





## IN BRIEF

**Delhi Police arrests six for bank fraud**

**New Delhi:** Six men were arrested for allegedly stealing money from a person's bank account here, police said on Thursday. The accused have been identified as Nasim Ansari (34), Iqbal Ansari (34), Ranjit Dey (31), Prakash Mandal (24), Jamiruddin (36) and Mohammad Daud (28), they said. The accused are suspected to be involved in several other similar cases of fraud, police said. According to police, the victim had some issues with his bank account and called on a number, which he found through Google search, for a resolution. The call went unanswered but later, the victim was contacted by a man who said he is the bank's customer care executive. The man then asked the victim to follow his instructions and a link was sent to the victim through a text message on phone, police said. After clicking the link, ₹63,800 got deducted from the victim's bank account, following which a case was registered at Begumpur police station, they said.

**2 held for thrashing man in Ghitorni area**

**New Delhi:** Police have arrested two men who allegedly thrashed a 28-year old man who had annoyed them with his honking in an effort to move a cow to make way for his vehicle, police said on Friday. The two accused, Gaurav (24) and Ashish (25), were drunk at the time of the incident and also fired shots in the air to threaten the victim, they said. The incident took place late on Thursday night in southwest Delhi's Ghitorni area when the victim, Babu, was returning home. Police said while Babu was on his way home, he saw a cow sitting in the middle of the road. To move the cow and make make way for his vehicle, he honked but when the cow did not move, he stepped out of his vehicle. While he was walking towards the cow, two men came out of a nearby house and got into a heated argument with Babu as they were disturbed by his honking, police said. The accused thrashed the victim with sticks. One of them also pulled out his licensed pistol and fired shots in the air to threaten him, the officer said.

**Woman makes plan to kill brother, held**

**Ghaziabad:** A woman was arrested on Friday for allegedly hatching a conspiracy to kill her brother, a day after he was shot dead here, police said. According to a police official, one Asif alias Sonu was shot in Prem Nagar colony in Loni area around 8.30 pm on Thursday and he later died during treatment at a nearby hospital. Investigation revealed that one of Asif's sisters, identified as Warisha, had made the plan to kill him. Warisha's son Golu, who is lodged in Mandouli jail of North East Delhi from last two years in a murder case, and two other family members were also involved in the plan, police said. The FIR in the case was registered after Asif's death at Loni police station by his other sister Shirin Malik, senior superintendent of Police Kalanidhi Naithani told PTI. The other accused in the case will be nabbed soon, the officer added. — PTI

**Gr Noida: Pvt firm's manager found dead**

**Noida:** The body of a private company's assistant manager was found inside his Greater Noida apartment on Friday in a suspected suicide case, police said. The body was found after locals alerted the police about stench emanating from the third floor of a house in a residential society under Beta 2 police station limits, they said. "The local police and forensic team immediately reached the spot. The door of the house was bolted from inside. The door and a window were broken down after which the teams gained entry into the house," additional deputy commissioner of police, Greater Noida, Vishal Pandey said. "The body was found lying between the kitchen and the lobby area of the flat. Everything else inside the house looked normal. The body appears to be four to five days old," Mr Pandey added. — PTI

# 2 arrested for duping people of ₹42K crores

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11

The Delhi police has nabbed two men for allegedly cheating more than 8,000 people across the country to the tune of ₹42,000 crore through their Ponzi schemes. The police said that the duo used to lure people in their 'bike boat' scheme after assuring them a good return of their investment. The accused have been identified as Sanjay Bhati, the CMD of the Garvit Innovative Promoters Limited and a resident of Gautam Buddh Nagar, and Rajesh Bhardwaj, the director of the company and a resident of Bulandshahr area. According to Dr O.P. Mishra, the joint commissioner of police, economic offences wing (EOW), a number of victims had filed complaints against Sanjay Bhati. "During investigation, it emerged that approximately 8,000 com-

**▶ DURING INVESTIGATION, it emerged that approximately 8,000 complainants are from Delhi and their cheated amount is approximately ₹42,000 crore**

plainants are from Delhi and their cheated amount is approximately 250 crore. The account details of alleged company Garvit Innovative Promoters Limited were obtained from IDBI Bank in Yamuna Vihar; ICICI Bank in Pallavpuram, Meerut, and Khurja branches; and also from Noble Co-operative Bank in Noida," said the Joint CP. "The police also received a reply from the RBI, wherefrom it was revealed that the alleged company was not registered with RBI as an NBFC and was not authorised to collect money from the public. A number of properties worth hundreds of crores of rupees have been identi-

fied and are being verified.

"During investigation, it also came to light that the Directorate of Enforcement (Lucknow zonal office) is also investigating this issue and a number of cases are registered in Noida and other states based on the statement of victims," said the Joint CP.

Explaining the modus operandi of the accused, the Joint CP said that the duo used to induce victims to invest ₹62,000 for a bike and receive ₹9,500 monthly including principal and rental income on the bike for one year.

"Due to lucrative offers allegedly made, a number of victims invested their hard earned money in this scheme. In January 2019, an alleged company launched an e-bike (electric bike) scheme. Under this scheme, they again offered a lucrative offer to invest ₹1.24 lakh for a bike and receive ₹17,000 per month for one year," said the Joint CP.

## 29 Delhi MLAs get tested for Covid ahead of special session

**New Delhi, Sept. 11:** Twenty-nine Delhi MLAs on Friday underwent coronavirus tests at a temporary testing centre set up at the assembly complex here ahead of a one-day special session to be held on September 14.

Speaker Ram Niwas Goel said all the legislators attending the session will have to carry the report of their Covid-19 test.

An official said that so far, three people posted at the secretariat, including a secretary person and a private secretary to the deputy speaker, have tested positive for coronavirus infection. All the assembly staffers are being tested for coronavirus. Those who enter the assembly hall will have to undergo an RT-PCR test and others a rapid-antigen test, officials said.

According to the Delhi Assembly Secretariat, the session will commence at 2 PM on Monday.

The MLAs will have to wear face masks and practice social distancing compulsorily. They will also carry and display their identity cards while wearing face masks in the Legislative Assembly Complex.

In view of the social-distancing norms, the existing seating arrangement will not be applicable during the session. Seats will be reserved for the chief minister, deputy chief minister, ministers, deputy speaker, chief whip and leader of opposition.

Other MLAs will take their seat in the House on a first-come, first-served basis.

— PTI

## Docs save boy with no heartbeat after violent shock from live wire

**SHASHI BHUSHAN**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11

In what is being termed as a miracle by medical practitioners, a 16-year-old boy, who suffered a severe electric shock from a high voltage live wire that fell on an iron railing at his shop, was brought back to life by a city hospital.

The incident took place in Old Delhi when the boy was inspecting damage caused to his shop due to the heavy rains.

He was found in a lifeless condition by people from nearby in a state of shock and stuck motionless to the railing while current still ran through his body. He was rushed to Indraprastha Apollo Hospital and was admitted to the Emergency.

After admission, the head of Emergency and critical care at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Dr Priyadarshini Pal, and her team quickly responded to his critical condition.

**▶ THE BOY** was found in a lifeless condition by people from nearby in a state of shock and stuck motionless to the railing while current still ran through his body. He was rushed to a hospital and was admitted to the Emergency.

"The boy was brought into the Emergency in an unconscious and unresponsive state and did have a heartbeat. Upon evaluation, it was discovered that due to the severe and prolonged electric shock he had suffered a cardiac arrest and his pulse could not be felt. We immediately gave him a CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) to try and revive the vitals of the patient," said Dr Pal.

"His progress was closely monitored for five days and the patient was discharged in a healthy state after that," she added.

## City records over 4K cases for 3rd day

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11

As cases continue to rise in the city, the Delhi government, as part of a strategy to ramp up testing, has instructed "mohalla clinics" to start Covid-19 testing with immediate effect.

The national capital, on Friday, reported 4,266 new cases. The total coronavirus figure of the city now stands at 2,09,748. Of the total cases in the city, 26,907 are active and 1,78,154 patients have recovered.

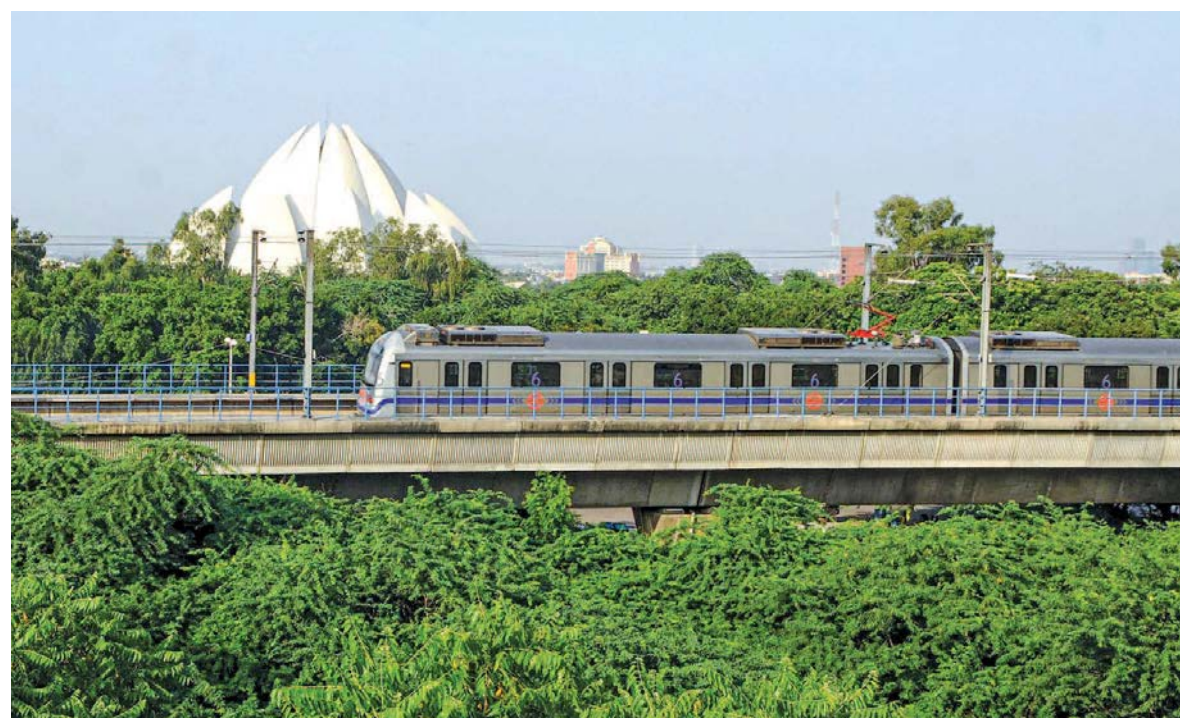
According to the Delhi health bulletin, a record 60,580 tests were done in the city in the last 24

**▶ THE TOTAL** coronavirus figure of the city now stands at 2,09,748. Of the total cases in the city, 26,907 are active and 1,78,154 patients have recovered

**▶ TWENTY ONE** fatalities have been recorded in the last 24 hours, pushing the total death count to 4,687. A record 58,340 tests were conducted in a span of 24 hours

hours. On September 10, the city had conducted 58,340 tests.

According to an order issued on September 10, the tests will take place on all working days between 2.00 pm and 5.00 pm. There are nearly 450



A metro train runs on the Violet Line in the backdrop of the Lotus Temple following resumption of its services during Unlock 4 in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

# Don't evict slums without alternative housing: Maken

*If AAP doesn't shift dwellers to 52K vacant flats, we will: City BJP*

**PRAMOD KUMAR**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11

The former Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) president Ajay Maken, on Friday, moved the top court seeking the rehabilitation of over two lakh residents of 48,000 jhuggis located all along the 140 km stretch of railway track in the national capital before they are evicted.

Seeking an urgent hearing of the intervention application, Mr Maken has contended that affected slum dwellers were not even heard before the order directing removal of their shanties was passed on August 31.

Besides Mr Maken, the other applicant is a slum dweller, Kailash Pandit, from Shakur Basti railway colony area of Delhi. Contending that the slum dwellers cannot be evicted without being rehabilitated, Mr Maken has sought direction to the Railway ministry, Delhi government, and the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) to follow the Delhi Slum and J.J. Rehabilitation and

**▶ Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal** government has yesterday written to the ministry of railways stating without rehabilitation any such demolition is unconstitutional and illegal

**▶ Adesh Gupta** gave an ultimatum to the Delhi government that his party will shift slum dwellers in 52,000 vacant flats if they do not shift in it within the next 90 days

Relocation Policy, 2015, and the Protocol (for removal of jhuggis) both in letter and spirit.

Pointing out that the large scale demolition of the jhuggis would render their dwellers homeless amid Covid-19, the application says, "The homeless persons will be forced to travel from place to place in search of shelter and livelihood and the same will be detrimental in the current Covid-19 crisis."

A top court bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra (since retired) and comprising Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice Krishna Murari had, on August 31, ordered the removal of 48,000 hutments all along the 140 km stretch of railway track in the national capital.

Meanwhile, while chief minister Arvind Kejriwal government has yesterday written to the ministry of railways stating without rehabilitation any such demolition is unconstitutional and illegal, on the other hand, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Friday gave an ultimatum to the Delhi government that his party will shift slum dwellers in 52,000 vacant flats if they do not shift in it within the next 90 days.

"In this letter, the Kejriwal government has given a list of 45,857 pucca flats which the Delhi government can give to these slum dwellers for rehabilitation," said AAP national spokesperson and MLA Raghav Chadha. Mr Chadha mentioned that in its affidavit to the

Supreme Court the BJP government has noted that due to the slums and slum dwellers the railway tracks remain dirty, therefore, slums should be demolished.

Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party president, Mr Gupta said that so far, no steps have been taken by the Delhi government to provide alternative accommodation to those slum dwellers, in fact, the Delhi government does not want to resolve but to create an obstruction.

"BJP has been continuously appealing to the Delhi government for several days that arrangements should be made in the vacant houses for the slum dwellers residing near the railway tracks but there is no positive response from the Delhi government, instead they started politics. This is an ultimatum for the Delhi government that if they did not shift the slum dwellers in the 52,000 houses vacant under the Rajiv Ratna Awas Yojana within the next 90 days, then we will shift the slum dwellers in those vacant houses," Mr Gupta added.

## 'Working to reduce Ghazipur landfill's height by 30-40 feet'

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11

BJP MP from East Delhi BJP Gautam Gambhir on Friday inspected the Ghazipur landfill site and said the height of the garbage dump is likely to be reduced by another 30 to 40 feet in the next one year. Mr Gambhir also inaugurated four trommel machines at the landfill site. Mr Gambhir had earlier claimed that the height of the landfill had been reduced by 40 feet.

"It's a continuous process and there are already 8 trommel machines installed at landfill site, with these four machines, 2,600 tonnes of garbage will be disposed, which receives 2,400 tonnes of waste a

day," he said.

"Within a year, 12 trommel machines have been installed at the site by the EDMC. Besides these machines, talks are also on for the installation of a state-of-the-art technology plant at the site," he added.

Mr Gambhir stated that he had promised that he would do his best to get the height of the garbage mountain down. With the addition of four more trommel machines, the segregation work will be done at a higher speed.

"As we reduced the height of the landfill by 40 feet earlier, hopefully, another 30-40 feet height will be brought down in the next year and in another two to three years, the landfill will be half of its height," he said.

## IMD: Rainfall unlikely in city till Tuesday

**New Delhi, Sept. 10:** Monsoon is likely to stay longer in the national capital and start withdrawing only in the "initial days of October", an India Meteorological Department official said on Thursday.

The wind system had reached Delhi on June 25, two days earlier than normal.

"According to the extended range forecast, monsoon rains will continue until September end. The withdrawal is likely to happen in the initial days of October," said Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre.

Earlier this year, the MeT department revised the date for the withdrawal of monsoon from Delhi from September 21 to September 25. — PTI



An MCD worker stands on the pile of garbage in the backdrop of a flock of Black Kite flying over Ghazipur landfill site in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI





## SHORT TAKES

## NIA to investigate Bengaluru riots

**Bengaluru:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday informed the Karnataka high court that the Centre might transfer to it two of the cases registered in connection with the August 11 riots here. The public prosecutor for the NIA approached made the submission before a division bench led by Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka during the hearing of a petition seeking investigation by the central agency in the cases. The PP said the Centre may pass an order soon for transfer of the two cases in which the Unlawful Activity Prevention (Prevention) Act provisions have been invoked. Around 3,000 to 4,000 people went on rampage torching the house of Congress MLA R Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy, his sister Jayanthi, DJ Halli police station and KG Halli police station over a derogatory social media post. — PTI

## Odisha floods: CM announces package

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday announced a special package of ₹300 crore for livelihood support for farmers to ameliorate their sufferings due to the recent floods in the state. In the farm sector, agriculture input subsidy will be provided to small and marginal farmers who have sustained crop loss of 33 per cent and above at the rate of ₹6,800 per hectare of land in rain-fed and non-irrigated areas, a statement from the chief ministers office said. ₹13,500 input subsidy will be provided per hectare of land in areas under assured irrigation and ₹18,000 per hectare for all types of perennial crops, the statement said. — PTI

## Hema: Mathura will get more projects

**Mathura:** Mathura MP Hema Malini promised to bring more projects to her constituency while inaugurating a lift and an escalator at the local railway station through a video conference on Friday. "I will bring more projects, including for the Mathura junction, in future," she said while complementing railway officials for the timely completion of both projects. The BJP MP said due to the coronavirus situation, she could not come to Mathura for the inauguration of the projects and congratulated local people for the facilities at the railway junction. The Railways has spent nearly ₹1 crore on the projects. — PTI

## Bengal: Drones to help in fire-fighting

**Kolkata:** West Bengal fire services department is contemplating to procure drones after acquiring four robots as a better fire fighting gear, state minister Sujit Bose said on Friday. These four robots would be used in situations where it is too dangerous for fire brigade personnel to venture or in places not accessible to them, the fire and emergency services minister said. West Bengal is the only state that has four such robots, he said. "Now, the department is planning to introduce drones," the minister said at a valedictory session of the Safety Symposium & Exposition organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). Fire audits are conducted regularly in the state, he said. Bose said that fire services department personnel also helped in the sanitisation and fumigation of COVID hospitals and quarantine centres. — PTI

## PLA morale hits rock bottom after key positions captured

Ladakh: Indian Army consolidating positions on strategic heights

VIKRAM SHARMA HYDERABAD, SEPT. 11

Watching their enemy snatch the strategic positions they once dominated can hit the psyche of soldiers of any Army. Unable to recapture the positions despite being one of the most powerful armies can make them feel miserable. To make matters worse, when a strategy devised to carry out a limited action and inflict casualties to hit the otherwise high morale of their enemy too fails, it shatters them. Being under the constant watch of their adversary all this while is just devastating. For all its massive fire power, state-of-the-art mil-

itary technologies and being strong numerically, the morale of the People's Liberation Army of China soldiers has hit rock bottom. The fact that they have been caged by aggressive Indian troops in eastern Ladakh — a first since the 1962 war — has hit them where it hurts the most. After all, a soldier's morale is the core element of military capability.

Sources privy to the multiple assessments of PLA's possible strategies and options — as analysed by the top brass of the Indian Army — point to one key aspect: The depleting morale of the PLA ever since Indian troops cap-

tured and started dominating the key heights at Spanggur Tso, Rechin La, Rezang La besides the hill-tops at Kalatop, Camelback and Helmet.

Most of these ridges and mountains used to be dominated by the PLA. This is precisely the reason the frustrated Chinese Army is baying for the blood of Indian soldiers. The recent attempt at having Galwan valley-type of clashes at the Mukhpari peak is one such example.

In order to keep the morale of their forces high, the PLA commanders are believed to have stepped up training to make them overcome the loss they suffered at the

hands of Indian soldiers. The Chinese side is said to be indulging in more battle drills, which is normally done to challenge the soldiers to keep their morale high. Such exercises are taken up by armies to prepare themselves physically and mentally but the sudden increase in such drills especially after suffering losses point to only one aspect — depleting morale of the enemy.

The PLA soldiers are believed to be worried over "lack of hard decisions" on the ground by their seniors which has resulted in Indian troops consolidating their positions on the strategic heights.

## Arunachal boys 'kidnapped' by PLA Rijiju: 5 missing youth to be handed over today

**New Delhi, Sept. 11:** China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) is likely to hand over five youths missing from Arunachal Pradesh to the Indian authorities on Saturday, Union minister Kiren Rijiju said.

The PLA on Tuesday had conveyed that the five youths, who went missing on September 4 from the Sino-Indian border in Upper Subansiri district, were found by them across the border.

"The Chinese PLA has confirmed to the Indian Army to hand over the youths from Arunachal Pradesh to our side. The handing over is likely to take place anytime tomorrow i.e. 12th September 2020 at a designated location," Mr Rijiju tweeted on Friday.

It was Rijiju who first broke the news about the PLA's confirmation that the youths were found on the Chinese side of the Sino-Indian border.



Rijiju

The incident came to light when two members from the group of youths, who went hunting in the jungle, returned home and informed the families of the five that they were whisked away by the Chinese troops from Sera-7, an Army patrol zone located about 12 km further north of Nacho.

Nacho is the last administrative circle along the McMahon line and is around 120 km from the district headquarters Daporijo.

Those who were allegedly kidnapped by the Chinese Army were identified as Toch Singkam, Prasat Ringling, Dongtu Ebiya, Tanu Baker and Ngaru Diri.

## C'garh: Naxals kill forest officer in Bastar district

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, SEPT. 11

Suspected Maoists on Friday brutally killed a forest officer in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Bijapur.

This was the first killing of a government officer by Naxals in Leftwing insurgency-hit Bastar division, comprising seven districts, in the last one year.

The slain officer, Rathram Patel (56), was posted as forest ranger in Indravati tiger reserve in the district in January this year.

"He was attacked with

sharp weapons by Maoists when he was distributing wages to labourers in the village of Kandoji under Bhairamgarh police station", Bastar range inspector general of police P Sunderraj told this newspaper.

He died on the spot. According to Bastar police, a local militia group of outlawed CPI (Maoists) was involved in the killing.

## Javadekar warning to sand mafia

**New Delhi, Sept. 11:** Paying tributes to martyred forest officials, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on Friday came down heavily on sand mining mafia, saying attacks on revenue or forest officials will not be tolerated and strict action will be taken against the culprits.

The remarks come on National Forest Martyrs

Day observed for the first time by the environment ministry. Mr Javadekar, in a virtual interaction, appealed to states to make stern laws to tackle sand mining mafia. In a stern message against the illegal practice, he said the situation will be reviewed and those found not abiding shall be punished. Expressing deep anguish over the death of a forest staff who was

killed by sandalwood smugglers in Rajasthan's Alwar, the minister said amendments shall be made in regulations so that sandalwood can be cultivated more widely. Revenue or forest officials doing their duty are killed. Attacks on them will not be tolerated. We will make strict laws, there will be stringent punishment provisions, he tweeted. — PTI



Narendra Modi

He, however, said that the NEP places no bar on learning any language and that children can study English or any international language which they find useful.

No one has any objection to this, he added, while not-

ing that Indian languages should be promoted. His comments came amid criticism of the NEP-2020 by some opposition-ruled states. A few opposition parties have accused the ruling BJP of working to promote Hindi, a charge rejected by it.

In his speech, the Prime Minister lamented that the world changed in the last three decades but our education policy remained the same.

In the current system, marksheet has become "pressure sheet" for students and "prestige sheet" for families, the prime min-

ister said, adding that the new policy aims to remove this pressure.

Mr Modi said the NEP will give a new direction to the country in the 21st century, sowing the seeds for a new era. "The job is not finished yet. It (NEP) has to be implemented in an equally effective manner, and we have to do it together," he said, noting that a nation-wide consultation process is going on over the policy.

People have many questions about the NEP, and they are legitimate, he said, noting that over 15 lakh suggestions have been received on MyGov portal. — PTI



Union minister for minority affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi meets the representatives of various social organisations and intellectuals from all sections of society during his two-day visit in Leh on Friday. — PTI

## New party formed in Assam, set to fight 80-100 seats

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, SEPT. 11

The two leading frontline students organisations of Assam — All Assam Student's Union (Aasu) and Asom Jatiyabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) here on Friday announced the formation of a new regional political outfit which would be contesting 80-100 assembly seats in the assembly polls next year.

Announcing the slogan of party — Assam first — always and forever, the AASU general secretary Lurinjyoti Gogoi told reporters that Mr Basanta Deka and Mr Krishna Gopal Bhattacharya have been appointed as the convenors of the party's Assam Advisory Committee which will be taking all the decisions on behalf of the party. The name of the party will be announced on or before September 15.

Pointing out that the new party will keep their distance from communal and nationalist parties, the Aasu general secretary said, "The people of Assam expect a change. They hope that the weak socio-economic situation will be restructured and a

foundation of a self-reliant state economy will be laid. The people of Assam also want a solution to the problem of illegal immigrants in the state."

If insiders in the students organisation are to be believed, there is a section of leaders in the Aasu who were opposed to the idea of floating the political party. The chief adviser and most prominent face of the Aasu, Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharya, was not present in the press conference on Friday.

Earlier, Aasu and AJYCP had formed a 16-member 'Assam Advisory Committee'. The Assam Advisory Committee that had some of the most prominent names from the state submitted its report on September 2 and suggested the influential Aasu-AJYCP to float a political party.

## MP BYPOLLS Congress releases 1st list of 15 candidates

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, SEPT. 11

The Congress on Friday released the first list of 15 candidates for the upcoming byelections in the 27 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh, expected to be held by the end of October this year.

The candidates for the rest 12 assembly constituencies are expected to be announced in the coming week.

Incidentally, the party has denied ticket to Satish Sikarwar, who has joined Congress from BJP recently with the hope to secure nomination by Congress for Ambah (SC) assembly constituency.

A strong section of Congress has opposed Mr Sikarwar's nomination forcing the party leadership to choose Satyaprakash Sikarwar as party candidate in the seat, a senior Congress leader told this newspaper requesting not to be quoted.

At least four other candidates who figured in the first list are party hoppers.

## CBI seeks nod to prosecute ex-CAG

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11

The CBI has sought sanction to prosecute former defence secretary and Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), Shashi Kant Sharma, former Air-Vice Marshal Jasbir Singh Panesar, and three other former Indian Air Force (IAF) officers for their alleged role in ₹3,600 crore AugustaWestland VIP helicopter deal case.

According to sources the central probe agency has approached the Defence Ministry for sanction to begin proceedings in court against Mr Sharma, Panesar and three other



Shashi Kant Sharma

former IAF officers. The agency is likely to file a supplementary charge sheet in the case, sources said adding role of Christian Michel, the alleged middleman in the deal who was deported from the UAE and is currently in judicial custody, will also be mentioned in

the supplementary probe report. A Special Investigation Team of the CBI took over this case in 2016 and filed its first chargesheet against SP Tyagi, former IAF Chief, and 11 others in September 2017. "Once the sanction is accorded, suspected public servants, along with Christian Michel, will be named in the supplementary chargesheet", sources said. The AugustaWestland case involves a ₹3,600 crore contract for the purchase of 12 luxury helicopters to be used by top Indian leaders like the President, the Prime Minister and other VIPs. Signed in 2007 by the Manmohan Singh govern-

ment, the contract was scrapped six years later amid allegations AugustaWestland paid kickbacks in India amounting to ₹362 crore.

Mr Sharma, who was Joint Secretary (Air) in the Defence Ministry between 2003-2007, initiated the purchase of the helicopters in that role. He allegedly approved the purchase in 2010 as Director General (Defence Acquisition). Three other former IAF officers against whom sanctions have been sought include—Deputy chief test pilot S.A. Kunte, Wing commander Thomas Mathew and group captain N Santosh, they said.

## FCRA VIOLATION

## Kerala minister Jaleel appears before ED sleuths

**Kochi, Sept. 11:** Kerala higher education minister, K.T. Jaleel appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) here on Friday in connection with alleged FCRA violation in accepting consignments of Holy Quran brought from UAE through diplomatic channel as opposition Congress and BJP staged protests, demanding his resignation.

Jaleel appeared before the ED here and his statement was recorded, a source privy to the development told PTI. The activists of Youth Congress, Yuva Morcha and the BJP took out separate marches to the state secretariat late Friday and burned effigies of the minister as they demanded his resignation.

The police lathicharged and used water cannon to disperse the protesters. Jaleel had earlier admitted that the consignment containing Holy Quran

had been received from the UAE Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram which a top Customs official had referred to as "prima facie violation of FCRA" (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act).

The minister on Friday posted on Facebook: "Truth will prevail. Only the truth. Even if the whole world opposes it, nothing else will happen." He did not elaborate.

As the news of Jaleel's appearance before the ED was flashed by television channels late evening, the opposition Congress and the BJP lashed out at the state government.

BJP workers, including state president K Surendran, also took out a march in front of the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday night demanding that Jaleel quit the Cabinet. — PTI

**ANDHRA PRADESH STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED**  
Regd. Office: 10-15/21, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sri Sai Towers, Besides SIRIS Company, Bandar Road, Vijayawada-520007.  
Tender. No. Mktg/M/21920(3)/KMS-2019-20 Dated: 11.09.2020

**RE-TENDER NOTICE**

APPOINTMENT OF MANUFACTURERS/DISTRIBUTORS/DEALERS FOR SUPPLY OF 7663 UNITS OF UNIVERSAL MOISTURE METERS TO RHYTHU BHAROSA KENDRAS IN ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FOR STRENGTHENING OF PADDY PROCUREMENT OPERATIONS AT VILLAGE LEVEL THROUGH AP e-PROCUREMENT PLATFORM.

Andhra Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd invites Tenders for Appointment of Manufacturers/ Distributors/ Dealers for Supply of Universal Moisture Meters.

Interested Manufacturers/ Distributors/ Dealers from all over India may visit [www.apsccl.in](http://www.apsccl.in) or [www.approcurement.gov.in](http://www.approcurement.gov.in) to view and download tender documents at free of cost. Interested tenderers to submit bids should be registered in the website [www.approcurement.gov.in](http://www.approcurement.gov.in) and should obtain digital Signature Certificates from any Certifying Authority in India. The details and procedure for obtaining digital Signature certificates are mentioned in the website [www.approcurement.gov.in](http://www.approcurement.gov.in) or contact the helpdesk of procurement portal, Phone numbers: 08645-246370/71/72/73/74.

Last date for online registration and completion of formalities for e-auction shall be up to 5.00 PM of 16.09.2020 and tentative date for online e-auction through e-procurement platform would be on 18.09.2020.

Sd/- VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**  
See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused namely Shishir Rawat, S/o Surender Prasad Rawat, R/o H.No. 76, Ward No. 36, Ramji Nagar Colony, Behind No. 1 School, Chattarpur, Madhya Pradesh, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case of FIR No. 300/17 u/s 408 IPC, Dated 18.09.2017, at P.S. Kotla Mubarak Pur, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the accused Shishir Rawat cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Shishir Rawat has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Shishir Rawat, FIR No. 300/17, Dated 18.09.2017, at P.S. Kotla Mubarak Pur, New Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 23.10.2020.

By Order  
Ms. Nupur Gupta,  
Metropolitan Magistrate-02, South-East  
Room No. 09, Saket Courts, New Delhi

DP/221/SD/2020-(Court Matter)



## SHORT TAKES

## Health worker commits suicide

**Thiruvananthapuram:** A 41-year-old woman Asha health worker was found hanging in an unused building here and in a suicide note purportedly written by her she has accused two local CPI-M members of mentally torturing her, police said on Friday. The woman was found dead at the one-room building in Udiyankulangara near here on Thursday, police said. The Opposition Congress and the BJP staged a protest here on Friday seeking stern action in the matter. "She is an Asha (Accredited Social Health Activist) worker and seems like a CPI(M) party sympathiser. We found a suicide note from the spot. It names two local committee members of CPI(M) for mentally torturing her," the investigating police officer told PTI. Police said as per the note, she had also complained to the party's local leadership about the "mental torture". — PTI

## Yogi: Check Covid spread in Lucknow

**Lucknow:** Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday directed senior state government officials to hold a meeting with the authorities in Lucknow to chalk out an effective strategy to check the spread of Covid-19 in the city. He also asked officials to increase the bed capacity in Covid hospitals in Kanpur Nagar, besides making use of the command and control centre in Allahabad for surveillance work. At a meeting held here, the chief minister directed the additional chief secretaries of health, rural development and Panchayati Raj departments to hold a meeting with senior officials of Lucknow, including district magistrate, chief medical officer, chief development officer and "nagar ayukt". — PTI

## Ladakh friction: India, China lay 5-point roadmap

■ Continued from Page 1  
two countries earlier of "not allowing differences to become disputes".

According to Chinese diplomatic sources, Mr Wang said bilateral ties are at a "crossroads", but "the Chinese side is willing to support enhanced dialogue between the frontier troops on both sides to resolve specific issues". Mr Wang also outlined China's "stern position" on "immediately stopping provocations such as firing and other dangerous actions". Beijing also claims that Indian troops had "trespassed" across the LAC. Mr Wang also said while it is "normal" for the two countries to have differences, there should be "cooperation, not confrontation; and mutual trust, not suspicion".

Meanwhile, the five-point Sino-Indian joint statement said: "Both ministers had a frank and constructive discussion on the developments in the India-China border areas as well as on India-China relations. The two foreign ministers agreed that the current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side. They agreed therefore that the border troops of both sides should continue their dialogue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions."

## Many 'dissenters' retained in CWC in Sonia reshuffle

■ Continued from Page 1  
Rajeev Shukla, Manickam Tagore, Pramod Tiwari, Jairam Ramesh, H.K. Patil, Salman Khurshid, Pawan Bansal, Dinakar Gundurao, Manish Chattrath and Kuljit Nagra. Besides Mr Azad, Ambika Soni, Motilal Vora and Mallikarjun Kharge have also been removed as AICC general secretaries. However, Ms Soni has been included in the special committee formed to assist Mrs Sonia Gandhi in organisational matters.

The special committee members include A.K. Antony, Ahmed Patel, K.C. Venugopal and Mukul Wasnik, besides Ambika Soni and Randeep Singh Surjewala.

The reshuffle comes a month after a group of 23 party leaders wrote a letter to Mrs Gandhi calling for an overhaul of the party, sought internal elections and a "full-time, visible leadership". The letter also suggested that the Gandhi family would always be a part of the party's collective decision-making process.



Howrah Bridge wears a deserted look during the complete bi-weekly lockdown to curb the spread of novel coronavirus in Kolkata on Friday. Normal life came to a grinding halt in West Bengal on Friday as a complete lockdown was enforced across the state. All public transport, offices and other commercial establishments, barring those dealing with essential services, remained closed as strict restrictions were clamped. The lockdown was also almost total in Kolkata and in districts barring some places like Purulia town, Asansol, Durgapur where some grocery shops and vegetable vendors did brisk business in the morning before the police stepped in. — PTI

■ Naidu gets his corona testing done before monsoon session  
MPs urged to undergo Covid test

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11

Ahead of the monsoon session of Parliament beginning from September 14, Rajya Sabha chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu underwent Covid-19 test on Friday. Rajya Sabha secretariat has already issued an advisory to MPs asking them to get their Covid test done within 72 hours before the commencement of the session and testing is also mandatory for Parliament's officials and staff. DRDO is also providing



M. Venkaiah Naidu

multi-utility kits to all MPs. Advisory has also been issued to journalists on how to cover the House proceedings and also to get Covid-19 test done. From Friday, three test centres will be functioning in

Parliament House Annexe. Mr Naidu had been holding regular meetings with secretaries of ministries of home, health and family welfare. DRDO chairman, ICMR DG on COVID-19 risk mitigation.

In order to ensure social distancing norms in the Upper House, the Rajya Sabha chamber, galleries and the Lok Sabha chamber will be used to seat members — of the total members, 57 will be accommodated in the chamber and 51 in galleries. The remaining 136 will be seated in the cham-

ber of Lok Sabha. In all, there are 244 members and one seat is vacant. Respective leaders of the parties have been intimating the number of seats allocated to them proportionate to their strength in all three locations. Four large display screens in the chamber will show the members speaking and there will be seamless live telecast of the proceedings on Rajya Sabha TV. In addition, six smaller display screens and audio consoles have been installed in the four galleries.

## WEST BENGAL

## Prison-like atmosphere in Visva-Bharati: Tagore's kin

**Kolkata, Sept. 11:** Several luminaries, including members of Rabindranath Tagore's family, have written to West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee against the Visva-Bharati authorities, urging her government to take possession of a century-old heritage road as they fear that access to it might be blocked.

Considering the spree of building high boundary walls in several parts of Shantiniketan and creating a "prison-like atmosphere", there are apprehensions that the 3-km road connecting Visva-Bharati with Tagore's dream village Sriniketan will also be blocked for public soon and a new road come up in its place, said the letter written by 40 eminent persons, including a member of painter Nandalal Bose's family.

"An 8-9 feet high wall is nearing completion on a portion of this old road which is dotted with residences of luminaries like Amartya Sen, Khsitimohan Sen and Nandalal Bose," the letter written in Bengali said.

"Once the wall is completed, this road will be out of bounds for residents of Sripally, Simanta Pally, Pearson Pally, Andrew's Pally, Deer Park, Binoy Bhavan and Sriniketan, and a part of history and heritage of Santiniketan will be lost," it added.

— PTI

■ Trinamul Cong asks Ghosh to visit a doctor  
'Corona is over', says WB BJP chief in rally

**Kolkata, Sept. 11:** West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh has claimed that the Covid-19 pandemic is over but chief minister Mamata Banerjee is imposing lockdown and other restrictions in West Bengal only to stop BJP from organising public meetings before the assembly polls due next year. Ghosh's comment was made at a time when the country and the state are witness to sharp spikes in Covid-19 cases daily of 95,000 and 3,000 respectively.

The rally where Ghosh made his remark was held in Hooghly district on Wednesday which was attended by a large number of people disregarding the social distancing norms for checking the spread of the contagion. The video of the meeting has gone viral.



Dilip Ghosh

"Didi's (Mamata Banerjee) brothers (supporters) are feeling uneasy after seeing the gathering (at the meeting). It is not due to the fear of coronavirus, but due to fear of BJP! Corona is over, but Didi is unnecessarily imposing lockdown across the state to stop BJP from holding meetings and rallies," Ghosh said.

A complete lockdown is on in the state on Friday. The Trinamul Congress mocked Ghosh for his comments and asked him to visit a doctor.

"Every day we are witnessing a spike of 3000 cases in Bengal and more than 95,000 cases in the country. And BJP state president Dilip Ghosh is making a hilarious statement that Covid-19 is gone! I think he should visit a doctor for his treatment," TMC MP Kalyan Bandopadhyay said.

The total number of Covid-19 cases in Bengal now stands at 1,93,175. More than 3700 people have died due to the contagion, including comorbidities. Hooghly district, where Ghosh was addressing the rally, has registered the fifth-highest number of cases in the state. — PTI

## HC notice to Rahman in tax evasion case

**Chennai, Sept. 11:** The Madras High Court on Friday issued notice to music composer A.R. Rahman on a petition filed by the Income Tax department alleging that he used a foundation in which he is the managing trustee as a conduit to evade tax and routed ₹3 crore plus income to it.

A division bench of jus-

■ AFTER RECEIVING the IT notice, A.R. Rahman had moved the income tax appellate tribunal in Chennai. The tribunal ruled in favour of Rahman finding that the amount was not taxable.

tices TS Sivagnanam and V Bhavani Subbarayan recorded the submissions made by the IT department and issued notice to the music composer.

According to senior standing counsel for the Income Tax department T R Senthil Kumar, in the assessment year 2011-12, Rahman received income

to the tune of ₹3.47 crore in connection with an agreement made with the UK-based Libra Mobiles.

The contract was to compose exclusive ring-tones for the company and the term of the contract was for three years.

As per the contract, Rahman instructed the company to pay his remuneration directly to the foundation managed by him, the department said.

"The taxable income must be received by Rahman and after due deduction of tax, it can be transferred to the trust. But the same cannot be

## Mumbai court denies bail to Rhea, brother

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 11

The special NDPS court on Friday rejected bail applications filed by actress Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik and four others in connection with a drugs-related case pertaining to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

After the court passed the order rejecting bail pleas, advocate Satish Manshinde, who is representing the Chakraborty family, shared in a statement that they are likely to approach the High Court. "Once we get a copy of the NDPS Spl Court Order, we will decide next week on the course of action about approaching the High Court," stated the lawyer.

Special judge G.B. Gurao on Friday informed the applicants' lawyers that all six bail pleas filed by accused in the case have been rejected. A copy of the detailed order will be given to concerned lawyers in due course, the judge said.

Special public prosecutor Atul Sarpande, appearing for the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), welcomed the deci-

## 'Sushant case not a poll agenda for NDA in Bihar'

NAYEAR AZAD  
PATNA, SEPT. 11

Former Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis on Friday clarified that the death case of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput was not an election agenda for the NDA in Bihar. "We don't want to make this an election agenda. Sushant Singh Rajput is the son of Bihar and people across the



country want justice for him. We would ensure that he gets justice", he said. Mr Fadnavis along with BJP chief J.P. Nadda is in Bihar to assess the party's preparedness for Assembly elections which is slated to be held in November this year.

sion and said the court, while rejecting the bail pleas, has accepted the contentions of the prosecution that the investigation is at a crucial stage.

In her bail plea, Rhea had claimed that she was falsely implicated in the case. Rhea had also retracted the confessional statement recorded by the NCB when she was questioned for three days. She had claimed that the NCB officials had coerced her into making self-incriminating statements.

The NCB had strongly opposed the bail pleas and

said that Rhea was conscious of the fact that Rajput was consuming drugs, but despite that she continued procuring and making payments for drugs. The NCB had said that although the quantity of banned drugs seized in the case was small, it was still a commercial quantity and worth ₹1.85,200. "Rhea Chakraborty and Showik Chakraborty financed and arranged drugs for Sushant Singh Rajput and at his instructions," the NCB had said in its affidavit responding to the bail pleas.

■ Veteran socialist quits RJD  
Raghuvansh sends olive branch to Nitish via FB post

**Patna, Sept. 11:** After resigning from the RJD, former Union minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh has written a letter to Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar with a slew of suggestions including an amendment in MGN-REGA and some issues concerning his native Vaishali district, sending an olive branch to JD(U) which has welcomed his decision to leave Lalu Prasad's party.

Singh addressed his letter to Kumar from the hospital bed at AIIMS, New Delhi on Thursday, the day he said goodbye to the RJD. He has posted the letter to the chief minister on Kumar's Facebook account. The ruling Janata Dal (United) has made it clear that it will welcome Singh into the party if he decides to join it. The former union minister is admitted to Delhi AIIMS because of post-COVID complications.

In his letter to Kumar, who heads the JD(U), the veteran leader has made a series of suggestions including an amendment in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee



Raghuvansh Prasad Singh

Act (MGNREGA), bringing Lord Buddha's begging bowl from Kabul and hoisting the tricolour at Vaishali, the land of worlds first Republic.

Singh has represented Vaishali Lok Sabha seat for five times before his successive defeats in 2014 and 2019 polls. Departure of the veteran socialist leader, a well known face of the RJD along with Prasad, will be a tremendous psychological debacle for the main opposition party. It would also dent the party's support among the upper caste Rajput.

Singh, who as union minister of rural development in the UPA-1 had piloted the NREGA scheme, urged the CM to bring an amendment through an ordinance into the Act in order to provide more benefits to the farmers. — PTI

## Will stand by Chirag's decisions: Paswan

**New Delhi, Sept. 11:** Amid the growing rift with NDA partner JD(U) ahead of the Bihar Assembly polls, Lok Janshakti Party patron Ram Vilas Paswan on Friday said he will stand firmly with whatever decision his son and LJP chief Chirag Paswan takes on the party's ties.

In a series of tweets, the Union minister also revealed that he was hospitalised with an illness and was getting treatment for it. He, however, did not mention the nature of his illness.

"In the time of the coronavirus crisis, I served the country as the food minister and made every effort to ensure that food items reach on time everywhere. During this time, my health started deteriorating but to ensure that there was no laxity in work due to this, I did not go to a hospital," Paswan said.

The minister said that it was at his son Chirag's behest that he went to a hospital and started treatment. "Besides taking care of me, he is also fulfilling his responsibilities towards the party," Paswan said. — PTI

## Haryana BKU chief, 300 others booked for damaging property

**Kurukshetra, Sept. 11:** The Haryana Police on Friday booked state BKU chief Gurnam Singh Charuni and 300 unidentified people for damaging public property and violating prohibitory orders, a day after farmers clashed with cops during a protest here.

Members of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) and other farm bodies had blocked a national highway in Kurukshetra's Pipili and clashed with police while protesting against three Union government legislations, which they

claimed were anti-farmer. Police had resorted to a lathicharge when farmers coming from the Shahbad area pushed their way to the protest site. The agitating farmers smashed windowpanes of a fire brigade vehicle and pelted police with stones.

Three separate FIRs were registered at the Sadar police station in Thanesar. The FIRs also include charges for the violation of the National Highway Act and the Disaster Management Act, he said. — PTI

## BJP netas in selfie rush for PM's birthday

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 11

Across the BJP echelons, Union ministers, chief ministers, parliamentarians and local leaders are in a digital scramble to achieve a humongous target: Reaching out to people to shoot and share, "voluntarily", at least one million 'happy birthday' selfie videos for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

With just one week to go for September 17, the BJP IT cell is frantically coordinating the digital drive,

■ WITH JUST one week to go for September 17, the BJP IT cell is frantically coordinating the digital drive, ensuring that the birthday wishes pour in like an avalanche, with the hashtag #HappyBirthdayModiji

ensuring that the birthday wishes pour in like an avalanche, with the hashtag #HappyBirthdayModiji where not only citizens greet him but also reflect on how his leader-

ship has changed India, how it has helped them and how hopeful they are about the future — the country's as well as their own.

The million videos will have to showcase unity in diversity — people across the demographic stretch and divides of religion, caste, region, location, social and educational range, age, gender, language — and the IT cell expects people to send their messages in different languages but with the same message: Everyone

loves Modi ji.

The drive is getting a good early traction, with several celebrities having been roped in. "We are overwhelmed but not surprised with the outburst of love from people across the country and several countries globally."

"Neither has this idea come from the top nor is there any pressure on anyone to muster these videos. In fact, it is going to be a total surprise for our beloved Prime Minister, a senior BJP leader said.



Youngsters perform physical exercises as part of preparations for recruitment in security forces in Ranbir Singh Pura sector of Jammu on Friday. — PTI



## THE ASIAN AGE

12 SEPTEMBER 2020

### Vaccine: Forget the hype, invest in policy

The Covid-19 vaccine race has heated up, but one of its main participants — out of 141 in total — has taken a pit stop. After a participant developed transverse myelitis, AstraZeneca paused trials for its coronavirus vaccine candidate, Covishield, also known as the Oxford University vaccine. After a rap from the Drug Controller General of India for proceeding regardless, the Pune-based Serum Institute of India, too, paused its own adenovirus trials. So now other frontrunners must have forged ahead, and they include Russia, China, the United States and Canada, although a majority of scientists see Sputnik V, allegedly put together with the help of research pilfered by Russian cyber-intelligence agents, as a rush job. The spotlight is now back on Moderna Therapeutics which has a year-end launch tentatively lined up for its messenger RNA jab.

But the hype — surrounding T cells and spike protein and neutralising antibodies — can be a bit misleading. At a time when the world is increasingly politically polarised, with epidemiologists and economists switching roles, as has been frequently complained of, this mad dash for the vaccine is actually being taken with a pinch of salt, and not only by evolution-deniers and anti-vaxxers. The common man interested in protecting his home and hearth, for instance, without being led astray by red herrings, is also asking the valid question — did this race not begin as a profit ploy by Big Pharma?

Pertinently, the industry may well have been in cahoots with the government — as the discovery of a vaccine before November 3 might well boost US president Donald Trump's chances in the election. Closer home in India, there did emerge a parallel deadline — a controversy erupted over Bharat Biotech's Covaxin after the Indian Council of Medical Research was reported to have been pushing for an August 15 launch.

Phase 2 trials of Covaxin are expected to start this week. In addition to Bharat Biotech, and Zydus Cadila, other Indian companies involved in the battle against SARS-CoV-2 are Biological E, based in Hyderabad, and Gennova Biopharmaceuticals, also in Pune. Biological E is licensing the recombinant protein Covid-19 vaccine being developed at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, USA, while Gennova is developing an mRNA vaccine in collaboration with HDT Bio of the United States.

There is no data yet for the efficacy of any vaccine for the coronavirus. How long they will work is also uncertain. The US Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organisation have both put out a point estimate of 50 per cent only as the answer to the first query. However, even a 40-50 per cent successful vaccine taken in the form of seasonal shots will go a long way in preventing disease in a population as large as India's, now clocking close to one lakh daily infections. But then there appears the question of the vaccine's accessibility. If made by multinational manufacturers, the cost of these shots could be in several hundreds of dollars. Luckily, this falls in an area that is our forte and our indigenous pharmaceutical companies do have the technology and wherewithal to mass-produce the vaccine.

Also, India has a fairly robust vaccine delivery system, as part of the universal immunisation programmes for pulse polio and tuberculosis. It is the duty of the Union government, therefore, to stop wasting more time and swiftly put in place a standard operating protocol, ensuring parity of access to all, so that once it is time for state health administrations to take over, the cure reaches the last citizen quickly and inexpensively.

### Media on trial

The reprimand of the media by two high courts on Thursday asking it to restrain itself while doing its job is a wake-up call for the practitioners of the profession in the country. While the Delhi court has asked the media to respect the sanctity of the lawful criminal investigation, the Bombay high court wondered why the electronic media comes under no government control.

The Delhi high court's directive to Republic TV came in a plaint by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor alleging that the channel was portraying him as murderer in a case, which the investigating agency has concluded to be a suicide. The court was unequivocal in its stand that there cannot be a media trial parallel to the process as established by the law. "The press cannot convict anyone or insinuate that he/she is guilty or make any other unsubstantiated claims," the court ruled. It rightly rubbished the channel's claim that it had evidence with it and said "statements from here and there" do not make evidence." The Bombay high court was incensed at the way the media was chasing the suicide of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput as it heard a PIL, which said the reportage sought to malign the Mumbai police.

The courts cannot be suspected of attempting to gag the media. The Delhi high court insisted that it was not interested in gagging the media and only directed the editor and the channel "to be bound by the statement made on their behalf by their counsel". The Bombay high court gave the News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSSA) to act on the petitions even while mentioning that it "has no teeth".

Democracy sustains fair journalism. If the latter tries to exceed its brief, then the instruments of democracy, however weak they are, would try and resist it. It's time the media realised it and restrained itself.

#### THE ASIAN AGE

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Editor in Chief

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Subhani



## On Sino-Indian border: Skirmish, war or peace?

Syed Ata Hasnain

As you enter the hallowed precincts of the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) at Wellington, Tamil Nadu, one of India's most prestigious military institutions, the credo "Yuddham Pragya" greets you everywhere. Before it got translated to its Sanskrit version, it existed as "Tam Marte Quam Minerva", or "To War With Wisdom". It essentially denotes two things to future senior leaders of the armed forces. First, you need to be wise enough to understand the enormity of war; and second, war should be resorted to if only you have the wisdom to understand and prosecute it. As the ongoing four-month standoff continues at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh, with some dramatic changes in the last few days, people are increasingly worrying about the possibility of war. While jingoism will rule the airwaves under such conditions and every Indian becomes an analyst, the term "war" adopts a romantic hue rather than a pragmatic one. It is the wisdom and not the romanticism which must prevail, as per the DSSC credo.

After suffering a perceived ignominy of surprise by PLA troops, under training in depth areas, who transgressed an appreciable distance and refused to vacate the Finger complex of northern Pangong Tso, the ongoing dynamics of buffer zones and uncertainty about transgressions in other areas like Depsang, the Indian Army smartly turned the tables on the PLA. It opened an unexpected front and proactively beat the PLA to the occupation of dominating features on the

Kailash Range, south of Pangong Tso, to secure a couple of advantages. First, this gives depth to the Chushul Bowl, currently the nerve centre of eastern Ladakh. Second, it gives clear and uninterrupted domination over the Spanggur Gap, Spanggur Lake and the PLA's Moldo garrison; the locations from which all PLA forces against Chushul will need to spring. Third, it forces the PLA to focus on our current strength, with no immediate flanks for riposte. Reading this, the natural question a non-military mind should ask is why this action couldn't have been executed in late May or June. The decision not to do so probably had a basic military rationale. Since the LAC is perceptual, the Kailash Range features have remained unoccupied by both sides; a sudden occupation at that stage in a critical area like Chushul could have led to a response from the PLA while we were still imbalanced; remembering that in terms of mobilisation of additional troops the PLA had a fair head-start over us. We are more balanced now and in position for a protracted fight should the PLA's response be violent. In terms of a military response, it's not just the first order of action by the adversary that needs to be assessed; that assessment has to go well beyond with imponderables increasing at every level and every order. Judging by the emotive and passionate response from China in the political and military domains this time, the temptation to go overboard and attempt eviction to evacuate the Indian occupation would even then have been extremely high. In May-June 2020 it would have triggered a situation of much higher

intensity to which we would have had to respond yet from a position of weakness without adequate troops to maintain the necessary balance all along the front. The operation of August 29-30 has been smart thinking, probably a result of some war gaming, but has also been risky as Chushul remained vulnerable.

It is equally important to assess why the PLA did not grab the opportunity to place troops at Rechin La or Helmet Top and dig in, in May or even June. My reasoning only leads me to imagine that it was contempt and a PLA superiority complex which gave it the perception that the Indian side would never have the proactivity to occupy features at a location where it had felt deterred to do so all these years; opening another front by India probably made no sense to the PLA leadership. Chushul is such a sensitive location on our side, it is surprising that the PLA probably got lulled. It attempted to do something on the basis of a late appreciation once Indian forces (including a lot of mechanised elements) were visible in the Chushul Bowl and its vicinity. We beat them to it with good early warning.

Prominent media persons are asking whether India is now in a position of advantage and whether counterattacks should be expected on the Kailash Range heights as appreciated by a former senior Indian Army commander. Whatever be the surmise we arrive at, the belief that counterattacks should be expected is sound; this could happen without application of any reasoning; a PLA lower-level knee-jerk response could be expected to retrieve a

situation usually associated with commanders in desperation. Tactically, the heights once secured and in this case reinforced with mechanised elements (some of these heights are rolling "downs"), it will make it extremely difficult to evict our troops without the use of force multipliers; that means artillery, air, rockets and missiles. All this means war, because India too has a lot of those ready for action. Does China wish to pursue this option? At present neither is its narrative carrying weight in the international community nor is there any guarantee that the PLA has the capability to worst the Indian Army in a short, sharp border war. It's a risk, and a serious one at that. Inability to achieve its objectives means a virtual loss for China and Xi Jinping cannot afford that, especially with the fifth plenary of the 19th Central Committee and Politburo due in October 2020. Conventional wisdom from the past points to October-November being the period for a war-like situation, the winter setting in thereafter. As such there is a month or more available, for war avoidance by negotiators on both sides. The positive in all this is that engagement at the political, diplomatic and military levels has not broken down. Sharp words from the Chinese state-controlled media as part of its psychological and information warfare should not influence us. To my mind, the stumbling block to "status quo ante" just got a little more complex with southern Pangong Tso getting added to the list. Skirmishes could therefore well be on the cards though war is only a remote possibility, with elongation of the standoff a certainty. If and when that remote possibility happens at all, let our wisdom prevail in pursuing it.

The writer, a retired lieutenant-general, is a former GOC of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps

**Tactically, the heights once secured and in this case reinforced will make it difficult to evict our troops without the use of force multipliers**

#### LETTERS

#### DECEITFUL TRUMP

US President Donald Trump saying that he downplayed the virus on purpose strikes a wrong note. The fact that Watergate icon Bob Woodward sat on the information in order to publish his big book is even more heartbreaking. The justification that President Trump had for hiding his misgivings, on the other hand, is ludicrous; he says he did it because he did not want people to live in fear. A virus as deadly as Covid-19 needs to be feared. Hope come November the electorate in the United States will teach him a lesson.

Subhashini Ramaswamy  
Mumbai

#### CANNABIS HAUL

A TIP-OFF has led the Seshadripuram police in Bengaluru to bust a marijuana racket and seize a mind-boggling 1,350 kg of the drug across three districts in the State. Close to 1,200 kg of the drug lay concealed in a secret chamber in a sheep farm in Kalaburagi. One of the accused owns several acres of land in his home town and was peddling marijuana to his contacts across the State and Mumbai too. This is one of the biggest marijuana hauls ever, and the authorities would do well to keep an ear to the ground.

N.J. Ravi Chander  
Bengaluru

#### LOST INNOCENCE

IT HAS BEEN proved in the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide episode that Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut is having the backing of the Bharatiya Janata Party which got her "Y" category security immediately. It won't be surprising if she is seen leading the BJP campaign in the Bihar Assembly elections, due in November. She may even get a back door entry to the Rajya Sabha. However, she may just have overplayed her card with the BJP distancing itself from her PoK statement. Whether she will now end up being exploited or rewarded only time will tell.

Bhagwan Thadani  
Mumbai

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

Saeed Naqvi  
Wide Angle



The film, *Agraharathil Kazhutai*, or *Donkey in a Brahmin Village*, was a surprise gift from a friend in Kerala to keep away the corona blues. The film is listed as one of the masterly satires by the late John Abraham though on an embarrassing shoe string budget. A baby donkey strays onto the doorstep of a tall, lanky Professor of Philosophy in a local college. The donkey in the bachelor professor's house leads to amusement, gossip, graffiti until the principal, a stern looking Pastor, informs the Professor that his hospitality towards the donkey was affecting the college's reputation.

The Professor carts the donkey by bus and bullock cart to the Agraharam or the Brahmin village where his parents live. A deaf and mute maidservant looks after the donkey.

The maid has an affair with the village washerman, delivers a stillborn male child which is left outside the temple. The Chief Priest declares it the most dreadful omen, unanimously attributed by the elders to the donkey's presence in the village. The animal is beaten to death. A series of unfortunate events follow, which the Agraharam, on second thoughts, blames on the fact that the donkey was killed in haste. A

monument to the beast is planned. A wild fire dance burns much of the village leaving the Professor and the maid contemplating the scene for its deeper significance.

The reason for my focus on the film is not "cinema", but the fact that someone with a name like John Abraham could satirise the Brahmin Agraharam with such outrageous audacity. I once prided my hometown of Lucknow as the world centre for satire, wit and an elegant inter-communal irreverence. Over the years I bade goodbye to those values in my hometown. But I rejoice that they thrive in places like Kerala indeed the South and the East. A day's visit to the Agraharam in Palghat was memorable. The neighbourhood was stately in its austerity. I saw no car on the street nor, in the middle of the day, was there any movement outside, dogs, cats, cattle, nothing. There is a lovely view of river Kalpathy below, like the Agraharam's private pond for a holy dip.

Away from the road, on the stone seat were occasional bare bodied men, sporting the fattest janyeus I have seen. The visitor's room in a house I has a mural size painting of Palghat Mani Iyer, the great mridangam player and a local icon. The wall space in the main hall is covered with gods and goddess-

es. The master of the house, a retired civil servant, man of wit and music, had worn a shirt to appear hospitable. With amusement in his eyes, he showed us where he slept: on a narrow bed in the passage. And his wife? "On the floor right below me." He puts his head back and guffaws. But it is not quite so unequal. "She qualifies for the bed when she is unwell."

I found it quaint, as an uncritical bird of passage would. But the Agraharam, like Peyton Place, would expose its darker side to a son of the soil, a few mohallas removed, like Abraham. His Christian name did not matter. That is what Lucknow once was.

The film is refreshingly, informal across faiths. The other Kerala movie in this corona season was equally cerebral. The most popular political prisoner in Adoor Gopalakrishnan's *The Wall* is Basheer, pining for Narayani on the other side of the wall and whom he has not seen. Adoor is quite unselfconscious about the fact that the protagonists belong to different faiths. Both these films took me to my earliest romance with "God's own country". It goes back to the late 70s-80s when I was editor of *The Indian Express* in the south. But my attitude to Kerala has changed: earlier I admired Kerala, indeed much of the South and Bengal

(on which more later). Now I have begun to envy places beyond my bleak environment.

India was always one's country, but the basic affiliation was with Awadh of which Lucknow was the markaz or centre. Mir Taqi Mir talked of Delhi's destruction:

"Dill jo ek shaher tha alam mein intekhab rehte thay muntakhib hi jahan rozgar ke Usko falak ne loot ke barbaad kar diya Hum rehne waley haen usi ujre dayar ke."

(Delhi which was once the world's pride, where only those with good manners lived, Fortune turned upon the city, destroyed and looted it. In that desolate city I did once live.)

Replace Delhi with Awadh/Lucknow and you have an idea of where I am coming from.

Lucknow, indeed Awadh, was generosity personified. Ram Advani from Sindh was embraced as Lucknow's very own. His bookshop was an incomparable cultural landmark. The Lucknavi was the exact opposite of parochial. The intellectual life of Lucknow University was dominated for long stretches by Radha Kumud and

Radha Kamal Mukherjee. Little wonder, when Satyajit Ray, soaked in Bengali, ventured out of Bengal, it was towards Lucknow he deviated with his superb *Shatranj ke Khiladi*.

Lucknow was in decline for years but my romance began to fade 30 years ago when the BJP and the Congress began to compete for the Hindu vote. The Congress read the 1984 landslide not as an emotional vote following Indira Gandhi's assassination, but as Hindu consolidation against minority communalism, in this case the Sikh agitation. It says something of the Congress mind, that Sikh communalism, in its perception, seamlessly became Muslim communalism. Congress chose to play both sides of the street. Once, V.P. Singh tossed the Mandal Commission into the simmering cauldron, the Hindutva brigade ran away with the platform of brazen anti-Muslim Hindu consolidation. The Congress, between two stools, had its spine broken. In the subsequent political churning, I lost Lucknow. But the gift of the Abraham film reassures me that my country now thrives outside the cow belt.

The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in New Delhi



## SHORT TAKES

## NEW ROUND OF ISRAEL AIRSTRIKES HITS ALEPPO: SYRIA

**Damascus, Sept. 11:** Israel launched a missile strike near Syria's main northern city of Aleppo early on Friday prompting air defences to respond, Syrian state media reported.

"At 1:30 am (2230 GMT Thursday), the Zionist enemy carried out an air attack, targeting the outskirts of Aleppo with salvos of missiles," state news agency SANA said.

The news agency did not specify what the target was but said that air defences had "intercepted most of the missiles".

Israel has carried out hundreds of air and missile strikes on Syria since the civil war broke out in 2011, targeting Iranian and Hezbollah forces as well as government troops.

## BEIRUT BLAZE EXTINGUISHED BUT ANGER SIMMERS

**Beirut, Sept. 11:** Lebanese fire-fighters on Friday put out a blaze at Beirut port that brought back the trauma of last month's deadly dockside explosion and destroyed badly needed food aid.

Fire crews used cranes to hose down the last smouldering embers of the fire that swept through already damaged warehouses on Thursday, *AFP* correspondents reported.

But popular anger at the authorities' failure to provide public safety, even in the heart of the capital, was rekindled by the new blaze.

The fire broke out on Thursday afternoon as workers were carrying out repair work on some of the warehouses still standing after last month's explosion.

Sparks from a power saw being used in the repairs were the likely cause of the blaze, according to the government's preliminary findings.

## RIO TINTO CEO OUT AS 46,000-YR-OLD ABORIGINAL SITE HIT

**Sydney, Sept. 11:** Rio Tinto announced the resignation of its CEO and two other top officers on Friday over the mining giant's destruction of a 46,000-year-old Aboriginal site to expand an iron ore mine in Australia.

The Anglo-Australian firm was facing a growing investor revolt over the destruction of the sacred site in the Juukan Gorge in Western Australia's remote Pilbara region — one of the earliest known locations occupied by Australia's indigenous people.

Following a board investigation into the May 24 incident, Rio Tinto said CEO Jean-Sebastien Jacques was stepping down "by mutual agreement" along with the chief of the company's core iron ore division, Chris Salisbury, and corporate relations head Simone Niven.

"What happened at Juukan was wrong and we are determined to ensure that the destruction of a heritage site of such exceptional archaeological and cultural significance never occurs again at a Rio Tinto operation," chairman Simon Thompson said.

## MAURITIUS OIL SPILL SHIP OPERATOR TO PAY \$9.4 MILLION

**Tokyo, Sept. 11:** The Japanese operator of a ship that leaked oil off the Mauritius coast pledged on Friday to pay at least \$9.4 million to help restore areas affected by the spill.

Mitsui OSK Lines said in a statement that it planned "to contribute a total fund of about one billion Japanese yen over several years to support measures" to restore the marine environment.

The measures include running mangrove and coral protection projects in partnership with experts and local NGOs, and setting up an environment recovery fund, it said.

The company operates the *MV Wakashio*, which ran aground on July 25 off the coast of Mauritius, carrying 4,000 tonnes of fuel that began seeping into the island nation's pristine, coral-filled waters.

After the boat split in two, the larger piece was towed out to sea and sunk, but the smaller section remains stranded on the reef. More than 1,000 tonnes of oil is believed to have leaked from the ship, with the rest siphoned out before it spilled.

The oil has affected mangroved areas that are complicated to clean.

## Dragon temple



An aerial view taken on Friday shows the Buddhist temple Wat Samphran (Dragon Temple) in Nakhon Pathom, some 40km west of Bangkok. Wat Samphran is a popular tourist destination with visitors coming to see the huge dragon figure curling around a pink cylindrical building next to the Buddha statues and places of worship of the traditional Buddhist temple complex.

— AFP

## California battles wildfires, 5 million people evacuated

**Clovis, Sept. 11:** Fire-fighters were battling unprecedented wildfires up and down the U.S. West Coast on Friday that killed 15 people and forced more than half a million others to flee their homes, with officials warning of more deaths to come in the days ahead.

The true scale of destruction was impossible to count across wide stretches of California, Oregon and Washington cut off from the world by an apocalyptic wall of flames, fuelled by record heatwaves and intense, dry winds.

The August Complex Fire became the biggest recorded blaze in Californian history on Thursday, after multiple fires in the state's northwest combined under high temperatures and winds to rip through 7,46,000 acres of dry vegetation. More than 2.6 million acres have been burned across the whole state so far, a Cal Fire spokesman said on Thursday evening.

Half a million people have been evacuated in neighboring Oregon, where the government said firefighters were "prioritising life (and) safety as they battle a record 9,00,000 acres of wildfires." — *AFP*

## Teen 'learns' to drive while escaping wildfire

**Clovis, Sept. 11:** Fourteen-year-old Ruben Navarrete learned how to drive the hard way — heading down a steep narrow road at night with giant flames leaping behind him.

No room for mistakes. Just focus, ignore the blaze and the steep cliff on the side of the road.

Ruben lives with his uncle Joshua Smith and his uncle's wife Jamie in the Cold Springs Rancheria of Mono Indians, a Native American reserve threatened by the Creek Fire.

As of late Thursday the

Creek Fire had razed 1,76,000 acres in the hills of the Sierra National Forest in central California, according to Cal Fire officials.

Ruben's family had two days to prepare for a possible evacuation, and in that brief time his aunt and uncle managed to show him some basics of driving. "It's like a video game, Ruben," the teenager recalled his uncle Josh telling him.

The fateful call came Monday at midnight. The flames were approaching — evacuate immediately.

— *AFP*

## THOUSANDS PROTEST AFTER GREEK REFUGEE CAMP BURNS DOWN

**Mytilene, Sept. 11:** Thousands of protesting refugees and migrants left homeless on the Greek island of Lesbos after fires destroyed the notoriously overcrowded Moria camp gathered on a road leading to the island's main town Friday, demanding to be allowed to leave.

Clapping and chanting

songs, the protesters, most of whom appeared to be from African countries and from Afghanistan, were boisterous but peaceful. Some held up signs pleading for help from Germany, a favored destination for many migrants and refugees who arrive in Greece from the nearby Turkish coast. — *PTI*

## Pompeo, Afghan negotiators land in Qatar for peace talks

**Doha, Sept. 11:** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Afghan government negotiators converged on Doha on Friday ahead of what promise to be lengthy and difficult peace talks with the Taliban after 19 years of war.

Afghan negotiations set to begin Saturday were originally slated to start in March but were repeatedly pushed back amid disputes over a prisoner exchange that included

the release of hundreds of battle-hardened Taliban fighters.

"After continuous efforts of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to start direct talks with the Taliban, the peace negotiating team of the IRA left Kabul for Doha," Nader Naderi, a member of the negotiating team, said on Twitter.

US President Donald Trump has made ending America's involvement in

Afghanistan a foreign policy priority as he faces uncertain prospects in the November 3 election.

Pompeo arrived in Doha on Friday ahead of the opening session of what he said was a "historic" opportunity to end America's longest war.

"I'm mindful of how difficult these conversations will be among the Afghans but it's theirs for the taking," he told reporters onboard his flight to the Qatari capital. — *AFP*

## FILM | FEST

## One Night In Miami, a fictional conversation between Cassius Clay, Mohammad Ali, an Oscar contender

## The audacity of Regina King and the quartet of champs

SUPARNA SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11

Regina King's audacity is staggering. Just last year she beat Amy Adams, Emma Stone and Rachel Weisz to take home the Oscar for best supporting actress, and now she's knocking on the doors of Hollywood's Dolby Theatre, all set to compete with the boys this time, as director.

Just this Monday, at the rather chauvinistic 87-year-old Venice Film Festival, Regina made history as the first person of colour director to have a film selected. And now she is going to dominate the Toronto International Film Festival (Tiff) as well, with *One Night in Miami*...

A film that's set in a room in a Miami motel where four superheroes gather one evening to, well, talk. Based on the one-act play by Kemp Powers, *One Night in Miami*... is a fictional account of a real day: 25 February 1964 — the day 22-year-old Cassius Clay (Eli Goree) beat Sonny Liston in Miami Beach, Florida, to become the World's Heavyweight Champion.

The young man who calls himself "The Greatest" would emerge from that room to announce that he is embracing the Nation of Islam and discarding his "slave name". He would soon be called, Muhammad Ali.

Almost exactly a year later, Malcolm X (played with a touch of Barack

Obama's elegance by Kingsley Ben-Adir), the Champ's spiritual and political mentor who stood by him as he announced that he identified as a POC Muslim, would be assassinated by the Nation of Islam.

What transpired in that room? Who else was there? Ali's two other friends — singer, song writer and black rights activist Sam Cooke (Leslie Odom Jr.), and Jim Brown (Aldis Hodge), the star of the National Football League, and a man still considered one of the greatest footballers ever.

Regina's film first introduces us to all its heroes, opening with Ali beating Henry Cooper at London's Wembley Stadium in 1963,

and then setting off to watch him "demolish that ugly beast, Liston". It then follows Jim in his sleek, open-air car as he visits a white well-wisher and benefactor who loves his achievements and can't stop talking about them, but won't let a POC man into his house.

One Night... then swoons to Sam's soulful crooning at New York's famed night-

club, Copacabana, and watches as the white audience grows uneasy and starts to leave.

And then it visits Malcolm X's home, to listen in as he talks to his wife about sexual abuse by the head of Nation of Islam. Lurking outside, he senses, is a threat to his life.

In Regina's film, the evening is imagined, and so is the conversation



A still from the movie *One Night in Miami*.

between these four men, who come to celebrate Ali's win but end up talking politics. But it takes place at a critical intersection of what really was happening in the lives of these men, and in their country.

The film's sharply written screenplay (by Powers himself), places an imagined meeting and conversation in the middle of real events and history to give us these four proud men with full-bodied personalities, traits, beliefs and frustrations at having to stand in the margins despite their genius and achievements.

The challenge first comes from Malcolm to Sam, about pandering to a white audience with his "soulful" songs. "Join the fight brother," he says, and puts on an LP of a white

## Microsoft blocks US vote hack bid

## China, Russia, Iran target Prez campaigns

**Washington, Sept. 11:** Microsoft said on Thursday it thwarted recent cyberattacks from China, Russia and Iran targeting both Republican and Democratic presidential campaigns, as technology giants scrambled to protect election security less than two months ahead of the US vote.

The announcement came as Twitter said it would implement a policy next week to remove "false or misleading information intended to undermine public confidence in an election," including unverified claims of victory; and Google said it would take steps to ensure its "autocomplete" search feature doesn't make such misguided suggestions.

Microsoft said that attackers have been targeting staff from the campaigns of President Donald Trump and his Democratic rival, Joe Biden. "In recent weeks, Microsoft has detected cyberattacks targeting people and organisations involved in the upcoming presidential election," said corporate vice-president Tom Burt.

It was clear that "foreign activity groups have stepped up their efforts

● **BEIJING ON Friday** accused Microsoft of concocting links between China and attempted cyberattacks on US presidential election campaigns.

● **WE HAVE no interest to interfere in it, and we never interfered in it, foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said. Microsoft shouldn't fabricate something out of nothing and create trouble by speaking about China.**

targeting the 2020 election as had been anticipated," according to Burt. The attackers have targeted political operatives, think tanks, consultants and political parties in Europe as well, Microsoft said.

It identified a Russia-based group called Strontium which Burt said "has attacked more than 200 organisations," and China-based Zirconium, which he said "has attacked high-profile individuals associated with the election, including people associated with the Joe Biden for President campaign and prominent leaders in the international affairs community." An

Iran-based group dubbed Phosphorus has been targeting personal accounts of people associated with the Trump campaign, Microsoft said.

The majority of those attacks were stopped by Microsoft security tools, and those targeted or compromised were alerted, according to Burt.

Russia is trying to undermine voters' faith in the US electoral system and especially in voting by mail ahead of the November 3 election, according to a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) analysis.

A statement in August from the National Countereintelligence and Security Centre said Russia is actively working against Biden's candidacy, favouring Trump as it did in 2016.

Microsoft's announcement affirms DHS warnings that "China, Iran, and Russia are trying to undermine our democracy and influence our elections," acting secretary Chad Wolf said in a prepared statement.

China denied the allegation, accusing Microsoft of "fabrication" and "creating trouble" by raising the accusation. — *AFP*

## Trump, Biden make rival appearances on 9/11 anniversary

## DON DENIES LYING TO U.S. ABOUT VIRUS AFTER BOMBSHELL BOOK

**Washington, Sept. 11:** President Donald Trump on Thursday denied lying to Americans about the severity of the Coronavirus after a bombshell new book by journalist Bob Woodward revealed that he deliberately downplayed the crisis.

Trump's taped admission to Woodward that he minimized the pandemic in public, while being aware from the start about the unique danger presented by Covid-19, has set off alarm bells less than eight weeks before election day.

Asked at a hastily organized White House press conference "Why did you

lie to the American people?" Trump responded: "I didn't lie." The Republican, who is down in the polls against Democrat Joe Biden and faces overwhelming disapproval from Americans on his handling of the Coronavirus crisis, insisted that he'd softened the dangers in public so as to preserve calm.

"I don't want to jump up and down and start screaming 'Death! Death!'" he argued. But Trump has been thrown onto the defense after multiple excerpts and recordings from Woodward's book "Rage" were released on Wednesday. — *AFP*

works and punctuated by minutes of silence, the first one at 8:46 am (1246 GMT), the time the first plane hit one of the Twin Towers.

The Republican president meanwhile travelled to Shanksville, Pennsylvania some 300 miles (480 kilometers) to the west of New York, where an airliner crashed after

the passengers tried to wrest control from the Al-Qaeda hijackers.

The president and First Lady Melania Trump listened in silence as the names of the 40 passengers and crew killed aboard Flight 93 were read out — with two bells tolling after the reading of each one. — *AFP*

## N. Korea issues shoot-to-kill orders to stop virus

**Washington, Sept. 11:** North Korean authorities have issued shoot-to-kill orders to prevent the Coronavirus entering the country from China, according to the commander of US forces in the South.

The impoverished North

— whose crumbling health system would struggle to cope with a major virus outbreak — has not confirmed a single case of the disease that has swept the world since first emerging in China, the North's key ally.

Pyeongyang closed its border

der with China in January to try to prevent contamination, and in July state media said it had raised its state of emergency to the maximum level.

US Forces Korea (USFK) commander Robert Abrams said that the bor-

der shutdown had increased demand for smuggled goods, prompting authorities to intervene.

The North introduced a new "buffer zone, one or two kilometers up on the Chinese border," Abrams said. — *AFP*



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,854.55	0.04
Nifty 50	11,464.45	0.13
S&P 500*	3,324.81	-0.43
Dollar (₹)	73.53	-0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.32	1.30
Euro (₹)	87.06	0.17
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,452.191	0.36
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.01	-0.05
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.041	-0.012
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.674	-0.010

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

GST Council meet postponed to October 5

The GST Council meeting slated for September 19 has been postponed to October 5, sources said. The 42nd meeting of the Council has been postponed since Parliament would be in session, they said. The meeting assumes significance as the Centre and states are at loggerheads over funding of Rs 2.35-lakh crore GST collection shortfall. Of this, the Centre says, Rs 97,000 crore is on account of GST implementation.

Economy to contract 11.5% in FY21: Moody's



Moody's Investors Service slashed India's growth projection for the current fiscal to (-) 11.5 per cent, from (-) 4 per cent estimated earlier, saying the economic contraction would be more pronounced due to the lockdown and rise in coronavirus cases. The agency also projected India's debt burden to peak at around 90 per cent of GDP in this fiscal and the Centre's fiscal deficit to be close to 7.5 per cent of GDP.

Promoters of Max Health sell ₹515-cr shares

Max Ventures Investment Holdings Pvt Ltd and Analjit Singh, promoters of Max Healthcare Institute Ltd, offloaded company's shares worth over Rs 515 crore through open market transactions. As per the BSE bulk deal data, Analjit Singh divested his entire 0.64 per cent stake in Max Healthcare Institute. Singh sold the entire 58,18,021 shares at Rs 110.7 apiece, valuing the deal at Rs 64.4 crore.

ADB, Suguna sign \$15 mn financing deal

The ADB said it has signed a pact for a \$15-million debt financing through the subscription of NCDs of Suguna Foods, to help sustain poultry farming operations, rural livelihoods and food security in India during the pandemic. Suguna, one of the largest poultry broiler enterprises, has been badly affected by the nationwide lockdown. This has resulted in losses and tight liquidity conditions for the company.

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Rise attributed to low base, pent-up demand Passenger vehicle sales up 14% YoY

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, SEPT. 11

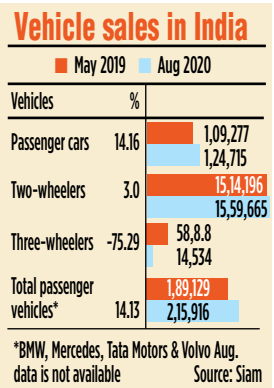
After a prolonged negative growth across automobile segments, there is finally some good news to cheer the automobile industry, the third largest employer in the country. Passenger vehicle sales in India, Asia's third biggest economy, rose 14.16 per cent in August, showing some signs of economic recovery as industries restart operations months after a coronavirus-induced lockdown disrupted a sector already hit by poor demand.

In a sign of improved consumer sentiment, a total of 215,916 cars, utility vehicles and vans were bought in August, compared with 189,129 a year earlier, snapping nine months of declining trend in sales, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, or Siam, said on Friday.

Clearly, it was a good monsoon that drove up demand for two-wheelers, including motorcycles from the rural clusters. Sales of two-wheelers, widely seen as an indicator of the health of the rural economy, also jumped 3 per cent to 15,59,665 units, as compared to 15,14,196 units in the previous year.

Motorcycle sales were also up 10.13 per cent to 10,32,476 units, up from 9,37,486 units sold in August 2019 aided by a good rural and semi-urban demand.

However, scooter sales were down 12.3 per cent to

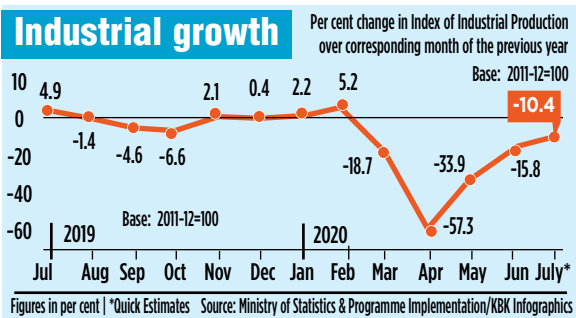


4,56,848 units last month, against 5,20,898 units in the previous year and three-wheeler slipped 75.29 per cent.

"We are beginning to observe growth, which is instilling confidence back into the industry," Siam president Kenichi Ayukawa, also the MD at Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest car maker, said in a statement.

"Even though the industry witnessed year-on-year growth in August 2020, it is to be recognised that the base figures in August 2019 itself was very low, as the industry had shown a de-growth of about (-) 32 per cent for passenger vehicles and (-) 22 per cent for two-wheelers in 2019, over 2018, then. Still, 14 per cent growth of passenger vehicles and 3 per cent growth in two-wheelers in August 2020 indicates trends of recovery for the industry, though it is on the back-drop of pent-up demand and beginning of a festive season this month," he pointed out.

Rajesh Menon, director



IIP CLIMBS UP IN CONTRACTION ZONE

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11

With lower output of manufacturing, mining and power generation sector, industrial production saw a contraction of 10.4 per cent in July compared to a 16.6 per cent contraction in June, according to the government data released on Friday. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) showed that industrial activity is slowly picking up.

"The index for the month of July 2020 stands at 118.1 as compared to 108.9 in June, 89.5 in May and 54 in April," the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implement-

ation said. Manufacturing sector production declined 11.1 per cent while the output of mining and power fell 13 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively.

The output of capital goods, which is a barometer of investment, fell by 22.8 per cent in July as against a contraction of 7 per cent a year ago. "Similarly, consumer durables output also declined by 23.6 per cent, as against a contraction of 2.4 per cent in July 2019," the ministry said, adding consumer non-durable goods production grew by 6.7 per cent, as compared to a growth of 8.5 per cent a year ago.

general at Siam, said, "After a period of lull... August has witnessed improvement in the sales figures of two-wheelers and passenger vehicles. However, three-wheeler segment continues to post a de-growth of more than (-) 75 per cent compared to

August 2019." The industry is positive that the coming festive season, which culminates in Diwali and sees a majority of buyers making big ticket purchases, would help with a faster revival in demand, he pointed out.

Route Mobile subscribed 74 times

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 11

Mumbai-based Route Mobile's Rs 600 crore initial public offering (IPO) was subscribed 74.13 times on the final day of bidding, again reflecting a huge primary market appetite among all categories of investors.

The huge response to Route Mobile's IPO comes two days after Happiest Minds Technologies' Rs 700-crore IPO got subscribed 151 times.

The price band for the

Route Mobile IPO was fixed at Rs 345 to Rs 350 per share of Rs 10 face value. The public offer received bids for 8.92 crore equity shares as against the offer size of over 1.21 crore shares, as per stock exchange data.

The retail investor's portion received subscription of 12.85 times the shares on offer. The non-institutional investors segment attracted bids to the extent of 192.81 times and the portion set aside for qualified institutional buyers

was subscribed 91.06 times.

The public offering consisted of a fresh issue of up to Rs 240 crore and offer for sale of Rs 360 crore.

The IPO also received interest from well-known institutions like Franklin Templeton, Goldman Sachs, Kuwait Investment Authority, Macquarie, Van-tage, Wells Capital and SBI Mutual Fund. The company raised Rs 180 crore from 15 anchor investors a day before the public issue opened.

India slips 26 spots on economic freedom index

New Delhi, Sept. 10: India has fallen 26 spots to the 105th position on the Global Economic Freedom Index 2020. The country was at the 79th spot in last year's rankings.

The Economic Freedom of the World: 2020 Annual Report by Canada's Fraser Institute has been released in India on Thursday in conjunction with New Delhi-based Centre For Civil Society.

The report said prospects for increasing economic freedom in India depend on next genera-

tion reforms in factor markets and in greater openness to global trade.

India reported a marginal decrease in size of government (from 8.22 to 7.16), legal system and property rights (from 5.17 to 5.06), freedom to trade internationally (6.08 to 5.71) and regulation of credit, labour and business (6.63 to 6.53).

A score closer to 10 indicates a higher level of economic freedom. According to the report, based on 2018 data, Hong Kong and Singapore once again

topped the index, continuing their streak as first and second ranked.

India has been ranked higher than China, which stands at the 124th position. New Zealand, Switzerland, US, Australia, Mauritius, Georgia, Canada and Ireland round out the top-10.

The report measures economic freedom (levels of personal choice, ability to enter markets, security of privately owned property, rule of law, among others) by analysing policies. —PTI

Multi Cap funds have to keep 50% assets in mid & small cap from Feb.

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT. 11

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has issued asset modification guidelines for floating multi-cap funds, making it mandatory for the funds to invest minimum 25 per cent assets in mid-cap and small-cap stocks.

Mutual funds have to ensure compliance by the first week of February 2021, Sebi said.

The Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) will publish the next list of stocks according to market capitalisation criteria in early January, ensuring compliance within one month by the multi-cap funds..

In a circular issued on Friday evening, Sebi said, "In order to diversify the underlying investments

of Multi Cap Funds across the large, mid and small cap companies and be true to label, it has been decided to partially modify the scheme characteristics of Multi Cap Fund."

According to the circular, minimum investment in equity & equity related instruments, up to 75 per cent of total assets, will have to be equally divided among equity & equity related instruments by size of the stock, i.e. 25 per cent of total assets in large-caps, 25 per cent in mid-cap companies and 25 per cent small-cap companies.

"All the existing Multi Cap Funds shall ensure compliance with the above provisions within one month from the date of publishing the next list of stocks by AMFI, i.e.

January 2021," Sebi said.

Joseph Thomas, head of research, Emkay Wealth Management, said, "At present, the multi cap funds have almost 70 per cent of their allocation to large-cap stocks and the balance to mid-cap and small-cap stocks. The new regulation will make it mandatory that any market cap may have a minimum allocation of 25 per cent, and therefore, to the extent of the excess allocation to large-caps mutual funds will have to reduce the allocation, that is, 20 per cent, and move into mid-caps and small caps. An amount equivalent to Rs 35 000 crore will move out of large-caps and will move into mid and small caps. This move will help mid-cap and small-cap stocks to move up."

Covid cover tenure to be extended

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEPT. 11

The insurance regulator may provide options to policyholders of corona-specific health covers to either renew their covers or port to other health plans to ensure that they remain covered.

T.L. Alamelu, member-non-life at the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), while speaking at the Assocham e-summit, said, "Actually we have been debating in the last 10 days on mainstreaming corona specific plans. I think when we launched them, we were

optimistic in thinking that the pandemic would end soon but now that is not going to happen we are thinking of ways and means. And sooner rather than later, we would be issuing instructions on how the Corona Kavach or Corona Rakshak plans can be mainstreamed or the plans be renewed or they be allowed to port or migrate to other plans so that the policyholders to whom the insurance companies have sold these plans continue to get a good cover not only for covid but for the entire health spectrum."

In July, the insurance regulator had mandated

insurers to provide two specific health insurance policies for Covid-19 treatment, namely Corona Kavach health insurance policy and Corona Rakshak health insurance policy. These two plans cover hospitalisation expenses, domiciliary treatment, Ayush treatment, and the cost of consumable items like PPE kits, masks, gloves, oximeters, oxygen cylinders, etc.

However a key difference between a Corona Kavach and Corona Rakshak is that the former option only covers the hospital bill whereas the sum insured is paid to the insured in the latter.

Insurers can accept health policies without signature



SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEPT. 11

In view of the pandemic, the regulator has allowed insurance companies to obtain customer's consent without a wet signature on the physical document of the proposal form of retail health policies. This facility will be valid till the end of March 2021.

"In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, the authority has received representations from the insurance companies for exemption to all individual / retail health insurance policies issued by general and health insurance companies from the requirement to issue physical policy document and hard copy of proposal form," the Insurance Regulatory and Development

Authority of India said. Granting the same, Irdai has insisted that the electronic copy of the proposal form shall be sent to the registered e-mail id or mobile number provided by the customer only on the specific consent provided by the policyholder. The policyholder should be informed about this through SMS and a c k n o w l e d g e m e n t should be obtained on delivery.

The date of delivery of the document should be reckoned for the purpose of considering any applicable free look requests.

Policyholders should be also informed that printing of physical policy documents and dispatch may be delayed due to operational difficulties in the wake of the pandemic.

Japan's Orix to buy \$980 mn stake in Greenko Energy



TAIGA URANAKA & TAKAKO TANIGUCHI SEPT 11

Orix Corp. has agreed to buy a roughly 20 per cent stake in Indian renewable energy developer Greenko Energy Holdings for \$980 million, the Japanese conglomerate's biggest investment in the sector overseas.

Under the deal terms, the Tokyo-based company will acquire new shares along with existing stock from Greenko founders. It will transfer its entire wind power generation business in India to Greenko, Orix said in a statement Friday.

"India is a big and attractive market-power demand is growing," Hidetake Takahashi, an executive officer at Orix, said in an interview.

Currently, Singapore's GIC Pte holds 65.8 per cent of Greenko, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority has a 16.5 per cent stake and the remainder is held by its founders.

Bloomberg News reported in April that Chinese state-backed investment fund CNIC Corp. was considering buying about a 10 per cent stake in Greenko Group, which was seeking to raise around \$800 million by introducing a long-term investor.

Orix is a major renewable energy developer in Japan, and Takahashi said the company aims to build up assets overseas as well. —Bloomberg

China starts testing nasal spray vaccine

Sept. 11: The newest Covid-19 vaccine candidate to start human testing is the first where volunteers won't get a painful injection. Instead, they'll receive a spray through the nose.

China this week approved phase I human testing for the nasal spray vaccine, which is co-developed by researchers at Xiamen University and Hong Kong University, as well as by vaccine maker Beijing Wantai Biological Pharmacy Enterprise Co.

Intranasal spray has previously been developed as a vaccine for the flu and is recommended for use among children and adults who want to avoid the more common needle injection. While it is not the most frequent choice for delivery, scientists

around the world are working to develop sprays as an alternative to muscle jabs for all sorts of vaccines.

The intranasal vaccine is the 10th candidate from China to proceed to the crucial stage of human testing. The country is building its lead in vaccine development after western front-runner AstraZeneca Plc had to pause its late-stage human trial to investigate a spinal cord illness in a person who received its experimental shot.

The intranasal spray contains weakened flu virus that carries the genetic segments of the coronavirus's spike protein. Administered through the nasal tract, it mimics the natural infection of respiratory virus-

China is building lead in vaccine development after AstraZeneca paused trial to investigate a spinal cord illness in shot recipient



es to stimulate the body's immune response against the pathogen that cause Covid-19, according to Science and Technology Daily, a paper affiliated with China's Ministry of Science and Technology.

Some scientists hope a vaccine that gets sprayed through the nose may have a better chance of stopping the spread of the

insidious virus through respiratory tracts. A needle injection can arouse a systematic immune response to prevent severe illness, but may not be strong enough to ward off infection.

Pre-clinical studies have shown the nasal vaccine can significantly reduce lung damage among mice and hamsters when chal-





## SHORT TAKES

## Teen rugby player dies of head injury

**Newcastle, Australia:** Nineteen-year-old rugby league player Joel Dark has died in hospital five days after collapsing following a head injury in his senior debut for a club in Newcastle, north of Sydney. Dark, the cousin of Australian international forward Boyd Cordner, had been in a critical condition in Newcastle's John Hunter hospital, where he underwent surgery after the Sunday injury. All senior games in Newcastle have postponed this weekend out of respect for Dark and his family. The Newcastle Knights and Cordner's club, the Sydney Roosters, are reported to be discussing an on-field tribute to Dark at their National Rugby League match because of his links to both clubs. — AP

## Bottas revs up in Tuscan practice

**Mugello, Italy:** Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas posted the fastest time in first practice for the Tuscan Grand Prix on Friday. Bottas was .048 quicker than Red Bull's Max Verstappen in warm and sunny conditions. Fans were present for the first time at the ninth Formula One race this season amid the coronavirus pandemic. The 3,000 spectators were split into three stands. Charles Leclerc was third for Ferrari, which is celebrating its 1,000th F1 race. Championship leader Lewis Hamilton was only fourth and 0.53 seconds slower than teammate Bottas. Pierre Gasly, who won his first race last weekend at the Italian GP in Monza, was fifth. Second practice takes place later Friday. — AP

## Bouchard beats top seed in Turkey

**Istanbul, Turkey:** Former Wimbledon finalist Eugenie Bouchard stretched her winning streak to four matches for the first time in two years by beating top-seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova 7-6 (3), 6-7 (5), 6-2 in the second round of the Istanbul Tennis Championship. Ranked 272nd and playing as a qualifier, Bouchard had three match points at 5-4 in the second set before Kuznetsova forced a deciding set. The Russian was one of four seeded players knocked out in Thursday's second-round matches. Bouchard, who reached the Wimbledon final in 2014 but lost to Petra Kvitová, will next face Danka Kovinić in the quarterfinals. Kovinić eliminated sixth-seeded Alison Van Uytvanck 6-3, 6-4. — AP

## Sharma flatters to deceive in Spain

**Vilamoura, Spain:** A rare albatross on the penultimate hole of the opening round brought Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma to par in one swoop but the double bogey on the last one spoilt the effort at the 2020 Portugal Masters. Sharma experienced ecstasy and agony on successive holes as he closed with two-over 73 to lie at Tied-93 on Thursday. Sharma, who is going through a lean patch, opened the round late in the afternoon with a bogey on Par-4 first. He got his first birdie on the fourth, but a double bogey on the seventh saw him turn in 2-over 37. On the back nine a bogey on 11th pushed him further down to 3-over. But he finished with his second double bogey of the day on 18th for a 74. — PTI

## Live on TV

## FOOTBALL

**English Premier League:** Arsenal vs Fulham from 5 pm; Crystal Palace vs Southampton from 7:30 pm; Liverpool vs Leeds United from 10 pm. All matches on Star Sports Select 1, HD

**Spanish League:** Elbar vs Celta Vigo from 7:30 pm; Granada vs Athletic Bilbao from 10 pm; Cadiz vs Osasuna from 12:30 am (Sunday). All matches on LaLiga page on Facebook

## FORMULA ONE

**Italian Grand Prix:** Practice-3 from 3.25 pm; Qualifying from 4.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2

## TENNIS

**US Open:** Women's singles final from 1:30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, 2

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# Osaka unstoppable

## Azarenka upsets Serena; Naomi makes final

**New York, Sept. 11:** Victoria Azarenka came from a set down to stun record-chasing Serena Williams on Thursday and set up a US Open final against Japan's Naomi Osaka.

Azarenka recovered from a 6-1 hammering in the first set to win the next two 6-3, 6-3 and schedule her first Grand Slam final appearance in seven years.

The former world number one is enjoying a remarkable renaissance in New York that the Belarusian credits to finding humility, following several years disrupted by injury and a custody battle over her son.

"I think when you're coming up from kind of nothing, then you become a number one player in the world, sometimes you can start to think you're invincible and that you're better than everybody, and it's not true," Azarenka said.

After a first set plagued by double faults and unforced errors, Azarenka turned the tide in the second, upping her service game and getting more returns in play as she began to dictate lengthy rallies.

Two-time Grand Slam winner had never beaten Williams before in a Grand Slam.

Her last appearance in a Grand Slam final came in the US Open in 2013 when Williams beat her.

Azarenka also suffered a heartbreaking loss to Williams in the 2012 US Open final, when she served for the match at 5-3 in the third set only to lose 7-5.

Azarenka, who had a son in December 2016, will bid to become only the fourth woman to win a singles Grand Slam in the Open era after having children.

She faces a formidable opponent in two-time Grand Slam winner and fourth seed Naomi Osaka, who defeated 28th seed Jennifer Brady 7-6 (7/1), 3-6, 6-3. — AP



Naomi Osaka of Japan returns the ball during her women's singles semifinal match against Jennifer Brady of the United States at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in the Queens borough of New York City on Thursday. Osaka won 7-6 (7/1), 3-6, 6-3. — AFP

## Jolted Serena braces for France

**New York, Sept. 11:** Serena Williams plans to dust herself down after the disappointment of another failed attempt at a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam singles title and continue her chase at Roland Garros this month.

Williams crashed out of the US Open semifinals on Thursday, blowing a set lead to lose in three hard-fought sets to former world number one Victoria Azarenka.

"It's obviously disappointing but at the same time I did what I could today," a weary-looking Williams told reporters.

It has been more than three years since Williams won her 23rd singles tennis major title

## WORLD NO.2 NADAL EYES ROMAN CLAY TO TUNE-UP

**Rome, Sept. 11:** Rafael Nadal, absent from the US Open, is preparing for his return to competition after a six-month break at the Foro Italico in Rome, the organisers of the Italian Open tweeted on Thursday.

Nadal posted a photo of the clay with the statues in the background on his Instagram account with the caption "Here we are!"

The Spaniard has won the Roman clay court tournament, normally played in May, a record nine times. This year's event begins on Monday.

"It will be my first tournament after a very long period without playing," Nadal said. — AFP

at the 2017 Australian Open — when she was already pregnant with daughter Olympia. Williams' presence at

the rescheduled French Open, which starts on September 21, had been in doubt after she said earlier this week that she was

undecided about whether to play.

Williams, who has a history of serious lung problems, said she wanted to talk to organisers about safety protocols after they said that some spectators would be in attendance.

After the French Open tournament director announced that all players will be housed in two designated hotels "without exception," Williams further added that she had hoped she would be able to stay in her Paris apartment.

When asked Thursday night whether she would compete for a third title at Roland Garros, she answered: "Yeah, I mean, I'm definitely going to be going to Paris." — AFP



Trinbago Knight Riders celebrate with the trophy after winning the Caribbean Premier League at Tarouba in Trinidad and Tobago on Thursday. The Knight Riders beat St Lucia Zouks by eight wickets in the final.

## Invincible Knights clinch CPL title

**Tarouba, Sept. 11:** Skipper Kieron Pollard produced a magical spell before Lendl Simmons and Darren Bravo went on a six-hitting spree to take Trinbago Knight Riders to a deserving Caribbean Premier League title with an eight-wicket victory over St Lucia Zouks in the final.

Chasing a target of 155 on Thursday, TKR finished it with 11 balls to spare as Simmons (84 off 49 balls) and Bravo (58 off 47 balls) added 138 runs for the unbroken third wicket stand. Such was TKR's dominance that they became first team in the history of CPL to win all matches en route to the title.

The turning point certainly was the 17th over bowled by inexperienced Afghan left-arm wrist spinner Zahir Khan, which went for 23 runs. From 41 required off 24 balls, it came down to run a ball as Simmons hit a six and Bravo hit a couple of biggies.

Earlier, TKR skipper Pollard marshalled his resources brilliantly while showing the way with figures of 4 for 30 which restricted Zouks to 154 after racing away to 77 for one at one stage. — PTI

## BCCI PUTS OFF GENERAL MEETING AMID PANDEMIC

**New Delhi:** The BCCI has indefinitely postponed its Annual General Meeting, supposed to be held by September 30, due to the Covid-19 pandemic as the meeting cannot be held online.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah has informed the state units about the postponement. The Indian cricket board is registered under the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act, 1975 and is required to hold an AGM before September 30 each year. "Owing to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, the Registration Department, Tamil Nadu Government has extended the period for a registered society under the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act, 1975, to conduct an Annual General Meeting by three months, from September 2020 to December 2020," Shah wrote.

After taking a legal opinion on the subject, BCCI decided to postpone the AGM to a later date. — PTI

**Johannesburg, Sept. 11:** South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) has asked Cricket South Africa's board to step aside as it investigates "many instances of maladministration and malpractice" in the crisis-ridden organisation.

SASCOC's action, which means that there is no one to run daily affairs of CSA, is another setback to the board which is in the middle of administrative chaos and facing allegations of corruption and racial discrimination.

ESPNcricinfo reported that SASCOC took the decision unanimously at a board meeting on Tuesday alleging "many instances of maladministration and

## KKR mentor banks on Kuldeep's craft

**Kolkata, Sept. 11:** Kuldeep Yadav's underwhelming show let Kolkata Knight Riders down in last year's IPL, but the team's chief mentor David Hussey believes that the Indian left-arm wrist spinner is at the "top of his game" this season and will be a consistent performer.

The Chinaman bowler got just four wickets from nine matches in 2019 and was dropped from KKR after logging an average of

71.50 and an economy rate of 8.66.

Hussey said Kuldeep would not have any confidence issues going into the 13th edition of the league.

"I personally believe after the last eight-nine days of training camp, he's at the top of his game. He's fielding well, he is running well. And his bowling has a nice rhythm," Hussey said of Kuldeep. — PTI

Govender replacing Faul. Country's elite players have also criticised CSA for postponing its AGM scheduled for September 5.

CSA also faces action from the International Cricket Council as SASCOC's action could also be seen as government interference. — PTI

## New boys Lens pip Paris giants

**Paris, Sept. 11:** Defending champions Paris Saint-Germain opened their league campaign without their stars and lost 1-0 at promoted Lens.

Striker Ignatius Ganago finished powerfully in the 57th minute after third-choice PSG goalkeeper Marcin Bulka passed the ball to him instead of teammate Marco Verratti, who perhaps should not have demanded it on the edge of the penalty area.

PSG were missing Kylian Mbappe, Neymar and five others who also tested positive for the Coronavirus recently, including winger Angel Di Maria.

Six were positive following a club-approved trip to Ibiza soon after the 1-0 loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League final on August 23. Mbappe was not with them and his positive Covid-19 test happened on international duty with France last week.

In their absence, coach Thomas Tuchel handed debuts to Kays Ruiz-Atil and Arnaud Kalimuendo in attack, while the 20-year-old Bulka made just his second appearance.

He wasn't helped when Verratti sprinted to demand the ball and the flustered goalie instead directed it straight to Ganago, who brushed off Verratti's attempt at a tack-

le and smacked the ball into the top corner. "Yes it was a bit dangerous but that's my way of playing. I always look for the ball because I play football. I asked for the ball," Verratti told broadcaster Canal Plus.

There are a lot of factors but we gave everything. Earlier, Ganago hit the post after a fine run and shot in the 17th. Ganago went close again before the break, while Ruiz-Atil looked lively.

Lens should have made it 2-0 midway through the second half, but forward Simon Banza fluffed a close-range header.

PSG had long spells on the ball but hardly threatened. "We struggled to create chances, we were missing players," Tuchel said.

His side now have a hectic schedule ahead with a home game against Marseille on Sunday followed by Metz at Parc des Princes on Wednesday. — AP



Gael Kakuta (left) of Racing Club de Lens (RCS) fights for the ball with Paris Saint-Germain's midfielder Marco Verratti during the French league football match at the Felix Bollaert-Delelis stadium in Lens, northern France, on Thursday. Lens carved out a 1-0 victory. — AFP

## CSK Chahar ready to play IPL opener

**C. SANTHOSH KUMAR**  
CHENNAI, SEPT. 11

Chennai Super Kings pacer Deepak Chahar has inched closer towards playing the IPL's opener after clearing BCCI's medical tests on Friday.

Returning from a 14-day quarantine, Chahar had to undergo a cardiac screening before resuming training on Friday.

K. S. Viswanathan, chief executive officer of CSK, expects Chahar to be available for the opener against Mumbai Indians on September 19.

"He is fit and ready. It's a big relief for us, but the support staff will continue to assess his progress in the nets. I think he will be fit for the first match. That's what we are expecting," said Viswanathan.

"Players' health is of paramount importance to us. We will not fast-track or force anyone into playing. Captain Dhoni will never do that," added Viswanathan.

### SIX-DAY QUARANTINE FOR CPL PLAYERS

Meanwhile, West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo, South African leg-spinner Imran Tahir and New Zealand left-arm spinner

Mitchell Santner will land in the UAE on September 12.

Viswanathan said the trio will undergo a six-day quarantine and be eligible to play the first match. "Their availability is subject to Covid-19 test results. The entire squad is scheduled to be tested on September 14 and 18. We will travel to Abu Dhabi for the first match on the morning of September 19," he added.

### KINGS ARE NOT KEEN ON MIDSEASON TRANSFERS

In just a week's time, the 13th edition of the tournament begins in Abu Dhabi, but CSK haven't announced replacements for Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh who pulled out of the league.

"We can get replacements whenever we want. Maybe Dhoni feels there is no pressing need to do so now," said Viswanathan.

This season, IPL franchises can loan players — capped or uncapped — between teams at the halfway point.

But Viswanathan ruled out the possibility of a midseason transfer.

"We are not looking at that possibility," he further said.

## LAKERS DIFFUSE ROCKETS

**Orlando, Sept. 11:** Anthony Davis had 29 points and 12 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers dominated the Houston Rockets 110-100 to take a commanding 3-1 lead in their NBA Western Conference series on Thursday.

The Rockets were no match for the Lakers' intensity and skill as Los Angeles outscored them 62-24 in the paint and 19-2 in fast break points in the quarantine bubble at the Disney resort in Orlando, Florida. The Lakers didn't need a big offensive night from LeBron James in their wire-to-wire victory. James finished with just 16 points, but grabbed 14 defensive rebounds and had nine assists for the Lakers, who are trying to reach their first Western Conference finals since the 2009-10 season. — AFP