

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

NELLORE | THURSDAY | 24 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 35.9°C
Min: 26.8°C
RH: 57%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: clear.
Max/Min temp. 35/26°C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+88,373)	(+1,157)
57,27,461	91,163
covid19india.org	
(+2,296)	(+10)
TS: 1,77,070	1,062
(+7,228)	(+45)
AP: 6,46,530	5,506

CASES AROUND THE WORLD	
3,19,46,610	
DEATHS	
9,78,202	
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	213
worldometers.info/ coronavirus	

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinaya
Tithi: Adhika Ashwayuja Shudhha
Ashtami till 7.06 pm
Star: Moola till 6.13 pm
Varjyam: 4.38 pm to 6.13 pm;
3.57 am to 5.35 am (Friday)
Durmuhratam: 10.08 am to
10.56 am; 2.55 pm to 3.43 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm
Hijri calendar: 1442 AH
Safar ul Muzaffar 6, 1442 AH
PRAYERS(SHAHI MASJID)
Fajr: 4.48 am
Zohar: 12.03 pm
Asar: 4.24 pm
Maghrab: 6.08 pm
Isha: 7.17 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.04 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.59 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 12.43 AM
MOONSET TODAY 00.13 PM

COUNTER POINT



How much did the Centre spend on PM's visits to China and Pakistan?

IN BRIEF

75% govt school toilets dirty: CAG

New Delhi: At least 75 per cent of government school toilets audited in 15 states by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) were not found to be hygienically maintained, according to a report tabled in Parliament on Wednesday. "During the survey, audit noticed that proper maintenance or sanitization was not available in 1,812 out of 2,326 toilets. 715 out of 1,812 toilets were not being cleaned. 1,097 toilets were being cleaned twice in a week to once in a month whereas, the norm was for daily cleaning at least once," the report said.

India, Oz hold naval exercises

New Delhi: The Indian and Australian navies on Wednesday began a two-day mega exercise in the Indian Ocean region that featured a range of complex naval manoeuvres, anti-aircraft drills and helicopter operations, officials said. It is the first major military exercise by India and Australia after they elevated their ties to a strategic partnership and signed a landmark deal for reciprocal access to military bases for logistics support in June. The Mutual Logistics Support Agreement allows militaries of the two countries to use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies.



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'Kashmiris rather have Chinese rule them'



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Trump insists on calling Covid as China virus



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Dhoni ridiculed for slow batting

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Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy carries a pair of new "Pattu Vastraams" on his head while going in a procession to the main shrine to present them to Lord Venkateswara during annual Brahmotsavams at Tirumala on Wednesday.

CM offers pattu vastram to Lord

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 23

Ignoring protests by opposition parties, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy entered the hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala without signing the declaration form and offered silk cloths to the Lord on behalf of the state government.

It is an official tradition to make such an offering on the occasion of Garuda Vahana Seva during the annual Brahmotsavams. The opposition parties, mainly TD and BJP, staged protests here and at different places in the state, demanding him to respect the practice of non-Hindus signing the declaration form and declare his faith in Lord Venkateswara before entering the temple.

It may be recalled that Jagan Mohan Reddy has visited Srivari temple at least five times since 2009. A controversy over his faith, however, surfaced for the first time in 2012. Sources said that Jagan at that time told the temple authorities that he had declared his faith in 2009 hence there was no need to do it again.

Meanwhile, clad in the

traditional attire of white shirt and silk dhoti with the *tirunamam* (insignia) applied to his forehead and adorned with traditional headgear by temple *archaka* at Bedi Anjaneya Swamy temple, he carried the silk vastraams in a silver plate over his head amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras to the accompaniment of Nadaswaram and Melam to the main temple.

Later, the Chief Minister handed over the vastraams to the chief priest inside the temple and had darshan of Lord Venkateswara. Later, he was offered Vedasirvachanam by vedic Pundits at Ranganayakula mandapam before participating in the Garuda Vahana Seva. He also unveiled the 2021 TTD calendars and diaries on the occasion.

According to official information, after an overnight stay, he will have another darshan Thursday morning along with his Karnatacouterpart B.S. Yediyurappa.

After taking part in Parayanam at Nada Neerajana mandapam in front of the temple, both of the CMs will lay the foundation stone for Karnataka choultries at Tirumala.

Meanwhile, clad in the

Oppn MPs protest in LS over bulldozing key Bills

Last day of monsoon session ends in chaos for Parliament

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

The last day of monsoon session saw several protests in Parliament with Opposition MPs from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha boycotting proceedings in their respective Houses and holding silent marches against the passage of "anti-farmer and anti-labour bills" in the absence of discussions.

Representatives of the Opposition parties also met President Ramnath Kovind later in the

evening and asked him to return the Farmers' Bills so that they can be passed after discussions and suitable amendments.

Briefing the media after meeting the President along with other leaders, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said the Opposition did not consider itself responsible for the pandemic in the Upper House on Monday.

"There was no division of votes, no voice voting. Constitution was undermined ... Unfortunately the deputy chairman got

the Bills passed forcefully and we could not understand what was happening. We have requested the President to return the Bills so that they can be discussed again and passed with amendments," Mr Azad said.

Claiming that the Constitution was undermined, he said: "The government should have consulted all parties, farmer leaders before bringing the farm bills".

Eight Opposition MPs were suspended on Monday after a ruckus during the passage of the

Farmers' Bills.

Earlier, MPs of 18 Opposition parties in Rajya Sabha staged a silent march from the Gandhi statue to the Ambedkar statue within the Parliament premises. Same drill was carried out by Opposition MPs of the Lok Sabha.

The protesting MPs carried placards with messages such as "Save Farmers, Save Workers, Save Democracy" during their march from the Mahatma Gandhi statue to the Ambedkar statue on the premises.



Suresh Angadi
**RAILWAY MOS
SURESH ANGADI
DIES OF COVID**

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Minister of State for Railways and Karnataka BJP MP Suresh Angadi passed away on Wednesday, days after he tested positive for Covid-19.

The 65-year-old passed away at around 8 pm at the AIIMS trauma centre which has been converted into a dedicated Covid-19 facility, sources at the hospital said.

A fourth-term MP from Belagavi, Angadi is the first Union minister to have died of the virus.

At least six MLAs and three MPs have earlier succumbed to it. Former president Pranab Mukherjee, who died on August 31, was also diagnosed as Covid positive.

Angadi had on September 11 tweeted that he had contracted the disease. The MP had requested all those who came in close contact with him over the last few days to monitor their health and get tested in case of any symptoms.

— PTI

Kala Bhairava linga stolen after thieves offered prayer

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNool, SEPT. 23

The linga of Kala Bhairava Swamy at Patha Kandukur near Allagadda was stolen as it is believed to have magical powers of granting children to barren women.

It is believed that women

who are unable to conceive worship the sacred linga of Kala Bhairava to become fertile.

Some women decorate the linga with *kumkum*, turmeric and carry the dust home.

The villagers said unknown persons entered the temple and lopped off

the linga of the idol.

Before doing so, they offered *pujas*, garlanded the idol and offer coconuts.

The response to the desecration did not go down well with the villagers.

■ Page 2: YSRC, TD accuse each other

RTC RESUMES OPS
IN AP BY KEEPING
SOCIAL DISTANCE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 23

AP State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) has from Wednesday started state-wide operations with "whatever possible social distancing" among passengers.

■ Full report on Page 3



Lord Malayappa Swamy mounted atop Garuda Vahanam on the fifth day evening of Srivari annual Brahmotsavams in Tirumala on Wednesday night.

Garuda Vahana seva held in solitude due to Covid

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 23

Garuda Vahana Seva, the hallmark of all the events wherein the Lord Malayappa takes celestial ride on his favourite vehicle Garuda Vahana, was organised at the Srivari temple on the fifth day of nine-day annual Brahmotsavams on Wednesday.

The Garuda Vahana Seva assumed much significance among the other Vahana Sevas observed during the nine-day mega event. From the first rituals till the completion of the nine-day religious

event, the Brahmo-tavams involve Garudalwar, which shows the importance of the King of Aves Garuda.

Earlier in the morning, Lord Malayappa Swamy appeared in Mohini Avataram on the colourfully decorated palanquin, accompanied by silver idol of Lord Krishna on another palanquin. The grand and richly decorated deities on palanquins were paraded inside the main shrine.

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Modi asks most hit states to stop spread

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

ing with the Chief Ministers and representatives of seven states with a high number of cases, Modi asked them to reassess if lockdown of one or two days a week are being effective in containing the deadly virus or are hampering economic activities. He also asked states to enhance their focus on testing, tracing, treatment, surveillance and clear messaging to curb Covid.

During a review meet-

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According to agency inputs, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday asked state governments to focus on "micro containment zones" to prevent the spread of Coronavirus instead of shutting down activities in the entire state which may restrict economic growth.

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OTHER STORIES

CM condoles death of Suresh Angadi

Vijayawada: Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed his profound grief over the sudden and untimely demise of Union minister of state for railways Suresh Angadi. The CM in his condolence message released here on Wednesday recalled his recent video conference with the Union minister during the flagging off of Kisan Rail from Anantapur. The CM conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members.

Gram secretariat building inaugurated

Kadapa: Chief whip Srikanth Reddy said the village and ward secretariat system introduced by Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was historic. Mr Srikanth Reddy along with MLC Zakia Khanam and former MLA Mohan Reddy inaugurated the new building of Rachapalle grama secretariat in Ramapuram mandal on Wednesday. The building was constructed at a cost of ₹40 lakh. On the occasion, he said secretariat staff and volunteers were acting as the bridge between the government and the people.

HOTELIERS LAUD CM'S INITIATIVE ON TOURISM REVIVAL

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 23

Hoteliers and tourism associations were all praise for Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for coming up with a series of initiatives to promote the hospitality industry in a big way in the state.

The AP Chamber of Commerce and Industry Federation organised an online interactive session for hoteliers and tourism association representatives. It was chaired by special chief secretary, commercial taxes, Rajat Bhargava on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the participants lauded the CM for issuing three GOs pertaining to the state excise policy and reopening of bars.

They opined that the tourism industry could contribute significantly to the gross state domestic production and generation of jobs in the service sector.

They said that the relaxations in excise policy would give a major relief to the hoteliers and the players in the tourism sector who were badly affected by the Coronavirus.

Mr Rajat Bhargava stated that the CM regarded the tourism as one of the crucial sectors for economic development and hinted that the state government was coming up with a very aggressive hospitality/tourism policy backed by a 'restart' mechanism soon.

'BHOGAPURAM AIRPORT WILL BE READY BY 2023'

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC

VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 23

The government is aiming at completion of green field Bhogapuram International Airport by 2023, said special secretary to industries and infrastructure Karikala Valavalan. The special secretary held a review meeting with the revenue and other senior officials at the Vizianagaram collector's office in Vizianagaram on Wednesday. He said the land acquisition process should be completed soon so that the construction work could begin thereafter.

"The new international airport would be a driving force for the development of the north coastal AP," he said.

He said after completion of land acquisition, the site should be handed over to the GMR Group who would start construction work. The airport needed 2,750.78 acres of which 2,383.02 acres have been acquired so far, he was told by the officials. He suggested the officials acquire the remaining 71 acres and hand it over to the GMR Group.

Mr Valavalan enquired about the private lands, assigned lands, government lands and the lands under court litigation with the land acquisition officials. He suggested revenue divisional officer Bhavani Shankar to take the responsibility of the government lands.

Replying to the queries, the RDO told the special secretary that two housing colonies were being built for the families of four villages whose lands were acquired.

The project is displacing 376 families and all of them would be accommodated in the housing colonies, the RDO told Mr Valavalan. Roads and drainage systems have been completed in the housing colonies, he added.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy takes harathi offered to him by priests as Lord Malayappa Swamy taken on a ride on Garuda Vahanam inside Srivari temple in Tirumala on Wednesday.

Kodali: Did Modi go to Ayodhya with his wife?

Minister slams BJP for criticising Jagan offering robes to Lord alone

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 23

Andhra Pradesh state civil supplies minister and member of the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy Cabinet Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (alias 'Kodali Nani') on Wednesday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not taking his wife for the Ayodhya Ram temple bhumi poojan and advised him to take his spouse while visiting temples.

Responding to BJP leaders' demand that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy must bring his spouse to the Tirupati-Tirumala temple, Nani said, "Let Modi and his wife set an example as an ideal couple, like Shiva and Parvati or lord Venkateshwara and his cohort."

Flaying Bharatiya Janata Party leaders over prevailing political unrest in the state, Kodali Nani pointed out that Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was also visiting temples without his cohort.

Responding to BJP's demand for his expulsion from AP Cabinet due to his recent remarks on faith declaration issue, Nani asked why YSRC sack him, saying, "will BJP dismiss Amit Shah from ministry if opposition parties demanded it."

The minister, who reached Tirumala to join his Chief Minister, who arrived at the hill town on a two-day visit to present silk *vastrams* to Lord Venkateswara on the occasion *Garuda Vahana seva* on behalf of the state government, responded strongly to BJP's demand that the AP Chief Minister, whose government has run into a controversy over non-Hindus declaring their faith in the Lord, should visit the Tirumala temple along with his family.

Speaking to media persons, Nani said, "why didn't Modi take his spouse during his recent visit to Ayodhya Ram Mandir bhumi Puja?"

He further said, "BJP leaders have no moral right to demand that Jagan Mohan Reddy must give a declaration at Tirumala temple or question him on bringing his



— DC

Modi delighted with virtual darshan

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed his delight at having virtual darshan of Lord Venkateswara on Wednesday. The Prime Minister had held a video conference on the day with chief ministers of several states, including Andhra Pradesh, to review measures being taken to contain the spread of Covid-19.

AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had been at Tirumala on the day for presenting silk robes to Lord Venkateswara as part of the Brahmotsavams at the temple. The CM, however, made it a point to attend the virtual meeting from Annamayya Bhavan with the portrait of Lord Venkateswara in the backdrop.

Seeing the Lord's por-

trait, PM Modi said he was very happy with having the darshan of Lord Venkateswara. He also appreciated the AP CM for taking part in the virtual meeting despite being busy in Tirumala in connection with the Brahmotsavams.

The Prime Minister also lauded the set up of gram/ward secretariats in AP, which provided services to people at the local level. He wished other states also adopt the same system for providing better civic services to their people.

family to the temple. They should ask PM Modi and UP CM to take their families during visits to temples."

Slamming BJP state chief Somu Veeraju, Nani reminded him that BJP had secured lesser votes than those polled by NOTA (none of the above) in 2019 elections.

"It would be better for BJP leaders to mind their own party matters. They should focus on getting more votes in next elections rather than politicising temple incidents," he take?"

take?"

"Let him (PM) go back to Ayodhya with his wife and do puja again. Modi garu ye bharyani teesukeltaru? (Which wife will Modi take?)"

take?"

IN BRIEF

Revenue officer held for graft

Visakhapatnam: The officials of Anti-Corruption Bureau arrested village revenue officer J. Nageswara Rao, working at Naguru village under Garugubilli mandal in Vizianagaram district for demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹5,000 from a farmer Appala Naidu. The ACB officials said that Rao demanded bribe for processing application for mutation of land. Based on the complaint from Naidu, the ACB officials laid a trap and nabbed him at the office.

VIVEKA CASE: CBI FINDS ₹48L IN SHOP OWNER'S LOCKER

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDI I DC
KADAPA, SEPT. 23

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) reportedly obtained key evidence in the murder of former minister Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy. It is learnt that as part of the investigation, the CBI questioned Munna, the owner of a sandal shop in Pulinvelu, and his family members. He is suspected to have been involved in financial transactions prior to the murder of the former minister. The investigation team is said to have found ₹48 lakh and 250 gram gold in the locker in Andhra Pragathi Gramene Bank, being operated by Munna besides ₹20 lakh fixed deposits in other banks. The CBI team has been in the second phase of investigating for the past few days and questioning suspects in the case. On Wednesday, it questioned a person who was very close to Vivekananda Reddy's family and recorded his statement.

The former minister and CM Jagan's uncle was murdered in his house at Pulinvelu on March 15, 2019.

RTC RESUMES SERVICES WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 23

Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) has from Wednesday started state-wide operations with "whatever possible social distancing" among passengers.

Corporation authorities point out that as states like Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have removed norms of maintaining social distancing in seating arrangements, AP too will follow the same to overcome loss of revenues.

The state government has also permitted RTC buses to operate as per their designated capacity at the time of their registration with the state transport department.

Yet, in view of continuing risk of Covid-19, they will try and ensure that "whatever possible social distancing" among passengers is maintained. An official explained that first, passengers will be asked to occupy the window seat of each row on the left and right side of the gangway. The seats abutting the gangway will be left vacant. However, once all the seats are filled in this manner and more passengers are boarding, the remaining seats will be filled in the same order on the left and right sides. The official clarified that no standing passenger will be allowed in the bus.

APSRTC has started operating around 4,600 services in this manner covering nearly 42 lakh km distance from Wednesday onwards.

To cut down the risk of Coronavirus, passengers are being thermally screened before being allowed into the RTC complexes.

Commuters are also being advised to sanitise their hands. Further, bus drivers and conductors are allowing passengers to board the bus only if they are wearing a face mask. For convenience of passengers who forget to bring face mask and sanitiser, RTC authorities have permitted stores in the complex to sell these goods.

RTC authorities have also started city services in metros like Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam.

APSRTC is hoping that the corporation will be able to enhance its occupancy ratio during the ensuing Dasara festivities. Corporation's executive director (Operations) K. S. Brahmananda Reddy said, "We have resumed RTC services all over the state from Wednesday onwards with 'regulated social distancing'. Earlier, we filled up only 50 per cent of seats."

Naval exercise

A submarine of the Indian Navy surfaces from the water as it passes through the Port Channel during a regular exercise in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday.

Covid +ve cases cross 50K mark in Nellore

DC CORRESPONDENT
Nellore, Sept. 23

With 3,79,319 Covid-19 tests done till date, the positive cases reported in Nellore district crossed 50,000 mark with 50,729 total positive cases till date.

According to health officials, there are 3,969 active cases after discharge of 46,760 patients and death of 507 patients. The recovery rate is 91.16 per cent, doubling rate is 18 days, case fatality rate is 1.007 and positive rate is 13.375 as of now.

Incidentally, Nellore is one of the few districts that carried out the highest number of tests for Coronavirus with 1,18,519.06 tests per one million population out of the total population of 3 million in the district.

According to a senior official of the district, measures such as shifting nearly 1,250 high risk patients, who are above 60 years old, with any one symptom of Covid-19 to the hospitals and starting Corona treatment without waiting for test results had helped to bring down the deaths from double digit to single digit.

In addition to this, higher officials interacted with the patients in general wards through Zoom App almost daily to find out the quality of food and service to send a message to the medical officers and nurses that their performance is under scanner.

Further, CC Cameras have been fixed in all the wards and 3 persons posted at the control room for monitoring round the clock.

FIELD STAFF TOLD TO KEEP A TAB ON PATIENTS IN HOME ISOLATION

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 23

the persons with Covid symptoms and also identify the primary and secondary contacts of infected persons.

He underlined the need to carry out 6,500 Covid tests per day and give priority in testing the persons with symptoms. He directed them to ensure 100 tests per day in each Primary Health Centre.

During an interaction with officials in the Constituencies and Mandals at Ongole on Wednesday, Collector of Prakasam District Pola Bhaskar told them to screen

PRAKASAM TO MAKE EFFECTIVE USE OF NABARD AID FOR FARMING SECTOR

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 23

officials during a review on agriculture at Ongole on Wednesday. Prakasam district collector Pola Bhaskar said that Nabard also provides extended financial assistance to the individual farmers. With respect to processing units, financial assistance to the extent of ₹2 lakh to ₹10 crore for each unit depending on the activity.

The funds will also be used for financial assistance to the activities of farmers' cooperative societies and for marketing of agricultural products.

Addressing agriculture

BJP SEEKS REPAIRS TO CAUSEWAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, SEPT. 23

Wednesday. In their representation to the joint collector, they demanded a permanent solution to the problem. Mr Ramachandra Reddy said that temporary repairs were carried out whenever there was damage to the structure.

This led to recurring damage to the causeway in rainy season in the past three decades, he said.

Instead of repairing the causeway, the government had better construct a bridge, he suggested.

SI'S PASSING OUT PARADE TOMORROW

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 23

DIG Kranthi Rana Tata said the third passing out parade for trained sub inspectors was completed at Anantapur for the year 2019-20 batch. A total of 273 Stipendiary Cadet Trainee sub inspectors of civil, Armed Reserve and AP Special Police wings got trained in the institute.

Home minister Mekapati Sucharitha will be the chief guest for the passing out parade programme.

People rush for CT scans

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 23

Private labs have jacked up the price from ₹2,700 during regular times to anything between ₹3,000-₹6,000 for a scan.

side. She along with her husband opted for a CT scan and the result was Covid-19 negative.

However, after a few days, in a swab test, she and her husband tested positive.

With a large number of patients visiting private labs, managements are unable to accommodate them while maintaining social distance and other protocols from the time of registration for a CT scan until the conduct of test and hand over of the report, resulting in exposure to the virus.

As the rapid antigen test is not foolproof to confirm Covid-19 and there are restrictions on the conducting of Covid-19 tests at government hospitals for varied reasons, people are rushing for a CT scan to ascertain their Covid-19 status.

In another case in Rajahmundry, a private employee got his son test

ed with a rapid antigen test at a government facility and it gave him a Covid-19 negative result. As the youngster was suffering from high fever continuously, he was taken for a CT scan which gave his level of suspicion for Covid-19 infection to be CO-RADS 4, indicating high, with abnormalities indicative of Covid-19. The youngster was immediately admitted in the hospital, discovered positive but fortunately recovered after reaching a critical stage.

His father said, "People should try to correlate regular Covid-19 tests and blood tests so that it helps them get accurate Covid-19 status. I appeal to the state government to promote digital X-ray which costs just ₹900 to help people save money instead of going for the expensive CT scan."

State Covid-19 command centre special officer Dr C. Prabhakar Reddy said, "We have been telling people not to opt for CT scans unless prescribed by the doctor as RT-PCR is the most accurate test for finding out Covid-19 status."

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each followed by five in Krishna, four each in East Godavari, 428 in West Godavari, 56,653 in Chittoor, 54,720 in Kurnool, 54,263 in Anantapur, 51,232 in Kadapa, 536 in Chittoor, 502 in Prakasam, 479 in Nellore, 428 in Krishna, 414 in Visakhapatnam, 387 in Vizianagaram, 319 in Srikakulam and 229 in Kurnool.

East Godavari has the highest number of cumulative cases at 90,047, followed by 60,659 in West Godavari, 56,653 in Chittoor, 54,720 in Kurnool, 54,263 in Anantapur, 51,232 in Kadapa, 536 in Chittoor, 502 in Prakasam, 479 in Nellore, 428 in Krishna, 414 in Visakhapatnam, 387 in Vizianagaram, 319 in Srikakulam and 229 in Kurnool.

Though the state government has been repeatedly maintaining that the RT-PCR test is the only cent per cent confirmatory test for Covid-19, people are visiting private labs for a CT scan and risking exposure to Covid-19.

In a case in Visakhapatnam, an elderly couple contracted Covid-19 after visiting a private lab for CT scans.

The woman developed slight fever having no history of visiting out-

Kurnool, 432 each in Krishna, four each in East Godavari, 428 in West Godavari, 56,653 in Chittoor, 54,720 in Kurnool, 54,263 in Anantapur, 51,232 in Kadapa and 536 in Chittoor, 502 in Prakasam, 479 in Nellore, two each in Srikakulam and 229 in Vizianagaram.

The state health authorities have discharged 8,291 Covid-19 infected patients after complete recovery in the last 24 hours.

AP has carried out

Covid-19 tests on 99,295 samples per one million population and has registered a positive rate at 12.19.

Maharashtra has tested 48,177 samples with a positive rate at 20.65 and Telangana has tested 65,471 samples with a positive rate at 6.79, proving yet again that AP remains the model state in testing and combating the virus.

The doctors ask 60 per cent of their patients to go for a CT scan. A patient suffering from cough also has to spend a minimum of ₹10,000 towards doctor's fee, scanning and medicines.

There are allegations that laboratories and doctors have 50:50 sharing of the cost. If a patient is suffering from fever, cough and cold, the doctor has to suggest a corona antigen rapid test.

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SHORT TAKES
NCB SUMMONS
DEEPIKA, SARA,
SHRADDDHA

SAURABH JOSHI | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 22

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Wednesday issued summons to actors Deepika Padukone, Sara Ali Khan, Shraddha Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh in connection with the ongoing drugs probe in Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case.

The actors have been asked to appear before the NCB in three days stated the summons. The agency, meanwhile, grilled Madhu Mantena of KWAN talent management agency after his name cropped up during the questioning of Rajput's talent manager Jaya Saha.

The actors will be grilled based on the witness statements and the chat records that were retrieved by the investigating agencies. While investigating, the NCB found that Sara and Shraddha had visited Rajput's farmhouse in Lonavala and were allegedly part of drug parties there which has also been claimed in statements of witnesses.

Deepika, meanwhile, came on the NCB's radar after chat records between the actor and her manager Karishma Prakash allegedly asking for hashish. The NCB may also grill the duo together at a later stage, officials said.

Deepika is likely to appear before NCB on Friday, whereas Sara and Shraddha would be there for questioning on Saturday, officials said. "The summons has been issued and further probe is underway. Others if found involved may also be summoned as and when needed," said an NCB officer.

**FIR LODGED
AGAINST
ANURAG KASHYAP**

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

Mumbai Police have registered an FIR against filmmaker Anurag Kashyap after actress Payal Ghosh accused him of raping her in 2013, an official. Kashyap has dismissed the allegations as baseless. The First Information Report (FIR) was registered at Versova police station on late Tuesday night after the actress along with her lawyer Nitin Satpathy approached the police.

The FIR was registered under Indian Penal Code Sections 376 (I) (rape), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 342 (wrongful confinement), the official said, adding that further investigation is underway.

According to the police, Mr Kashyap will be called for questioning in connection with the alleged seven-year-old incident. In her police complaint, the actress alleged that Mr Kashyap raped her at a place on Yari Road in Versova in 2013. The actress and her lawyer earlier approached Oshiwara police station in Mumbai on Monday, but they were asked to go to the Versova police station as the alleged incident took place at the under Versova police's jurisdiction, the official said.

**MAHA BUILDING
COLLAPSE TOLL
INCREASES TO 40**

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

The death toll in the building collapse in Bhivandi in Maharashtra's Thane district increased to 40 on Wednesday with the recovery of 14 more bodies overnight. Twenty-five persons have been pulled out of the debris alive so far and are being treated at hospitals in Bhivandi and Thane, an official said.

The search operation continued throughout the night despite heavy rains. The bodies recovered from the debris were mutilated and highly decomposed as they had remained there for over 50 hours, the official said.

Even at the time of writing this news more people were feared trapped. Due to heavy rains rescue teams were facing difficulties in rescue operation however they continued rescue operation throughout night. According to NDRF and Thane Municipal Corporation's disaster management cell, the rescue operation will continue as more people are feared trapped under the debris.

Of the 40 bodies recovered so far, 18 were children.



Police use water cannons to disperse supporters of Lok Insaaf Party (Punjab) during a protest over the passage of recent farm Bills and electricity amendment Bill, at Punjab-Haryana border in Ambala district on Wednesday. The Haryana police also on Wednesday used water cannons in Panipat and Ambala on agitators to stop them from proceeding to Delhi to protest against the farm reform Bills.

— PTI

Kerala may challenge farm Bills

Says Centre didn't consult states despite agriculture being state subject

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPT. 23

The Kerala government is planning to move the Supreme Court against the farm Bills passed by Parliament recently.

Replying to a question on the feasibility of a state government challenging Bills passed by Parliament, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said a proposal had come before the Cabinet here on Wednesday.

"We thought it needs to be examined in detail legally. So we decided to send the proposal to the law department for detailed perusal. That's

what has happened," he said. There were reports that legal advice received by the government stated the passing of farm Bills amounted to violation of states' powers and blatant contravention of Constitutional norms.

According to the CPM-led LDF Government, the Bills are anti-farmer and also aimed at promoting the interests of corporates. The Left parties have already announced that they would be taking part in the agitation planned by Kisan Coordination Committee across the country on September 25.

The two Bills - Farmer's Produce Trade and

Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 - have been passed by both Houses of the Parliament.

Earlier agriculture minister Mr V.S. Sunil Kumar had sought legal opinion and he got the advice that the government can go ahead and challenge the legislations in the apex court.

The matter was discussed at the weekly Cabinet meeting on Wednesday and the government was of the opinion that the Bills mounted to interfering with the

powers vested with the state under the federal system. Mr Sunil Kumar who has been tested positive, took part in the Cabinet meeting online.

He pointed out that despite the fact that agriculture fell in the state list as per the seventh schedule of the Constitution; the Centre did not consult even single state before introducing these Bills in the Parliament.

He said the Centre had also not taken the farmers' organizations into confidence.

"This goes to show that the Bills will only serve the interests of big corporates who have stake in agriculture sector," he

said. Apart from fighting the Bills legally in the courts, the agriculture department also plans to counter the Centre's move by bringing in agriculture cooperative societies and self help groups on a big scale. The minister said the Bills had been brought at a time when lakhs of farmers were committing suicide across the country due to agrarian crisis.

The Left parties in Kerala along with many unions and organizations working in the agriculture sector have expressed solidarity with the nationwide agitation called by Kisan Coordination Committee on September 25.

As many as 15 Bills including the three farm sector related Bills, over which the House, witnessed unruly scenes and suspension of eight members, were passed in the last two days with no Opposition member present in the House as they were boycotting the proceedings.

Expressing concern over the conduct of some of the members, he said it was "deeply painful" and all need to "collectively ponder" over these issues. Over the suspension on the eight members, Mr Naidu said rules

of the House do provide for such action when it becomes inevitable.

"We have to conclude this session eight sittings ahead of the scheduled 18 sittings as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to challenge humankind across the globe even after nine months of its outbreak," said the Chairman.

Referring to the suspension of eight MPs, Mr Naidu said "the developments in the House surrounding this unprecedented move have been deeply painful for all those who hold the stature and the dignity of this august House dear to their hearts."

Earlier during the day, the House bid farewell to 11 members who will retire in November, including civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri, SP's Ram Gopal Yadav, Ravi Prakash Verma, Chandrapal Singh Yadav and Javed Ali Khan, BSP's Veer Singh, Congress's P.L. Punia and Raj Babbar and BJP's Arun Singh and Neeraj Shekhar. Mr Naidu said some of the members will return to the House after re-election.

Meanwhile, BSP supremo Mayawati hit out at the government as well as the Opposition for the ruckus and chaos during the ongoing Monsoon Session, saying their conduct has harmed the dignity of Parliament and the Constitution.

In a tweet in Hindi, the BSP supremo said "Although Parliament is called the temple of democracy, its dignity has been shredded many times. Even during the ongoing Parliament session, the functioning of the government and the behaviour of Opposition in the House are embarrassing for the dignity of Parliament, Constitution and democracy. Very sad!"

Despite protests, RS sees 100.47% productivity

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Making an appeal to Rajya Sabha MPs to ensure that the "unseemly behavior" that led to the suspension of eight opposition parties members from the House is not repeated, chairman M Venkai Naidu on Wednesday said to protest is the right of the opposition but the question is how it should be done.

In his valedictory speech before the House was adjourned sine die eight days ahead of schedule due to Covid-19, Mr Naidu informed that the 252nd session of the Rajya Sabha witnessed a productivity of 100.47 percent, with 25 bills being passed and the session has been satisfying in terms of productivity but there were some areas of concern as well, including for the first time in the history of the Upper House, a notice of motion for removal of the deputy chairman was given.

Mr Naidu said it is "extremely unpalatable" when Bills are passed amid a boycott of proceedings by some sections of the House, but not taking up legislative work in such a situation may legitimise their action as an "instrument of blocking legislation".

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Expressing concern over the conduct of some of the members, he said it was "deeply painful" and all need to "collectively ponder" over these issues. Over the suspension on the eight members, Mr Naidu said rules

statehood. He said he would fight for this – but always peacefully – till his last breath. The former chief minister said that he had faith in the Supreme Court and hoped that they would stop postponing the petition his party has brought and hear it expeditiously. In the interview he, in fact, appealed to Supreme Court judges to hear the constitutional case quickly.

Asked why he had not raised this matter during the present session of Parliament, he said he wasn't given time. He said he had gone to meet the Speaker, along with MPs from Congress, Trinamool, DMK and the Communist Parties, and the Speaker had assured them time for a discussion would be allocated. But that never happened.

Asked if he believed the government had intervened and told the Speaker not to give time, Mr Abdullah said he did not know but agreed the Speaker had not kept his word.

He said that in the greater interest of Kashmiri families have come together.

He said that the NC and, in fact, all the other parties that had come together to issue the Gupkar Declaration of August 2019, which was reiterated on August 22 this year, were committed to restoring the dignity of Kashmiris.

He said that this meant reinstating Articles 370 and 35A and restoring

statehood. He said he would fight for this – but always peacefully – till his last breath. The former chief minister said that he had faith in the Supreme Court and hoped that they would stop postponing the petition his party has brought and hear it expeditiously. In the interview he, in fact, appealed to Supreme Court judges to hear the constitutional case quickly.

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Kashmiris rather have Chinese rule them: Farooq

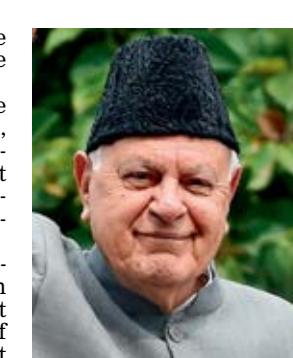
YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 23

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah who, according to his critics, has as a politician grown accustomed to setting off controversies, said in his latest harangue that the people of Kashmir do not feel Indian and do not want to be such.

"Today Kashmiris do not feel Indian and do not want to be Indian. They are slaves. They would rather have the Chinese rule them," he said in an interview to veteran journalist and television commentator Karan Thapar.

Reacting sharply to the government's doing away with the 1927 State Subject Law and replacing it with new domicile law in what is now called as the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr Abdullah said, "Every Kashmiri believes the new domicile laws are intended to create a Hindu majority. The gap between Kashmiris and the rest of the country is wider than ever before and growing."

He added that alleged attempts to change the



HE SAID, "Modi deliberately deceived me in August 2019 but I will fight to restore the dignity of Kashmiris till my last breath. The Abdullahs and Muftis have come together in Kashmir's greater interest and now Mehbooba (Mufti) is politically close to Omar (Abdullah) and me. I speak to her frequently".

out of his way to give him the impression the massive increase in troops was for security purposes.

He said the Prime Minister did not say a word about Articles 370 and 35A. Consequently, he emerged from that meeting believing the two Articles were not in danger. When asked he agreed that the Prime Minister had misled and deceived him.

The Senior Abdullah who is a member of Lok Sabha representing home constituency Srinagar said in the interview which has been published by The Wire alleged that the Kashmiris are being treated like second class citizens and hence are "slaves." He also said that

He said that he asked the Prime Minister why there were so many troops in the Valley and whether this was because of any perceived military threat.

He suggested the Prime Minister deliberately went

to get a ticket from the BJP.

Sources, however, said that this time Mr Pandey decided to quit six months earlier than his actual retirement date after he got assurances from the NDA. He was to retire from services on February 28, 2021.

The Bihar government had appointed him as DGP of the state police on January 31, 2019.

Few hours after reports of his voluntary retirement surfaced, a music

video went viral on the social media terming Gupteswar Pandey as "Robin Hood of Bihar" and "Janata ka hero".

In the video singer Deepak Thakur also praised Mr. Pandey's role

in Sushant Singh Rajput case and how he faced criticism from various political parties for leading a battle for the deceased actor Gupteswar Pandey had hit headlines by taking a strong stand on the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

He had also stoked a controversy by saying that "Rhea Chakraborty doesn't have aukat to make any comments on Bihar CM Nitish Kumar".

On Wednesday while talking to reporters he

stated that "people from various districts where I served earlier have been asking me to contest polls but I have not taken any decisions yet. But as far as my interest in serving people is concerned I can do that even without joining politics".

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IN BRIEF

6th term: Belarus
Prez takes oath

Kyiv: President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus was sworn in Wednesday for his sixth term in office at an inaugural ceremony that was not announced in advance amid weeks of huge protests of the authoritarian leader's reelection, which the opposition says was rigged. Several European countries used the occasion to reiterate that they don't recognise the results of the election and refused to regard Lukashenko as the legitimate president. The ceremony was held in front of several hundred dignitaries at the ornate Palace of Independence in the capital of Minsk, the state news agency Belta said. Police and other security forces blocked off parts of the city and public transportation was suspended.

Navalny released from hospital

Berlin: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was released from a Berlin hospital after more than a month's treatment for poisoning, with doctors now believing that a "complete recovery" from the Soviet-era nerve agent is possible for him, the hospital said Wednesday. Navalny spent 32 days at Berlin's Charite hospital, 24 of them in intensive care, before doctors deemed his "condition had improved sufficiently for him to be discharged from acute inpatient care." As he was released Tuesday, the 44-year-old displayed his characteristic sarcastic sense of humour. In an Instagram post, he took swipe at Russian President Vladimir Putin, scoffing at reported comments by the Russian leader suggesting that Navalny might have intentionally poisoned himself. He was flown to Germany two days after falling ill on Aug. 20.

UK: Truck lines if no-deal Brexit

London: The British government says there could be lines of 7,000 trucks at the English Channel and two-day waits to get into France immediately after the UK makes its economic break from the European Union at the end of the year. Michael Gove, the minister in charge of Brexit preparations, described that as a reasonable worst-case scenario in a letter to logistics firms. The government letter says that between 30% and 50% of trucks wanting to cross the Channel may not be ready for new paperwork and regulations that will come into effect on Jan. 1. This could lead to maximum queues of 7,000 port-bound trucks in Kent and associated maximum delays of up to two days," the document said. The UK withdrew from the EU's political institutions on Jan. 31 but remains in a tariff-free transition period until the end of the year.

COURT: NAWAZ ARREST REPORT BY SEPT. 30

SHAFQAT ALI | DC
ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 23

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday directed the concerned representative to submit report on the implementation of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) supremo Nawaz Sharif's arrest warrant through United Kingdom's County Court by September 30. During the hearing of Avenfield and Al-Azizia references conducted by a two-member bench, Additional Attorney General has assured the court that official of Pakistan High Commission will reach the PML-N supremo's residence in London to inform him about court orders.

The IHC had issued non-bailable arrest warrant against Nawaz for September 22 and rejected his plea seeking exemption from the hearing.

The court had also directed the concerned authorities to initiate proceedings to declare him as proclaimed offender. His petition to continue the case hearings through legal representative was also turned down by the IHC.

Nawaz had requested the IHC to nullify its ruling and allow him to become a part of the court proceedings through his representative. He made the request on medical grounds.

The IHC had ordered him to surrender and appear on September 10 at any cost in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption reference.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani had said in his remarks, "Nawaz Sharif has to appear before the court for hearing. He may face additional three-year imprisonment if he is absconder in the reference."

Trump: Harris incompetent

Don: US has most powerful weapons ever produced

CHINA TRAILS U.S. IN DEVELOPING 6TH-GEN CRAFT

Beijing, Sept. 23: China, which in recent years tried to catch up with the US in the design and production of new generation warplanes, is trailing the American air force in the development of the sixth-generation fighter jets by several years, according to a media report. America is leading the world in the sixth-generation fighter jets with the US Air Force saying it has flown a prototype – a milestone that is still years away for China, South China Morning Post reported.

"We will strike down terrorists who threaten our citizens and we will keep America out of endless, ridiculous, stupid foreign wars," he said at an election rally in Pennsylvania on Tuesday night. "I am just telling you the most powerful weapons ever produced we have and other countries know that and it's a good thing that they know it and I don't think we will ever be using them and I hope we don't, I hope to God," Trump said.

The president said by saying so, he was not leaking any classified information. He said he was allowed to speak about it because he is the president of the United States. Trump said that he has rebuilt the US military. "It was totally depleted when I took over. We built a military, \$2.5 trillion we spent all made in the US saying, the greatest equipment, the greatest planes and rockets and missiles and our nuclear," he said.

spoke at a voter mobilisation event in Detroit. She also launched Michigan's "Shop Talk" programme at Headliners Barbershop in Detroit. "Everything's at stake," Harris told a woman as she made a brief stop at a woman-owned cold pressed juice company in Michigan.

— PTI

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— PTI

Senate GOP plans vote on Don court pick before election

WOMAN WROTE 'GIVE UP' IN RICIN NOTE TO TRUMP

Washington, Sept. 23: Votes in hand, Senate Republicans are charging ahead with plans to confirm President Donald Trump's pick to fill the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Supreme Court seat before the November 3 election, launching a divisive fight over Democratic objections before a nominee is even announced.

Trump said Tuesday he will name his choice Saturday, confident of support. Democrats say it's too close to the election, and the winner of the presidency should name the new justice. But under GOP planning, the Senate could vote October 29. "I guess we have all the votes we're going to need," Trump told WJBF FOX 2 in Detroit.

"I think it's going to happen," Republicans believe the court fight will energize voters for Trump, boosting the party and potentially deflating Democrats who cannot stop the lifetime appointment for a conservative justice.

The Senate is controlled by Republicans, 53-47, with a simple majority needed for confirmation. The one remaining possible Republican holdout,

Mitt Romney of Utah, said Tuesday he supports taking a vote. Still, with early presidential voting already underway in several states, all sides are girding for a wrenching Senate battle over health care, abortion access and other big cases.

— AP

said the bill "maliciously slandered the human rights situation in Xinjiang" and sought to curb development and progress in the region while stirring up ethnic divisions and interfering in China's internal affairs.

The Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the bill "maliciously slandered the human rights situation in Xinjiang" and sought to curb development



French police officers secure the bridge leading to the Eiffel Tower, Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2020 in Paris. Paris police have blockaded the area around the Eiffel Tower after a phone-in bomb threat. — AP

Paris police barricade Eiffel Tower following phone-in bomb threat

Paris, Sept. 23: Paris police have blockaded the area around the Eiffel Tower after a phone-in bomb threat.

The Eiffel Tower in Paris was evacuated for two hours Wednesday after an anonymous caller threatened to blow up the great edifice situated in the heart of the French capital, police said.

Police cars and tape surrounded the streets below the tower and the bridge stretching from across the Seine River to the Trocadero Plaza.

Some tourists were still walking in the area, but it was unclear if any were still inside the tower on Wednesday.

Two police officers at the scene told The Associated Press that the operation was the result of a phone-in bomb threat.

Eiffel Tower management did not respond to requests for comment.

After an inspection was carried out, nothing suspicious was found and the Eiffel Tower was able to reopen to visitors.

"A man phoned up,

daily in normal years and about seven million visitors a year, some three-quarters from abroad, but visits are down this year because of Coronavirus travel restrictions.

While the Eiffel Tower is scheduled to be open every day, it occasionally closes because of suicide threats, bomb threats or labour strikes.

The monument had reopened on June 26 after its longest closure since World War II forced by the coronavirus pandemic.

— Agencies

2L dead as Don vilifies science, prioritises politics

New York, Sept. 23: "I did the best I could," President Donald Trump said. Huddled with aides in the West Wing last week, his eyes fixed on Fox News, Trump wasn't talking about how he had led the nation through the deadliest pandemic in a century. In a conversation overheard by an Associated Press reporter, Trump was describing how he'd just publicly rebuked one of his top scientists — Dr Robert Redfield, a virologist and head of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Redfield had angered the president by asserting that a COVID-19 vaccine wouldn't be widely available until late 2021.

So hours later, with no supporting evidence, Trump called a news conference to say Redfield was

"confused." A vaccine, Trump insisted, could be ready before November's election.

Mission accomplished: Fox was headlining Trump's latest foray in his administration's ongoing war against its own scientists. It is a war that continues unabated, even as the nation's Covid-19 death toll has reached 200,000 — nearly half the number of Americans killed in World War II, a once unfathomable number that the nation's top doctors just months ago said was avoidable.

Over the past six months, the Trump administration has prioritised politics over science at key moments, refusing to follow expert advice that might have contained the spread of the virus and Covid-19, the disease it causes.

— AP

once and for all.

Describing the November 3 election as a "matter of economic survival", Trump said that the country was doing great on economic front before the plague was unleashed on the United States, and blamed China for it. "You had the greatest year you have ever had last year, and you were really on your way — we were very, very sadly disturbed by what happened with China. They let the plague out. They shouldn't have done it," he said.

"We built the greatest economy in the history of the world. And right now we're doing it again," he asserted.

— AP

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— AP

China denies forced labour in Xinjiang

Beijing, Sept. 23: China

on Tuesday lashed out at the passage of a bill by the US House of Representatives that threatens sanctions over the alleged use of forced labour in China's Xinjiang region, calling the accusation a lie.

Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the bill "maliciously slandered the human rights situation in Xinjiang" and sought to curb development

and progress in the region while stirring up ethnic divisions and interfering in China's internal affairs. "The so-called problem of forced labor is totally a lie fabricated by some organisations and personnel in the United States and the West," he told reporters at a daily briefing.

The House voted 406-3 to declare that any goods produced in Xinjiang are

presumptively made with the forced labour of detained Uighurs and other ethnic minorities, and therefore banned from being imported to the US. If enacted into law, it could force companies to avoid a region that produces 80% of the cotton in China, one of the world's top producers of the fiber, as well as tomatoes and manufactured goods.

— AP

IT'S 'CHINA VIRUS', NOT CORONAVIRUS WHICH SOUNDS LIKE A BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN ITALY, SAYS U.S. PRESIDENT

MORE CURBS IN HARD-HIT MADRID

Madrid, Sept. 23: Health authorities in Madrid may extend to more communities the restrictions on movement it imposed on areas of the Spanish capital with high Coronavirus infection rates.

About 860,000 Madrid residents already are required to justify trips out of 37 neighbourhoods. The region's deputy health chief, Antonio Zapatero, said Wednesday that a decision on additional measures would be announced on Friday.

— AP

FAKE PAGES FROM CHINA TRIED TO DISRUPT US POLITICS: FACEBOOK

Washington, Sept. 23: Facebook says it has removed a small network of fake accounts and pages that originated in China and focused on disrupting political activity in the US and other countries.

The US-focused activity was just a "sliver" of the

accounts' overall activity and gained almost no following. Their primary focus was Southeast Asia, including the Philippines. The accounts posted material both in support of and against Pete Buttigieg, Joe Biden and Donald Trump.

— AP

Academic policies and practices from 2013-14 to 2018-19 at 4 campuses examined

Auditor: UC wrongly admitted well-connected students

San Francisco, Sept. 23:

The University of California "inappropriately admitted" at least 64 wealthy students over the past six years as "favours to donors, family, and friends," according to an audit released on Tuesday that found hundreds more questionable cases of student athletes accepted to the top UC schools.

Auditors found that 22 applicants were falsely designated as student-athlete recruits "because of donations from or as favours to well-connected families." These students "had little or no athletic skills," Howle said. "UC Berkeley really had some significant weaknesses in their admissions process," Howle said.

The audit found that the elite school admitted 42 applicants based on their connections to donors and staff while denying admission to others who were more qualified. Howle said she believes the findings have barely scratched the surface of problems in the UC admissions process.

The 64 students identified as being improperly admitted were based on "definitive evidence," such as emailed communications showing a student was denied admission but then reconsidered and accepted after an athletic coach or the development office got

involved to suggest the student's entry could lead to donations, Howle said. "There's at least another 400 or so students...that were really questionable," Howle said, including some student athletes who didn't appear to have any athletic ability. UC President Michael V. Drake, who took over the job in July, said in a statement that he took the findings and recommendations "very seriously and will do all I can to prevent inappropriate admissions."

"The University will swiftly address the concerns the State Auditor raised. Furth-

ermore, individuals involved in improper activities will be disciplined appropriately," Drake said. The audit recommends that the UC President's office take a more robust role in auditing the admissions processes at the nine campuses and closely examine what is called "admissions by exception," granted for student athletes, artists, or those who have other specific talents that are attractive to a campus.

"We think that the Office of the President and their audit function should be not only looking deeper at these four campuses but looking

at all of the campuses in the UC system," Howle said. The audit was requested last year by state Assemblywoman Tasha Boerner Horvath in response to the national college admissions scandal, which embroiled prestigious universities across the country, athletic coaches and dozens of wealthy parents.

The scandal shed light on the murky world of UC college admissions and how the rich and famous exploited it to buy their children's way into top schools with rigged test scores or fake athletic credentials. At the centre of the scheme was Newport Beach-based college admissions consultant, William "Rick" Singer.

These investigations, known as Operation Varsity Blues, previously identified at least three students at UCLA and UC Berkeley who were improperly admitted. UCLA men's soccer coach Jorge Salcedo was indicted on charges of racketeering conspiracy for allegedly accepting \$200,000 in bribes from the scheme's mastermind, Singer, in exchange for helping two students gain admission to the school as soccer players.

— AP

DECCAN Chronicle

24 SEPTEMBER 2020

With Opp. away, govt sneaks in labour code

The government on Wednesday pushed through a set of key pieces of legislation that will impact the lives over 50 crore people who form the country's workforce. The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, along with the code on wages, which has already been enacted, subsume and replace 29 central laws that governed the country's industrial relations.

The Industrial Relations Code raises the threshold on the number employees needed in an organisation for retrenchment and closure of establishments without government approval to 300 from 100. While the law throws job security of a large number of people into the wilderness, it is welcomed by the industry as it makes hiring and firing easy. It also redefines the sole negotiating union in an establishment as the one in which more than 51 per cent of the workers are members. Establishments now need not listen to the voice of smaller sections of their employees. The Code on Social Security provides for universal social security to all workers, including the unorganised and the gig and platform workers who account for over 90 per cent of the total workforce. The Bill mandates that the governments set up social security funds for them and fixes the maximum hours of work as eight per day. It is to be seen how this provision to allow women to work in hazardous industries, albeit with safety measures, will benefit them. A redeeming feature is the attention on inter-state guest workers: the government will now have to maintain a database on them online. They can also avail the benefits of the public distribution system either in the native state or the state of employment, and insurance and provident fund benefits available to other workers. Critics have noted an alarming and unusual feature in the bills that gives the government wide powers to frame rules that will form the operational part of the legislation. They include the conditions for increasing the threshold for lay-offs, retrenchment, and closure, for applicability of different social security schemes to establishments, and specifying safety standards, and working conditions to be provided by establishments under the occupational safety code. The government has made its intention clear when it said the purpose of labour reforms is to provide a transparent system to suit the changed business environment. The codes also empower the state government to offer relaxations in provisions on labour security, with an aim to trigger a race to attract capital.

That the codes cleared parliamentary scrutiny in less than three hours of discussion, that too when the Opposition was boycotting the proceedings, reflects the disdain the government has shown towards not only to parliamentary practices but also to the people whose lives they will impact. The government showed a similar high-handedness when it got the farm bills passed. Every trade union, including the Bharatiya Mazdur Sangh affiliated to the Sangh Parivar, has voiced their protest against the anti-labour provisions in the codes. It remains to be seen how the government will tackle the disaffection within India's workforce.

Callous disregard of data

Data, they say, is the new oil. The finance minister had poured scorn though she did acknowledge the significance of credible data to base decision-making on. The real import of the importance of data in modern administration may have dawned on the government when it confessed in Parliament that it had no data on the deaths of guest workers who were forced by the suddenness of the declaration of the world's most severe lockdown to collectively log millions of miles as they trudged home in distress. This human tragedy, so gut-wrenchingly portrayed when a child was photographed trying to wake its dead mother on a road in Bihar, surpasses even the horrors of the pandemic.

In the absence of credible data gathering, the figure of a crore migrant workers having walked or ferried home by special trains and buses can only be taken as a ballpark figure conjured to satisfy questions tabled in Parliament. If it did not collate any data from different states on the fatalities and the number of returning migrants, the government is guilty of carelessness. But if the real reason is that data is being withheld because of the embarrassment it would cause, the government stands condemned by its own callousness. The suspicion is data — media sources put guest workers' deaths near about 300 — is a tool to be manipulated in the hands of the current dispensation as amply proved in several debates over statistics regarding job losses in a downward spiral of the economy in the last couple of years.

The government also admitted in Parliament that it had no data on farmer suicides in the last three years. The fact that its own national crime database reveals 10,281 farmer suicides in 2019 and 10,357 in 2018, besides counting 42,480 deaths by suicide of farmers and daily wage workers last year, shows up the rulers as shying away from the truth when it comes to keeping people's representatives informed in Parliament. In refusing to address inconvenient data, the government is proving unworthy of the people it governs.

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Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patainata, Industrial Estate, Apollo Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234
Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-255233/255234; Fax: 0891-2755285
Rajahmundry: Venagiri, Dhawalewaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208
Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515000, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904
Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burrapur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Adv Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325
Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552.
Cochin: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammangal, Cochin - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
Kochi: No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavathara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408
Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thiruvananthapuram 695 014
Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Ph: 0495 4019 018
Gangtok: Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Suresh Rajan

Investor visa: A way out of the Covid-19 conundrum?

Eight months after the first human case of the new coronavirus (Covid-19) was diagnosed in the United States, a countless number of dreams and plans have been permanently tabled or put on hold. Businesses have shuttered, some colleges and universities will be starting the fall fully remote, and racial strife is adding to the turmoil in the country.

While "unprecedented times" is now a cliché for describing this time we are in, it's also apropos to describe this year as a time like no other. If someone were to make a movie about the 1918 Spanish Flu, the Great Depression, and 1968 race riots all happening at once, it would look and feel like 2020.

Amid all the uncertainty in the US surrounding public health, job security, unemployment figures, and education, no one wants to put their future on hold. Foreign investors will continue to see opportunities to invest in US businesses and in support of creating more jobs and securing permanent US green cards.

Despite the pressures that the pandemic and surrounding rhetoric have

placed on immigration and some visa programs, the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program continues to be a viable, solid alternative to getting a quality US education and becoming US residents.

PRESSURES ON OTHER VISA PROGRAMMES

The topic of immigration has received particular attention from the Trump Administration this summer and has targeted some visa programs but not others.

Mr Trump's June 22, 2020, presidential proclamation effectively shut down L-1 and H1-B visa channels by suspending visa issuances for workers, their spouses and children.

Then, the administration said international students would have to transfer or leave the country if their universities opted for online-only learning this fall; this proclamation was later rescinded after major universities like Harvard and MIT sued.

On August 19, exemptions to the June order were announced for tech and healthcare workers who would be resuming employment with the same employer. Even then, there's an

uncertainty around these visas that cannot be shaken.

As a consequence, we are likely to see renewed interest in the EB-5 program, which provides mutually beneficial arrangements for immigrants and job creators. A one-time investment of \$900,000 for a new US business that creates at least 10 jobs for US workers earns the investors green cards and the ability to achieve permanent residency.

The "at-risk" capital is returned after the permanent green cards are received. Students who take advantage of this program are not limited by the industry they will work in after graduation — unlike other visas — and they do not have to worry about having to re-apply for visas or work permits.

In an average year, about 10,000 EB-5 visas are issued per year, and just under half that figure was used as of June over the course of fiscal year 2020 (which ends September 30), according to department of state visa control chief Charles Oppenheim in a June IIUSA webinar.

He acknowledged issuance has been slowed by the pandemic impacts, and

he predicted the programme could gain at least 4,200 new visas in FY2021. In other words, we could see 14,000 new EB-5 visas next year (starting October 1).

This is good news for residents of countries that have limits on the number of immigrant visas or that tend to have a higher number of EB-5 applicants.

Part of the sluggishness this past year was due to the limitations or resistance to in-person meetings and the increase in the minimum investment from \$500,000 to \$900,000 that became effective last year. Applications for EB-5 could take longer for investors to make if they cannot see projects firsthand.

Another shift we'll see from the pandemic's impacts is the categorisation of Targeted Employment Areas (which are rural or high unemployment areas) toward the end of 2021, as some regions in the US have been hit harder than others.

This could open up or shift opportunities for some investors. Similar to the most recent financial crisis, when stock market return potential has diminished, investors in a strong posi-

tion are likely to turn to real estate for stability, as demand in real estate is increasing.

High net worth investors may also be enticed to put their funds toward other countries, such as Portugal, whose Golden Visa Program is attractive for fast-tracking residency into the European Union.

Taxation in Portugal is considered more favourable and can be an important factor as investors and their families decide where to reside. The country also offers universal health care and affordable yet quality education.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the coming months, businesses are going to be picking up the pieces. Some international students may have opted for a gap year rather than deal with visa uncertainty and the limits of virtual-only learning.

The next year could be an opportune time to plan carefully the kind of future families and investors want to establish for themselves.

The writer is executive chairman and founder of LCR Capital Partners

Subhani



Are we ready for 'give & take' with China at LAC?

Sunanda K.
Datta-Ray

Reflections

The five teenaged Arunachal Pradesh boys who went missing on September 4 and were later found on the Chinese side of the border highlighted the dilemma that the top Indian and Chinese Army commanders must have faced during Monday's mammoth meeting.

Of course, the boys, who had unwittingly strayed across the border and were later found in China by People's Liberation Army personnel, were close to the extreme northeastern end of the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control between India and China. The meeting of Chinese and Indian commanders at Moldo was on the Chinese side of the LAC's north-western end. This is where, as Jawaharlal Nehru famously told Parliament before the 1962 border war, "not a single blade of grass grows".

In contrast, the Northeast is lush with vegetation and bristling with game. Moreover, as one of the lost boys put it: "We are hunters, we move around a lot." Yet, despite their experience and expertise, they got lost and could not be found for several days. "The borders are not demarcated well", they said. "We can't say which side is which."

It must be even more difficult to do among the barren rocks and snow-clad heights of Ladakh where there are often no marked borders at all, as narrated in Kyle J. Gardner's forthcoming book, *The Frontier Complex: Geopolitics and the Making of the India-China border, 1846-1962*.

This is where India accuses the Chinese PLA of encroaching on Indian territory in early May. In 1841-42.

Ladakh's king, Tshespal Namgyal, was dethroned and exiled and Ladakh incorporated into the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. China's PLA may be trying to regain through backdoor means what the Chinese lost fair and square in a war 178 years ago.

However, it must be admitted that the proposed Johnson-Ardagh line (for Tibet's northern boundary with Chinese Turkestan) and the abortive Macartney-MacDonald Line (to delineate Aksai Chin) were even more inconclusive than the McMahon Line which those Arunachal Pradesh boys so unwittingly transgressed.

One wonders whether either side at the Moldo talks in a fresh bid to ease the months-long standoff remembered Rajiv Gandhi's warning about these mythic lines. India's sixth Prime Minister, who paid an epochal five-day visit to Beijing in December 1988 to meet Deng Xiaoping, reminded everyone that the disputed Sino-Indian border was a thick pencil line on a small-scale map, blurring all physical features. Identifying the border in the ground can't be easy since according to Gardner, the British left large stretches of it without delineation or demarcation.

Indians are indignant about the Chinese intrusion into our sacred motherland only because they have been told about them by their political and military leaders. No one has any direct knowledge of those inaccessible heights. Similarly, when the Chinese complain similarly of Indian encroachments, they are only echoing the PLA and what the *Global Times* prints. Again, there is no independent corroboration.

The Indian delegation for Monday's sixth round of military talks was headed by Lt. Gen. Harinder Singh, the commander of the Leh-based

The protracted campaign which the Chinese call "wei qi" is hardly best suited for the onset of winter. It's not in anyone's interest to be lost in the uncharted mountains like those five Arunachal Pradesh boys.

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

BJP'S DAYDREAM

The BJP is day dreaming about capturing power in AP in 2024 when the performance of the NDA-II is a big question mark. It never displayed determination to grow on its own after its alliance with the TD. And thanks to the caste card by the TD leadership, BJP never gained ground. Right now the BJP is ill-organised, lacks cadre and more importantly a leader-ship.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

AP TOURISM

Even though the tourism department has suffered the most due to Covid-19, it still can get good occupancy for the tourist season if it takes drastic steps (*APTDC hopes 50% occupancy in hotels, DC, Sept. 23*). A reasonable discount on room rent and food may be introduced for individuals and small groups.

Panchakarla.Govardhana Rao
Kankipadu, Krishnagiri district

JEE ADVANCED

The woes of students appearing for JEE advanced on September 27, particularly from northern AP, are unlimited. The allotment of centres is very illogical. They have to travel hundreds of kilometres to reach the centre despite the fact that they have exam centres. The lack of public transport, hotels and the risk of virus coupled with monetary burden are parents sleepless nights.

Dr V.V. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Podgorny, Giri begin talks

MOSCOW, SEPT. 23. President V.V. Giri and President Nikolai Podgorny began formal talks in the Kremlin today with salutes of newsmen who crowded in there for a brief view.

The Soviet President observed that the temperature within the chandeliered hall of the seventeenth century Supreme Presidium which was cool and comfortable had suddenly become warm. "Even for us it is extremely hot" said President Giri as spotlights focused on the two Presidents and movie cameras whirred. One President said about the newsmen they are good friends," while the other added, "but bad enemies."

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37668.42	-0.17
Nifty 50	11,131.90	-0.20
S&P 500*	3,304.65	0.33
Dollar (₹)	73.56	0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	93.25	1.13
Euro (₹)	85.96	0.48
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,697 ▾684	-1.36
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.20	0.48
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.990	-0.021
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.676	0.012

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Hexaware Tech to offer ₹475 per share for delisting

Hexaware Technologies on Wednesday said will offer ₹475 per share as the final price for its delisting offer. The company stated the offer was successful and 8.72 crore equity shares had been validly tendered. The bid process for the delisting offer had started on September 9 and closed on September 16. "The acquirer and promoter have accepted the discovered price of ₹475 per equity share as exit price."

Mobile World Congress will be held in June 2021

The world's biggest four-day telecom assembly Mobile World Congress has been scheduled to start from June 28, 2021, global industry body GSMA Association said on Wednesday. The Mobile World Congress is held in the last week of February every year but this year, it was cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic, and after telecom companies one after the other started pulling out of the conference.

Toyota launches Urban Cruiser priced ₹8.4 lakh

Japanese auto major Toyota on Wednesday launched its compact Sports Utility Vehicle Urban Cruiser, which it has sourced from compatriot Suzuki, in India with price starting at ₹8.4 lakh as it looks to use cross-badged products from the latter to draw more customers in the volume segment. The Urban Cruiser is the second model to be launched in India under the global Toyota-Suzuki alliance after premium hatchback Glanza.

Airtel picks up stake in tech start-up Waybeo

Bharti Airtel on Wednesday said it has picked up a strategic stake in Waybeo under its start-up accelerator programme, in line with its strategy to ramp-up cloud offerings. The company did not divulge into the financial details of the deal. Tech start-up Waybeo, focused on deep artificial intelligence-based analytics for cloud telephony, is fifth to join the Airtel Startup Accelerator Program.

Boycott call fails to reduce import of Chinese products

Chinese share in imports rose to 19% as against 14% last year

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 23

Despite the drop in demand post-lockdown and the general resentment towards Chinese products after Ladakh incursion, China has increased its share in imports into India. Imports from the Communist country came down only by 29 per cent between April and August this year compared to 48 per cent decline in overall imports.

China's share in India's total imports has gone up to 19 per cent between April and July, up from 14 per cent in the year-ago period.

During the lockdown months of April and May and even during the initial months of unlock, the flow of imports in general

FOREIGN DEPENDENCE

- While India's total imports declined by 48 per cent, the country's imports from China have dropped merely by 29 per cent.
- Agro chemicals, medical and scientific instruments, other miscellaneous chemicals, handicrafts and petroleum products have seen rise in imports



and especially those from China had faced several issues. During these months, the shipments of many items got stuck at the ports, consumption was curbed and logistics remained unresolved.

Further, the Chinese incursion into Ladakh evoked a strong resentment among Indian consumers and calls to ban

Chinese imports had become loud. Small and medium traders under Swadeshi Jagran Manch and the Confederation of All India Traders had given open calls to boycott Chinese products. This was followed by increased scrutiny of Chinese products at ports and consequent delays. The government also wanted to cut

the Chinese imports whenever possible and promote indigenous production. Certain curbs in the form increased import duties were also brought in for select items.

However, the share of Chinese imports in India's overall imports has gone up to 19 per cent in the period between April and July compared to 14 per cent in the yearago period.

Among the top 50 commodity groups, import of agro chemicals rose from \$321 million to \$377 million, medical and scientific instruments grew from \$200 million to \$205 million, other chemicals from \$212 million to \$240 million, handicrafts from \$156 million to \$168 million and petroleum products from \$60 million to \$68 million.



Depositors and account holders of Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank hold placards during a protest near the Reserve Bank of India in New Delhi on Wednesday. On Tuesday, the central bank said net worth erosion, steep fall in deposits posed serious challenges in finding a workable plan for the revival of the fraud-hit bank. — AFP

US PE buys 1.28% stake in Rel Retail for ₹5,550cr

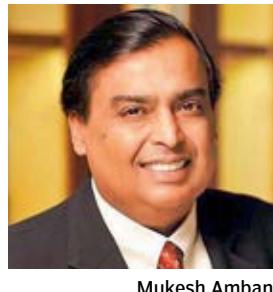
New Delhi, Sept. 23: US private equity firm KKR & Co will invest ₹5,550 crore to buy a 1.28 per cent stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's retail arm as the Mukesh Ambani-run conglomerate extends fundraising spree that has already netted more than ₹20 billion.

"KKR will invest ₹5,550 crore into Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd," RIL said in a statement.

The investment values Reliance Retail, which runs grocery stores and fashion chains, at a pre-money equity value of ₹4.21 lakh crore.

"KKR's investment will translate into a 1.28 per cent equity stake in RRVL on a fully diluted basis," it said.

This is the second investment by KKR in Reliance Industries (RIL) units. It had previously



Mukesh Ambani

picked up a 2.32 per cent stake in the digital arm, Jio Platforms for ₹11,367 crore.

For Reliance Retail, KKR is the second investor. US private equity firm Silver Lake Partners had earlier this month agreed to buy 1.75 per cent stake in the venture for ₹7,500 crore.

Reliance Retail Limited, a subsidiary of RRVL, operates India's largest, fastest-growing and most profitable retail business spanning supermarkets,

consumer electronics chain stores, cash and carry wholesale business, fast-fashion outlets, and online grocery store JioMart. It operates almost 12,000 stores in nearly 7,000 towns.

The investment will add fire to Ambani's battle for dominance in the retail market that is also being eyed by Jeff Bezos' Amazon.com and Walmart Inc's Flipkart.

In May, Reliance launched an online grocery delivery service JioMart. It has tied up with WhatsApp to connect customers with local kirana stores. Late last month, Reliance acquired the retail and logistics businesses of Future Group for ₹24,713 crore to boost its vertical.

Founded in 1976, KKR has ₹222 billion in assets under management as of June 30, 2020. — PTI

TELECOM STOCKS CRASH AFTER JIO'S POSTPAID PLANS

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Telecom stocks on Wednesday tumbled up to 10 per cent a day after Reliance Jio unveiled its postpaid plans.

Vodafone Idea shares plummeted 10.05 per cent to close at ₹9.22 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 14 per cent to ₹8.81.

Bharti Airtel also tumbled 7.89 per cent to settle at ₹433.90 after falling 9.99

per cent to ₹423.95 during the day. Bharti Airtel was the biggest laggard in the Sensex pack.

"Telco stocks like Vodafone Idea and Airtel plunged after Reliance Jio released a new postpaid tariff plan," said Sumeet Bagadia, executive director, Choice Broking.

After unleashing a price war in mobile tariffs and fibre-broadband services,

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio on Tuesday unveiled postpaid plans, bundling up to 500 GB of data and subscription to Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney + Hotstar.

JioPostPaid Plus for mobile customers will have a monthly tariff from ₹399 to ₹1,499 with different benefits, the company said in a statement.

— PTI

Brokerages to see no Covid impact

Mumbai, Sept. 23: The domestic brokerage industry's revenue will grow up to 12 per cent in FY21 on the back of heightened retail participation in markets, a report said on Wednesday.

The revenue for the industry, which was reeling under pressure because of factors like penetration of tech-led discount brokerages till recently, has grown 34 per cent in the first five months of the fiscal year, rating agency ICRA said.

The agency said its pool of 11 entities grew their revenue by three per cent in FY20, but the revenue growth has been 16 per cent per annum on a com-

pounded basis since FY16, and added that its outlook on the industry is "cautiously stable".

While growth momentum is expected to continue, operational and funding challenges could have a bearing on the performance, particularly for small to mid-sized brokerage companies, it said.

"In the current fiscal, the industry aggregate revenues are expected to increase to ₹23,000 crore (Yo-Y growth of 10-12 per cent)," it said. "While the

economy has been reeling under the pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdowns, the trading volumes in the domestic capital markets have been on an upwards trajectory, reaching an all-time high in July 2020," it said.

The option of work from home, limited investment opportunities and attractive valuations have helped drive investor interest to capital markets, ICRA's Samridh Choudhary said.

— PTI

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter agree on common definition, external auditing, standard reporting

Social media, advertisers in deal to curb hate content

London, Sept. 23: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have agreed with big advertisers on first steps to curb harmful content online, following boycotts of social media platforms that advertisers had accused of tolerating hate speech.

The agreement comes three months after Facebook was hit by a boycott from major advertisers in the wake of anti-racism demonstrations that followed the death of George Floyd, an American Black man, in police custody.

Under the deal, announced on Wednesday by the World Federation of Advertisers, common definitions would be adopted for forms of harmful content such as hate speech and

bullying, and platforms would adopt harmonised reporting standards.

The platforms agreed to have some practices reviewed by external auditors, and to give advertisers more control of what content is displayed alongside their ads. The deal comes less than six weeks before a polarising US presidential election.

"This is a significant milestone in the journey to rebuild trust online," said Luis Di Como, executive vice president of global media at Unilever, one

of the world's biggest advertisers. "...Whilst change doesn't happen overnight, today marks an

important step in the right direction."

Carolyn Everson, Vice President for Global Marketing Solutions at Facebook, said the agreement "has aligned the industry on the brand safety floor and suitability framework, giving us all a unified language to move forward on the fight against hate online."

Campaigners who want more regulation of social media companies have been sceptical of voluntary measures such as those announced on

Wednesday.

"Any progress in reducing harmful online content is to be welcomed. However, up to now voluntary action from social media companies has rarely lived up to its initial promises."

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SHORT TAKES

Marsh ruled out, Holder in for SRH

Dubai: Australian and Sunrisers Hyderabad all-rounder Mitchell Marsh was on Wednesday ruled out of the remainder of the Indian Premier League with an ankle injury he suffered in the team's opener against Royal Challengers Bangalore.

West Indies captain Jason Holder has been named as Marsh's replacement and is expected to join the Sunrisers squad soon in the UAE. "Mitchell Marsh has been ruled out due to injury. We wish him a speedy recovery. Jason Holder will replace him for #Dream11IPL 2020," Sunrisers posted on its official Twitter handle. Marsh came out to ball the fifth over in Sunrisers' opening game against Royal Challengers Bangalore on Monday. However, he could only bowl four deliveries as he twisted his right ankle in the second ball while trying to stop a drive by Aaron Finch in his follow through. — PTI

Focus is more on fun, says Stoinsky

Dubai: Star all-rounder Marcus Stoinsky says carrying the confidence of good BBL performance into the 13th IPL and not putting too much pressure on himself should help him deliver for his new team Delhi Capitals. The 31-year-old made a quick-fire 53 off 21 balls to help his side score 157 for 8 and then snapped two wickets to drag their IPL opener against Kings XI Punjab into a Super Over, where they emerged victorious. "I've come in with some confidence through good performances this year, but also maybe putting less responsibility on myself than some other years. My focus is on just having a lot of fun and trust that I'll be good. Everyone who plays cricket at this level, the main reason you play it, is because you love it. That's the main ingredient," said Stoinsky. — PTI

Murray magic spurs Nuggets

Orlando: Jamal Murray scored 28 points as the Denver Nuggets held off a ferocious late fightback from the Los Angeles Lakers to roar back into contention in the Western Conference finals series on Tuesday.

Murray nailed two crucial late three-pointers in the closing minutes as Denver held on for a 114-106 victory in game three to reduce the Lakers' lead to 2-1 in the best-of-seven series. But the Nuggets — who looked in complete control for long periods of the contest — were given a mighty scare by the Lakers in a thrilling fourth-quarter battle.

The Lakers had trailed by 20 points with just over 10 minutes remaining but whittled away the Denver lead to just three points with 3min 53sec left on the clock in Orlando. — AFP

West hammer Hull amid Covid scare

London: West Ham manager David Moyes and Hammers players Issa Diop and Josh Cullen tested positive for the Coronavirus just before the Premier League club's 5-1 win over Hull in the League Cup on Tuesday. Sebastien Haller and Andriy Yarmolenko both scored twice and Robert Snodgrass was also on target. West Ham's medical team were informed of the test results while Moyes and his squad were at the Stadium preparing for the third round tie. Diop and Cullen had to withdraw from the line-up. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Kings XI Punjab vs Royal Challengers Bangalore from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

ATP Hamburg European Open: Fourth day's action from 4 pm on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

UEFA Super Cup: Bayern Munich vs Sevilla from 12.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

BASKETBALL

NBA Western Conference Finals (Game 4 of best-of-7): Denver Nuggets vs Los Angeles Lakers from 6.30 am (Friday) on Sony Six

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Mumb high Indians

Blues vault from bottom to top as Rohit cracks whip

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 23: Skipper Rohit Sharma's effortless batting formed the cornerstone of Mumbai Indians' resounding 49-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders in an Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday.

On a big Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Rohit pummeled the KKR bowlers into submission for a 54-ball 80 and powered Mumbai to an imposing 195/5.

The night belonged to Rohit, the great white-ball exponent, whose knock was laced with six fours.

Then the Jasprit Bumrah-led Mumbai attack did most things right to restrict KKR to 146 for 9.

KKR were never on course for a comfortable chase as they lost openers Shubhman Gill (7) and Sunil Narine (9) cheaply to be in a spot of bother at 25 for two.

One-down skipper Dinesh Karthik (30 off 23) and Nitish Rana (24 off 18) tried to up the ante but they were still playing the catch-up game with 125 runs needed from the last 10 overs.

Kolkata were dealt a double blow in quick succession — first Karthik was trapped by Rahul Chahar (2/26) in front of the wicket and then Hardik Pandya grabbed a running catch on the fence to send back Rana.

Bumrah (2/32) in the 16th over sealed the game for Mumbai as he removed Andre Russell (11), who was bowled, and then forced Eoin Morgan (20) to edge to the wicket-keeper. Pat Cummins (33 off 12) launched into Bumrah with four sixes in a very expensive 18th over, but it was too late for Kolkata.

Rohit, who began with a maximum, displayed his languid grace and elegance as he took the Kolkata attack to the cleaners. Surya effortlessly smashed four boundaries off Sandeep Warrier (0/34), including a cover-drive and a flick, in the third over.

Kieron Pollard (1/21), Trent Boult (2/30), James



Rohit Sharma of Mumbai Indians plays a shot against Kolkata Knight Riders in their IPL match at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi of United Arab Emirates on Wednesday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Mumbai Indians: Quinton de Kock c Naik Shivam Mavi 1, Rohit Sharma c Pat Cummins b Shivam Mavi 80, Suryakumar Yadav run out (Sunil Narine/ Eoin Morgan), 47, Saurabh Tiwary c Pat Cummins b Sunil Narine 21, Hardik Pandya hit wicket b Andre Russell 18, Kieron Pollard not out 13, Krunal Pandya not out 1. **Extras:** (lb-2, nb-1, w-1) 14.

Total: (for 5 wickets in 20 overs) 195.

Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-98, 3-147, 4-177, 5-180.

Bowling: Sandeep Warrier 3-0-34-0, Shivam Mavi 4-1-32-2, Pat Cummins 3-0-49-0, Sunil Narine 4-0-22-1, Andre Russell 2-0-17-1, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-39-0.

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubhman Gill c Pollard b Trent Boult 7, Sunil Narine c de Kock b James Pattinson 9, Dinesh Karthik lbw b Rahul Chahar 30, Nitish Rana c Hardik Pandya b Pollard 24, Eoin Morgan c de Kock b Jasprit Bumrah 16, Andre Russell b Bumrah 11, Nikhil Naik c Pandya b Boult 1, Pat Cummins c Pandya b Patterson 33, Shivam Mavi st de Kock b Chahar 9, Kuldeep Yadav not out 1. **Extras:** (lb-2, w-3) 5. **Total (for 9 wickets in 20 overs)** 146.

Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-25, 3-71, 4-77, 5-100, 6-101, 7-103, 8-141, 9-146.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-1-30-2, Patterson 4-0-25-2, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-32-2, Rahul Chahar 4-0-26-2, Kieron Pollard 3-0-21-1, Krunal Pandya 1-0-10-0.

Gambhir lashes out at Dhoni

RAYUDU SET TO MISS ONE MORE GAME

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 23

New Delhi, Sept. 23: Mahendra Singh Dhoni did not lead from the front by dropping himself down the batting order during a mammoth chase, opined former India batsman Gautam Gambhir, tearing into CSK captain's decision to bat at number seven against Rajasthan Royals.

The former India opener reckons that if any other captain had done this, he would have drawn a lot of flak but since it is Dhoni, people are not even talking about it.

With Chennai Super Kings chasing a massive 217-run target in Sharjah, Dhoni came to bat when they needed 103 runs from 38 balls.

Dhoni sent the likes of Sam Curran, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Kedar Jadhav ahead of him. CSK lost the match by 16 runs.

"I was a bit surprised to be honest. MS Dhoni batting at No. 7? And sending (Ruturaj) Gaikwad, Sam Curran before him. Makes no sense to me. In fact you should be leading from the front," Gambhir told ESPNcricinfo's T20 Time Out.

"This is not what you call leading from the front. Batting at No. 7 when you're chasing 217. The game was over. Faf was probably the lone warrior," he said.

"See, if someone else would have done this, some other (batsman) captain had batted at

No.7, he would have got a lot of flak. It is MS Dhoni — probably that's why people don't talk about it" he added.

Gambhir also questioned CSK's intent to win the game.

"There is nothing wrong if you end up getting out early, at least

start leading from the front, trying to inspire the team as well. What you did in the last over (hitting 3 sixes in last over), probably if you'd done that coming in at No.4 or 5, alongside Faf, you could have made a game out of it," said Gambhir. — PTI

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start leading from the front, trying to inspire the team as well. What you did in the last over (hitting 3 sixes in last over), probably if you'd done that coming in at No.4 or 5, alongside Faf, you could have made a game out of it," said Gambhir. — PTI

QUARANTINE DIDN'T HELP, SAYS DHONI

Sharjah, Sept. 23: The extended two-week quarantine of Chennai Super Kings hampered his preparations as he did not get enough time for bat practice, said captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni after his side lost to Rajasthan Royals by 16 runs in their second IPL game.

Dhoni came in to bat at No.7, sending Sam Curran and Kedar Jadhav ahead of him in a mammoth 217-run chase on Tuesday.

Asked why he came so low in the order, the CSK captain said, "I haven't batted for a long time. 14-day quarantine doesn't help."

Dhoni was not out on 29 off 17 balls with three sixes in the last over.

"With 217 on the board, we needed a very good start which was not the case. Smith and Sanju batted very well. We need to give credit to their bowlers. Once you've seen the first innings, you knew the lengths to bowl," Dhoni said. — PTI

Kings XI to lock horns with RCB

Dubai, Sept. 23: Kings XI Punjab will look to put behind the controversial 'short run' decision in their IPL opener and start afresh when they take on Virat Kohli's buoyant Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Thursday.

In their opening game against Delhi Capitals, the square-leg umpire erroneously called KXIP's Chris Jordan for a 'short run' in the third ball of the 19th over, effectively costing his team the closely fought game.

In contrast, RCB opened their campaign on a winning note defeating Sunrisers Hyderabad by 10 runs, raising hopes that things might finally fall into place for them this season.

Devdutt Padikkal started his IPL career on a classy note hitting a sublime half-century and will once again be in focus, while AB de Villiers will also look to continue in the same vein following a crucial half-century.

Both Kohli and Aaron Finch looked good on Monday night and would be itching to spend more time in the middle.

Yuvendra Chahal, as always, will be the key man in the RCB bowling attack.

The leg-spinner was instrumental in his team's victory on Monday, triggering a batting collapse.

However, RCB will again miss the services of South African all-rounder Chris Morris who has picked up a side-strain. Morris was bought for a whopping ₹10 crore at the auction.

Umesh Yadav continues to leak runs in the IPL and going by his showing in the first game, he could be replaced by Mohammad Siraj. It remains to be seen if the team can fit in England all-rounder

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 24
● Punjab won: 12
● Bangalore won: 12

MEETING IN 2019

● Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Kings XI Punjab by 8 wickets at Mohali
● Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Kings XI Punjab by 17 runs at Bangalore

FOR THE RECORD

● Mohammed Shami recorded his best bowling for Kings XI Punjab by taking three for 15 in the previous match against Delhi Capitals. He took 22 wickets at an average of 22.00 in 15 matches for Kings XI Punjab in IPL.

● Virat Kohli, who scored 542 runs at an average of 37.68 in 170 innings of 178 matches for Royal Challengers Bangalore, is the highest run-getter in IPL. He scored just 14 runs in the first match against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

Moeen Ali in the middle-order.

For KXIP, Mayank Agarwal looked in imperious touch but was gutted to not be able to get his team over the line with just one run required to win.

Rahul, Glenn Maxwell and Nicholas Pooran will be expected to step up as they possess the ability to take away the game from any opposition.

Big hitters Chris Gayle, who was left out of the opener for better balance in the eleven, could be back and batting all-rounder Jimmy Neesham could also be given a chance.

— PTI

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	2	1	1	0	2	+0.993
Rajasthan Royals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.800
Royal Challengers Bangalore	1	1	0	0	2	+0.500
Delhi Capitals	1	1	0	0	2	+0.000
Chennai Super Kings	2	1	1	0	2	-0.145
Kings XI Punjab	1	0	1	0	0	+0.000
Sunrisers Hyderabad	1	0	1	0	0	-0.500
Kolkata Knight Riders	1	0	1	0	0	-2.450

Tabulated as Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points, Net Run Rate

Sanju sharpened during the break

Sharjah