

IN BRIEF

Sex racket busted in Tilak Nagar area

New Delhi: An alleged sex racket running under the cover of a spa centre was busted in west Delhi's Tilak Nagar area, the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) said on Tuesday. A senior police officer said, "We have registered a case at Hari Nagar police station and investigation is underway." The DCW said it received a complaint on its 181 helpline from an unidentified man who informed the commission that several spas were running even during the coronavirus pandemic. The complainant also informed that these centres were indulging in illegal prostitution activities. The DCW team visited the location along with the police and entered a spa. They found several customers at the centre. Used condoms were also recovered from the centre in large numbers, the commission said. The receptionist was asked to call the owner but as soon as he got to know about the inspection, he switched off his phone, it said.

23-year-old kills self after fight with sister

Noida: A 23-year-old woman died after she allegedly jumped off a 10th floor flat in Uttar Pradesh's Noida on Tuesday following a quarrel with her elder sister over cutting a birthday cake, police said. The woman lived with her parents in Jaypee Kosmos society in Sector 134 and was celebrating her birthday at her married sister's house in the same complex, an officer from the local Expressway Police Station said. "The woman and her parents had gathered in the flat of her sister where her in-laws and some other people had also come to celebrate the birthday. The family said there was a fight between the two sisters over the cutting of cake after which the woman jumped off the balcony and died," the officer said. The exact details of the fight were not available, with the official saying the police have been only told that the incident took place due to some argument over cake cutting.

Man held for duping garment traders

New Delhi: The Delhi police has arrested a man for allegedly duping garment traders of lakhs of rupees to tide up the losses his business suffered due to the coronavirus triggered lockdown. The accused has been identified as Sandip Arora, a resident of Geeta Colony. The police said that the accused, using the fake name of Rishi to hide his identity, duped garment traders in the national capital. The police said that accused Arora and his associate Vishal were in the garment business but during the lockdown they suffered huge losses and to tide up the financial losses, they started duping people to earn quick buck. "They duped over 15 garment traders by placing orders on credit and in turn delivering the products to multiple sellers at cheaper rates," said the police, adding that manhunt has been initiated to nab Vishal, who is absconding. According to DCP (Southeast district) R.P. Meena, "A case was registered and accused was arrested."

Guest worker kills self at Noida home

Noida: A 28-year-old migrant worker from Jharkhand was found dead at his residence in Uttar Pradesh's Noida on Tuesday in a suspected case of suicide, police said. The man was found hanging through a noose from the skylight (ventilator) of his rented accommodation in Sector 63's Chotpur village in the morning, they said. "His wife and mother spotted the body and the police were informed subsequently. They were at home when the incident happened," an official from the local Phase 3 police station said. The deceased hailed from Palamau district of Jharkhand and worked for a private firm in Sector 63 here, the official said. "No suicide note was found from the spot. The reason behind him taking the extreme step is yet to be ascertained. His wife and mother were waiting inconsolably when the police reached the house. Their statements would be taken once they are in a condition to speak to us," he said.

■ Accused fled to Amroha but was later held by police**Man kills 2 roommates after being pressured to pay rent**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1**

A 23-year-old man killed his two roommates in the national capital's Raghbir Nagar after allegedly being pressured by them to pay the rent of their accommodation for the period he was at his native place.

The police said that it has arrested accused Sakir, who fled to his village in Uttar Pradesh's Amroha after killing his roommates.

"The accused had been staying with Ajam (45) and Amir Hasan (46) in a rented flat at Raghbir Nagar for which they were paying ₹4,000 per month. Ajam and Amir were staying there since 1994," said DCP (West district) Deepak Purohit.

"Earlier this year, Sakir had gone to his village and stayed there for four months and returned to his accommodation in Delhi just 15 days ago.

► The accused had been staying with Ajam (45) and Amir Hasan (46) in a rented flat at Raghbir Nagar for which they were paying ₹4,000 per month. Ajam and Amir were staying there since 1994

► Earlier this year, Sakir had gone to his village to stay there for 4 months. But after his return, his roommates started pressuring him to pay the rent even for the four months that he stayed in his village

But after his return, his roommates started pressuring him to pay the rent even for the four months that he stayed in his village," said the DCP. "This led to an argument following which the roommates of the accused abused him. Sakir took offense and wanted to take revenge. On the intervening night of August 30-31, while his roommates were asleep, he killed them and fled," the DCP added.

"A police control room (PCR) call was received about the incident on Monday. Upon reaching

the spot, the police found both Ajam and Amir dead with multiple stab injuries. The spot was inspected by the crime team as well as a Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team from Rohini," said the DCP.

"A case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code was registered at the Khayala police station and investigation revealed that Sakir, who was the prime suspect, was absconding. All the three roommates were engaged in the sale of garlic in nearby areas," said the DCP.

"Various police teams were formed and dispatched at all the possible hideouts. A team was also dispatched to his village and finally he was nabbed there," said the deputy commissioner of police.

"During interrogation, Sakir told the police that he had gone to his village earlier this year and spent four months there. After his return, his roommates were pressuring him to pay the rent for the four months even though he was at his village.

"An argument broke out during which the accused was also abused by his roommates. This angered him and he decided to take revenge," said the DCP.

"Sakir had killed both his roommates with a knife and hid the weapon and left for his village. However, he has been arrested," the deputy commissioner of police added.



Devotees immerse an idol of Lord Ganesh in the Western Yamuna Canal during Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations in New Delhi on Tuesday.

—PTI

Kejri writes to PM Modi over GST dues to states

**SANJAY KAW
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1**

Days after the Union government placed two options before states to meet their goods and services tax (GST) revenue shortfall, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, on Tuesday, wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to consider a legally viable option to tide over the coronavirus induced economic crisis and that the GST council should consider authorising the Centre to borrow on its behalf and extend the period of collection of cess beyond 2022.

Mr Kejriwal said the "assurance of the GST compensation to states to meet the shortfall in GST collections is one of the pil-

lars on which the entire GST edifice rests."

The GST council had, on August 27, offered the states with two options to tide over their revenue shortfall as the GST cess collected from items such as cars and tobacco was not adequate to compensate them this financial year. The Centre specified that the states could either borrow from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) or from the market under different terms.

Terming the GST reform as the landmark reform in the indirect tax structure of India, Mr Kejriwal, in the letter, said: "All the states will overcome the unprecedented situation that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought before the



Arvind Kejriwal

country by working collectively."

He said, "It is in the background that I would like to submit that the two options of borrowing presented by the ministry of finance, which primarily require the states to borrow and then meet the repayment liabilities, will put an extremely onerous burden on the states which are, as it is, reeling under the financial crisis due to the

shortfall in the revenue collections and an increased commitment of expenditure emerging from Covid-19 response."

Mr Kejriwal also said that the options proposed by the Centre will lead to a cumbersome process of borrowing by the states, crediting the debt amount to the GST compensation fund.

"To create an artificial distinction between loss due to the implementation of GST and those owing to Covid-19 pandemic goes against the very spirit of the Compensation Act and will lead to a creation of a trust deficit between the Centre and the states, wherein in the future the states will be hesitant in coming together to achieve

more such larger common national goals as was done through the implementation of GST," he said.

The Centre and non-BJP ruled states are at loggerheads over the financing of the ₹2.35 lakh crore GST shortfall in the current fiscal year.

On Monday, five non-BJP ruled states rejected the proposal mooted by the Central government in last Thursday's GST council meeting that states could borrow to meet their current GST revenue shortfall.

The states agreed during a meeting of finance ministers of Punjab, Delhi, Kerala, Telangana, and West Bengal to reject both the borrowing options mooted by the Centre.

Help divyang students to appear for DU exams: HC tells railways

**AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1**

The Delhi High Court Tuesday directed the Ministry of Railways to ensure that all students with disabilities who need to travel to the national capital to appear in physical exams being held by Delhi University are provided confirmed tickets. The court said it needs to be ensured that the students belonging to the persons with disabilities (PWD) category do not miss the chance to appear in the second round of final year examinations, which will be held in physical mode from September 14.

A bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad said that in view of the limited number of trains running currently, effort shall be made to provide them confirmed tickets. It said students can book tickets in the waiting list and inform the Railways two days in advance. The court also asked DU to file an affidavit stating the number of students who have registered for the second phase of exams.

The court asked senior advocate S K Rungta, representing petitioner

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The university will also mention in the affidavit as to when the results of both the phases can be declared. It listed the matter for further hearing on September 22.

Advocate Jagjit Singh, representing the ministry, said the Railways already gives the concession to several categories of PWDs including those with visual and speech impairment. He said the procedure to avail the concession is set out.

The court asked senior advocate S K Rungta, representing petitioner

National Federation of Blind, to provide a list of PWD students who propose to travel to Delhi from far off places. The high court was hearing pleas by law student Prateek Sharma and NFB seeking to set up effective mechanisms PWD students so that educational instructions can be transmitted to them properly and teaching material is provided to them through online mode of teaching during the coronavirus pandemic.

The online OBE for final year undergraduate students commenced from August 10 and will end on August 31. The students who will be left out of online exams will be given an opportunity to appear in physical examinations, to be held from September 14.

Taking note that the physical exams are going to commence on September 14, the high court listed the matter for further hearing on September 22. The court was also informed that fresh as well as those students who want to improve their results can sit for the second phase of final year examinations.



The tricolour flies at half-mast at Parliament Building during the seven-day state mourning on demise of former President Pranab Mukherjee in New Delhi on Tuesday.

—PTI

City records highest daily spike in nearly 2 months**2,312 cases push Covid count over 1.77 lakh**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1**

The national capital on Tuesday recorded its highest single-day spike in coronavirus cases in nearly two months. According to Delhi government health department data, 2,312 new coronavirus cases and 18 deaths were reported in the last 24 hours, taking the total to over 1.77 lakh. The city has reported 4,462 deaths due to Covid. The recovery rate is 88.5 per cent.

Delhi health minister, Satyendar Jain, meanwhile, said that the latest next round of monthly sero-prevalence survey began on Tuesday covering all 272 municipal wards to analyse the Covid situation in Delhi at "micro-level".

"The sample size this time will be 17,000 and the exercise will be carried out for seven days," Mr Jain added.

The last sero-prevalence survey was held from August 1-7, which showed that 29.1 per cent of the

► **DELHI GOVERNMENT health department data, 2,312 new coronavirus cases and 18 deaths were reported in the last 24 hours, taking the total to over 1.77 lakh**

people surveyed had antibodies against the coronavirus infection. "The fresh round of sero-survey began today. This time we will be doing it ward-wise, so all 272 municipal wards of Delhi will be covered, plus two Assembly areas. Sampling will be done for a week. After that, results should come in 7-10 days," said Mr Jain.

Mr Jain pointed out that the previous surveys were done district-wise. But this time, it is being done ward-wise to analyse the COVID-19 situation in the city at a "micro-level".

While announcing the results of the August, Mr Jain had said that 15,000 representative samples were taken from 11 districts. He had also said the prevalence of antibodies

in males was 28.3 per cent and that in females was 32.2 per cent.

Sero-prevalence of antibodies against Covid found in the age group of less than 18 was 34.7 per cent, in 18-50 years 28.5 per cent, and 31.2 per cent in 50 years and above.

The exercise was undertaken in the first week of August for a comprehensive assessment of the Covid situation in Delhi and to formulate strategies based on its findings.

The sero-prevalence survey before the August exercise, done from June 27-July 10 by the Delhi government in association with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), had used 21,387 samples and found that around 23 per cent of the people surveyed had exposure to the novel coronavirus.

"The rise, rather than the exponential rise is not there. So, people are taking safety precautions it seems. But, we cannot afford to be complacent and lower our guard," Mr Jain had said.

Gautam Buddha Nagar records 102 Covid cases, total at 8,058

Noida, Sept. 1: Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar on Tuesday recorded 102 new Covid cases, pushing the infection tally to 8,058 in the district, official data showed. The number of active cases climbed to 1,067 from 1,055 on Monday and 1,009 on Sunday, according to the data released by the UP health department for a 24-hour period. Also, 96 more patients got discharged during the period, it showed.

The district dropped to 12th position in the state in terms of active cases, the data showed.

So far, 6,946 patients have recovered from Covid in Gautam Buddha Nagar, the third highest among districts in UP after Lucknow (20,348) and Kanpur Nagar (11,449), it showed.

The death toll in the district stood at 45 with a mortality rate of 0.55 per cent, slightly better from 0.56 per cent on Monday and 0.57 per cent on Sunday, according to official statistics.

The recovery rate of patients improved slightly to 86.20 per cent from 86.10 per cent on Monday. It was 86.54 per cent the previous day, as per the statistics. Meanwhile, Gautam Buddha Nagar (1,067) dropped to 12th position on the list of districts in the state in terms of active cases.

The maximum active cases are in Lucknow (7,334) followed by Kanpur Nagar (3,266), Allahabad (3,020), Gorakhpur (2,666), Varanasi (1,813), Saharanpur (1,589), Aligarh (1,558), Moradabad (1,468), Bareilly (1,429), Ghaziabad (1,421) and Meerut (1,186), according to the data.

There were 55,538 active cases across Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday. So far, 1,76,677 patients have recovered across the state, while the death toll linked to Covid climbed to 3,542, showed the data.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Floods in 3 Gujarat districts, 9K shifted

Ahmedabad: Over 9,000 people were shifted to safer places in Gujarat's Bharuch, Narmada and Vadodara districts with the Narmada river swelling due to heavy inflow from upstream dams, officials said on Tuesday. The intensity of showers decreased during the day, but in the last three days, rain-related accidents claimed 12 lives in the state, said commissioner of relief Harshad Patel. With continuous inflow of water from upstream dams, mainly the Indira Sagar in MP, the water level of the Sardar Sarovar Dam (SSD) on the Narmada has now reached 133 meters against its top level of 138.68 meters, he said. As per an official release, 10.70 lakh cusec water is being discharged into the river by opening 23 of SSD's 30 radial gates. As a result, the level of the Narmada has risen significantly and water has now started entering low-lying villages on its banks in Narmada, Vadodara and Bharuch districts, Mr Patel said. — PTI

Panel to meet today to discuss FB issue

New Delhi: Amid a political slugfest over the Facebook issue, a parliamentary panel will meet on Wednesday to discuss alleged misuse of the social media platform. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on information technology, headed by senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, has summoned representatives of Facebook and will hear their views "on the subject of safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news media platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space", according to the agenda of the meeting. It has also called representatives of the ministry of electronics and information technology on the same issue. The meeting of the panel was adjourned on Tuesday in view of the national mourning due to the demise of former President Pranab Mukherjee. — PTI

Telcos get relief, can pay ADR dues over 10 yrs

■ **Continued from Page 1** with it will be decided by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), a suggestion that was made to the court by senior counsel Harish Salve in the course of the hearing, which Justice Mishra said has been accepted.

The court directed the TSPs will make payments in annual instalments starting from April 1, 2021 till March 31, 2031, payable by March 31 of every succeeding financial year.

The court further directed that all TSPs and the DoT would report to the court on compliance of its order by April 7 of every year.

Any default in the payment of yearly instalments by the TSPs, the court said, would attract interest payable as per agreement along with penalty and interest on penalty automatically without reference to the court.

Any default in the payment of yearly instalments, the court said, would be punishable for contempt of court.

HC grants bail to Pinjra Tod's Kalita

■ **Continued from Page 1** CrPC, though the witnesses remained present at the spot throughout, the court observed.

"Chargesheet has already been filed against the petitioner on June 2. Moreover, I have gone through the inner case diary produced in a sealed cover along with pen drive and found that though her presence is seen in peaceful agitation, which is fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution of India... (the police, prosecution) had failed to produce any material to show Ms Kalita had instigated women of a particular community or gave hatred speech due to which the precious life of a young man was sacrificed and property damaged," Justice Kail said.

The court granted bail to Ms Kalita on furnishing a personal bond of ₹20,000 and a surety of the like amount.

Ms Kalita will not be released from jail as four cases are registered against her. While she has managed to secure bail in three, she is yet to get bail in a case under the stringent UAPA.

Pranab walked 2 km barefoot to school: Friend

Man yet to come to terms with death of father figure

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 1

Tarunkanti Kanchilal, a native of Odisha's Kendrapara, is yet to come to terms with the demise of former President Pranab Mukherjee. Holding in his hand an old photograph from his album, the 44-year-old man remembers the precious moments he spent with the great leader during his visit to Ramnagar in 1999 to see the plight of Super Cyclone-affected people.

he will come to Kolkata and give me three complete days to record his interview for the book, but that was not to be," Prof Mukhopadhyay said. The former head of the department of political

In 1999, Odisha experienced an unprecedented Super Cyclone that killed over 10,000 people and stripped the state of its greenery and wealth.

Pranab served as an MP then. Seated on Tarunkanti's motor-cycle, the former President visited Ramnagar, Kharinasi, Petachhela and other affected areas.

On the demise of the former President, Tarunkanti, who held immense affection and respect for him, said he lost a father-figure from his life.

science at Presidency College said that Mukherjee went to a free village school at Miriti for his primary education and then to Shibchandra Uchcha Vidyalaya (High School) at Kirnagar.

"At that time, those who pursued high school education in the area were sent to Labhpur town, but since Pranab's father Kamada Kinkar Mukhopadhyay was an idealist, he wanted him to pursue his schooling at the institution in nearby Kirnagar," Prof Mukhopadhyay said.

On July 1, 1952, two half-pant clad boys Mukherjee and Prof Mukhopadhyay started attending classes at Suri Vidyasagar College and the seeds of a life-long friendship were planted there.

After graduation, Mukherjee came to Kolkata and enrolled for comparative philology at Calcutta University, but he did not take a liking to the subject and switched to political science, Prof Mukhopadhyay said.

After doing his master degree in Political Science, Mukherjee also did his Masters in History, before getting an LLB degree. — PTI

Scores pay tribute at ancestral temple



Bipadbaran Banerjee, family priest of former President Pranab Mukherjee, pays tribute to him at his ancestral home Mirati in West Bengal's Birbhum district on Tuesday. An oil portrait of the former President graced the wooden chair on which he would sit and chant shlokas at the ancestral temple during Durga Puja.

Scores of people lined up to offer tribute and light candles in memory of their beloved "Poltu da". Grief-stricken neighbours and family members, who had been holding yagnas for Mukherjee's recovery over the past three weeks, milled around his residence 'Kamada Kinkar Bhavan' at Miriti village. — PTI

VBA chief, 1K others booked for violation of Covid rules

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 1

The Pandharpur police on Tuesday booked more than 1,000 people, including VBA chief Prakash Ambedkar, for defying social distancing norms while protesting for reopening of the famous temple of Lord Vitthal at Pandharpur town in Maharashtra's Solapur district on Monday.

"A case has been registered against over 1,000 people, including Mr Ambedkar, for unlawful assembly and violating the Covid-19 restrictions that inflicted to stop the spread of the virus," said Manoj Patil, superintendent of police, Solapur district.

The protesters have been booked under relevant sections.

During their agitation near the temple, shut due to Covid-19 restrictions, Mr Ambedkar said they were waiting for a response from the district collector over the demand and added, "I am here to break rules." The police had barricaded roads leading to the temple to stop the protesters.

The VBA is supporting the demand of the Vishwa Warkari Sena, an outfit of devotees of Lord Vitthal, which had given a memorandum to the Solapur district administration seeking that all temples should be reopened in Maharashtra.



Devotees ignore social distancing norms while carrying a Lord Ganesha idol of Khairatabad pandal for immersion towards Tank bund in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

— PTI

China refutes claim, says India 'violated protocols'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1

Contradicting India's stand that the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) had carried out provocative military movements in an attempt to change the status quo at the southern bank of Pangong Tso Lake in the Ladakh sector both on Saturday night and on Monday, China on Tuesday lodged a protest and accused India of "grossly violating China's territorial sovereignty, seriously violating relevant agreements, protocols ... and severely damaging peace and tranquillity" in the border areas on Monday, adding that it has "made

solemn representations to the Indian side, urged the Indian side to strictly control and restrain its frontline troops, earnestly honour its commitments". This came on a day when New Delhi said that even on Monday (August 31), "even as the ground commanders of the two sides were in discussions to de-escalate the situation, the Chinese troops again engaged in provocative action" (for the second time since Saturday late night).

In a statement, the Chinese embassy in New Delhi said, "On August 31st, Indian troops violated the consensus reached in previous multi-level engagements and

negotiations between China and India, illegally trespassed the LAC again at the southern bank of the Pangong Tso Lake and near the Requin Pass in the western sector of China-India border, and conducted flagrant provocations, which again stirred tension in the border areas."

Claiming that "what India has done runs counter to the efforts made by both sides for a period of time to ease and cool down the situation on the ground", the Chinese embassy statement also accused Indian troops of "violating the consensus reached in previous multi-level engagements and negotiations between China and India".

India-Russia drills in Bay of Bengal on Sept. 4-5

New Delhi, Sept. 1: The Indian and Russian navies will hold a mega military exercise in the Bay of Bengal on September 4 and 5 to further bolster their operational interoperability in dealing with emerging security challenges, official sources said on Tuesday.

As part of the Indra Navy exercise, a plethora of maritime drills such as gun firing on surface and aerial targets, tracking exercises and replenishment at sea approaches are planned, they said.

The exercise is taking place at a time when India is engaged in a bitter border row with China in eastern Ladakh. The Indian Navy has significantly expanded its presence in the Indian Ocean Region, deploying a plethora of warships and submarines following the border row to send across a message to Beijing as the maritime space around the Malacca Strait is very critical for China's supply chain through sea routes.

In July, the Indian Navy carried out a military exercise with a US Navy carrier strike group led by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz* off the coast of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

— PTI

K'taka & Goa open bars, eateries

Bengaluru/Panaji, Sept. 1: The Karnataka and Goa governments allowed bars and restaurants to open for customers on Tuesday.

The Karnataka government has allowed bars, pubs, clubs and restaurants in the state to serve liquor from Tuesday with 50 per cent of their seating capacity.

There were restrictions on serving liquor since March, when the lockdown was enforced first, and until now only take-

aways were allowed at these establishments.

They have been instructed to strictly follow the MHA guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Covid-19.

The order by the excise commissioner said such relaxations were already in place in states like Assam, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

It also cites government's revenue as one among the reasons for the decision.

The Karnataka government had in May allowed sale of liquor through MRP outlets.

This was followed by permission for bars, microbreweries, pubs and others to clear out their stocks, but in-house service was not allowed.

The Goa excise department issued an order on Monday permitting opening of bars and restaurants, with certain conditions, from September 1.

Selling retail outlets continued to remain

closed during the last three unlock phases.

However, the Union ministry of home affairs has allowed these outlets to reopen for business as part of the guidelines for Unlock 4.

As per the MHA guidelines, sale of liquor for consumption on the premises of bars and restaurants and taverns has been removed from the list of restricted activities by the government, the excise commissioner said. — PTI

Sushant death: CBI questions Rhea's parents

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 1

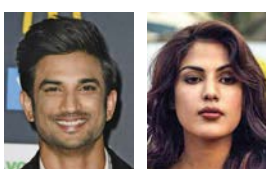
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday began questioning of Rhea Chakraborty's parents in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide probe. The grilling took place in the absence of Rhea who has undergone exhaustive interrogation of at least 35 hours in the past four days.

Rhea and her parents are all named as accused in the case filed by the Bihar police, being probed by the CBI. Meanwhile, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Tuesday detained a supplier and seized drugs sourced from the USA and Canada.

The first round of CBI questioning of Indrajit and Sandhya Chakraborty along with their son Shovik began with the kind of relationship their daughter shared with Rajput. The officials sought details on

the monetary transaction and financial relationship between Chakrabortys and the late actor. The questioning continued till late evening at the DRDO guest house, Santacruz.

"CBI will question the parents again if needed and other accused named in the case as the investigation progresses. The facts recorded till now in the interrogation of those questioned will be verified with the versions given by all," said an officer privy to the investigation.



The ED meanwhile continued questioning Arya for the second day in a row on Tuesday. The agency is probing the possible role of Arya in laundering money to the tune of ₹15 crore, belonging to

Rajput. The officials said that Arya's name came up in the investigation after some text messages on narcotics substances, exchanged between him and Rhea, surfaced online. The NCB is probing the drugs angle and is likely to question Arya soon.

The NCB officials conducted multiple raids in Mumbai and Delhi and seized 3.5 kg curated marijuana having ₹5,000 per gram street value in Mumbai.

The above tenders can be uploaded by date 15.09.2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 16.09.2020 at 11.00 AM.

The above tenders can be uploaded by date 08.09.2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 09.09.2020 at 11.00 AM.

NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	
noida Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P.) Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & http://tender.up.nic.in . Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.	
(A)	1. 36/SM-Jal-III/ET/20-21, Strengthening of W/s (P/L Distribution Water line from T.Well NO.-3/77 to Rising Main) Noida. Cost: Rs. 4.72 Lacs 2. 37/SM-Jal-III/ET/20-21, Strengthening of W/s (C/o Boring in Mahamaya Inter College Sector-44) Noida. Cost: Rs. 4.76 Lacs 3. 38/SM-Jal-III/ET/20-21, Strengthening of W/s (C/o Boring in new Child Hospital Sector-39) Noida. Cost: Rs. 4.78 Lacs
The above tenders can be uploaded by date 15.09.2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 16.09.2020 at 11.00 AM.	
(B)	1. 04/SM-Jal-III/ET/20-21, M/o W/s (Annual R/o PVC Water lines in Sector-82) Noida. (AMC For Two Year) Cost: Rs. 18.35 Lacs 2. 18/SM-Jal-III/ET/20-21, M/o W/s (Annual Repairing of V.T. Motor at UGR Sector-93B) Noida. (AMC For Two Years) Cost: Rs. 16.79 Lacs 3. 23/SM-Jal-III/ET/20-21, Water Chlorination (Repairing, Operation & Maintenance of Chloromak-500 Chlorination Plant at UGR Nangla Charandas) Noida. (For Three Years) Cost: Rs. 15.31 Lacs 4. 25/SM-Jal-III/ET/20-21, Water Chlorination (Repairing, Operation & Maintenance of Chloromak-500 Chlorination Plant at UGR sector-47) Noida. (For Three Years) Cost: Rs. 15.31 Lacs
The above tenders can be uploaded by date 08.09.2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 09.09.2020 at 11.00 AM.	
Office Sector-39	(M.K. JAIN) SENIOR MANAGER (JAL)-III NOIDA CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

SHORT TAKES

Reconsider proposal on GST: Rao to PM

Hyderabad: Telangana chief minister K. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to drop the proposal asking the states to go for borrowing to meet the shortfall in the GST compensation and said the Centre can itself take up the entire financing. In a letter to Mr Modi, he also claimed the Centre has taken a unilateral decision to lower the threshold limit of 14 per cent for working out GST compensation to 10 per cent. He underlined the need for strengthening cooperative federalism in this crisis situation posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Centre was abdicating its responsibility of fully compensating states by taking recourse to legal opinion, and violated the provisions of the GST Compensation Act by parking the surpluses in the Compensation Fund in its Consolidated Fund instead of parking them in the non-lapsable Compensation Fund in the Public Account, he said.

— PTI

Rajasthan: 7 killed in 3 road mishaps

Jaipur: Seven people died and three more were injured in three separate road accidents in Rajasthan's Pali and Jodhpur districts, police said on Tuesday. A truck overturned in Pali district's Jaitaran police station area on Tuesday, leaving two people dead, they said. They were identified as Tejaram Gurjar (20) and Sohan Lal (18), the police added. Two people were killed and two more injured on Monday night after being hit by a truck in Pali's Transport Nagar area, they said, adding that the injured were undergoing treatment. In Jodhpur, a car rammed into a truck near the Asop area on Monday night, killing three people and injuring one. The deceased were identified as Rafiq Mohammad, Alladeen and Aziz, the police said. The victims were on their way to Bhopalgarh from Nagaur, they added. — PTI

1 killed, 3 injured in Amethi accident

Amethi: A 28-year-old man was killed and three others were badly injured in a head-on collision between two motorcycles in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi district on Tuesday, police said. The incident took place near Janta Nagar market under Piparpur police station. Vipin Kumar, a resident of Sultanpur district, was killed and three others were seriously injured when their motorcycles collided with each other, station house officer Santosh Singh said. The injured were rushed to a hospital. An investigation is underway in the incident, Mr Singh said. — PTI

Shops in UP to be closed on Sundays

Lucknow: Shops in Uttar Pradesh will remain closed only on Sundays, instead of the two-day weekend lockdown, the state government said on Tuesday. The government had in July announced that shops and offices would remain closed on Saturdays and Sundays to stop the spread of the coronavirus infection. Additional chief secretary (Home) Awasthi on Tuesday said: "The chief minister has instructed that there will be no weekly closure on Saturdays, and shops can remain open from 9 am to 9 pm. "However, shops will remain closed on Sundays from midnight of Saturday to midnight of Sunday," he said. — PTI

Two men die in a bid to click selfie

Barwani, MP: Two men died after falling into a 1,000-feet gorge while allegedly trying to take a selfie on their mobile phone in Barwani district of Madhya Pradesh, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place on Monday evening when the victims identified as Dinesh (25) and Bunti (22), residents of Dahi in Dhar district, had gone to Ramgarh Fort, located around 50 km from the district headquarters, said Pati police station in-charge Santosh Sanvie. According to eyewitnesses, there was dense fog due to rains in the area and the duo did not see the gorge while trying to take a selfie and fell, he said. — PTI



A low lying area submerged in floodwaters following heavy rainfall as the water level of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers rises in Prayagraj on Tuesday.

Rajnath reviews LAC situation ahead of SCO meet in Russia

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1

A high-level meeting was held on Tuesday under defence minister Rajnath Singh which was attended by foreign affairs minister S. Jaishankar, national security advisor Ajit Doval, chief of defence staff Gen. Bipin Rawat, the three service chiefs and the director general of military operations. It reviewed the situation at the LAC and the options before India.

Mr Singh will leave for Russia on Wednesday to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) defence ministers' meet on September 3. Chinese defence minister Wei Fenghe will also take part in the SCO meet. Indian and Russian navies will be conducting exercise this week in Indian Ocean region.

The military standoff between India and China in Ladakh will complete four months this week. The two armies are involved in standoff in Pangong Tso, Hot Springs area and Deshpang-DBO sector in Ladakh.

Since May, the Chinese Army's strategy has been to grab unoccupied land at the LAC in Ladakh sector. On the southern banks of Pangong Tso, as soon as they saw a large number of Chinese troops moving in, Indian troops on Saturday night moved fast to occupy many peaks in a "pre-emptive move".

JEE held across country amid strict precautions

New Delhi, Sept. 1: The Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Mains for admission to engineering colleges began on Tuesday amid stringent precautions and social distancing measures in view of the Covid-19 pandemic even as the chorus continued to grow for postponement of the crucial exam which has already been deferred twice.

Scenes outside exam centres across the country reflected the "new normal" amid the pandemic: staggered entry and exit for candidates, sanitisers at the gates, distribution of masks, and students queuing up with safe social distance among

them. JEE-Mains, the first large scale exam to be conducted amid the pandemic, is scheduled from September 1 to 6. Over 9 lakh candidates have registered for the exam for admission to engineering courses in IITs, NITs and Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (CFTIs).

While the governments of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have assured students that they will provide transportation to candidates, a group of IIT alumni and students have also launched a portal to provide transport facilities to exam centres the candidates in need.

SC orders preservation of Jyotirlinga in Ujjain temple

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, SEPT. 1

The Supreme court on Tuesday ordered the authorities of famed Mahakaleswar temple in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh to take measures to preserve the Jyotirlingam, the symbol of the presiding deity of the 18th century shrine, from erosion and decay.

Taking suo moto cognizance of the matter, the bench of Justice Arun Mishra listed out measures to be undertaken by the temple for preservation of

the Jyotirlingam. "The supreme court ordered to take measures to protect the Jyotirlingam. The court has made 4-5 recommendations for the purpose. We are waiting for the hard copy of the judgment", Ujjain district collector Ashish Singh who is chairman of the management committee of the shrine said.

Use of pure milk while performing the ritualistic offerings to the Jyotirlingam was one of the key points made in the order by the apex court for its preservation, an official of temple administration

MAHAKAL TEMPLE

told this newspaper. Besides, the court ordered to shun the practice of treating 'pancham-ruta', made of milk, ghee, liquid jiggery and honey, with the Jyotirlingam. The court observed that

only pure milk should be allowed to pour over the Jyotirlingam as offerings.

"We are waiting for the order of the apex court. We have already initiated measures for protection and preservation of the Jyotirlingam as per the recommendations by an expert committee comprising officials of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Geological Survey of India (GSI) for the preservation of the lingam", administrator of the Mahakaleswar temple S.S. Rawat told this newspaper. According to him, the

■ Ammunition also seized by BSF, local police**Army recovers huge cache of arms in J&K**

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 1

The Army on Tuesday claimed that its troops defending the Line of Control (LoC) hit upon "a huge cache of arms and ammunition" left behind by a group of infiltrators in secret locations in Rampur sector of Uri belt in Jammu and Kashmir's north-western Baramulla district. It said that after being challenged by alert troops, the infiltrators moved back into Pakistan-occupied-Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

Separately, the Border Security Force (BSF) and J&K police said that they during a joint operation carried out in Shiendara Top and Khanater Top villages in the hills of Poonch district of Jammu region recovered two pistols with four magazines and 150 rounds of live ammunition, five AK-47 magazines and 250 bullets, two wireless sets, four grenades and a binocular from a militant hideout.

Defence spokesman



Senior Army and police officers display arms and ammunitions recovered from multiple hideouts along the Line of Control in Rampur Sector of Jammu & Kashmir on Tuesday.

— PTI

Colonel Rajesh Kalia said here that the Army troops detected movement of suspicious persons in a forward area in Rampur sector on August 30. "The movement was from a village close to the LoC and the suspects crossed into Indian Territory. Due to terrain of thick foliage and weather conditions an alert of likely infiltration attempt was sounded," he said.

The spokesman further said that at first light on

Monday, the troops carried a search of the area which continued for seven hours and that it was when two "concealed locations" in two "hideouts" were discovered. "From these hideouts five AK series rifles along with six magazines and two sealed boxes of 1,254 rounds of AK ammunition, six pistols with nine magazines and six rounds, 21 grenades, 2 UBGL grenades and 2 Kenwood radio sets were recovered," he said.

L-G Sinha visits Hazratbal shrine

Srinagar, Sept. 1: Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday visited revered shrine Hazratbal here and offered prayers for peace, progress and prosperity of the people besides asking religious leaders to play an effective role in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Sinha, who took over the administration of the newly created UT last month, has been making

rounds of the city, which include some surprise checks at hospitals and other areas of public services. An official spokesperson of the J&K administration said the L-G arrived at the historic shrine, located on north of Dal lake where the holy relic of Prophet Muhammad has been kept, and spoke to officers and religious leaders there.

Among others he was accompanied by divisional commissioner, Kashmir,

Pandurang K Pole and deputy commissioner, Srinagar, Shahid Iqbal Chaudhury, who showed him around the shrine and the facilities being put in place for the devotees.

"The L-G paid obeisance at the magnificent shrine and prayed for peace, progress, and prosperity in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and well-being of its people," the spokesperson said.

— PTI

■ 784 elephant deaths in Odisha in last 10 years, 114 killed by poachers**19 kg ivory seized in Keonjhar dist, 3 held**

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 1

The allegation by animal lovers that Odisha is a happy hunting ground for elephant poachers has once again received credence as the state forest department officials on Monday night seized around 19 kg of elephant tusks from a car near Bayapita village under Harichandrapur police limits in Keonjhar district.

Three persons, all ivory traders, were arrested in this connection. According to reports, the officials, acting on a tip-off

about the smuggling of the tusks in the car, chased the vehicle and intercepted it near Bayapita village.

On searching the car, the tusks were recovered from the vehicle. The accused were being questioned to ascertain the possible involvement of others in the offence.

According to Dr Biswajit Mohanty, an eminent wildlife activist, poachers are indulging in mindless killing of tuskers in the state to extract their teeth.

The state government, on the other hand, has not been able to contain such ghastly act because of inadequate focus on the



Tusks seized by Odisha forest officials.

grave issue.

"Despite Odisha being criticised outside for the rising number of elephant deaths, mostly tuskers, the state forest department

has not been able to crack down the poachers and traders. Unless the state government wakes up to nail the poachers, the elephant population here will

cease to exist," said Dr Mohanty.

Although the state government is arresting poachers from time to time, the killers are being acquitted due to the weak investigation process by the forest officials.

Dr Mohanty, who is secretary of Wildlife Society of Odisha, urged the state government to hand over the arrested poachers to the Special Task Force for an effective probe.

Of the 784 elephant deaths in Odisha in the last 10 years and four months, 114 were killed by poachers, primarily for Ivory.

Covid shadow lurks at exam centres

Students undergo thermal scanning outside an examination centre as they arrive to appear in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) amid Covid-19 pandemic in Jabalpur on Tuesday.

— PTI

Konark temple opens to visitors after 5 months

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 1

The 13th century Sun Temple at Konark in Odisha's Puri district reopened on Tuesday after remaining out of bounds for visitors for more than five months in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

The monument has been thrown open for public as per the Unlock 4 guidelines of the central government as well as state government after a discussion of the Archaeological Survey of



Sun Temple at Konark

India (ASI) authorities with the district administration. "We had already received the instructions for reopening of the temple from the Centre. However, we were waiting the guidelines of the state government," ASI superintendent Arun Mallick told reporters here.

THE ASIAN AGE

2 SEPTEMBER 2020

Only long-term measures can resuscitate economy

Little over four years ago, then International Monetary Fund managing director Christine Lagarde billed India as a bright spot in the gloomy global economy. Notwithstanding the fact that the Indian economy shone majorly because of cheaper crude oil, all of us felt euphoric. Hearts swelled with pride and a sense of reinvention. Within the next year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched his googlies, demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax. Instead of launching the economy into a geostationary orbit of the global economy, the government's twin mistakes sent it into a free fall. The Covid-19 pandemic has finally taken the Indian economy to a journey of the netherworld. The government finally admitted that the economy had shrunk 23.4 per cent in the quarter ended on June 30 — the worst performing economy among the top 50 countries.

Does it mean an end to the economic growth story of India? Definitely not! The people of this country are smart enough to set right things. However, the journey of the Indian economy over the last four years — from being the bright spot in the global economy to the worst performer among 50 countries — gives a vivid commentary on the economic policy of the central government. The economic crisis during the UPA-2 government was attributed to policy paralysis. And if one were to pick one phrase to describe the economic failure under the current regime, it would be “impulsive policy”. Be it demonetisation or the rollout of the GST or lockdown, the government went after headline-grabbing policies without adequate preparedness to handle the consequences of those decisions. The result is a big mess-up.

The lockdown was not per se a wrong decision. Several countries have effectively implemented the lockdown to control the coronavirus pandemic. But implementing blindly what other foreign countries did without taking into consideration the uniqueness of India was wrong. Perhaps, top officials might not know that the majority of Indian families have hand-to-mouth existence. One wonders how the ministers, who grew up in middle-class backgrounds, could have forgotten this stark reality of India. How did the ministers expect that crores of such people remain locked in without money and food? Had the government transferred some cash to all families, the lockdown could have been successful. But the Narendra Modi government dithered in taking this step. With state elections on the horizon, the government did not stop guest workers from returning home. This fatal error helped the coronavirus spread to smaller towns and rural India, making containment of the pandemic much more difficult and potentially pushing lakhs of people into poverty.

With large swathes of the economy, involving businesses such as hospitality, events, weddings, tourism, entertainment, travel in a virtual coma, the Gross Domestic Production (GDP) or the size of the economy cannot be expected to reach pre-Covid levels immediately. There is nothing that the government can do in the short term to resuscitate the economy. Two things that the government could do are: Not deploying smokescreens to make everything look hunky-dory, and adopting a transparent and consultative approach in framing the economic policy.

Bhushan's choice

It is no precedent in terms of redefining the law, nor is it an example of judicial statesmanship — an exercise that the respondent in the Supreme Court's 2020 suo motu contempt of court petition had prayed for before the court. But the much-publicised sentence of a ₹1 fine in menacing conjunction with the nasty threat — of a three-month jail sentence and disbarment — that failed to conceal or disguise the intent of intimidation nor the old-style, passive-aggressive conservatism of its writers — coming as it did in 82 thick leaves pursuant to a 108-page judgment — during a lockdown when thousands of urgent petitions desperately awaited their audience — nonetheless spells hope. It holds the promise that the citizen's right to free speech may yet emerge morally victorious. Should their view carry genuine weight, its opponents will blink, and expose themselves.

This is despite the fact that Mr Bhushan is a privileged man. None other than the attorney general of India spoke for him. His name carries influence in the bar association circles. As it transpired, the conclusion to the case was plain for what it was — a crafty manoeuvre by the bench — of Justices Arun Mishra, B.R. Gavai, and Krishna Murari — to beat a hasty retreat after biting of more than it could chew. Perhaps Justice Mishra and his brother judges had made an error of judgement in taking suo motu cognisance of contempt in response to advocate Mahek Maheshwari's petition in the first place. It is widely believed that Mr Bhushan, in fact, did a service to the judiciary by calling attention to his misgivings. This newspaper opined that the bench was in contempt of justice by pronouncing him guilty. And the bench went on to prove it right!

In sentencing Mr Bhushan to the token fine, the bench had aimed for the high moral ground. It ended up making a mockery of itself. There was much mirth over photos of Mr Bhushan's advocate, Rajeev Dhawan, comically presenting him a one-rupee coin, post the announcement. Kudos to Mr Bhushan for displaying grace under pressure, not giving in to the impulse for drama — of being seen braving imprisonment and discredit — but paying the fine cheerfully as he had promised to. He reserved the right to file a review petition. His next move remains unpredictable.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Printer & Publisher: K. SUDHAKAR

THE ASIAN AGE offices are located at:

New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Mumbai: Sigma House, #43, Ground Floor, R. A. Kidwai Marg, Near Wadala Rly Station, Wadala (West), Mumbai - 400 031. Phone (022) 24195301 Fax (022) 24195347

Kolkata: 4th Floor, Chowdhury Building, 8/1A Little Russell Street, Kolkata 700 071. Phone: (033) 2289 0676/77 Fax (033) 2289 0686

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office in the United Kingdom

Air surcharge for Kathmandu and J&K ₹1

Published and Printed on behalf of and for

Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre,

219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.

► Mumbai: Dangat Media Pvt Ltd, Plot No 22, Digha MIDC, TTC Industrial Estate Area, Vishnu Nagar, Digha, Navi Mumbai-400708.

► Kolkata: Sarvagang Employees Cooperative Industrial Society Ltd, 13/A, Prafulla Sarkar Street, Kolkata 700 072.

► London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.

RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Postal registration numbers: DL(S)-05/4189/15-17

Subhani



Delimitation next stop in govt's Kashmir project



Riyaz Wani

Ever since Narendra Modi government stripped J&K of its semi-autonomous status in August last, the decision has invariably been explained as the outcome of the BJP's push to fulfil its longstanding ideological agenda and electoral promise. It was certainly about that but only in a rhetorical sense. In its implementation on the ground since then, the decision has come across as an elaborate and minutely-thought-through plan of action that seeks to fundamentally alter the facts on the ground to end the lingering conflict on this side of the Line of Control. And in that sense the withdrawal of the former state's special status and the actions undertaken over the past year form an ambitiously envisioned alternative settlement formula for Kashmir.

This formula is not about resolving the Kashmir issue as we know it: a dispute between India and Pakistan going back to Partition and the one arising from a decades-long separatist struggle in the region. There is no plan underway to talk to Pakistan or to the dissenting political and militant groups in J&K to arrive at a solution. On the contrary, the effort is to enforce a unilateral solution — a merger of J&K into India — without taking Kashmiris or Pakistanis on board.

And this solution, if we go by the constitutional and legal changes ushered in over the last year, operates along two axes: one, a demographic shift being brought about by throwing J&K open to settlement by outsiders and another by altering the nature of the political representation through the delimitation of the constituencies that has already been initiated.

According to new domicile law, issued on April 1, anyone who has

been a resident of Kashmir for 15 years will get the residency rights. The law applies retrospectively. For central government officials, the period is 10 years and for students it is only seven years. According to 2011 census there are 28 lakh migrant labourers in J&K other than lakhs of security personnel and thousands of central government employees, a significant number of whom have become eligible for residency rights should they wish to settle down in the former state.

As for the delimitation, the BJP has made no secret of its desire to enhance the number of Assembly seats to Jammu region. Before J&K's bifurcation into two Union territories — J&K and Ladakh — its Assembly had 87 seats of which predominantly Muslim majority Kashmir Valley had 47 seats, Hindu majority Jammu 37 and the now separated Ladakh with a slim Muslim majority four seats. Now according to the delimitation, that in normal course was due to be held in 2026, seven new seats are being added to the Assembly, most of which, if not all, are expected to go to Jammu.

This has the potential to shift the region's political centre away from Kashmir Valley to Jammu, turning in the words of J&K's former finance minister Haseeb Drabu “a demographic majority into a political minority”. Of the 13.6 million living in J&K, according to Census 2011, 68.3 per cent are

Delimitation has the potential to shift the region's political centre away from Kashmir Valley to Jammu, turning in the words of Haseeb Drabu ‘a demographic majority into a political minority’

Other than the main aim of eradication of separatist struggle, the withdrawal of J&K autonomy and legislative changes introduced since have a larger objective: to reclaim Kashmir from Islam

Muslim and Hindus are 30 per cent. While Kashmir is 97 per cent Muslim, Jammu is 65 per cent Hindu and 31 per cent Muslim.

The simultaneously applied twin policies of the progressive dilution of the existing demographic composition and the shift in political representation away from Kashmir Valley to Jammu is geared to contain and eventually stamp out the separatism in Kashmir. First, a demographically altered J&K evenly split between Muslims and Hindus and slowly on way to becoming a Hindu majority is deemed to commensurately reduce the footprint of separatist resistance, marginalising it to a point of little more than a pinprick. Second, a J&K government where Hindu majority Jammu is an equal stakeholder and later probably a majority partner will be decisively aligned against separatism, unlike the existing Kashmir-dominated political structure that is largely perceived to be playing to separatist sentiment in the Valley and parts of Muslim dominated areas of Jammu.

Other than the main aim of eradication of separatist struggle, the withdrawal of J&K autonomy and the legislative changes introduced since then are understood to have a larger civilisational objective: to reclaim, what some observers in the Valley contend, Kashmir from Islam. In RSS imaginary, the seven centuries of Muslim history are an aberration and it is time the region returned to its civilisational motherhood.

These are ambitious aims and the BJP knows it. That is why it revoked the Article 370 within the first three months of its second

term so that it gets the sufficient time to implement the plan. Over the past year, Modi government has been in a tearing hurry to bring one after another legislative and administrative measure to cast Kashmir in a premeditated image, the PM Modi has called Naya Kashmir. In its way, however, will be the anticipated lingering resistance in the Valley, Pakistan's recurrent roadblocks and many a geopolitical complication. But after going the whole hog with erasing the former state's autonomy and bifurcating it into federally administered areas — J&K and Ladakh — there will possibly be no looking back for New Delhi under Modi. Its goal will be to lead its Kashmir project to its logical conclusion in the remaining period of its term. So, contrary to expectations among some sections of people in Kashmir, the statehood for J&K may not be restored anytime soon. The reason is this gives central government a direct control over the region and, in turn, freedom to make any administrative or legislative changes to accomplish its goal within the time-frame of its ongoing tenure.

Tailpiece: On July 20 last year, just a fortnight before the withdrawal of Article 370 that granted J&K its semi-autonomous within India, defence minister Rajnath Singh on his visit to Kargil War Memorial in Drass sector declared that the resolution of Kashmir issue was on the cards and that “no power on the earth can stop it”. At the time Mr Singh shared no details about this solution. But the situation since has made it amply clear what he meant. The BJP is out to execute its own extreme version of Kashmir solution in the teeth of Pakistan and resistance in Kashmir. And if its actions over the past year are anything to go by, it seems to have already covered a lot of ground.

The writer is a free-lance journalist based out of Kashmir. He has received the Ramnath Goenka and Mumbai Press Club awards for his reportage.

LETTERS

BRAVO INDIAN ARMY

The Indian Army deserves commendation for thwarting the PLA's bid to change the LAC status quo at the south bank of the Pangong Tso lake on the disputed boundary in Ladakh. We believe that the PLA troops violated earlier consensus arrived at during military and diplomatic engagements. The Chinese resorted to a blame game and accused the Indian Army of transgressing the LAC and causing tension on the border. With both sides refusing to cede an inch, resolving the dispute will be no walk in the park.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

THANK YOU, HC

DR KAFEEL KHAN, who paid for oxygen cylinders himself and saved many children in Gorakhpur hospital tragedy in 2017, was booked under the stringent National Security Act for alleged hate speech at the AMU over anti-CAA protests. The Allahabad high court on Tuesday revoked NSA charges and directed the state government to release him. This exposes the UP government's vindictive attitude towards a particular community.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

NEW ACRONYM

AS PER THE DATA released by the National Statistical Office, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the April-June quarter (Q1) slipped by a sharp 23.9 per cent. The June quarter GDP data is the worst contraction in the history of the Indian economy since Independence. I think there should be a new term pertaining to GDP in India. It is the Gross Domestic Fall. Our government is fond of abbreviations and acronyms. This could be one more to its credit. Let's define GDF.

M.N. Alam
Saharanpur

DON'T UNLOCK

INDIA IS the largest population cluster after China and a sitting duck for the coronavirus. With a time lag of two months on first incidence, the case count is peaking now. With poor history of expenditure outlay in health infra, we clearly could not leverage this vital lag for readying matching medical services. Today we would be ill advised to mimic the Unlock schedule of other nations.

R. Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: letters.asianage@gmail.com.

Dilip Cherian



Dilli Ka Babu

Kumar, the new EC, is likely to run 2024 polls

Former finance secretary Rajiv Kumar has been named the new election commissioner. He replaces Ashok Lavasa, who is leaving to join the Asian Development Bank as vice-president. While Sunil Arora is the chief election commissioner, the other election commissioner is Sushil Chandra.

The importance of this announcement lies in the fact that Rajiv Kumar will likely be CEC during the next general elections in 2024! The current CEC Sunil Arora's tenure will end in April next year, following which Sushil Chandra will replace him as the next CEC. Chandra's term will end in May 2022, paving the way for Rajiv Kumar.

Rajiv Kumar has more than 30 years experience in public policy

and administration in several sectors. He was appointed finance secretary in July last year and his stint ended earlier this year in February. He is known to have worked on many key aspects of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan of financial inclusion through such flagship policies as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and Mudra loan scheme, among others.

LATERAL ENTRY IN CAT SOUP It's hard to keep a whistleblower and internationally lauded babu down. The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) has issued notices to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the Uttarakhand government alleging that the scheme for lateral entry into bureaucracy is flawed and biased.

The notices follow an application by Indian Forest Service officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi seeking quashing of the 360-degree appraisal system and restraining the Centre from filling up joint secretary-level posts through the “contract system”.

Sources say that the case dates to 2017 when the Modi sarkar initiated the process for lateral entry into bureaucracy on a contract basis. Following this, the Centre appointed nine professionals, including actor Manoj Bajpai's brother Sujit Kumar Bajpai, from the private sector as joint secretaries in the central government in 2019.

Stating that the present system of recruitment of joint secretary level post through contract system is completely arbitrary and irrational, Mr Chaturvedi said that the

documents obtained under RTI Act, prima facie reveal certain serious irregularities, which needs to be investigated objectively by an appropriate agency.

SOME BABUS DO RETIRE BUT NOT FOR LONG

Retired senior babus rarely fade away into the sunset, they line up for other plum jobs in the government. In Himachal Pradesh, according to sources, several retired bureaucrats are among those who have applied for the post of chairman and member in the HP Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority. They include ex-IAS, IPS and IFS officers. These posts have fallen vacant following the completion of the tenure of K.K. Katoch as chairman and S.P. Katyal as member.

Further, now that the state government is setting up the state food commission, which will be notified soon, several retired bureaucrats are reportedly already lined up to get a posting here. Similarly, many senior IAS and IPS officers, including retired chief secretaries and DGP-rank officers, have applied for the post of member in the Information Commission. Intense lobbying is reportedly underway, which underlines how the babu-neta nexus works in the country, whether at the Centre or in the states. Watch this space for updates.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian @Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

IN BRIEF

10 guards hostage in Guatemalan jail

Guatemala City: Imprisoned Guatemalan gang members took 10 guards hostage Monday after prison system authorities moved some gang leaders to another lockup. Interior Minister Olivero García Rodas dismissed gang demands that the Barrio 18 gang leaders be returned for the guards to be released at the prison known as “Little Hell”. He said authorities had control outside the prison. Early Monday, prison authorities had transferred some gang members who made up the inmate leadership. “It was an operation organised to break up the gangs,” García said. “If the use of force becomes necessary, force will have to be used.” In an audio recording sent to reporters, someone saying he was a guard held hostage said the gang members wanted a peaceful dialogue to make sure their leaders weren’t sent to two prisons.

Earthquake hits northern Chile

Santiago: A magnitude 6.8 earthquake struck near the coast of Northern Chile on Tuesday, the GFZ German Research Center for Geosciences said, and some damage and minor landslides were reported in areas near the epicentre, according to local media. A number of people living near the coast were evacuated as a precaution, according to BNO News. There were no reports of casualties. GFZ reported aftershocks of around magnitudes 6.2 and 5.5. There was no tsunami threat from the earthquake, according to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre. GFZ earlier showed the magnitude as 7, with the quake at a depth of 10 km (6.2 miles). Chile is on the Pacific Ring of Fire, an arc of fault lines circling the Pacific Basin which is prone to frequent earthquakes. In June, a magnitude 6.8 earthquake had struck Chile’s mineral-rich northern desert. Damage in that quake was minimal.

Japan typhoon heads to Korea

Tokyo: A powerful typhoon blew over Japan’s southernmost islands on Tuesday and was headed toward the country’s main southern island and the Korean Peninsula. More than 20,000 homes were left without electricity, according to Okinawa Electric Power Co. As of noon, Typhoon Maysak had already traversed the area around Okinawa, home to US military bases, but warnings continued to be issued about strong gusts that could cause homes to collapse. Extremely high tides were a risk as well. The Japanese Meteorological Agency had said earlier that Maysak was expected to later make landfall on Kyushu, Japan’s main southern island, but its course appeared to be swerving away. Still, its passing close by could bring strong winds and rain. The storm is on course to hit South Korea by Thursday. A typhoon that hit the Korean Peninsula last week caused scattered minor damage in both Koreas.

TALIBAN HIT MILITARY BASE, KILL 3

Kabul, Sept. 1: Taliban insurgents launched a complex attack on Tuesday morning against a military base in eastern Afghanistan, killing at least three public protection forces, an official said.

Five other forces were wounded in the attack, said Abdul Rahman Mangal, a spokesman for the governor in Paktia province of the country.

A suicide car bomber targeted the entrance gate of the base in the provincial capital Gardēz then two gunmen started shooting at the Afghan security forces, Mangal said.

Security forces killed both attackers in a gunbattle lasting almost 10 minutes and the area is now under control, he added.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the group claimed responsibility for the attack in Gardēz.

The attack comes after Afghanistan’s president appointed 46 members to a council for national reconciliation, which will have final say on whether the government will sign a peace deal with the Taliban after what are expected to be protracted and uncertain negotiations with the insurgents.

The negotiations were envisaged under a US-Taliban peace agreement signed in February as intra-Afghan talks to decide the country’s future.

Israeli knee on Palestinian neck



Israeli soldiers detain a Palestinian protester during a demonstration against the Israeli settlement expansion in the village of Shufah, southeast of Tulkarm in the occupied West Bank, on Tuesday. — AFP

Outrage as cops shoot, kill another PoC in LA

Los Angeles, Sept. 1: US police shot dead another PoC, who they said had a handgun but dropped it during a violent altercation in Los Angeles, sparking further outrage as tensions soared around racism and police brutality.

The man, named in local media as Dijon Kizzee, 29, was riding his bike when Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Deputies attempted to arrest him for an unspecified vehicle code violation Monday.

He fled on foot and, when officers caught up with him, he punched an assistant in the face, dropping clothes he was wearing, police said. “MPs noticed that inside the clothes he dropped was a black semi-automatic handgun, at that time a shootout involving a deputy took place,” Lt. Brandon Dean said.

It was not clear if the man was looking for the weapon when he was shot. Dean said officials have yet to interview MPs involved. “So he didn’t have the gun in his hand, it had already fallen to the ground, so when he was actually shot he wasn’t armed at the time?” asked a reporter during the televised press conference.

“I don’t know that,” Dean replied, later adding, “If this individual was looking for a semi-automatic handgun, I would suggest... that’s probably why lethal force was used.”

The man was pronounced dead at the scene.

Up to 100 people gathered at the scene to demand justice within hours of the shooting, according to local media.

“What good is the prison system if you want to kill

HOUSE TO SUBPOENA POSTMASTER GENERAL OVER MAIL DISRUPTIONS

Washington, Sept. 1: The House Oversight Committee intends to subpoena Postmaster General Louis DeJoy for documents about disruptions in mail delivery operations that are now central to questions over the ability to handle an onslaught of mail-in ballots expected for the November poll.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., the committee chair, sent a memo Monday saying DeJoy blew past last week’s deadline to

fully respond to the committee’s request for more information. He has not provided any new materials, she said. “It is clear that a subpoena has become necessary to further the Committee’s investigation and help inform potential legislative actions,” she said.

Democrats are aggressively pursuing oversight of postal operations after President Donald Trump railed against mail-in ballots. — AP

WORKING FOR TRUMPS A ‘MISTAKE’, SAYS EX-ADVISER TO FIRST LADY

Washington, Sept. 1: A former friend and adviser of Melania Trump says it was “the worst mistake of my life” to work for President Donald Trump and his family, lashing out at the first lady for not defending her over questions about costs for the presidential inauguration she helped produce.

Stephanie Winston Wolkoff was an unpaid White House adviser to the first lady until February 2018, when her contract was te-

minated as questions about inaugural spending arose. “When it really counted, Melania wasn’t there for me,” Wolkoff writes in “Melania and Me: The Rise and Fall of My Friendship with the First Lady,” to be published Tuesday. “She wasn’t really my friend. In fact, I wish I had never met her,” Wolkoff said. Wolkoff, a New York-based event planner, said the pair first met in 2003 in the hallways of *Vogue* magazine. — AP

us all,” a woman told a *CBS News* reporter in tears. “Why are you all here?” Who are you protecting? The latest murder came as US President Donald Trump headed to Kenosha, Wisconsin on Tuesday, where police shot PoC father Jacob Blake seven times in the back on August 23, leaving

him paralysed from the waist down.

Blake’s shooting sparked further grief and protests three months after George Floyd suffocated below the knee of a white policeman in Minneapolis in May, paving the way for the most widespread civil unrest in the US since the 1960s. — Agencies

Detentions resume in Belarus

Moscow, Sept. 1: Belarusian authorities on Tuesday resumed detaining protesters in the capital, Minsk, where students took to the streets demanding the resignation of the country’s authoritarian leader after an election the opposition denounced as rigged.

Several dozen students on Tuesday held pickets outside their universities and marched through the

city centre on the fourth week of mass protests rocking the country. Belarusian media reported that at least 18 students were detained as police moved to break up the crowd. President Alexander Lukashenko has dismissed the protesters as Western puppets and bristled at the demands for him to step down after 26 years in power or start a dialogue with the opposition.

After a ferocious crackdown on demonstrators in the first days after the August 9 vote that caused international outrage, his government has avoided large-scale violence against demonstrators and sought to end the protests with threats and the selective jailing of activists. Several organisers of strikes at top industrial plants have been detained. On Tuesday, people start-

ed gathering near several large plants in support of the striking workers. Belarusian prosecutors have opened a criminal probe against the opposition Coordination Council, accusing its members of undermining the country’s security. Last week, the country’s courts handed 10-day jail sentences to two council members and summoned several others for questioning. — AP

WHO’S NEXT? Sep. 14 vote will pick leader after Abe decided to step down over poor health

Party manoeuvres to pick Japan’s next PM

Tokyo, Sept. 1: With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announcing his plans to step down due to health reasons, members of his ruling party are furiously maneuvering ahead of an internal vote that will ultimately decide his successor. Executives of Abe’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party met Tuesday and decided that the September 14 vote for party leader — and with it almost assuredly prime minister — will be limited to lawmakers and not broader members of the party.

Some younger lawmakers had called for the latter

to be included in order to make the process more open and democratic. Whoever is chosen will fill in for the rest of Abe’s term, until September 2021. The next prime minister will face a number of challenges, including the ongoing fight against Covid-19, managing the Tokyo Olympics that has been postponed to next summer, setting Japan’s security policy in the face of an increasingly assertive China, and dealing with the results are of the presidential election in the US, Japan’s key ally.

Here are the three candidates, who have either announced their intention to run or are expected to do so: Yoshihide Suga: Japan’s top government spokesman and Abe’s longtime right-hand man, the 71-year-old Suga has emerged as the favourite among ruling party heavyweights.

Suga has been pegged by the party secretary general as the best caretaker who can ensure the continuation of Abe’s policies. The son of a farmer in the northern prefecture of Akita, Suga is a self-made politician, rare in Japan’s largely hereditary world of politics. As chief cabinet

secretary, Suga is a policy coordinator and advisor to Abe. He is also the public face of Abe’s government, doing twice-daily televised media briefings. He’s become known as “Uncle Reiwa” after he was tasked with unveiling the new imperial era name for Emperor Naruhito last year.

Suga has been a loyal supporter of Abe since his first stint as prime minister from 2006-2007 and helped his return to power in 2012. Suga had previously denied that he would run, but on Monday simply said he would not comment. Fumio Kishida: Abe’s fo-

Tug leaving wreck sinks, 3 sailors die

It was responding to Mauritius oil spill

Johannesburg, Sept. 1: The oil spill disaster off Mauritius turned deadly this week when a tugboat leaving the shipwreck collided with a barge and sank, killing at least three sailors, police said Tuesday. The tug was towing the empty barge from the stranded hull of the Japanese ship, the MV Wakashio, on Monday night when heavy seas rammed the barge into the tug. It sank off the northeast coast of the Indian Ocean island nation, near a village called Poudre D’or. Four sailors were rescued and one is missing, said Mauritius police constable Jordan Jason Sunasy. “It is a terrible twist in this disaster,” environmental consultant Sunil Dowarkasing said. “The consequences of the shipwreck has now taken human lives. The cost of the oil spill keeps mounting.” The tugboat sank in deep water outside a coral reef and so far no oil has been seen on the coast, Dowarkasing said. The environmental disaster began on July 25

● **THE ENVIRONMENTAL** disaster began on July 25 when the Japanese bulk carrier MV Wakashio strayed miles off course and struck a coral reef a mile offshore.

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After being pounded by heavy surf for nearly two weeks, the ship’s hull cracked and on August 6 it began leaking fuel into the Mahebourg Lagoon, polluting a protected wetlands area and a small island that was a bird and wildlife sanctuary.

More than 1,000 tonnes of fuel spilled into the coastal waters. About 3,000 tonnes remained on the boat and was pumped into barges before the Wakashio broke in two several days later. Thousands of civilian volunteers created makeshift oil barriers by stuffing fabric tubes with sugar cane leaves and using empty plastic bottles to

keep them afloat.

Environmental workers carefully ferried dozens of baby tortoises and rare plants to shore, plucking some trapped seabirds out of the goo. Dead dolphins began washing up on the coast last week. So far 47 dolphins and three whales have been found, Dowarkasing said.

An initial autopsy by a government laboratory said oil was not the cause of the deaths, but few Mauritians believe that, Dowarkasing said. The government of Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth is under pressure to explain why immediate action was not taken when the ship first ran aground.

He has blamed bad weather for the government’s apparent inaction. Tens of thousands of people marched in the capital on Saturday in protest, calling on top officials to step down. The ship’s captain and first officer have been arrested and charged with “endangering safe navigation”, and several investigations are underway. — AP

Mass testing for virus in HK amid public doubts

Hong Kong, Sept. 1: Hong Kong tested thousands of people for Coronavirus on Tuesday at the start of a mass-testing effort that’s become another political flash point in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory. Volunteers stood in lines at some of the more than 100 testing centres, though many residents are distrustful over the resources and staff being provided by China’s central government and some have expressed fear DNA could be collected.

The Hong Kong government has dismissed such concerns, and leader Carrie Lam urged the public to see the programme in a fair and objective light.

Children in Wuhan return to school

Beijing, Sept. 1: Children returned to school Tuesday in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, the original epicentre of the Coronavirus epidemic that underwent months of lockdown but which has not seen new cases of

local transmission for weeks.

It’s class time again across Europe

Paris, Sept. 1: Tugging on their masks or dashing to hug long-unseen friends, millions of children returned to school across Europe and beyond Tuesday in a mass experiment aimed at bridging inequalities and resuscitating economies — despite the persistent pandemic. — AP

Graft charges: Saudi Arabia sacks 2 royals

Riyadh, Sept. 1: A top Saudi military commander and his son were sacked on Monday over graft allegations, state media said, in the government’s latest anti-corruption purge.

Joint forces commander Prince Fahad bin Turki — a senior royal family member — and Abdulaziz bin Fahad, the deputy emir of northern Al-Jouf region, were fired and placed under investigation for corruption, according to the report.

Several other officers of the defence ministry were also being probed for corruption, it added, citing a royal decree from King Salman. Prince Fahad served as the commander of the Saudi-led military coalition fighting Iran-linked Huthi rebels in neighbouring Yemen.

He was replaced by Mu-tlaq bin Salim, the deputy chief of staff, on the recommendation of the kingdom’s de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, state media said. The government decision to sack the commander was a “very public signal against corruption in the military”, said Saudi author and analyst Ali Shihabi.

The announcement marks the latest government crackdown on what officials describe as endemic corruption in the kingdom. Senior Saudi security commanders were among a string of officials sacked last month over graft allegations at tourism projects.

In March, Human Rights Watch voiced alarm over the arrest of 298 Saudi officials over corruption allegations, warning of possible “unfair legal proceedings” in an opaque judicial system.

Military and judicial officials were among those arrested over allegations of bribery and embezzlement amounting to a total of 379 million riyals (\$101 million), according to the state anti-corruption watchdog. — AP

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SURRENDER BY SEPT. 10: COURT TELLS NAWAZ

SHAFQAT ALI ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 1

Pakistan’s Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday ordered former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to surrender before till September 10, in appeals pertaining to Al-Azizia Steel Mills and Avenfield property references. The bench remarked that the court wanted to give an opportunity to the former prime minister to surrender and appear, before being declared absconder.

Justice Aamer Farooq remarked that the court would initiate the process to declare Nawaz Sharif as absconder if he failed to present himself before court till next date. A division bench comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhter Kiyani conducted hearing on a case seeking exemption from hearing for Nawaz Sharif on medical grounds in appeals pertaining to graft references.

Haris pleaded that his client could still challenge the Punjab government’s decision for rejecting extension of Nawaz’s bail despite the summons of this court. To this Justice Farooq said that the court was not depriving the accused from his legal rights.

PAK COURT TO INDICT ZARDARI ON SEPT. 9

Islamabad, Sept. 1: A Pakistani accountability court on Tuesday fixed date for indictments of former president Asif Ali Zardari, his sister Faryal Talpur and Omni Group’s Abdul Ghani Majeed in the mega money laundering case. The AC Judge Muhammad Azam Khan conducted hearing of the case and summoned the suspects on September 9 for indictments.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,900.80	0.71
Nifty 50	11,470.25	0.73
S&P 500*	3,510.25	0.28
Dollar (₹)	72.87	1.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.88	0.05
Euro (₹)	87.30	0.22
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,963▲418	0.82
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.91	0.63
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.943	-0.135
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.718	0.025

* As of 9:30 PM IST

ONGC profit dips 92% on oil, gas price slump

ONGC reported 92 per cent slump in its June quarter net profit after oil prices halved and gas rates fell to a decade low. Standalone net profit of Rs 496 crore in April-June was 91.7 per cent lower than Rs 5,980 crore net profit a year back. Revenues dipped 51 per cent to Rs 13,011 crore. The surprise profit came after the public sector company delayed payment of cess on crude oil it produces.

Infosys to hire 12K US workers in two years



Infosys said it plans to hire 12,000 American workers over the next two years, taking its hiring commitment in the country to 25,000 over five years. In 2017, Infosys had committed to hiring 10,000 American workers over two years, and has created 13,000 jobs in the US to date. "Through this expanded commitment, Infosys will hire an additional 12,000 workers by 2022 across a variety of roles," it said.

Adani is world's largest solar asset owner

Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) said Mercom Capital has ranked it as the world's largest solar power generation asset owner in terms of operating, under-construction and awarded projects. AGEL's under-construction and awarded capacity stands at 10.1 GW, while its operational capacity is nearly 3 GW. Adani's renewable energy portfolio exceeds the total capacity installed by the entire US solar industry in 2019.

Honda launches new variants of City in India

Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) launched two petrol variants of the fourth generation of its popular sedan Honda City with price starting at Rs 9.29 lakh, ex-showroom Delhi. The company, which recently launched an all-new 5th generation version of the Honda City sedan, said it will continue selling the 4th generation car in two variants SV and V grade with BS-VI compliant 1.5-litre petrol engine in manual transmission.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: T.Venkatram Reddy, RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

■ Mfg PMI bounces, but GST, diesel, e-way bills lag August signals possible recovery in September

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEP. 1

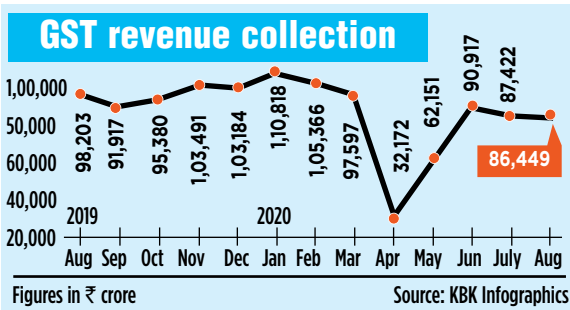
The industrial activity has rebounded in August as has been evident from the Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). However, some of the other key indicators of industrial recovery, including diesel consumption, GST collections and e-way bills, were still moving sideways, indicating a possible recovery in September.

Manufacturing PMI released by IHS Markit in August has come in at 52, compared to 46 in July, signalling growth for the first time in five months since March. Production growth was largely driven by greater client demand for domestic goods following the resumption of business operations.

However, the decline in exports weighed slightly on overall new orders, as firms cited subdued demand conditions from abroad. Further, job shedding continues in August at a strong rate.

Supply chains were disrupted in August, with firms citing transportation restrictions and supplier delays. These supply chain issues and movement restrictions were reflecting in the fuel consumption patterns as well. Monthly diesel consumption continued to decline for the second month in August.

Diesel consumption accounts for 40 per cent of overall refined fuel sales and is one of the key parameters linked to over-



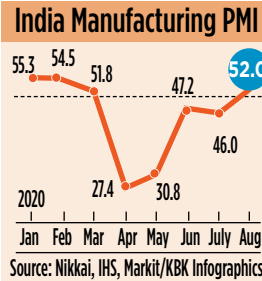
MARKET HEAVES A SIGH OF RELIEF

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT.1

Market bounced back after sharp fall on Monday encouraged by positive auto sales number, softer AGR verdict for telecom companies, stable GST collection in August and five-month high manufacturing data.

The Sensex gained 272.51 points to close at 38,900 after rising 598 points intra-day. The Nifty-50 closed at 11,470

up 82.75 points. Globally stocks surged higher on encouraging PMI (purchasing managers index) data across the globe. PMI number for August came in at - Euro (51.7 vs 51.8 for July), UK (55.2 vs 53.3 in July), Caixin China (53.1- highest since 2011 vs 52.8 in July), India (52 vs 46 in July), said HDFC Securities. FPIs were net buyers of equities worth Rs 486.09 crore.



malcy," he added.

The GST collections data for August also saw a recovery of 88 per cent of the year-ago period. In July, the collections were 86 per cent of the same month last year. The gross GST revenue collected in August 2020 is Rs 86,449 crore against Rs 98,202 crore in August 2019.

Of the gross GST revenue collected, CGST was Rs 15,906 crore, SGST Rs 21,064 crore, IGST was Rs 42,264 crore (including Rs 19,179 crore collected on import of goods) and cess was Rs 7,215 crore.

The GST mopup in August was marginally down from the previous month. "We do not have to read too much into the marginal decline sequentially, as domestic collections have attained 92 per cent YoY for operations in July is a sign of economic recovery post-lifting of lockdown," said Abhishek Jain, tax partner, EY.

"A significant part of the dip is attributable to imports, which has witnessed a decline," he added.

(With inputs from Madhusudan Sahoo)

AirAsia to charge for check in at airport counters

ANURAG KOTOKY SEP. 1

AirAsia Group Bhd is charging passengers who check in at airport counters rather than via its website, mobile app or self-service kiosks.

The budget carrier, which posted a record loss last quarter, is charging 20 ringgit (\$4.82) per passenger on counter check-ins for domestic flights and 30 ringgit for international trips, effective from Tuesday, it said.

AirAsia's chief operations officer Javed Malik said the move is aimed at encouraging customers to use the other check-in means and minimize physical contact between guests and staff. Fees will be waived for passengers with reduced mobility and premium travelers.

— Bloomberg

SKODA RAPID AUTOMATIC BOOKING OPENS AT ₹25K

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, SEP. 1

After launching the BS6 Skoda Rapid with a turbo-petrol engine and a manual gearbox earlier in May, the Czech automaker Skoda has opened its order books for the Skoda Rapid automatic sedan that is slated for a launch on September 18 when the price will be announced.

The Skoda Rapid will be on a more even footing with rivals like the Maruti Suzuki Ciaz, Toyota Yaris, Hyundai Verna and the new Honda City, all of which are available with their own varieties of automatic transmissions.

"An overwhelming response from brand loyalists and auto enthusiasts from across the nation has obligated the Czech marque to push the yardstick further and introduce the convenience of an automatic transmission across the Rapid TSI range, at a very competitive price point," Zac Hollis, brand director at Skoda Auto India, said.

Expect the Rapid automatic prices to range from Rs 8.50 lakh to 12.50 lakh.

Textile industry wants skewed dumping duty on VSF to go

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEP. 1

Anti-dumping duty on viscose staple fibre (VSF) has hurt the textile industry badly while it benefited monopoly players. The industry now wants the government to end the dumping duty, which is forcing textile units to import spun yarn. It is estimated that the powerloom sector lost the opportunity to utilise production capacity worth Rs 1,000 crore and provide 8,000 jobs in FY20 due to higher imports.

Viscose yarn producers and the downstream sectors are troubled by the discriminatory pricing of the dominant domestic staple fibre producer on the back of the anti-dumping duty on imported fibre. This has resulted in India's viscose-based man-made textile products lose their competitiveness in the overseas market.

For the past 10 years, VSF has been enjoying "undue protection" by way of anti-dumping duty. VSF attracts anti-dumping duty of \$0.103 to \$0.512 per kg of import. This has made the fibre costlier for the domestic yarn producers compared with international prices.

On the other hand,



Grasim, which produces VSF in India, has been following a "discriminatory pricing" and MSME spinners have been bearing the brunt of it, says the Southern India Mills Association (Simas).

The current capacity of the domestic producer is not enough to meet the growing demands of the industry and hence the indigenous producer is adopting import parity pricing while selling the fibre to domestic spinners at a premium of Rs 20/kg, taking advantage of the anti-dumping duty. At the same time, Grasim is exporting the fibre to competing countries like Bangladesh, Turkey, Nepal, and Sri Lanka at international prices.

Further, the manufacturer has been adopting a complicated domestic pricing policy. It promises discounts to the tune of 40 per cent while withholding over one-third of it till

the year-end, leading to the blockage of working capital. It links the discount to the incremental fibre consumption with a one-sided penalty clause and prevent sourcing from other suppliers with an annual contract, said Sima.

"Competition Commission of India in its order dated March 18, 2020, levied Grasim Industries a penalty of Rs 301.61 crore for abuse of dominant position in the market for supply of VSF to spinners in India," said Ashwin Chandran, chairman, Sima. When contacted by *Financial Chronicle*, Grasim spokesperson did not respond to the allegations by the power looms.

Due to the higher pricing of the fibre, the powerloom sector has been increasingly importing yarn from overseas markets. The import of viscose spun yarn grew 27 times from 2,022 tonnes in 2016-17 to 56,262 tonnes in 2019-20.

Removing the anti-dumping duty on VSF will make the entire Indian VSF textile value chain globally competitive, said the Northern India Textiles Mills Association.

Both the associations want the duty to be removed on VSF.

Robot to track bogus algo trades on cards in Korea

HEEJIN KIM SEOUL, SEP. 1

South Korean regulators are turning to artificial intelligence to help detect illegal use of algorithmic trading in financial markets.

The Korea Exchange has temporarily hired outside experts to develop a model to monitor algo trades, according to Lee Jong-pil, an official at the bourse. They are expected to complete studying the model by October, and the exchange will then test and decide whether to use it, he added.

"We intend to crack down on bogus orders or stock manipulation with this new model," Lee said



by phone on Tuesday. "With algorithmic trading widely used in markets, unfair trades using algos are allegedly pervasive."

Authorities aim to stamp out specific trading patterns, such as market-making, spoofing or layering with the help of the model, according to state-

ment on KRX's website in April. Spoofing is a practice where traders enter orders they don't intend to execute to mislead others in the market as to the demand to buy or sell. One type of spoofing is called layering, where orders are stacked at various prices on one side of the market.

South Korea's stock exchange in July 2019 fined Bank of America Corp's brokerage arm 175 million won (\$148,000) for violating market rules. The US firm disrupted fair market orders through algorithmic trading, helping a hedge fund client earn 220 billion won of profit by repeatedly submitting and cancelling quotes for hundreds of

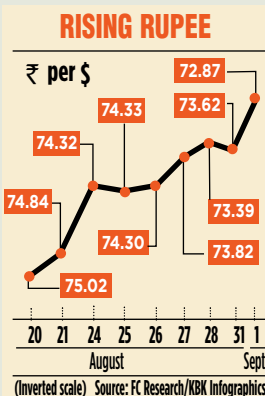
Rupee surges 75p, bonds prices up

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEP. 1

The rupee on Tuesday posted its biggest single intraday gain in nearly two years, appreciating by 75 paise, or 1.02 per cent, against the US dollar while bond yields fell to their lowest level in over two weeks following the Reserve Bank of India's measures to maintain financial system stability and encouraging manufacturing PMI data.

Global dollar weakness and sustained foreign fund inflows too supported the rupee. Traders said that they expect the RBI to now allow the rupee to appreciate as it could help in combating inflation.

At the interbank forex market, the rupee finished at 72.87, up 75 paise from its previous close of 73.62. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a



basket of six currencies extended its flight below the 92 levels.

Encouraging macro data uplifted the domestic risk sentiment. The benchmark 10-year bond yield closed 18 basis points lower at 5.94 per cent as the RBI introduced several measures to soothe sentiment in the bond market.

Darshit Purohit at IFA Global said, "The central bank has stepped off the gas in accumulating the foreign exchange reserves and might intervene only to curb sharp volatility. Rupee is now down by only 2 per cent for the calendar year 2020. It marked an all-time low on April 22, 2020 at 76.91 (losing 7.73 per cent). Global dollar weakness, sustained FII inflows (\$6.82 billion in August), strengthening Asian currencies and RBI stepping aside from dollar buying intervention are the key factors behind the recent recovery in the Rupee."

"The immediate support is 72.40 to 72.50 levels," added Purohit.

The Reserve Bank on Monday announced a host of steps, including term repo operations totalling Rs 1 lakh crore in mid-September to ease pressure on liquidity.

Inventory stocking helps car numbers

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, SEP. 1

After six months of slowdown, the struggling Indian automobile manufacturers are seeing signs of a turnaround from the lockdown woes, with sales picture improving amidst positive signs of recovery.

Automobile wholesales from factory gates to showrooms rose in August as supply constraints caused by the pandemic eased and companies pushed stocks to dealers, anticipating an improvement in demand ahead of the festive season.

However, the long-term demand trends still remain in question.

India's biggest car maker Maruti Suzuki, with 50 per cent market share, on Tuesday registered 17 per cent growth in overall sales led by a 20 per cent jump at 113,033 units in domestic sales in August.

Hyundai Motor, India's second largest car maker, reported a 20 per cent uptick in August with sales of 45,809 units.

Hyundai's performance along with Maruti Suzuki India hints towards a visible recovery trend in the market, which is coming on the back of pent-up demand, as well as the enhanced need for personal mobility post Covid-19 crisis.

Tata Motors, India's biggest automaker by revenues, sold 18,583 units last month, a rise of 154 per cent, up from 7,316 units it sold last year, reliable sources said. The firm reports only quarterly sales.

Sales at Mahindra and Mahindra grew 1 per cent year-on-year at 13,651 units.

Kia Motors posted 74 per cent year-on-year growth with 10,845 unit sales last month.

Sales at MG Motor India jumped 41 per cent year-on-year at 2,851 units. However, sales at Honda Cars India fell 9 per cent year-on-year at 7,509 units.



The result: India's economy posted its worst contraction last quarter - the biggest among major economies.

While India already runs the world's biggest jobs programme, under which workers can earn a guaranteed minimum daily wage for at least 100 days a year, the programme is limited to those living in the hinterland.

In urban areas, the survey shows that 31 per cent of individuals have a guaranteed number of days of work. But among those who do not, an overwhelming 70 per cent reported needing a guarantee of a minimum 100 days of work, according to the report by LSE's Centre for Economic Performance.

Central and state governments recognise the

livelihood crisis, but for the most part, their recovery packages fall far short of outlays to overcome it, the authors wrote.

"It may finally be time to revive old ideas, such as a universal job guarantee, to protect the livelihoods of many informal workers who are at risk of falling into urban poverty," said Dhingra. "Their aspirations of a prosperous life have already been shattered by the pandemic."

Some of the findings of the survey are: About 52 per cent of urban workers in India didn't have work and income for at least a month during the lockdown; and financial assistance from the government or employers was available to just a quarter of the workforce.

— Bloomberg

Small is new big for hotels in Covid times: Oyo chief

AXEL THRELFALL & JOSHUA FRANKLIN LONDON/NEW YORK, SEP. 1

The Covid-19 pandemic will mean holiday-goers will shy away from larger hotels for the foreseeable future in favour of boutiques and home rentals, the CEO of India-based hospitality startup Oyo Hotels and Homes said.

"The comments by Ritesh Agarwal underscore the anticipation within the hospitality industry that the coronavirus outbreak will fundamentally change the nature of travel.

"The hospitality industry will never be the same again, that is absolutely

clear," Agarwal said. "Small hotels are going to be in vogue. In my view, small is going to be the new big, wherein people will rethink a lot about going back to that 1,000-room hotel versus going to a 40-room niche hotel."

Oyo has seen some green shoots of recovery. "The last four, five months the company has seen some incremental recovery, especially in geographies such as Europe and the United States," Agarwal said.

In the US, where Oyo customers are primarily truckers, medical reps and essential workers, its revenue has nearly bounced back.

— Reuters

SHORT TAKES

Barca still unclear about Messi's stay

Madrid: With or without Lionel Messi, Barcelona already know they will start their season at home against Villarreal at the end of September.

The Spanish league announced its calendar on Monday, and the first round is scheduled for the second weekend of September. But Barcelona and other teams, who played later into this past season will have some of their games postponed so they have time to prepare.

All matches will continue to be played in empty stadiums. Messi, who last week told Barcelona he wants to leave, skipped the team's first day of training on Monday. He had already been a no-show on Sunday as the squad underwent coronavirus testing at the club's training center. He wants to leave on a clause that allows him to leave for free at the end of the season, but Barcelona said that clause has expired. It wants the Argentine great to stay at least until the end of his contract in June 2021. — AP

Uruguay's Pearol fire coach Forlan

Montevideo, Uruguay: Diego Forlan says he has been fired as coach of Uruguayan club Pearol.

The former Atletico Madrid and Manchester United player took the job in February but leaves amid a poor campaign in the local championship. His last match with Pearol was Sunday's 2-0 loss to league leader Montevideo Wanderers. Forlan, who retired from professional soccer in 2018, had his first coaching job at his boyhood club Pearol. He guided the team to four wins from 11 games. The team is in the middle of the Uruguayan championship standings with only six rounds remaining.

I have to leave Pearol, but beforehand I want to write a few words of gratitude, Forlan said in his social media channels.

I have no reproaches, this is soccer. — AP

Nat'l online fitness event set to start

Mumbai: Fitness platform Xtralive in association with the Directorate of Sports and Youth Services of Maharashtra will host the National Level Online Athletic Fitness Championship to keep athletes going amidst the pandemic. Competitors will be shown a workout video on September 10 by the team of professionals. They will have to submit a video performing the same workout by September 20 with the results scheduled to be announced on October 2. The first three positions stand to win ₹75,000, ₹50,000 and ₹25,000 respectively. Registrations are free on www.itsxtralliving.com.

PGA event in Japan shifts to California

Washington: The Zozo Championship is moving from Japan to California this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic, making it the anchor of a West Coast Swing in the fall portion of the schedule that is certain to attract strong fields. The \$8 million tournament will be played October 22 to 25 at Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, California, with Tiger Woods as the defending champion on a course where he has won five times.

The tour and Zozo Inc. announced the decision Monday night.

It will be called the Zozo Championship at Sherwood, a similar title to the South Korean event moving to Las Vegas the week before. That one will be called the CJ Cup at Shadow Creek. Both tournaments will return to Asia next fall. — AP

Live on TV

CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Trinbago Knight Riders vs St Kitts & Nevis Patriots from 7.30 pm; St Lucia Zouks vs Guyana Amazon Warriors from 3 am (Thursday) on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

US OPEN

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

TOUR DE FRANCE

Stage Five from 4.45 pm on Eurosport, HD

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002. And Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C-9, Sector-13, Noida-201301.
Editor-T. Venkatram Reddy, RNI Registration number 57290/94, Price in Nepal - Nep. Rs. 20.00 per copy.

NOLE NAILS IT

Djokovic rolls into 2nd round with Zverev, Tsitsipas

New York, Sept. 1: Pre-tournament favourite Novak Djokovic marched into round two of the US Open Monday as he launched his bid for a 18th Grand Slam with a straight-sets win.

The world number one dispatched unheralded Damir Dzumhur of Bosnia-Herzegovina 6-1, 6-4, 6-1 under floodlights at an empty Arthur Ashe Stadium in New York.

The Serbian superstar took just 23 minutes to win the first set before laboring to a narrow victory in an hour-long second set.

With Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer absent, Djokovic is looking to close the gap on them in the race for the all-time men's singles Grand Slam record. Djokovic currently has 17, behind Nadal on 19 and Federer on 20.

Earlier, fifth seed Alexander Zverev was made to work hard as he progressed into round two of the US Open Monday following a three-hour-long tussle with 2017 finalist Kevan Anderson.

The German, seeking his first Grand Slam title, took the first set on a tie-break 7-6 (7/2) before losing the second 7-5 in an eerily empty Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Ultimately, the 23-year-old proved too much for the South African veteran, winning the third set 6-3 and the fourth 7-5.

Afterwards he shared a moment on a big

screen with his tennis-playing brother Mischa Zverev who was beamed into the stadium from his sofa at home.

Fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas eased into the second round of the Flushing Meadows tournament, which is being played without fans due to coronavirus, with a straight-sets win over Spain's Albert Ramos-Vinolas.

'TWO DOGS'

The Greek player needed just one hour and 38 minutes to dispose of the world number 41, 6-2, 6-1, 6-1.

The 22-year-old Tsitsipas, sixth on the ATP rankings, will play American wildcard Maxime Cressy after he defeated Slovakian Jozef Kovalik, ranked 123 in the world, 6-1, 2-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Britain's Cameron Norrie enjoyed one of the day's most impressive wins, charging back from two sets down to sink Argentine ninth seen Diego Schwartzman 3-6, 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, 7-5.

"It shows that it was just two dogs out there battling with no serves really," said the 76th-ranked Norrie, will face another Argentine, Federico Coria, for a place in the third round.

Elsewhere in the men's draw on day one, 12th seed Canadian Denis Shapovalov required four sets to overcome US wildcard Sebastian Korda.

— AFP



Japan's Naomi Osaka wears a mask in honour of Breonna Taylor as she celebrates after defeating countrymate Misaki Doi 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 in their US Open first round match in New York on Monday.

— AP

Osaka using US Open as platform for activism

New York, Sept. 1: Naomi Osaka arrived on court for her opening US Open game on Monday wearing a face mask bearing the name of Breonna Taylor, the African-American nurse shot dead by police who raided her apartment in Kentucky in March.

By the time the US Open fortnight is over, Osaka says she hopes to have honoured the memory of six other victims of racial injustice.

"For me, I just want to spread awareness," Osaka said after her 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 win over Japanese compatriot Misaki Doi.

I'm aware that tennis is watched all over the world, and maybe there is someone that doesn't know Breonna Taylor's story. Maybe they'll Google it or something. For me, just spreading awareness.

— NAOMI OSAKA tennis player

"I'm aware that tennis is watched all over the world, and maybe there is someone that doesn't know Breonna Taylor's story. "Maybe they'll Google it or something. For me, just spreading awareness. I feel

like the more people know the story, then the more interesting or interested they'll become in it."

Osaka, of Haitian and Japanese heritage, said she has six other masks bearing the names of black people killed by police that she hoped to wear throughout the Grand Slam.

"I have seven and it's quite sad that seven is not enough for the amount of names. Hopefully I'll get to the finals and you'll see all of them," Osaka said.

Osaka said she is increasingly comfortable in her role as athlete activist.

— AFP

HERE TO PLAY CRICKET, NOT FOR FUN: KOHLI

Dubai, Sept. 1: Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli understands "the privilege" of being able to play cricket in the middle of a raging pandemic and he wants all IPL participants to respect the tournament's bio-secure bubble.

Speaking on RCB's Youtube show, the 31-year-old said he didn't exactly miss the game during the Covid-forced lockdown, which brought sporting action to a halt.

"Maybe because I was going on day and night for the last 10 years...It was a revelation for me in the sense that my focus was not solely on missing the game all the time," Kohli said.

Now that he is gearing up to be back in action with the IPL, Kohli said the BCCI's Standard Operating Procedure and the bio-bubble restrictions should be non-negotiable for all participants.

"We are all here to play cricket...The bio-bubble needs to be respected at all times for the tournament to happen eventually. We are not here to have fun and roam around and you know say that 'I want to hang out in Dubai'," Kohli asserted.

"That is not the time we are living in. Accept the phase that we are going through and understand the privilege that we have, just to be a part of the IPL."

— PTI

NBA | PLAYOFF SERIES

Top seeds Bucks face the Heat

Los Angeles, Sept. 1: Jimmy Butler seized control down the stretch, scoring a career-playoff high 40 points as the Miami Heat beat the Milwaukee Bucks in the opening game of their second round NBA playoff series on Monday.

Butler was a one-man wrecking crew, scoring 13 of Miami's final 16 points in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida. He scored 27 of his 40 points in the second half.

Butler warned his teammates not to expect any passes with the game on the line.

"I told my teammates I probably wasn't going to pass the ball. I made a couple of shots and they said, 'That's fine with me,'" Butler said.

In the Western Conference, Chris Paul scored 28 points as the Oklahoma City Thunder forced a decisive seventh game in their first round series with a 104-100 win over the mistake-prone Houston Rockets.

Butler is just the third player in Heat history with a 40-point game in the playoffs, joining LeBron James and Dwyane Wade.

"I took it up a level in the fourth. If that's what needs to happen every game, I have got to do it," he said.

Game two of the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series is Wednesday in Orlando.

Goran Dragic added 27 points as he helped the Heat clamp down defensively which set the stage

● **Butler was a one-man wrecking crew, scoring 13 of Miami's final 16 points in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida. He scored 27 of his 40 points in the second half.**

for Butler's offensive heroics.

With 52 seconds left, Dragic made a clutch defensive play by stealing the ball from Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo to preserve Miami's seven-point lead, 111-104.

Bam Adebayo had 12 points and 17 rebounds and rookie Tyler Herro tallied 11 points for the Heat, who swept the Indiana Pacers in the previous round.

Fifth seeded Miami found a way to contain reigning NBA most valuable player Antetokounmpo, who was limited to just 18 points.

It was the Greek superstar's fewest points in a playoff game since he was held to 12 by the Toronto Raptors in game three of the NBA semi-finals last season. He also missed eight of 12 free throws against the Heat.

Khrist Middleton scored 28 points and Brook Lopez had 24 for the Bucks, who also lost the opening game of their first round series before winning four straight to beat the Orlando Magic in five games.

— AFP



Marvin Williams (left) of the Milwaukee Bucks defends as Jimmy Butler of Miami Heat takes a shot during the second half of an NBA basketball conference semifinal playoff game in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, on Monday.

— AP

Referee Srinath bats for bowlers

New Delhi, Sept. 1: If a batsman at the non-striker's end is leaving the crease before the bowler has released the ball, he is not following the spirit of the game and should not seek empathy if he is run out, reckons ICC match referee and former India pacer Jagavallab Srinath.

India off-spinner R. Ashwin courted controversy when he ran out Jos Buttler during last year's IPL as the England batsman backed up too far. The act triggered the age-old debate on the bowler's conduct in such dismissals.

Srinath does not feel that the bowler is wrong if he runs out a batsman in this fashion.

"The bowler is focusing on the batsman. For the batsman (at the non-striker's end) to stick to the crease till the ball is released is no big deal, because he's not batting, nor is he thinking of anything else," Srinath told Ashwin on his Youtube show 'DRS With Ash'.

Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting feels that the bowler violates the spirit of the game by this dismissal and he would not allow Ashwin to do it. Ashwin will play for Delhi Capitals in this year's IPL. "So the batsman shouldn't leave the crease and the bowler should focus on just bowling and the batsman he's going to bowl to. If the batsman is taking undue advantage, and if he's involved in a run out, I am fine. I am perfectly okay with that," Srinath said.

India's former pace mainstay said the rules state that the onus is on the batsman to stay inside the crease till the ball has been released.

"Don't look for any empathy. Don't invoke the spirit of the game. The spirit of the game is with the runner. He cannot move out of the crease. If he is doing it, he's not invoking the spirit of the game itself. I would believe that the batsman should stick to the crease."

— PTI

MY UNCLE SLAUGHTERED TO DEATH, SAYS RAINA

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR CHENNAI, SEPT. 1

After a series of setbacks, Chennai Super Kings on Tuesday moved a step closer to kicking off their IPL preparations. While the 13 Coronavirus-infected members, including two players, who are staying in a separate hotel in isolation will be tested only after the mandatory 14-day quarantine period, the rest of the team cleared another test on Tuesday.

Chennai Super Kings CEO K.S. Viswanathan said there will be one more test on Thursday. "Only after we get the test result on Friday can we confirm the training date. Hopefully, we will be able to hit the ground this weekend. Two players who are currently in isolation can join later if they clear the tests," Viswanathan told this newspaper.

While their rivals have already begun their preparations, CSK are in an extended room quarantine. Viswanathan said the support staff, led by coach Stephen Fleming and his deputy Michael Hussey, are engaging players in online sessions.

"Apart from that, our trainer and physio are giving instructions over Zoom calls on how to train indoors," said Viswanathan.

Viswanathan said Super Kings will definitely play warm-up games if the organisers can arrange

AGE CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, SEPT. 1

In an effort to put to rest intense speculations over his surprise IPL pullout, Suresh Raina on Tuesday took to Twitter to say he was grieving his relatives who were murdered in a midnight robbery. The recently-retired cricketer didn't, however, specify that was the exact reason for his leaving the Chennai Super Kings' camp.

Ever since he took a red-eye to reach India last weekend, various reports have claimed there was 'a serious bubble breach', 'team rift' and a 'hotel room issue' that led to Raina's return.

A day after CSK boss N. Srinivasan issued a denial saying his comments on Raina were wrongly attributed, the cricketer said his uncle was murdered in a "horrible" incident in Pathankot (Punjab).

The incident hap-

pened two days before Raina landed in the UAE.

"What happened to my family is Punjab was beyond horrible. My uncle was slaughtered to death, my bua & both my cousins had severe injuries. Unfortunately, my cousin also passed away last night after battling for life for days. My bua is still very very critical and is on life support (sic)," Raina tweeted.

Raina also requested the Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh to look into the matter.

"Till date, we don't know what exactly had happened that night & who did this. I request @PunjabPoliceInd to look into this matter. We at least deserve to know who did this heinous act to them. Those criminals should not be spared to commit more crimes. @capt_amarinder @CMOPb (sic)," Raina said in another tweet.

has returned to India.

BHAJJJI'S ARRIVAL DELAYED

Veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh who was expected to join the CSK camp on Tuesday

them. "I think all the teams want to play some warm-up games," he added.

The CSK team management hasn't decided if they need a replacement for Suresh Raina, who