotline message to the Chinese Army and a response was awaited.

"The Indian Army has already sent a hotline message to the counterpart PLA establishment at the border point in Arunachal Pradesh. Response is awaited," said Mr Rijiju. Kento Dangen, the deputy commissioner of Upper Subansiri district, told this newspaper that they dispatched a police team from the headquarters town of Daporijo to Nacho, about 120 km north, for an investigation but it will take some time for them to reach the frontier villages.

Parents of the abducted youth have expressed confidence in the Indian Army.

"We have very strong bonding with our Indian Army. They are always there to help us in our challenging days. We have been assured by local Army officers that they are trying to rescue the youths," a villager said.

Fact-checker
draws support
after police case

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 7

Days after two FIRs were registered against fact checking website AltNews co-founder Mohammad Zubair in Delhi and Raipur for alleged online harassment of a minor girl, "#IStandWithZubair" was trending on Twitter on Monday.

Meanwhile, Pratik Sinha, another co-founder of AltNews, shared some screenshots of obscene and salacious posts made by JSINGH2252 on his Twitter handle.

He wrote, "It must be noted that NCPCR commission headed by @KanoongoPriyank has acted against @zoo_bear on the basis of a bogus complaint by @JSINGH2252. Who is this @JSINGH2252? Here's a preview into the vulgar mindset of this person. Is the establishment a voice for such people now?"

Later, on Monday, the National Commission for Women taking account of the post made by Mr Sinha filed a complaint with the cybercrime cell and also asked Twitter to take action against Twitter user JSINGH2252.

"NCWIndia has come across this post enclosing offensive tweets by @JSINGH2252 which has posted pictures of women with misogynistic comments. Our chairperson @sharmarekha has written to @TwitterIndia for deleting the account & to stop transmission of such content at the earliest," NCW tweeted.

Mr Sinha, in a statement on Twitter, stood by his colleague and alleged that the FIRs were an

attempt to hound Mr Zubair through the misuse of legal apparatus.

"An attempt is being made to hound co-founder of AltNews Mohammed Zubair (@zoo_bear) through misuse of legal apparatus.

AltNews stands by Mohammed Zubair. Zubair has been in the forefront of fighting fake narratives and his work hurts those who have weaponised misinformation to subvert the Indian democracy," Sinha said on Twitter.

Earlier, on August 6, Mr Zubair responded to an abusive message from Twitter user Jagdish Singh, who uses the handle @JSINGH2252.

He posted Mr Singh's display picture, which features a little girl who is perhaps his granddaughter. Mr Zubair blurred her face in the image posted.

"Hello Jagdish Singh. Does your cute granddaughter know about your part time job of abusing people on social media? I suggest you to change your profile pic," he wrote.

On August 8, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights took note of the matter.

The commission had acted on a complaint filed by the Forum for Indigenous Rights-Northeast India.

The commission wrote to the Delhi deputy commissioner of police and the nodal cyber cell officer, seeking action against Mr Zubair for "stalking of a minor girl on Twitter."

Mr Zubair called the complaint "absolutely frivolous." "I will be responding to it legally," he said.

There's no need
to use lantern:
Nitish Kumar

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, SEPT. 7

While addressing his party's election campaign through a virtual rally, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar accused the opposition of spreading lies and misleading people about the policies of the state government.

During the event, he asked his party leaders and workers to reach out to voters and explain them the difference between the 15 years of Jungle raj during Lalu-Rabri regime and the "good governance" during his tenure after 2005.

While referring to the latest NCRB data to claim that law and order scenario has improved in the state after his government came to power, he said that the state's ranking is 23rd in crime, 29th in crime against women, 33rd in rapes, 23rd in kidnapping and 11th in murders.

"What was the situation of law and order when they were in power? There used to be no fear of law and criminals used to roam around freely. But now the situation has changed and people go out with their family even

in the night without any fear", the Chief Minister said.

He also used the occasion to highlight the achievements of his government. He said that number of steps were taken to improve the situation in the state.

While taking a dig at the RJD he said, "there is no need to use lantern (RJD's party symbol) as electricity has reached every household in the state. Besides, the road network has also improved".

He further added that his government identified 65 panchayats and carried out a special drive in villages where Naxalism was at its peak during Lalu-Rabri regime.

"The situation improved in villages and there has been no incident of Naxal violence in the state".

According to political experts the NDA which is battling the anti-incumbency wave in the state hopes to return to power by highlighting the failures of the RJD government between 1990 and 2005.

Assembly elections for 243 seats in Bihar are scheduled in November.

TWITTER | WAR

Senior leader accuses BJP's IT cell of 'putting out fake ID tweets to make personal attacks

Now, Swamy wants Malviya sacked as BJP IT cell head

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 7

Known for taking Bharatiya Janata Party's opponents head on in the social media and sometimes ending up getting entangled in political controversies, BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya faced a bizarre situation on Monday when the party's own Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy demanded that he be

sacked.

Accusing the BJP's IT cell for being "gone rogue" and "putting out fake ID tweets to make personal attacks" on him, Dr Swamy tried to keep the party leadership out from personal attacks against him by stating that he cannot be held responsible if his "angered followers make counter personal attacks just as the BJP cannot be held responsible for the rogue IT cell of the

● WHEN ASKED BY his followers to ignore the personal attacks against him, Dr Swamy said that he will but the party must sack those who are involved.

party." Malviya is the in-charge of BJP's national information and technology cell.

"The BJP IT cell has gone rogue. Some of its members are putting out

fake ID tweets to make personal attacks on me. If my angered followers make counter personal attacks I cannot be held responsible just as BJP cannot be held responsible for the rogue IT cell of the party," tweeted Dr Swamy, who often takes a different stand than the BJP like on the JEE-NEET issue.

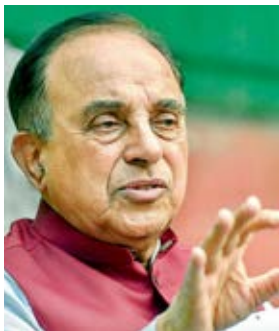
Dr Swamy had earlier asked the government to come clean on news reports that Chinese

Army had re-entered Doklam and had slammed the Good and Services Tax.

When asked by his followers to ignore the personal attacks against him on the social media, Dr Swamy said that he will but the party must sack those who are involved.

"One Malviya character is running riot with filth. We are a party of *maryada purushotam* not of Ravan or Dushasan," tweeted the

BJP MP. It may be recalled that a case was lodged against the BJP president J.P. Nadda and Malviya in Rajasthan earlier this year over a tweet by the latter for allegedly tarnishing the image of Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi. The Rajasthan High Court later stayed the entire proceedings against the BJP president as the tweet was from Malviya's personal account.



Subramanian Swamy

IN BRIEF

Pakistan mine collapse kills 6

Peshawar: At least six labourers were killed on Monday when a marble mine they were working in collapsed due to landslides in northwest Pakistan, a senior official said. The incident happened in Mohmand district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province when the labourers were busy in excavation and the mine collapsed and buried them. “Six labourers have died in the incident and their bodies have been retrieved from the debris of the mine,” Khateer Ahmed, DG Rescue 1122, said. He said that six other miners also received injuries and are undergoing treatment at a hospital.

24 killed in Yemen clashes

Dubai: More than 20 people were killed in clashes in Yemen’s northern province of Al-Jawf late Sunday as government troops tried to reclaim positions lost months ago to Huthi rebels. Yemen’s internationally recognised government has been fighting the Iran-allied insurgents since 2014, when the Huthis seized much of the north including the capital Sanaa. A Saudi-led military coalition intervened on the side of the government the following year. A government military source said 16 Huthis and eight loyalists were killed in clashes Sunday night. Government troops captured more than 40 rebels, the source said. Meanwhile, the insurgents advanced in the neighbouring Marib governorate, in particular the Mahliya district, after heavy fighting that also resulted in a number of casualties.

Nirav reporting ban plea rejected

London: A UK judge, presiding over fugitive diamondaire Nirav Modi’s extradition case over the estimated \$2-billion PNB fraud and money laundering charges brought by India, rejected an application seeking a partial reporting ban at the start of a five-day trial here on Monday. District Judge Samuel Goozee dismissed the application after hearing representations in what he called a “high profile case in India”, including from members of the press present at Westminster Magistrates’ Court who stressed the importance of free and fair reporting of the proceedings. Modi’s barrister, Clare Montgomery, applied for the partial restriction with reference to a BJP press conference held in India in May, giving “unfair commentary” on the evidence given by former Indian High Court Judge Abhay Thipsay during the first part of the extradition trial. Thipsay, as a member of the Congress party, was accused of “party political bias” in his expert legal opinion, which challenged the Indian government’s case.

RESPECT BREXIT WITHDRAWAL DEAL: EU TO UK

Brussels, Sept. 7: The European Union warned the British government on Monday not to renege on commitments made ahead of its departure from the bloc earlier this year. Amid growing signs that trust between the two sides is evaporating ahead of another round of post-Brexit talks in London on Tuesday, the bloc said any attempt by the British government to unilaterally ride roughshod over the divorce agreement could jeopardise the hardwon peace process on the island of Ireland, as well as the prospects for a trade deal. Ursula von der Leyen, president of the EU’s executive commission, said she expected Boris Johnson’s government to implement the withdrawal agreement that paved the way for the UK’s smooth departure from the bloc on January 31. She said in a tweet that the agreement was an “obligation under international law” and a “prerequisite for any future partnership”. She added that the section in the agreement that ensures an open border between Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK, and EU member Ireland, is “essential to protect peace and stability on the island” as well as for the “integrity” of the EU’s tariff-free and frictionless single market. Her comments followed a report that the British government is planning domestic legislation that would effectively override the international treaty obligations enshrined within the withdrawal agreement, particularly over issues related to the Irish border.

Unicef to procure, supply vaccines

It is to ensure that all nations have safe, fast and equitable access to initial Covid doses

United Nations, Sept. 7: In what could possibly be the world’s largest and fastest ever operation of its kind, Unicef has announced that it will be leading the procurement and supply of Coronavirus vaccines to ensure that all countries have safe, fast and equitable access to initial doses when they are available. The United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef) is the world’s largest single vaccine buyer, procuring more than 2 billion doses of various vaccines annually for routine immunisation and outbreak response on behalf of nearly 100 countries.

With several vaccine candidates showing promise, the UN agency, in collaboration with the Revolving Fund of the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), will lead efforts to procure and supply doses of Covid-19 vaccines on behalf of the COVAX Global Vaccines Facility for 92 low and lower middle-income countries, whose vaccine purchases will be supported by the mechanism. “We are ready for an immense new challenge:

To lead the global supply of Covid-19 vaccines and help end the worst stage of this pandemic,” Unicef tweeted on Saturday. “Unicef is the world’s largest single buyer of vaccines for diseases like measles and polio. Thanks to our supporters, we now have the experience and expertise to deliver a Covid-19 vaccine to the world,” it said.

Unicef will also serve as procurement coordinator to support purchases by 80 higher-income economies, which have expressed their intent to participate in the COVAX Facility and would finance the vaccines from their own budgets, it said.

The vaccine procurement and distribution effort, involving over 170 economies, has the potential to become the world’s largest and fastest ever operation of its kind. “This is an all-hands on deck partnership between governments, manufacturers and multi-lateral partners to continue the fight against Covid-19 pandemic,” Unicef executive director Henrietta Fore said.

PAK SCHOOLS SET TO REOPEN FROM SEPT. 15

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 7

Pakistan’s Inter-Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IPEMC) on Monday decided to reopen universities, colleges and school for matric students in the country from September 15.

Federal Minister for Education and Vocational Training Shafqat Mahmood, chaired the conference on the issue. Ministers from all provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir attended.

It was decided that in first phase universities, colleges and school for ninth and tenth grade will be allowed to reopen from September 15 under strict implementation of SOPs and in second phase students of sixth to eight standard will be allowed to return to schools from September 22.

NAVALNY OUT OF COMA, SAYS HOSPITAL

Berlin, Sept 7: Poisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny’s condition has improved, allowing doctors to take him out of an induced coma, the German hospital treating him said Monday.

Navalny, a fierce, high-profile critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin, was flown to Germany last month after falling ill on Aug. 20 on a domestic flight in Russia. German chemical weapons experts say tests show the 44-year-old was poisoned with a Soviet-era nerve agent, prompting the German government last week to demand that Russia investigate the case.

“The patient has been removed from his medically induced coma and is being weaned off mechanical ventilation,” Berlin’s Charite hospital said in a statement.

Khashoggi: 5 get death reprieve

Dubai, Sept. 7: A Saudi court issued final verdicts on Monday in the case of slain *Washington Post* columnist and Saudi critic Jamal Khashoggi after his son, who still resides in the kingdom, announced pardons that spared five of the convicted individuals from execution.

While the trial draws to its conclusion in Saudi Arabia, the case continues to cast a shadow over the international standing of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, whose associates have been sanctioned by the US and the UK for their alleged involvement in the brutal

killing, which took place inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

The Riyadh Criminal Court’s final verdicts were announced by Saudi Arabia’s state television, which aired few details about the eight Saudi nationals and did not name them. The court ordered a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison for the five. Another individual received a 10-year sentence, and two others were ordered to serve seven years in prison. A team of 15 Saudi agents had flown to Turkey to meet Khashoggi inside the consulate on October 2, 2018.

Seoul, Sept. 7: A powerful typhoon damaged buildings, flooded roads and knocked out power to thousands of homes in South Korea on Monday after battering islands in southern Japan, killing one person and injuring dozens of others. The Korea Meteorological Administration said Typhoon Haishen was passing over waters off the eastern coastal city of Sokcho on Monday afternoon after barreling through South Korea’s southern and eastern regions.

The typhoon was weakening, with its maximum winds measured at 108

kilometres (67 miles) per hour after blowing at 144 kilometres (80 miles) in the morning, and was forecast to be downgraded to a tropical storm within six hours. Japanese disaster management officials in Kagoshima said a woman in her 70s died of a head injury after falling into a roadside ditch while evacuating from a coastal town as Haishen lashed southwestern Japan over the weekend with strong winds and rain.

Japan’s Fire and Disaster Management Agency said at least 38 other people were injured, five of them seriously. Schools and department stores were closed



Stella Moris (L), partner of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, arrives with her father John Shipton (R) and Australian human rights lawyer Jennifer Robinson, at the Old Bailey court in London on Monday, for Assange’s hearing to decide if Assange should be extradited to the United States to face trial over the publication of secrets relating to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The 49-year-old Australian, who is currently being held on remand at a high-security jail, faces 18 counts from US prosecutors that could see him jailed for up to 175 years.

Assange in UK court to fight US extradition bid over espionage

London, Sept. 7: Wikileaks co-founder Julian Assange, who faces charges of computer hacking and espionage in the US, on Monday returned to a UK court to fight his extradition to the US. The 49-year-old Australian national, who has been in Belmarsh Prison for 16 months, is wanted over the publication of classified documents in 2010 and 2011 and faces a possible penalty of 175 years in jail if convicted on being extradited to the US.

He appeared before the Old Bailey court in London where the court was informed of his formal re-arrest on a new indictment issued in June, during the Cporonavirus lockdown, by the US government.

The fresh indictment contains 18 charges, including plotting to hack comp-



Julian Assange

uters and conspiring to obtain and disclose national defence information. Wearing a dark suit, tie and white shirt, Assange sat behind a glass security screen at the back of the court and spoke only to say that he did not consent to his extradition.

James Lewis, the barrister-

Birmingham stabbings: Man held 7 nabbed for knife attack in Tunisia

London, Sept. 7: A 27-year-old man was arrested on Monday on suspicion of murder and attempted murder in connection with a stabbing spree in Birmingham which claimed one life and injured seven others, UK police said. West Midlands Police said the suspect was detained at an address in Selly Oak area of the city in the early hours of Monday after detectives worked through the night in a bid to catch the suspect, who remains in police custody for questioning over the knife attacks.

“Officers worked through yesterday and into the early hours of this morning in a bid to trace the man we believe responsible for these terrible crimes,” said Chief Superintendent Steve Graham, the Birmingham Police Commander. “We issued CCTV footage of the suspect and had a strong response from the public... Clearly, this is a crucial development but our investigation continues. We still need to speak to any witnesses who saw what happened who’ve not yet spoken to us, or anyone who may have video footage or photos of the incidents or the attacker,” he said.

During the attack in the early hours of Sunday, a 23-year-old man suffered fatal injuries in Irving Street having been stabbed in what police believe was a “random attack”. A man and a woman, aged 19 and 32, suffered serious stab wounds and remain in hospital in a critical condition.

Tunis, Sept. 7: Tunisian authorities said Monday they had arrested seven people over a knife attack the previous day that killed a National Guard officer and wounded another. The attackers struck early Sunday morning in the tourist district of Sousse, ramming the officers with a vehicle and then assailing them with knives.

Three assailants were later shot dead in a firefight, the National Guard said, labelling the attack a “terrorist” act.

The wounded officer was “in a stable condition”, interior ministry spokesman Khaled Hayouni said.

Since Sunday, “43 people have been questioned and seven of them arrested”, Guard spokesman Hou-

em Eddine Jebabli told private station *Radio Shems*. They included “the wife of one of the assailants, who described her husband as a ‘martyr’ during the interrogation”, he said. Two brothers of one of the attackers and a person suspected of recruiting them were also arrested, he added.

He said the attackers were a pair of twins and a third man from the marginalised northwestern region of Siliana, he said, without confirming or denying reports of a fourth attacker. Jebabli said the twins had visited Facebook pages dealing with “explosive and armed attacks” but had stayed under the radar of the authorities.

Five other people, aged between 23 and 33, were less seriously hurt. The first attack happened in the Constitution Hill area, followed by further stabbings in Livery Street, Irving Street and finally Hurst Street.

WE DO HAVE 2 JUSTICE SYSTEMS IN U.S.: HARRIS

Washington, Sept. 7: The US has two systems of justice for PoC and White Americans, Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris has said, as the Indian-origin Senator rebuked President Donald Trump and his Attorney General for denying there is systemic racism in the country’s justice system.

The strong criticism from Harris, the first Indian-American woman on a major party vice presidential ticket came less than two months before the US presidential election. Democratic Party’s presidential candidate Joe Biden and his running mate Harris are challenging incumbent President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence of the Republican Party in the November 3 election. But she said she was optimistic that as a nation, Americans hold dear to an ideal that is inscribed in marble on the Supreme Court, which is that ideal of equal justice under law.



A coastal road is damaged in Ulsan, South Korea, on Monday. A powerful typhoon flooded roads, damaged buildings and knocked out power to thousands of homes in South Korea after battering islands in southern Japan and injuring dozens of people.

DECCAN
Chronicle

8 SEPTEMBER 2020

‘Justice for Sushant’ holds mirror to media

Wild and unabashedly outrageous, a little far out in its brazen attempt to exploit the voter’s sentiment as son of the soil, the BJP’s improbable “Justice for Sushant” campaign, launched ahead of the elections to the Bihar legislative Assembly, invites the media today to a spot of introspection. The media is guilty of according the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput too much priority. To this end, it has blithely allowed itself to play into the hands of political lobbies that quickly converted the coverage into a running skirmish between the ruling party at the Centre and the Opposition-led Maharashtra government. Hungry for TRPs, the media remained oblivious. Rigour, due diligence and facts were tossed to the winds in the course of a media trial, masquerading as an investigation.

As floods raged through Bihar, alongside Coronavirus and recession, the big media invisibilised the sufferings of the poor and the marginalised. The post-truth media was shy of putting governments on the mat. The social media fostered echo chambers; cancel culture, and trolling and real life stalking of ones with uncomfortable views. But the cardinal sin committed by the media was trying to reverse-engineer the tastes of its audience and in so doing it underestimated it, badly. The masses are intelligent. They do not enjoy an exact overlap with the classes to which the journalist aspires to belong like every other middle class citizen. But they vote out governments. They have sections that are semi-literate and they also comprise minds that are not influential but are far more educated than the journalist themselves. The masses may be entertained by melo-drama and kitsch but they know how to distinguish between news and entertainment. Sometimes, they knowingly opt for the latter. At other times, they do so in the former’s absence. But to perpetrate their particu-late frauds, journalists were encouraged to buy into the toxic middle class culture of misogyny, shame, fear and fascination of “drugs” and various “noble than thou” tribalisms that coexist as cognitive dissonances, indeed neuroses, in people’s psyches and milk them no end. It was sur-prising how the journalist of a television channel kept steering the con-versation away to the topic of drugs even after Rhea Chakraborty dropped repeated clear hints about Sushant Singh being stressed out about the pos-sibility of a “#MeToo-type allegation” prior to his death. Chakraborty has just been interrogated by the CBI and this adds to her statements new weight. It is also surprising how large sections of the media gave zero cur-rency to the possibility that Sushant Singh’s death might have been the result of a suicide. This behaviour by the media invalidates the needs of people suffering from depression that the death had urgently highlighted.

There is a growing suspicion that the media is instinctively refusing to consider and/or present the actor as having been an overthinking, per-fectionist, high-achieving, fallible human, with talent and flaw, and instead placing him on the pedestal of “the wronged genius” that it believes its audience wants him to occupy. Should it be otherwise, the ensuing shame withers its own pet narrative. All of which is typical of the regressive society that the media aims to cater to and likes to place itself above. The coverage of this case is indeed a study in its midsize history of hypocrisy.

Djokovic’s fault

Novak Djokovic, world’s top ranked player, has been thrown out of the US Open. And rightly so too for hitting a line judge in the throat with the ball he had smacked behind him in frustration after dropping his service to Pablo Carreno Busta of Spain in a fourth round match. The ball hitting the woman official was clearly accidental but then Djokovic is known to be a habitual offender in this regard and he had no business demonstrating his displeasure at himself or otherwise in this fashion on court. It may be deeply disappointing for fans to see the winner of 17 Grand Slams disqualified like this, especially since he adds such colour to the sport. But then Djokovic is also expected to be a paragon of good behaviour. The argument that there would have been little fuss and possibly just a small fine had the ball missed the line judge is futile. These are extraordinary times with the pandemic having changed the lives of everyone globally and the quirky turn of events comes just when Djokovic has been preparing to launch a controversial players’ association which excludes women players. The US Open loses its charm as the Serbian was the lodestar in the men’s half in the absence of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Modern tennis has evolved from the age of John McEnroe and his rage for perfection erupting in abysmal behaviour. Djokovic sounds con-tribute in his apology and he should be taking a leaf out of Federer’s play-book in being an epitome of grace on court. A loose cannon like him may lack the sangfroid of great champions but he can’t blame it on the pan-demic-induced “cabin fever” or his being targeted for the event in Serbia-Croatia that became a virus super spreader among tennis players.

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Subhani



Wuhan and the garden of false expectations

V Sudarshan

Picture this mood setter: It is a cool April evening on the banks of the East Lake in Wuhan, the year is 2018, some months after a testing standoff in Doklam, Bhutan, between Indian and Chinese troops. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese strongman Xi Jinping are listening to the dulcet tones of ancient Chinese string instruments and flutes playing a sweet Bollywood hit of yester-years. By the time the music sets the mood, the two leaders have taken a stroll by the East Lake without their official delegations in tow, have sat in a houseboat, without their delegations, partake of Chinese tea, teased only by the gentle lake-side breezes. The song the Chinese musicians are playing with elegance, plucking pear shaped lutes, zithers, blowing melodiously on Chinese flutes, is a carefully chosen Kishore Kumar-Aasha Bhosle duet which goes, Mil Jaye is tarah, do lehrein jis tarah, phir na hona juda, han yeh wada rahan.

It is a song where two lovers pledge never to separate. This song helped define the so-called “Wuhan Spirit”. Later the following year, in Mamallapuram in another informal summit setting, which is to say, without the rigidity of official positions, Xi was to tell the media, looking as pleased as a fat Chinese cat that just tasted its favourite cream, that he had “heart to heart discussions” with Modi on bilateral matters. This heart to heart moment was branded by spinmeisters as the “Chennai Connect”. What the formal communications were to claim later, after both these mutually rewarding meetings, where each leader much better

understood the other’s strategic perspectives on a range of issues, reveal as much as they conceal. But Modi was to declare with much satisfaction: “The first informal summit between India and China last year in Wuhan led to fresh stability in our relations and gave a fresh momentum. Strategic communication between our two countries has also increased. The Wuhan summit instilled a new momentum and trust in our relations and today’s ‘Chennai Connect’ is the start of a new era in India-China relations.” Significantly, Xi Jinping said that such informal summits have helped “initiate discussions on many issues” and he was happy that Mr Modi had mooted the idea. So we know whose idea it was, these one-ones to better understand the other. That the Chinese responded, and that after 18 meetings between Modi and Xi Jinping, the comfort of “strategic communication” has entered the lexicon of diplomacy. It is also appropriate to underline the phrase “fresh stability” that Modi highlighted. Now, consider the surprising remark that external affairs minister S. Jaishankar made in an interview to the Hindustan Times a few days ago: “We have very large number of Chinese forces (in Galwan and other areas) and frankly, we (emphasis added) are at a loss to know why.” It is at some variance with the statement by Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat to the same newspaper a week prior to that. In it he said two things broadly, one suggesting that there is proper intelligence coordination between the various agencies, thereby down-playing the possibility of intelligence failure, and second, that the military

option was always there if all else fails, a foreshadowing of intent. Indeed, there could be evidence that by October the aviation wing of the Research and Analysis Wing had produced compelling visual and other evidence which when pieced together showed that the Chinese were consistently massing, moving, constructing, like worker ants. This couldn’t have been filed away in some cupboard without the necessary dissemination. The answer lies elsewhere. Is it even possible that in the 18 times Modi met Xi in the past six years, one-to-one, they failed to probe each other’s perspectives on the boundary issue? After all, there are over 460 incursions a year. The Wuhan summit followed the numbing Doklam experience. And now Galwan, Hot Springs and Pangong Tso follow Mahabs. How does this make any sense? Especially after Xi’s political endorsement, declared so openly: “Yesterday, Prime Minister, as you said, you and I had engaged in candid conversations like friends, heart to heart discussions on bilateral relations.” The fact is the strategic framework of how to take the relationship forward, in place since Rajiv Gandhi’s 1988 visit to Beijing, which downplayed the urgent resolution of the boundary question and made it a secondary goal while seeking to expand the horizon of relations, had long collapsed by the time Modi started meeting the Chinese leadership in 2014. Was Modi still waiting for a strategic communication when he declared on June 19: “Neither have they intruded into our border, nor has any post been taken over by them (China)”?

After all our Prime Minister had a chance to broadly survey and review what the two countries had been able to achieve and, more important, had a chance to map the path where the two were heading in an uncertain world. It was quite an unparalleled achievement, expending so much political capital to better get a handle on this complicated relationship. Modi must surely have factored in the negative signals the Chinese have sent over the years, on the Nuclear Suppliers Group, on Jaish-e-Mohammed, on Pakistan, Arunachal Pradesh. Or were they, like the two characters in Chiroco’s painting, just conversations among the ruins, with the high Himalayas providing the barren backdrop? Could it be that for a while Modi and his policy-makers, based on Modi’s various heart-to-heart conversations with Xi, had thought there could be somehow a disconnect between Xi and sections of the PLA and that he would somehow prevail? Was this the context that we should have viewed our man in Beijing’s special pleadings in the middle of August with the director of the Office of International Military Co-operation of the Central Military Commission of China? Is it even possible that Modi, chowkidar exemplar, was blindsided by Xi and let himself be led up the garden path? If we allow for that possibility, then the recent surprise expressed by our external affairs minister, in the collective second person “we”, starts to make sense. He speaks not only for himself, but for those who provided close support in Wuhan, Mahabs and 16 other salubrious settings. Thus have the scales fallen from their eyes. That would explain the additional, proactive military scrambling, the forward deploying, in the areas of the Ladakh UT where we continue to plug the gaps. A delightful reworking of Nehru’s much-maligned forward policy.

The writer is the author of *Adrift: A True Story of Survival at Sea and Anatomy of an Abduction*. He writes, among other things, on diplomacy, security, strategic affairs and foreign policy.

LETTERS

BE RESPONSIBLE

The rapid increase in Covid-19 cases is an alarming sign. The reason appears to be a kind of resigned attitude on the part of people as well as governments, what is more surprising is the spread of the pandemic in educated urban areas. The truth is that people in rural areas exercised more conventional caution with conventional wisdom. With the start of unlocks people started moving with carefree abandon. There lies a great responsibility on the people to impose self-discipline and take a proud part in the recovery process.

D.S.P. Rao
Kakinada

CHARIOT FIRE

It is shocking and appalling to read that the chariot of the ancient Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Antarvedi of East Godavari district was gutted in a fire. No effort should be spared to book the culprits.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

AGRICULTURE

The only silver line we saw in this record contraction of GDP of -23% was the agricultural sector, the only sector which reflected a positive growth. It reflects that we have to strengthen our labour-intensive industries like agriculture, textiles etc. When these industries will grow, our employment opportunities will get a boost. The myth that only manufacturing can create more jobs has made the governments neglect the labour intensive industries and hence it’s time for a introspection.

Ratnaraj Jain
Rajahmundry

FORMER RULERS ARE COMMONERS

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 7 The 320 rulers of erstwhile States in the country became commoners today with their de-recognition by a Presidential order.

The Finance Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan told a

cheering Rajya Sabha today that the privy purses and privileges of the rulers had been ended “with immediate effect.” Mr. Chavan declared that with the de-recognition of rulers, “the princes have ceased to be rulers.”

Anita Katyal

Political Gup-Shup

‘Pro-changers’ for voter lists; Anar ambition worries BJP

It has been more than ten days since the eventful meeting of the Congress Working Committee where its members hit out at their colleagues for writing a letter to Sonia Gandhi seeking far-reaching changes in the party organization. But a discussion on the subject continues to rage. There is considerable speculation about how the letter writers or pro-changers, as they are often called, will continue to push for the much-needed reforms in the party. To begin with, this group is waiting for the promised session of the All-India Congress Committee for the election of the next party president. Before that, they plan to seek the publication of the names of members who are entitled to vote for the party president to be able to peruse it in advance. It is an acknowledged fact that the list of voters comprises handpicked workers and supporters of office bearers whose contribution to the party is suspect. However, it is not clear if the publication of this list will actually help the letter writers as it will not be easy to detect bogus voters.

The Coronavirus pandemic has come in handy for the Modi government to control the flow of information to the media.

Maneka Gandhi (who was once called the kutta billi minister when she headed the environment ministry) may no longer be in the government but she is keeping herself busy dashing off letters to resident welfare associations in the Capital on her favourite subject - stray dogs. Her letters have pointed out that it is illegal to relocate dogs and that irrational phobias should not be entertained and gone on to draw attention to specific laws on strays and that punishments for breaking the law go up to three years and fines. The problem of stray dogs has been a subject of an animated debate in recent weeks as many residents from across the city have complained about it following increasing cases of dog bites. They are also upset with residents who do not feed the dogs at designated spots and don’t bother to sterilize them. This has predictably invited a backlash

from dog lovers like Maneka Gandhi.

The Gujarat unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party is getting worried as Anar Patel, the high-profile daughter of former chief minister and Uttar Pradesh governor Anandiben Patel, has become politically active and is said to be eyeing a seat in one of the Gandhinagar Assembly constituencies. An entrepreneur by profession, Anar Patel joined the BJP a couple of years ago and had tried for a ticket in the 2017 Assembly elections but failed to make the cut. Though the next Assembly election is due only after two years, BJP insiders maintain Anar Patel has started preparing for it by meeting party workers and voters of the area. This has not gone down well with the local party leaders, especially the sitting MLAs. Anar Patel had courted controversy when her mother was chief minister. Emerging as a parallel power centre, she was wooed and sought by party workers, industrialists and others. She was in the eye of a storm following media reports that her business partners were allotted land

at a throwaway price for the construction of a holiday resort. In fact, Anar’s role was cited as a major reason for Anandiben’s removal as chief minister.

The Coronavirus pandemic has come in handy for the Modi government to control the flow of information to the media. Take the case of the ministry of external affairs. The ministry earlier held regular briefings where the official spokesperson responded to queries from press persons on the beat. These physical press briefings were discontinued when the lockdown was announced and replaced by virtual press conferences. When the new system was first put in place, media persons were given the option of asking their questions during the virtual briefing. But this has changed. Journalists are now required to send their questions in advance. Very often, a whole lot are bunched together while inconvenient queries are ignored. Plus, there is no scope for any follow-up questions. This has naturally upset the beat reporters but none can afford to complain for fear of being

ostracized by the ministry.

The letter by Abdul Manan, leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly, to Sonia Gandhi demanding that senior leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury be appointed president of West Bengal Congress, is being interpreted in party circles as a done deal. Manan is close to Chowdhury and the latter is apparently keen on taking up this post which has been lying vacant after the last incumbent Somen Mitra’s death. This move serves a double purpose. The party needs a strongman like Chowdhury in election-bound West Bengal and, at the same time, it will pave the way for replacing him as the party’s Lok Sabha leader. But the question is: who is best suited for the job. Shashi Tharoor or Manish Tewari are obvious choices except the two have fallen from grace after they signed the famous pro-change letter to Sonia Gandhi.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,417.23	0.16
Nifty 50	11,355.05	0.19
S&P 500*	3,426.96	-0.81
Dollar (₹)	73.34	-0.25
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.98	0.24
Euro (₹)	86.87	-0.28
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,877.258	0.49
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	41.99	-0.67
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.993	0.063
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.721	0.00

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Maruti Suzuki production up 11% in August

Maruti Suzuki India said its total production in August increased by 11 per cent to 1,23,769 units. The firm had produced 1,11,370 units in the same month last year. Passenger vehicles production stood at 1,21,381 units last month compared to 1,10,214 units a year ago, a growth of 10 per cent. Production of mini cars were at 22,208 units as against 13,814 units, up 61 per cent. Compact car production stood marginally up at 67,348 units.

Dumping probe into vitamin C from China



India has initiated a probe into the alleged dumping of vitamin C, used by pharmaceutical firms for the production of medicines, from China following complaint by a domestic manufacturer. Bajaj Healthcare Ltd has filed the application before the commerce ministry's investigation arm DGTR, seeking initiation of the probe. The company alleged the domestic industry is impacted due to the dumping of vitamin C from China PR.

PFC seeks to raise borrowing limit to ₹6 L cr

Power Finance Corporation will seek shareholders' nod to hike borrowing limit to Rs 6 lakh crore from Rs 4 lakh crore now in the AGM later this month. The company said considering the fund requirements of PFC over the next three-to-four years, the board on August 13 approved seeking shareholders' nod for raising the borrowing limit to Rs 6 lakh crore over and above aggregate paid up capital and free reserves.

Plan to recruit 14,000 staff this year: SBI

State Bank of India said it proposes to recruit 14,000 employees during the current year and its 'on tap VRS' is not a cost-cutting exercise. An SBI spokesperson said the proposed VRS is not a cost-cutting exercise, as "it was thought to provide a congenial solution to employees who expressed desire for making strategic shift in their vocations, either due to professional growth limitations, mobility issues..."



RBI accepts Kamath panel suggestions Debt recast: Ratios for 26 sectors set

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEPT. 7

The expert panel appointed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to suggest the financial and sectoral parameters for restructuring loans for companies hit by the Covid-19 pandemic has recommended financial ratios for 26 sectors that could be factored in by lending institutions for the debt recast.

The committee headed by veteran banker K.V. Kamath has said that only borrowers classified as standard (did not default) and with arrears of less than 30 days as at March 1, 2020 should be eligible under the resolution framework. Banks can adopt a graded approach based on impact severity. "Time is of essence at the present juncture. Considering the large volume and the fact that only standard assets are eligible under the proposed scheme, a segmented approach of bucketing these accounts under mild, moderate and severe stress, may ensure quick turnaround. To complete this task simplified restructuring for mild and moderate stress may be prescribed. Severe stress cases would require comprehensive restructuring," said the expert committee report released by the central bank on Monday. The 26 sectors selected by the panel for the resolution framework are power, construction, iron and steel manufacturing, roads, real estate, trading wholesale,



textiles, chemicals, consumer durables/FMCG, non-ferrous metals, pharma, logistics, gems and jewellery, cement, auto components, hotels, mining, plastic products manufacturing, automobile manufacturing, auto dealership, aviation, sugar, port and port services, shipping, building materials, and corporate retail outlets. For sectors where ratios have not been specified, lenders can make their own assessment. The committee selected five financial parameters related to leverage, liquidity, debt serviceability, etc. The financial parameters included total outside liability to adjusted tangible net worth, debt to Ebitda, current ratio, debt service coverage ratio (DSCR) and average debt service coverage ratio (ADSCR). As per the report submitted by the panel, 72 per cent debt of the banking sector has been impacted by Covid-19. The committee said the resolution framework may

be invoked not later than December 31, 2020 and the resolution plan needs to be implemented within 180 days from the date of invocation. "The recommendations of the committee have been broadly accepted by the Reserve Bank," said the RBI. The plan has to be prepared based on the pre-Covid-19 operating and financial performance of the borrower and impact of Covid-19 on its operating and financial performance in the first and second quarter of this fiscal and to assess the cash-flows for this, next and subsequent years. In these financial projections, the threshold total outside liability to adjusted tangible net worth and debt to Ebitda ratios should be met by fiscal 2023. The other three threshold ratios should be met for each year of the projections starting from fiscal 2022. The base case financial projections need to be prepared as part of the resolution plan.

ED arrests Deepak Kochhar under PMLA

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEPT. 7

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday arrested Deepak Kochhar, husband of former ICICI Bank MD & CEO Chanda Kochhar, in connection with the money-laundering probe into the ICICI Bank-Videocon case. According to sources, Deepak Kochhar has been arrested by the agency in Mumbai under the stringent sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). He will be produced before a court in Mumbai on Tuesday. On January 22, 2019, the CBI had registered an FIR for alleged cheating, criminal conspiracy under the Prevention of Corruption Act against Chanda Kochhar, Deepak Kochhar and Videocon Group promoter Venugopal Dhoot and his companies—Videocon International Electronics Ltd and Videocon Industries Limited. It also named Supreme Energy, a firm founded by Dhoot, and NuPower Renewables, controlled by Deepak Kochhar, in the FIR. On January 31, the ED lodged a case of money laundering against Chanda and Deepak Kochhar, Dhoot and others to probe alleged irregularities and corrupt practices in sanctioning of Rs 1,875-crore loans by ICICI Bank to the corporate group.

Vodafone, Idea rebranded as Vi; tariff hike on cards

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, SEPT. 7

Vodafone Idea, India's third largest mobile operator, on Monday announced rebranding of the Vodafone and Idea brands as 'Vi' (read as We), in a move aimed at attracting digital customers and hinted at tariff hike for prepaid and postpaid users, as it looks to increase the average revenue per user (Arpu) figures. The rebranding by the company comes amid intense competition in the country's highly-indebted telecom sector. "Everyone is selling below cost and the telco is not shy to take the first step," Ravinder Takkar, MD and CEO at Vodafone Idea, said at a media briefing on Monday. He also added that the telecom regulator would have to reconsider tariff charts. Increased tariff rates will help the telco improve its Arpu, which is currently at Rs 114, compared to rivals Airtel's Rs 157 and Jio's Rs 140, Takkar pointed out. According to analysts, higher Arpu will be an essential requirement for the company, with a net debt of Rs 1.7 lakh crore (including AGR liabilities) to service its annual cash obligations. Vodafone Plc's Indian arm had merged with Idea Cellular in August 2018, but the telcos had since maintained two separate brands. The new brand identity is an attempt to mount another challenge in the



space that has seen Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel strengthen over the past few quarters. "The integration of two brands is a culmination of the largest telecom integration in the world," Takkar said as he announced the rebranded entity. "It's time for a fresh start," he said. The board of Vodafone Idea had approved fundraising up to Rs 25,000 crore on September 4 to pay off the hefty dues owed to the government. It plans to raise up to Rs 15,000 crore through debentures and an equal amount by issuing shares and warrants. Through the unified brand and a bigger bet on digital, Vodafone Idea now hopes to attract fresh subscribers. The company's customer base dropped sharply to around 280 million at the end of June from 408 million at the

time of its merger with Idea two years ago. Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel had lost around 47 lakh wireless subscribers each in May 2020, according to the Telecom Authority of India data released in August. Vodafone Idea is making efforts to keep its business running in India, after the Supreme Court (SC) gave telecom companies 10 years to pay adjusted gross revenue dues (AGR) dues. Takkar said the 10 years granted to telcos by the SC to clear past statutory dues was "a good outcome." Vodafone Idea owes slightly over Rs 50,000 crore to the Department of Telecommunications as AGR-related dues. The SC asked telecom companies to make an upfront payment of 10 per cent of the balance AGR dues by March 31, 2021.

MFIs see current a/c restrictions as a headache, want to be excused

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, SEPT. 7

Micro-finance institutions (MFIs) have requested the RBI to exempt them from the restrictions on current account and overdraft facility extended by banks, as the new guidelines will create operational difficulties for them. The Reserve Bank of India had restricted banks from opening current accounts for customers who have availed of cash credit or overdraft facilities. Instead all transactions should be routed through a cash credit (CC) or overdraft (OD) account. "In the current scenario, when borrowers require urgent credit to restart their lives, implementation of the revised guidelines will result in numerous difficulties and operational issues for the microfinance sector," said P. Satish, executive director of Sa-Dhan. The sector has requested the RBI to review the circular and exempt all MFIs—NBFC-MFIs as well as non-NBFC-MFIs—from this circular in respect of restriction on opening and operation of current accounts.



According to Sa-Dhan, MFIs have various current accounts with banks based on the location of their branches. Since demonetisation all loan disbursements of MFIs are being credited to the bank accounts of their borrowers. Many MFIs also have ECS mandates for loan collections. Such banks may or may not have CC/OD facilities extended to such MFIs. Pursuant to the circular, these current accounts will need to be closed. Though loan disbursements of MFIs are through bank accounts of borrowers, a large part of collections are still in cash. MFIs require multiple current accounts in multiple banks for their cash management requirements. In case of MFIs which avail term loans from banks for on-lending, the requirement is that the lending bank will remit funds directly to the supplier of goods and services. This provision is a little insurmountable for MFIs as the loan availed is for further lending to the ultimate borrowers. If all transactions are only to be routed through a particular bank, there would be no flexibility or back up available in case of any unforeseen issues with that particular bank or freeze on transactions with that bank. If an MFI does not have more than 10 per cent exposure to any bank, it is not clear as to how the banking transaction requirements of that MFI would be met, said Sa-Dhan. It is not clear if an MFI having more than 10 per cent of exposure to a bank can do debit transactions from its collection account.

Robust growth in employee cost expenditure was seen in industries like public sector banks (32.1 per cent), stock broking (17.5 per cent), ports (12.1 per cent), household and personal products (11.4 per cent) and telecom service providers (9.8 per cent). Net profits of the sample companies declined by almost 60 per cent during the quarter as against a growth of 4.7 per cent in same quarter last year. Despite the savings in tax expenses, the reason for a sharp fall in net profits can

Rajan terms GDP fall alarming, tells bureaucrats to wake up

New Delhi, Sept. 7: Terming the 23.9 per cent fall in the economic growth in June quarter alarming, former Reserve Bank Governor Raghuram Rajan has said bureaucracy should come out of complacency and take meaningful action. The current crisis requires a more thoughtful and active government, he said, adding unfortunately, after an initial burst of activity, it seems to have retreated into a shell. "The sharp decline in economic growth should alarm us all. The 23.9 per cent contraction in India (and the numbers will probably be worse when we get estimates of the damage in the informal sector) compares with a drop of 12.4 per cent in Italy and 9.5 per cent in the United States, two of the most Covid-19-affected advanced countries," Rajan wrote in a post on his LinkedIn page. He further said the bureaucracy needs to be frightened out of their complacency and into meaningful activity. If there is a silver lining in the awful GDP numbers,



hopefully it is that". Rajan, currently a professor at the University of Chicago, said the pandemic is still raging in India, so discretionary spending, especially on high-contact services like restaurants, and the associated employment, will stay low until the virus is contained. The eminent economist pointed out that the government's reluctance to do more today seems partly because it wants to conserve resources for a possible future stimulus. "This strategy is self-defeating," he opined. Emphasising on the importance of government relief or support in the current scenario, Rajan said, "Without relief measures, the growth potential of the economy will be seriously damaged." He said Brazil, which has spent tremendously on relief, is seeing a much lower downgrade to medium term growth than India. "So, government officials who hold out the possibility of a stimulus when India finally contains the virus are underestimating the damage from a more shrunken and scarred economy at that point," Rajan noted. Citing an example, Rajan said if one thinks of the economy as a patient, relief is the sustenance the patient needs while on the sickbed and fighting the disease. "Without relief, households skip meals, pull their children out of school and send them to work or beg, pledge their gold to borrow, let EMIs and rent arrears pile up." He also suggested that reforms can be a form of stimulus, and even if not carried out immediately, a timeline to undertake them can boost current investor sentiment. "The world will recover earlier than India, so exports can be a way for India to grow," he said.

Samsung to stop production at sole China TV factory by Nov.



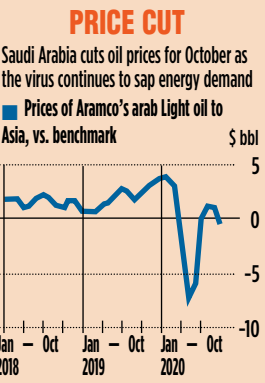
JOYCE LEE SEOUL, SEPT. 7

Samsung Electronics has decided to cease production at its only TV factory in China by the end of November, a spokesman said on Monday, the latest in a series of moves by the South Korean firm to shift production from the world's second-largest economy. The TV factory in Tianjin is the only Samsung Electronics TV production base in China, the spokesman said. The decision is part of "ongoing efforts to enhance efficiency" in its production facilities, Samsung said in a statement earlier. The factory has about 300 workers, Yonhap news agency reported on Monday. Samsung declined to comment on the number of workers, but said some of the workers and equipment are expected to be retained. The latest exit leaves Samsung Electronics in China with a home appliance factory in Suzhou and chip production facilities in Suzhou and Xian. The decision follows Samsung Electronics' display unit confirming separately last week that it is selling off a majority stake in its Suzhou liquid crystal display (LCD) production unit to TCL Technology Group Corp's Star Optoelectronics Technology unit. Samsung Display said in March it decided to end all of its production of LCD panels in South Korea and China by the end of this year. In August, Samsung said it will halt operations of its last computer factory in China.

OIL RETREATS AS SAUDI ARABIA SLASHES PRICES FOR OCTOBER

JAMES THORNHILL SEPT. 7

Oil extended its slide after Saudi Arabia cut its pricing for oil sales in October, a sign that the world's biggest exporter sees fuel demand wavering amidst more coronavirus flare-ups around the globe. Brent crude was at \$42.04 a barrel, down 62 cents or 1.4 per cent by 0859 GMT, after earlier sliding to \$41.51. US West Texas Intermediate crude skidded 63 cents, or 1.6 per cent, to \$39.14 a barrel after earlier dropping to \$38.55, the lowest since July 10. The world's top oil exporter Saudi Arabia cut the October official selling price for Arab Light crude it sells to Asia by the most since May, indicating demand remains



weak. Asia is Saudi Arabia's largest market. The kingdom's state producer, Saudi Aramco, reduced its key Arab Light grade of crude by a larger-than-expected amount for shipments to Asia, its main market. It also lowered pricing for US buyers. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Sindhu to play in Thomas, Uber Cup

New Delhi: Reigning world champion P. V. Sindhu has agreed to compete in next month's Thomas and Uber Cup after deciding to pull out of the event earlier due to personal reasons, national federation's president Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday.

"I have requested @Pvsindhu1 to join the team as we find a favourable draw and have the best chance to take a shot at a medal at the ThomasUberCup," Badminton Association of India (BAI) chief Biswa Sarma tweeted.

"She has agreed and will pre-pone her family function so that she can be part of the Indian Team and play for the country." The Indian women's team has been clubbed with 14-time winners China, France and Germany in Group D. — *PTI*

Messi back at Barca, trains alone

Madrid: Lionel Messi returned to Barcelona training for the first time on Monday since his failed attempt to leave the club this summer. Barca confirmed Messi has started by training alone, in line with La Liga protocol. "The 2020/2021 pre-season is under way for Leo Messi," the statement read. Messi was seen driving into the Ciutat Esportiva and Barca posted a photo on social media just before 6.30 pm (1630 GMT) of him training in kit and working with a ball. He was taking part in his first session since Ronald Koeman was appointed coach and his first since he said on Friday he had been forced to stay at Barcelona. In an explosive interview with *Goal*, Messi blamed the club's president Josep Maria Bartomeu for "breaking his word" over a much-disputed exit clause in his contract. — *AFP*

Bucks lose Giannis but beat Heat in OT

Miami: Khris Middleton starred as the Milwaukee Bucks, their backs against the wall and star Giannis Antetokounmpo injured, beat the Miami Heat 118-115 in overtime on Sunday to stay alive in the NBA playoffs.

With reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Antetokounmpo ruled out after aggravating his sprained right ankle in the first half, Middleton stepped up to score 36 points — including nine of the Bucks' 11 in overtime. A Middleton three-pointer put Milwaukee up 116-112 with 6.9 seconds left in the extra session. Miami rookie Tyler Herro drained a three-pointer to close the gap to 116-115 before Middleton made two free throws to seal the win. Middleton led six Bucks players to score in double figures in the must-win game. — *AFP*

Fati impresses as Spain take control

Paris: Ansu Fati announced his arrival in international football on Sunday after becoming the youngest goalscorer in the history of the Spanish national team in a 4-0 thumping of Ukraine that put them top their Uefa Nations League group. Barcelona forward Fati put Spain three goals ahead after just 31 minutes of the League A, Group 4 clash at the empty Alfredo di Stefano Stadium in Madrid with a fine individual strike that came amid a scintillating debut start for his adopted country.

The easy win leaves Spain top of Group 4 on four points, one ahead of Sunday's opponents but more importantly two in front of Germany who were held to a second consecutive 1-1 draw, this time with Switzerland. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Semifinals: Trinbago Knight Riders vs Jamaica Tallawahs from 7.30 pm; Guyana Amazon Warriors vs St Lucia Zouks from 3 am (Wednesday) on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

CRICKET

England vs Australia Third T20 from 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

US OPEN TENNIS

Matches from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 2, HD

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

Georgia vs North Macedonia from 9.30 pm on Sony Ten 2, HD; **France vs Croatia** from 12.15 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD; **Denmark vs England** from 12.15 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

WWE NXT

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

NO DJOKE!

Novak out of Open after hitting line judge with ball

New York, Sept. 7: Novak Djokovic was dramatically disqualified from the US Open on Sunday after accidentally striking a female lines judge with a ball in frustration during his last-16 match, sending shock waves through the tournament.

The world number one apologized for hitting the ball in disgust after losing his serve to go 6-5 down in the first set to Spain's 20th seed Pablo Carreno Busta inside Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Djokovic appeared to be looking the other way when he pulled the ball from his pocket and smacked it in the direction of the official, it hitting her full toss in the throat.

The official cried out and began gasping for air as she collapsed to the ground.

Djokovic rushed over to check on her, placing his hand on her back as she struggled to breathe. After a few minutes she got up and walked off the court looking dazed.

Around ten minutes of discussions then ensued between Djokovic and the tournament referee Soeren Friemel, during which the world number one pleaded his case.

The umpire then declared that Carreno Busta had won by default. Djokovic shook hands with his opponent before leaving the court without appearing to shake the umpire's hand.

He went then directly to his car and left the Flushing Meadows site in New York without speaking to reporters.

Djokovic, 33, later posted an apology on Instagram saying he "so sorry."

He also apologized to tournament organizers for "my behavior" but did not say whether he thought they were right to default him.

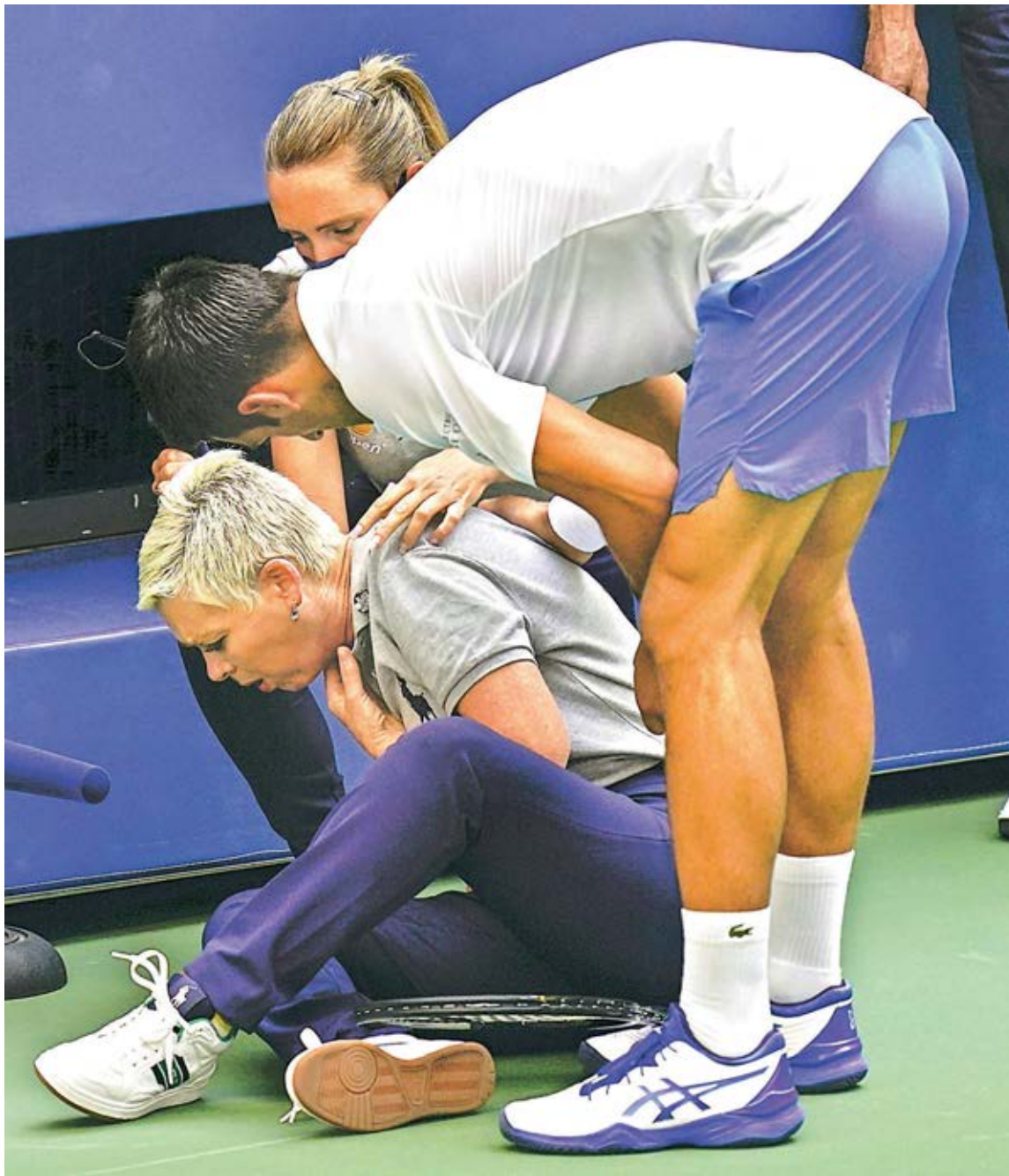
The United States Tennis Association said Djokovic had been defaulted under the Grand Slam rules for "intentionally hitting a ball dangerously or recklessly within the court or hitting a ball with negligent disregard of the consequences."

The body added that he would lose all ranking points and prize money from the tournament.

Referee Friemel said Djokovic told him he should not be defaulted because it was unintentional. Friemel said he agreed there was no intent but that it was a clear-cut case of Djokovic hitting the ball "angrily and recklessly."

"She was clearly hurt and in pain. There was no other option," he told reporters.

The Serbian star is one of only a handful of players to be disqualified from a men's singles tournament at a Grand Slam since John McEnroe was infamously tossed from the Australian Open in 1990.

— *AFP*

Serbia's Novak Djokovic checks a lines judge after hitting her with a ball in reaction to losing a point to Pablo Carreno Busta of Spain during their US Open fourth round men's singles match in New York on Sunday. Djokovic was disqualified from the tournament for the reckless hit. — *AP*

Extremely sorry, says Djokovic

New York, Sept. 7: Novak Djokovic apologised for his US Open disqualification on Sunday, declaring himself "extremely sorry" for the moment of madness which saw him defaulted from the tournament.

In a statement on Instagram just hours after his sensational exit in New York, the Serbian world number one said he had been left "really sad and empty" by the controversy.

The 33-year-old was tossed from the tournament after accidentally hitting a tennis ball into the throat of a line official during his fourth round match with Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta.

"This whole situation has left me really sad and empty," Djokovic said in a statement on Instagram. "I checked on the lines person and the tournament told me that thank God she is feeling ok."

"I'm extremely sorry to have caused her such



Novak Djokovic walks off the court after being disqualified in a fourth round match on Sunday. — *AFP*

This whole situation has left me really sad and empty. I checked on the lines person and the tournament told me that thank God she is feeling ok.

— **NOVAK DJOKOVIC**

stress. So unintended. So wrong."

Djokovic, who left Flushing Meadows without speaking to reporters following his exit, said he would try to learn from the incident. "As for the disqualification, I need to go back within and work on my disappointment and turn this all into a lesson for my growth and evolution as a player and human being," he said.

"I apologize to the @usopen tournament and everyone associated for my behavior. I'm very grateful to my team and family for being my rock support, and my fans for always being there with me." — *AFP*

Nick trolls Nole with Twitter poll

Sydney, Sept. 7: Nick Kyrgios opened a cheeky Twitter poll on Monday asking how many years he would be banned if he had hit an official with a ball, after 17-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic's default at the US Open.

The Australian has waged a running battle with the Serb in recent months over his ill-fated Adria Tour exhibition series, lashing out at the world number one's "stupidity" after several players contracted coronavirus.

And he was quick to have his say after Djokovic was sensationally disqualified from the US Open for hitting a woman line judge in the throat with a ball bashed away in disgust after losing his serve.

The combustible Kyrgios, who was hit with a suspended 16-week ban last year for a series of on-court outbursts, jumped onto social media to ask his followers what would happen if he had hit the line judge.

"Swap me for jokers incident," he said, using Djokovic's nickname.

"Accidentally hitting the ball kid in the throat.' How many years would I be banned for?" asked the Australian.

The options given were five, 10 or 20 years with the poll attracting more than 60,000 answers in its first hour, with the majority voting for 20 years.

The United States Tennis Association said Djokovic, who apologised, would lose all ranking points and

Swap me for jokers (Djokovic's nickname) incident. 'Accidentally hitting the ball kid in the throat'. How many years would I be banned for?

— **NICK KYRGIOS**
tennis player

prize money from the tournament.

While most took the Kyrgios's tweet as a light-hearted dig, not everyone was impressed.

"Slight difference: you did much worse," noted one user, while another wrote: "Same penalty as Djoko. Stop victimising yourself, get on with it."

The ATP opened a probe into Kyrgios last year following an explosive meltdown at the Cincinnati Masters where he smashed two racquets and launched into an abusive tirade at the chair umpire before appearing to spit at the official.

He was fined US\$113,000 for ball abuse, leaving the court without permission, an audible obscenity and unsportsmanlike conduct during his loss to Russia's Karen Khachanov.

While Kyrgios was penalised for the Cincinnati outbursts, he avoided further punishment for calling the ATP "pretty corrupt" during the 2019 US Open after he "clarified" his comment.

Kyrgios, ranked just 40 but a big drawcard, opted to remain in Canberra and not play this year's US Open due to the pandemic.

— *AFP*

Osaka powers into quarters

New York, Sept. 7: Two-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka booked a place in the quarter-finals of the US Open on Sunday with a straight-sets win over Estonia's Anett Kontaveit.

Osaka, the fourth seed, powered past her 14th seeded counterpart 6-3, 6-4.

The 2018 US Open champion said keeping her emotions in check was key to dominating the 1 hour 12 minutes match.

Osaka said she hadn't watched live the incident with Novak Djokovic earlier in the day when he was disqualified for accidentally hitting a lines judge with his ball after losing a game.

She was sleeping ahead of her night match, but after becoming aware of it she said it served as a reminder to remain in control while on the court.

"That's definitely like a warning to never do that," Osaka said.

ROGERS, BRADY SCORE UPSETS

Shelby Rogers fought off four match points to upset sixth seed Petra Kvitova and reach the quarter-finals for the first time on Sunday.

The 27-year-old Rogers, who two years ago wondered if she would ever

THE RESULTS

Men's singles fourth round: Pablo Carreno-Busta (ESP x20) bt Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) 6-5 default; Denis Shapovalov (CAN x12) bt David Goffin (BEL x7) 6-7 (0/7), 6-3, 6-4, 6-3; Borna Coric (CRO x27) bt Jordan Thompson (AUS) 7-5, 6-1, 6-3; Alexander Zverev (GER x5) bt Alejandro Davidovich (ESP) 6-2, 6-2, 6-1.

Women's singles fourth round: Jennifer Brady (USA x28) bt Angelique Kerber (GER x17) 6-1, 6-4; Yulia Putintseva (KAZ x23) bt Petra Martic (CRO x8) 6-3, 2-6, 6-4; Naomi Osaka (JPN x4) bt Anett Kontaveit (EST x14) 6-3, 6-4; Shelby Rogers (USA) bt Petra Kvitova (CZE x6) 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 7-6 (8/6).

play again as she struggled to recover from knee surgery, battled into the last eight with a 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 7-6 (8/6) defeat of Czech ace Kvitova in 2hr 40min.

Later, Jennifer Brady, the 28th seed, steamrollered Kerber 6-1, 6-4, to reach her first Grand Slam quarter-final.

Brady said she had transformed her game this year by improving her physical and mental strength.

She defeated Angelique Kerber earlier Sunday before ousting second seed Sofia Kenin.

— *AFP*

Stokes may miss 'Calm' Kohli eyes better season

New Delhi, Sept. 7: IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals are likely to miss their premier all-rounder Ben Stokes during the first part of the T20 event as the World Cup-winner is currently in New Zealand to be with his ailing father Ged.

Stokes, considered the world's best all-rounder right now, left for Christchurch in the middle of the Test series against Pakistan last month after his father, a former All Blacks International, was diagnosed with brain cancer.

"As per quarantine rules in New Zealand, Ben has just completed his 14-day isolation period after reaching New Zealand. Now he will be meeting his father and obviously he would like to spend some quiet time with his family

in this time of crisis," a source privy to developments in the franchise said on conditions of anonymity.

Stokes has been bought by Royals for ₹12.5 crore.

"It is only logical that if he has just completed his quarantine, he would not be available for the first part of the IPL and that is completely understandable. The franchise will not even call Ben as this is not priority at the moment. Let him spend quality family time and any discussions on his availability can happen only after that," the source added.

It is understood that the franchise will "wait" for Stokes to get back to the management and only if the cricketer confirms his availability for the second half, it will take things forward. — *PTI*

Dubai, Sept. 7: Virat Kohli has been able to "disconnect" from the underwhelming seasons that he and Royal Challengers Bangalore have endured in the IPL and there is a welcome "sense of calm" as he prepares to lead the side this year, something he last felt in 2016.

Despite the presence of champion players like Kohli and AB de Villiers, RCB, in the last three seasons, has failed to even qualify for the play-offs. The team last played the final in 2016, a season in which Kohli struck an unprecedented four hundreds.

"The 2016 IPL, we all loved to be a part of (it). Since then, this is the most balanced I have felt about (the) squad," the Indian skipper said on RCB's Youtube show 'Bold Diaries', sharing his thoughts on the upcoming edition start-

NEESHAM LOOKS TO MAKE IT COUNT IN IPL

New Delhi, Sept. 7: Back in IPL after six years, New Zealand all-rounder James Neesham says his much "steadier head" and international success should help him immensely in his stint with Kings XI Punjab this season. By his own admission, Neesham did not know much about his game when he made is IPL debut with the Delhi franchise six seasons ago.

"It is my first time getting involved in a long time. It is exciting to come as an older player and as an experienced player. Last time I played for Delhi, I was young and talented but didn't really know much about my game. I did not know what I needed to do to succeed. It was a challenge back then," Neesham said.

Neesham was bought by KKR for the 2015 edition but could not take part due to an injury.

"This time I have come with a steadier head and knowledge under the belt and hopefully I can pass that knowledge to some of the younger guys in the squad." — *PTI*

ing September 19 in Abu Dhabi. Kohli said that both he and AB de Villiers feel that this

could be the "break-through season" when tables will turn for the franchise which has flat-

tered to deceive on many occasions.

"I (have) never felt so calm going into a season before. He (ABD) is coming from a very different space and he is enjoying his life and is very relaxed and fit as ever. I feel I am in a much better space, much more balanced, when it comes to environment of (the) IPL," Kohli said.

This is the first time he feels that he isn't carrying any baggage.

"Disconnecting with things that have happened in the past and not taking that baggage, as we have done that way too many times," he responded to a query on what has changed for him this season.

"Just because we have a bunch of players that are so skilled, people like seeing them play is the reason people have had so much expectation as well." — *PTI*

BUTTLER MISSES FINAL T20 vs OZ

Southampton, Sept. 7: England's wicketkeeper batsman Jos Buttler will miss the final T20 match against Australia on Tuesday to be with his family, the country's cricket board announced on Monday.

Buttler, who hit a match-winning unbeaten 77 in the second T20, left England's bio-secure bubble on Sunday evening following the team's six-wicket victory over the arch-rivals. — *PTI*

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