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SHORT TAKES

Cloudburst in Kashmir kills 4 members of family

Srinagar, Sep 12 (UNI) Four members of a 'Bakarwal' (Nomad Goatherd) family were killed by a massive cloudburst in a meadow in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district on Sunday. Police said four persons of a Bakarwal family were found dead in Kafarnar meadow of the Rafiabad area in Baramulla district. "Of the six members of this family, four were found dead while one was found alive and one is still missing." Reports suggest that the family was hit by a massive cloudburst. "The family belonged to Haji Bashir Ahmad Khari of Rajouri district. The family was washed away by the cloudburst. "Rescue teams are searching for the missing person, who is feared to be buried under the debris," Sujit Kumar, Deputy Inspector General (North Kashmir) said. The cloudburst later triggered flash flood submerging paddy fields and some government buildings, including schools in Watergam village of the Rafiabad area.

1 lakh skilled workers in UP to get tablets

Lucknow, Sep 12 (UNI) The Uttar Pradesh government will provide one lakh tablets to skilled workers as part of its Skill Development Mission. The move is aimed at helping workers in honing their skills further and performing better at their jobs. The state government through its portal and call centre is providing a wide range of services to skilled and common people. Skilled workers, seeking a job, can apply through this portal, which also facilitates their training to hone skills. A spokesman said that as part of the mission, the government has launched 'seva mitra' service in 25 districts to generate employment among skilled workers. The service is currently under trial and will soon be launched in the remaining districts.

3 youths arrested for assaulting Dalit woman over drinking water issue

Chamarajanagar, (Karnataka) Sep 12 (UNI) Three youths have been arrested on charges of assaulting and passing vulgar comments on a Dalit woman over the issue of drinking water in a village in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district, police sources said on Sunday. The arrested youths were identified as Sachin, Swamy and Manu, all residents of Kilagere village. According to the police, the accused got into a quarrel with Tejashwini, the Dalit woman, after which they assaulted her, passed vulgar comments and also threatened her.

INDIA, US SET TO LAUNCH CLIMATE ACTION AND FINANCE MOBILISATION DIALOGUE

New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) India and the US would launch the Climate Action and Finance Mobilisation Dialogue (CAFMD) on Monday as US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change, John Kerry visits India as part of his multi-country tour in the run-up to the annual climate summit less than 50 days ahead.

The CAFMD is one of the two main tracks of the US-India Agenda 2030 Partnership that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden had announced at the



Leaders Summit on Climate in April 2021. The other is the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership. Slated to reach on Sunday, Kerry will be in India

till September 14, meeting ministers, top bureaucrats, and private sector leaders. The US State Department has said Kerry will travel to India to "discuss efforts to raise global climate ambition and speed India's clean energy transition."

Kerry has visited Korea, Argentina, Japan, and China over last few days to continue vital discussions on reducing emissions and raising ambition ahead of COP26, the annual climate summit that in UK's Glasgow. A spokesperson from the Environ-

ment, Forests and Climate Change Ministry confirmed the CAFMD launch event on Monday but did not divulge further details. Earlier in the year, in their joint statement at the launch of the "India-US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership", the two nations had said: "Through this collaboration, India and the United States aim to demonstrate how the world can align swift climate action with inclusive and resilient economic development, taking into account national circumstances and

sustainable development priorities." On August 24, Environment Minister Bhupendra Patel had held a telephonic conversation with Kerry to discuss CAFMD Track and had said these platforms provide greater opportunities for working together for climate actions and emphasized that India stands committed to working with the US on clean energy. The annual climate summit, the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC).

I get motivated by you': PM to Paralympic contingent

New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) Lauding the achievements of the Indian contingent at the Tokyo Paralympics, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told the players he gets 'motivated' by them, shows a video of the prime minister's interaction with the sportspersons released on Sunday. "I get motivation from you all," the prime minister told the contingent when he hosted them at his residence in Delhi. The Prime Minister had met India's 54-membered paralympics contingent at his residence in Delhi on Thursday.

In a video released on the official Twitter account of PM



Modi, he can be seen interacting with the entire contingent and lauding them for overcoming adversities. He said their achievements will boost the confidence of other sportspersons. "Your achievement will significantly boost the morale of the entire sporting community in the country, and budding sportspersons will feel encouraged to come forward to take up sports.

Yogi's image against Kolkata flyover sparks criticism

Kolkata, Sep 12 (UNI) In a major embarrassment, a full-page advertisement carried in a national English daily showcasing the industrialisation and development of Uttar Pradesh under UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath featured a photograph of Kolkata's Maa flyover. The advertisement drew sharp criticism from several top ministers and leaders of the Trinamool Congress accusing Adityanath of "stealing images from infrastructure scenes in Bengal". The English daily, later, owned the responsibility of the fault. "Transforming UP for @myogiadityanath means stealing images from infrastructure seen in Bengal under @MamataOfficial's leadership and using them as his own! Looks like the 'DOUBLE ENGINE MODEL' has MISERABLY FAILED in BJP's strongest state and now stands EXPOSED for all," TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee tweeted.

The tweet was immediately followed by Mukul Roy who has recently joined TMC from BJP. "Mr @



narendramodi is so helpless to save his party that other than changing CMs, he has also had to resort to using pictures of growth & infrastructure seen under @MamataOfficial's leadership, as his own," Roy retweeted.

There were several others including State Transport Minister Firhad Hakim, Commerce and industry minister Partha Chatterjee and MP Mahua Moitra who joined the chorus. "Previously, BJP used photos

from failures of law & order of their states to spread misinformation about West Bengal. Now they use photos of the flyover built under the leadership of #MamataBanerjee and under the chairmanship of KMDA to advertise for the 'development' in UP," Hakim said.

"Thuggy Yogi in his UP ads with Kolkata's MAA flyover, our JW Marriott & our iconic yellow taxis! Change your soul or at least your ad agency Gudduji!... P.S. Looking forward to FIRs against me in Noida now," Moitra wrote.

"When even Ajay Bisht can't help himself but use pictures of #Bengal-Model for his own publicity... Slow claps!" Chatterjee tweeted.

The advertisement "Transforming Uttar Pradesh Under Yogi Adityanath" carried on Sunday in an English language publication has a cut-out of Mr Adityanath with a flyover that resembles Kolkata's "Maa flyover" that connects the central part of the city with Salt Lake and Rajarhat located in the northeastern fringes of the city.

Priyanka attacks UP CM on fake picture used in advertisement

New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) After a full-page advertisement carried in a national English daily showcasing the industrialisation and development of Uttar Pradesh under UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath featured a photograph of Kolkata's Maa flyover, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra lashed out at him.

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi, who is also in charge of Uttar Pradesh, tweeted, "They give fake advertisement, fake jobs of lekhpal were offered to youths, now giving fake pictures of flyover and factories and claiming fake development. Neither they have any understanding of the



people's issues nor have they anything to do with it. The government is of fake advertisement and false claims." The advertisement issued by the state government drew sharp criticism from Trinamool Congress also as several top ministers and leaders accused Adityanath of "stealing images from infrastructure scenes in Bengal." The

advertisement "Transforming Uttar Pradesh Under Yogi Adityanath" carried on Sunday in an English language publication has a cut-out of Adityanath with a flyover that resembles Kolkata's "Maa flyover" that connects the central part of the city with Salt Lake and Rajarhat located in the northeastern fringes of the city.

Vice Prez pays tributes to Philosopher Sri Aurobindo

Puducherry, Sep 12 (UNI) Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has paid tributes to Saint Philosopher, poet and Journalist Sri Aurobindo here on Sunday. Mr Naidu who is on a three-day visit to Puducherry reached the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and paid trib-



utes at the Samadhi of the philosopher. It may be noted that the Vice President

had inaugurated a solar power plant at Jipmer hospital this morning and is scheduled to inaugurate the Puducherry Technological University at the Pondicherry Engineering College and another solar power plant at the Pondicherry central University on Monday before leaving the Union Territory on Tuesday morning.

Mamata eyes alliance with Samajwadi Party in UP polls

Lucknow, Sep 12 (UNI) The Trinamool Congress is looking towards an alliance with the Samajwadi Party for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, due early next year. A decision on this is expected to be taken by the leaders of both the parties in the coming weeks.

The Trinamool has already launched its mass contact programme in Uttar Pradesh from Pilibhit where farmers had staged a protest on the issue of cane dues. At least two districts in each of the 18 divisions will be covered to gauge the mood of the people and their expectations.

Trinamool state president Neeraj Rai said, "We will tell the people about the policies implemented by us in West Bengal and will seek public feedback on the welfare policies of the state government. We will prepare the manifesto of the Trinamool Congress based on the expectations of the people." He said the Trinamool was focusing on building a strong organisational structure and cadre base in Uttar Pradesh.

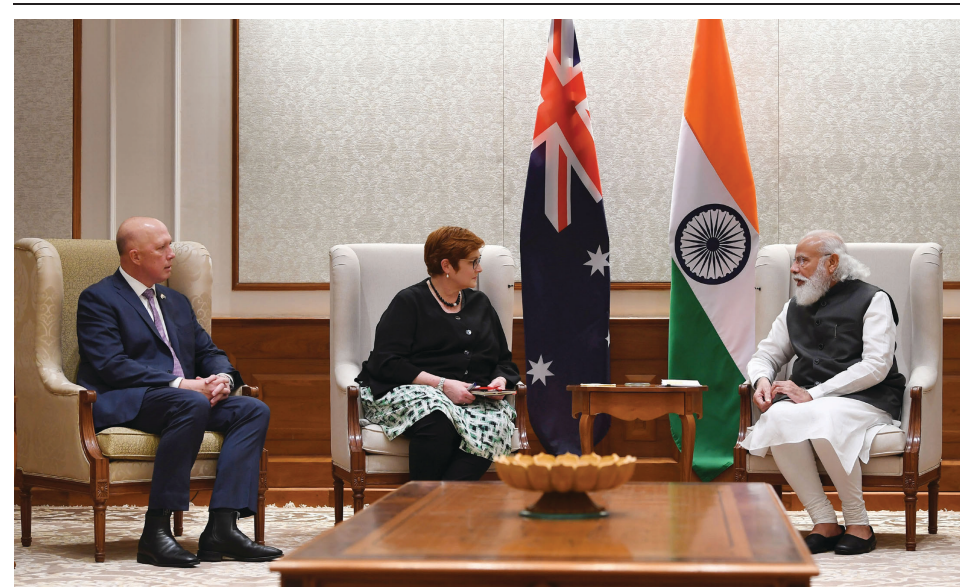
Rahul Gandhi takes a dig at Modi govt over unemployment issue



New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday took a dig at the Narendra Modi-led BJP government at the Centre over the unemployment issue and said under the present regime, the difference between Sunday and Monday has ended.

"BJP government's development is such that the difference between Sunday and Monday has ended. When there are no jobs then what is Sunday

or Monday!" the Congress leader said in a tweet in Hindi where he has tagged a media report which said that American multinational automobile manufacturer Ford Motor had taken the decision to stop manufacturing of vehicles in the country. As per the data released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the unemployment rate rose from 6.95 percent in July to 8.32 percent in August, 2021.



MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND WOMEN, AUSTRALIA, MS. MARISE PAYNE AND THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE OF AUSTRALIA, MR. PETER DUTTON MEETING THE PRIME MINISTER, SHRI NARENDRA MODI, IN NEW DELHI.

The greater catastrophe

COVID-19 was, and is, an unprecedented health disaster over which humankind or the governments of the world have little control. No government can be held responsible for the origin of the virus. Governments can be held responsible only for the sufficiency or insufficiency of the response to the pandemic: its spread in the country concerned, the number of infections and deaths, the vaccination programme, and the help and support extended to citizens.

India is somewhere in the middle of the rankings. It faltered, but recovered, in containing the spread of the virus; the rise in the number of infections can be attributed to the lax social behaviour of the people; the number of deaths has been grossly underestimated; the 'vaccination for all adults' programme was painfully slow in the early months due to supply and distribution failures but seems to have gathered pace in the last three weeks; and, as for succour to the poor, there was cruel neglect by the government.

These consequences are measurable in terms of numbers or money. Beyond what is visible, however, there is a fallout that was not visible to the naked eye. I shall call the fallout the less noticed, but greater catastrophe. I refer to the education of our school children. Urban families with young children know that keeping the children within the confines of the home was a challenge; rural families, after the first few months, simply let them roam the village streets and fields. All families were gripped by the fear of falling sick. They survived the first phase of fear without much thought to absence of school for their children. But as the weeks became months and months became a year, and the enforced absence from school has stretched into the second year, the families are gripped by panic.

Their worst fears about the education of their children — or the lack of it — have proved true. There is data to show that the country has paid a humongous price for the enforced closure of schools for 18 months. The Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2020 Wave 1 was released on February 1, 2021. It recalled the learning deficiency of rural children (as reported in ASER 2018) and probed the impact of the lockdown when schools were closed. After analysing data relating to parental education, availability of smartphones and access to textbooks and learning material, the report concluded:

Overall, only about 35 per cent children reported receiving any learning material from their school; 72 per cent of children received learning material only through WhatsApp. A majority (55 per cent) of children are in relatively poorer households that do not have a smartphone; their access to whatever learning material was being distributed would be limited; A study by the World Bank simulated the learning loss and concluded that school closure of seven months will cause children to lose almost a year of learning adjusted years of schooling; School closures will result in significant learning loss; these losses are likely to be much greater for already disadvantaged children, resulting in even greater learning gap between the rich and the poor; All children will need some remediation, as and when there is a marked deterioration in foundational skills between 2018 and 2020 among children in Std V, 46.0 per cent could read a Std II level text in 2018, but this proportion declined to 33.6 per cent in 2020 (the pattern was the same across Std I to Std VIII); similarly, among children in Std V, 34.5 per cent could subtract and 20.5 per cent could divide in 2018, but these proportions declined to 32.1 per cent and 12.1 per cent in 2020 (the pattern was broadly the same across Std I to Std VIII). Another study of 1,362 households across 15 states, co-ordinated by Mr Jean Dreze, has concluded that only 8 per cent of children in rural India were able to access online education while at least 37 per cent have stopped studying altogether.

Maritime dimensions of a continental debacle

"... those once bitten by a snake fear even a twisted rope," William Dalrymple, Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan 1839-42. India's foreign policy outlook, which previously had a continental focus, has now come of age with a distinct maritime flavour. Apropos, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level UNSC debate on Enhancing Maritime Security - A Case for International Cooperation on August 9. India's maritime diplomacy has considerably enhanced under the SAGAR initiative (Security And Growth for All in the Region), bestowing upon us the moniker of Preferred Security Partner in the IOR (Indian Ocean Region). Recent events in Afghanistan have laid bare the inadequacies of modern military tactics against a determined and well-funded guerrilla outfit. William Dalrymple's prophetic words above would also suggest that the US is likely to tread carefully in Afghanistan in coming years. While the fallout of Afghanistan's dramatic collapse will be felt in coming weeks and months, India must remain nimble and fleet-footed to the developing situation in the maritime domain.

Alibi for Pakistan-Sponsored Maritime Terror

Afghanistan presents Pakistan and the mendacious ISI with an alibi for engaging in maritime-based terror activities. With the resurgence of Taliban, IS-K, Al Qaeda and Haqqani Network, Pakistan may ramp up terror-related activities to harm India, including in

the maritime domain. The current disaffection of the western world with Afghan terror groups and shift of their focus away from Pakistan may embolden ISI to strike India. Indian maritime security agencies, headed by the Indian Navy, would need to remain aware and cognisant of this emerging threat.

J&K Flare Up

Having wrested Afghanistan from the worlds lone super-power has been a proverbial shot-in-the-arm for the worlds terror-factories. The New York Times recently quoted Ali Mohamed Ali, a former Afghan security official Afghanistan has now become the Las Vegas of terrorists, radicals and extremists who are chanting and celebrating the Taliban victory. Pakistan's waning Kashmir narrative has made the Imran Khan government and the ISI desperate for an opening. They are not likely to miss this opportunity to channel hardened fighters across their Eastern border to hamper progress being made in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Indian security forces must remain alert to such misadventures and be prepared for retaliatory actions.

PLA Navy

2020 was watershed year in many regards, particularly due to emergence of the Covid-19 virus in Wuhan and belligerence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its military. Medieval tactics by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Ladakh was matched by shrill provocations by CCPs state-run media. The Indian military deployments and

manoeuvres in subsequent months clearly demonstrated to the CCP, India's dominating position astride the Indian Ocean. This is likely to have had significant impact on the CCPs calculus, since the PLA (N) would have been at considerable disadvantage in the IOR in case of an escalation.

The PLA Navy already deploys an Anti-Piracy Escort Force in the Red Sea. PLA (N) planners are unlikely to miss an opportunity to augment their presence in the IOR and will be watching events in Afghanistan with a hawk-eye. Any emergent window of opportunity in the maritime domain must, therefore, be tracked and acted upon. However, Navies cost money and ships are designed, planned and built over decades. While the current government has shown resolve to bolster Indian Navy's assets, there is an urgent need to review inter-service allocation of precious capital resources.

MNF Engagement

The Indian Navy is one of the pre-eminent stabilising forces in the extended IOR and is engaged in capacity and capability building with regional navies and maritime agencies. However, while the Indian Navy engages with individual navies, there has been some hesitation towards participation in multi-lateral constructs such as CTF 150/ 151/152, EMASOH etc. The emerging crisis in Afghanistan offers an opportunity for greater engagement with these maritime security constructs and may be the segue that Indian Navy

has been awaiting. The recent uptick in Quad engagements is also indicative that Indian foreign policy would support engagements in multi-lateral constructs.

Refugee Crisis

An immediate fallout of Taliban's capture of Kabul was an exodus of asylum seekers and Afghan nationals, who were likely to be persecuted by the new totalitarian regime. While present evacuations are primarily by the air/ land route, India must monitor sea routes for refugees and asylum seekers who have managed to reach sea-ports. Further, the possibility of inimical elements being implanted amongst fleeing Afghans cannot be ruled out.

Maritime Dimensions of Afghanistan Crisis

The Afghanistan imbroglio, while set in a land-locked scenario, has distinct maritime dimensions. The recent bombing at the Hamid Karzai International Airport and US airstrikes against IS-K in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province and Kabul indicate that while US may have ended the battle, they may have inadvertently stepped into a war. Indian military strategists must take the long view of the current Afghanistan crisis; while the nature of the land conflict fought for over two decades by the US is unlikely to change, there are likely to be incremental shifts in the maritime domain. Despite being a land-locked country, reverberations of Afghanistan's debacle in the maritime domain are now a certainty; India's maritime pundits must remain focussed and astute.

Markets awaiting trigger for correction

Markets last week were a four-day week and gained on the opening day, but remained sideways on the remaining three days. BSESENSEX gained 175.12 points or 0.30 per cent to close at 58,305.07 points. NIFTY gained 45.65 points or 0.26 per cent to close at 17,369.25 points.

Incidentally the closing on Thursday were at lifetime highs on both the BSESENSEX and NIFTY. The intraday highs were made earlier on the 7th of September at 5,8553.07 points and 17,436.50 points respectively. The broader markets saw BSE100, BSE200 and BSE500 gain 0.31 per cent, 0.37 per cent and 0.48 per cent respectively. BSEMICAP and BSESMALLCAP had a strong showing during the truncated week and gained 1.33 per cent and 1.24 per cent respectively.

The Indian Rupee lost 48 paise or 0.66 per cent to close at Rs 73.50 to the US Dollar. Dow Jones had a very poor showing and lost on all five days of the week. Dow Jones was down 761.37 points or 2.15 per cent to close at 34,607.72 points. In what could be said as an ominous sign for Dow Jones, it lost more than a third of its weekly losses on Friday and closed at around the low of the day, indicating likely further weakness when trading resumes in the new week.

SEBI, the regulator has permitted stock exchanges to introduce shortened settlement cycles with effect from the 1st of January 2022. Against the present T+2 settlement cycle, the new cycle would be T+1. Exchanges would have to inform in advance, which stocks would be traded under the new guidelines. Brokers associations have expressed their anguish against the same as they believe that this would benefit the online brokerages and be a disadvantage for the old back office driven brokerages. Surprisingly, FPI's have raised concerns against the proposed scheme and said this will make trading difficult for them under the new regime. While we still have over three months to go before the scheme is implemented, the last word on the same has not yet been said.

After the busy month of August as far as the primary market was concerned, we have the first issue open-



ing in September. The issue from auto component manufacturer Sansera Engineering Limited is tapping the capital markets with its offer for sale of 1,72,44,328 shares in a price band of Rs 734-744. The issue opens on Tuesday the 14th of September and closes on Thursday the 16th of September. The company reported revenues of Rs 1,575 crore for the year ended March 21. This was roughly 10 months working as the rest was lost on account of lockdown on account of covid. The company has half its turnover for the two-wheeler and motorcycles segment, a fourth from passenger vehicles and about 13 per cent from commercial vehicles. The rest comes from aerospace, off highway vehicles, agriculture and others.

The company reported EBITDA margins of 19 per cent for the year ended March 21 which were higher than the 16 per cent reported in the previous year. Net Profit of Rs 109.9 crore for March 21 was at a net margin of 7 per cent. The diluted EPS for the year 2021 was Rs 20.55. At

this EPS, the PE price band is 35.72-36.20. The company has been taking more than adequate safeguards in growing business considering the advent of EV in the coming years. The issue is adequately priced and offers scope for appreciation in the medium and long term.

Coming to the Covid-19 front, the world saw 22,51,13,117 patients, 46,38,620 deaths and 20,16,53,284 patients who had recovered. In India, we saw 3,32,36,921 patients, 4,42,688 deaths and 3,24,09,346 patients who had recovered. Compared to the previous week, the world saw 39,75,944 patients, 62,930 deaths and 40,23,892 patients who had recovered.

In India we saw 2,48,248 new patients, 2,121 deaths and 2,71,254 patients who had recovered. The number of people who have been vaccinated now stands at 73.82 crore who have been given the first and second doses combined. This number has been rising steadily and has increased by 6.10 crore in the previous week. Markets saw the benchmark indices close at

new lifetime highs, but the disturbing fact was that during the last three days, markets were struggling and remained sideways. Heavyweight stocks were used to prop the benchmark indices. Secondly, there was some renewed activity in Smallcap and mid-cap stocks which could be more of a renewed interest by interested holders to create a conducive atmosphere to raise prices and then sell. Thirdly the weakness in Dow is not sending the right signals for further sustained rally from hereon. Considering these points, it makes sense to continue to reduce positions and sit on some amount of cash and plenty of investing opportunities would be available. The strategy would be to allow markets to find their own levels of comfort and use rallies to sell and very sharp dips to buy. The focus of the universe of stocks should continue to remain the very large cap stocks only. Markets seem tired and are looking for a reason to correct. What could be the trigger is the only question remaining unanswered.

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Guj BJP legislature party likely to meet on Sunday to choose new CM

Gandhinagar, Sep 12 (UNI) The Gujarat BJP legislature party is likely to meet on Sunday to choose the new chief minister following Vijay Rupani's resignation, a party spokesperson said on Saturday. Union Minister Amit Shah is most likely to join the legislature party meeting along with central observers. The meeting is to be held at state BJP HQ at Kamalam.



Putting an end to all speculations about a change of guard over his government's handling of the Covid-19 crisis, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Saturday tendered his resignation to Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat at his residence, Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar. This development comes even as the state assembly elections are

more than a year away. "I am a loyal soldier of the BJP and have resigned of my own accord. Nobody has asked me to do so. I will work to strengthen the organisation or whatever role the party leadership assigns me," Rupani told the reporters at the governor's residence after tendering the resignation. "I am just a worker of the organisation and will continue to be so.

For the upcoming state Assembly elections, definitely our PM Modi will be the face," Rupani said, when asked who will be the face of the elections, as he and the party earlier had declared that the 2022 elections will be led by him.

According to national general secretary in charge of Gujarat Bhupender Yadav, the BJP has convened a meeting of its legislature party on

Sunday to elect a new leader. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is reaching here on Sunday. "The BJP legislature party is likely to meet on Sunday, but we will be able to confirm this once the central parliamentary board conveys the exact time of the meeting to us. All BJP MLAs will attend the meeting along with central observers," said Yamal Vyas, the BJP spokesperson at Kamalam.

"The name of the new CM will be decided in the meeting. Being the Parliament constituency legislator, Amit Shah is also likely to be at the meeting," Vyas added.

The saffron party is yet to announce Rupani's replacement. But, political pundits are speculating a number of faces looking at the current scenario. Praful Patel,

the administrator of Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Daman and Diu is one such face that is likely to replace Rupani. He is believed to be close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. Speculations are also rife that one of the state general secretaries Gordhan Zadaphia, a Patidar, may be given the mantle, though there is no official indication. Zadaphia was the home minister in the Modi government in Gujarat in 2002, during the infamous Godhra riots and believed to be a hardliner right wing face of the saffron party. This is besides Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, who is also a Patidar and his name has been cropping up for the post during the last one year.

Akali Dal to observe Sep 17 as 'black day' to mark enactment of farm laws



Chandigarh, Sep 12 (UNI) The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) will observe September 17 as the 'black day' on completion of one year of enactment of three Central farm laws, a party leader said on Sunday. Party activists along with farmers will hold a protest march from Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib to Parliament in New Delhi on that day, demanding repeal of the agricultural laws. A decision in this regard was taken at a meeting here on Saturday presided over by party President Sukhbir Badal. Party Senior Vice Presi-

dent Daljit Cheema told the media that party leaders and workers along with farmers of Punjab will participate in the protest march. It was on this day last year that party leaders, Harjinder Kaur Badal and Sukhbir Badal, had opposed the passage of three farm laws in Parliament and they were only the two MPs who voted against the Bills. After that Akali Dal representative Harjinder Kaur resigned from the Union ministry and the party quit the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and broke away its 24-year-old alliance.

Odisha hotel owner thrashes customer for not paying bill

Bhubaneswar, Sep 12 (UNI) In a shocking incident, a hotel owner thrashed a customer for failing to pay his bill in Odisha's Keonjhar district, police said on Sunday. The incident occurred at Laxmibazar area under Ghasipura police limits of Keonjhar district on Saturday. The local police arrested the hotelier. A purported video of the incident has gone viral in social media too. According to the police, the customer Jitendra Dehuri had visited a hotel named 'Maa' on Saturday afternoon to have his lunch.



The hotel owner Madhu Sahu asked him to clear his pending dues of Rs 140. Jitendra had Rs 100 with him and requested the hotel owner to allow him to pay

the remaining Rs 40 later. However, the hotel owner refused and this led to an altercation between the two. Soon, the altercation turned ugly as the hotelier along with his son thrashed the customer. After getting information, Ghasipura

police reached the spot and registered a complaint. "We have registered a case (No 187) and arrested the hotel owner Madhu Sahu. He will be forwarded to the court today," Ghasipura IIC, Manoranjan Bishi told IANS over phone.

RLD to embark on its yatra in UP from Oct 2

Lucknow, Sep 12 (INS) The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) will now join other political parties whose yatras are crisscrossing Uttar Pradesh on the eve of Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. It will embark on its 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' from October 2 which will continue till October 31. The yatra will be preceded by a 'Shradhanjali Sabha' that will be held in Chaprauli in Baghpat on September 19. According to party sources, RLD president Jayant Chaudhary also plans to spend two days in every district later, during which he will interact with party workers. The party will release its manifesto on October 31 which is also the Sardar Patel Jayanti. Jayant Chaudhary will interact with people at the village level before he finalises his manifesto. The RLD, according to sources, is upbeat about the Assembly elections, especially after the response it has been getting from farmers who are agitating against the three contentious farm laws.



GOVERNOR OF UTTAR PRADESH, SMT. ANANDIBEN PATEL, THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA, SHRI JUSTICE N.V. RAMANA, THE CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTAR PRADESH, YOGI ADITYANATH AND OTHER DIGNITARIES ARE ALSO SEEN.

Shiv Sena vows to 'teach a lesson' to BJP, to contest UP, Goa polls

Lucknow/Mumbai, Sep 12 (UNI) The Shiv Sena has vowed to "teach a lesson" to the Bharatiya Janata Party by contesting all 403 seats in the upcoming Uttar Pradesh elections, plus the Goa polls, both due to be held in early-2022, top officials said here.

The pre-poll bugle was sounded after a high-level meeting of Sena leaders, led by the state president Thakur Anil Singh in Lucknow, after deliberating on what it termed as 'jungle raj' prevalent in UP under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath since the past four-and-half years.

"We deliberated on several issues ranging from the education system to the healthcare sector, the bungling of the Covid pandemic, the problems of farmers, the spectre of unemployment among youth, etc," said UP Shiv Sena Secretary Vishwajeet Singh.

Confirming the developments, Sena's Chief Spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut said that as per current plans, the party may put up at least 100 candidates in UP and 20 in Goa polls. In a no-holds barred attack, Singh said that the (UP) regime has joined hands with the 'mafia' resulting in a 'jungle raj' where sisters and daughters are not secure, and the government has completely failed on the law-and-order front. He charged the Yogi regime of not honouring the Supreme Court



verdict giving 15 per cent fee remission to students, while youth reeling under unemployment and inflation are fleeing the state.

"The UP government is giving a step-motherly treatment to the farmers, the health infrastructure has collapsed and they could make no arrangements to even cremate those claimed by Covid," Singh said.

"However, now the Sena will stand up 'as the voice of the masses' and 'teach a lesson' to the BJP in UP by contesting all the seats in the state assembly," he said. "We have been fighting UP elections since 1991 when one MLA Pawan Kumar Pandey was

elected. We also have many Shiv Sainiks elected in various civic bodies across the state," Singh told IANS on the party's prospects. Welcoming the move, Sena's former face Kishore Tiwari, accorded a MoS status, said tersely: "The people of UP have not forgotten those dead bodies floating in the Ganga though the Yogi government refused to acknowledge the mess it made during the Covid pandemic." He also questioned the safety of women, the Dalits and OBCs, minorities and other sections under Yogi rule and said after Maharashtra, "UP will prove to be a mega-gamechanger for the BJP."

Ahead of Prez visit to Shimla, 4 staff test Covid positive

Shimla, Sep 12 (UNI) With President Ram Nath Kovind's 5-day tentative visit to the Himachal Pradesh capital just days away, four employees of 'The Retreat', the summer holiday resort of the President near here, tested positive for Covid-19, officials said on Sunday. The President, who is likely to reach Shimla on September 16, stays in the British-era heritage building. Four employees, including the manager of The Retreat, tested positive on Saturday. The RT-PCR tests of all employees of The Retreat were being conducted ahead of the President's visit on September 17, Deputy Commissioner Aditya Negi told the media here. Normally, 50-60 employees are deployed in The Retreat. However, ahead of the President's visit more employees have been deployed. During his visit, Kovind will address the special session of the Assembly to mark the golden jubilee anniversary of statehood on September 17. The Council Chamber, the building which houses the state legislative Assembly, was inaugurated by Lord Reading, the then viceroy of India, August 27, 1925. He is also scheduled to visit the National Academy of Audit and Accounts here and likely to host 'At Home' on September 19, a day ahead of his return. The Retreat was once the summer residence of the British viceroys when this hill town was the summer capital of British India.

Gurugram moots plan to make southern peripheral road signal free



Gurugram, Sep 12 (UNI) The Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) has sought suggestions from people to make the Southern Peripheral Road (SPR) between Ghata village and Vatika Chowk signal free. At present, there are five intersections on this eight-kilometre route, where traffic signals are installed. According to the GMDA officials, flyovers and underpasses have been proposed here to make these intersections signal free.

The GMDA has now sought suggestions from the people on whether flyovers or underpasses should be built at these

intersections. Keeping in mind the suggestions of the people, further work will be done on this project, said the officials. "Due to the traffic signals from Ghata village to Vatika Chowk, the commuters have to wait for a long time. For this, there is a plan to make these five intersections signal free. After the people's suggestions GMDA will decide whether flyovers or underpasses should be built here to make these intersections signal free," said a senior official of the GMDA. The officials said, if the flyover is constructed at all five intersections, it will cost an estimated Rs 420 crore.

Palaniswami lashes out at DMK over NEET aspirant's death

Chennai, Sep 12 (UNI) Tamil Nadu's former Chief Minister and AIADMK Coordinator K. Palaniswami on Sunday lashed out at the DMK government for its false poll promise which resulted in the suicide of a 19-year old boy.

In a strongly worded statement, Palaniswami said the DMK party made a false poll promise of cancelling the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) which has resulted in the suicide of 19-year old medical aspirant Dhanush in the state.

Palaniswami said during the assembly elections Stalin declared that within 24-hours of coming to power in Tamil Nadu, the DMK government will take action to cancel NEET and it knows what to do.

The DMK party leaders and members with a sarcastic smile on their face promised



that the first signature of their Chief Minister will be cancelling NEET in the state, giving false hope to the students, he said. Expressing his anguish at the suicide of Dhanush, the AIADMK Joint Coordinator said a responsible leader of a political party should weigh the consequences in the society before making any public statement.

Palaniswami said when

asked in the assembly about the NEET exam in the state, Stalin gave a wishy-washy answer. The Leader of the Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, Palaniswami said like doing "surya namaskar" after going blind, the government said that it would move a resolution in the Assembly against NEET on Monday a day after the exam was held.

Palaniswami urged the gov-

ernment to provide a solatium of Rs 1 crore to the parents of Dhanush. Dhanush was found dead in his home at Kooliyur village in Tamil Nadu's Salem district. Police sources said the deceased Dhanush was to appear for his third attempt in the national entrance test on Sunday.

Dhanush had cleared his Class 12 exam in 2019 and was preparing for the NEET exam on Sunday. However, he was found lying dead when his parents went to wake him up early in the morning.

Police rushed to his home and the body was taken to the government general hospital at Mettur. A case has been registered and police are investigating the matter. Meanwhile, reacting to the development, Chief Minister Stalin expressed shock and blamed the Centre for the tragic incident.

Kerala BJP writes to Amit Shah for protection of Catholic Bishop

Thiruvananthapuram, Sep 12 (UNI) In a deft political move, Kerala BJP state general secretary and former Vice Chairman of All India Minorities Commission, George Kurien has written to Union Home Minister, Amit Shah to provide protection to Arch Bishop of Pala, Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt after Islamic organisations came out in the open against the Bishop.

Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt had while addressing the faithful at Marth Mariam Pilgrim Church at Kuruvilangad in Kottayam district on Wednesday, had said that non-Muslims are subjected to 'Narcotic Jihad' in Kerala. He said that there were two types of Jihad -- Love Jihad and Narcotic Jihad.

He had said that the 'Narcotic Jihad' is the activity of spoiling the life of non-Muslims, particularly youths by making them addicted to

drugs, the Bishop had said.

The BJP state general secretary in the letter to the Union Home Minister said that the Chief Minister of the state, as well as the opposition leader, had come out against the Bishop and that this has given strength to the Islamist organisations to conduct a public protest against the Bishop.

Kurien while addressing media persons at Kochi said, "The position taken by the Chief Minister and that of the state Opposition leader have given strength to the divisive organisations and for the first time in the history of the state, extremist organisations conducted march towards Bishop's House."

He said that the extremists who took part in the march used filthy language against the Bishop near the Bishop's house. The senior BJP leader said that the extremists had

also threatened the Bishop that he would not be allowed to walk freely in the street.

George Kurien while speaking to media persons said, "In this context of threat to the life of a Bishop, I have requested Union Home minister, Amit Shah to provide protection to Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt." Union Minister of State for External Affairs and former Kerala state president of BJP, V. Muralidharan had on Saturday said that the period of "Palm Chopping of Islamic Extremists" is over and that the BJP would give complete protection to the Bishop. The BJP which is struggling to get a foothold in the state is trying to make use of this anti-Bishop remarks by both the mainstream political parties of the state, CPM, and the Congress as an opportunity and trying to capitalize on the same.

Give Sri Lankan Tamil refugees Indian citizenship, says SL lawmaker

Chennai, Sep 12 (UNI) Sri Lankan Tamil MP V.S. Radhakrishnan on Sunday called upon Tamil Nadu and the Indian governments to accord Indian citizenship to Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who are living in different parts of the state.

A large number of Sri Lankan Tamils, who had worked in plantations and took asylum in India due to the civil war in Sri Lanka, are living in various refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, he told reporters after meeting the Muslim League leader Khader Moideen. Moideen said that even though the civil war in Sri Lanka had ended ten years ago, they are continuing to work in India as the job opportunities in the island nation were bleak. Radhakrishnan praised the efforts of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on improving the living conditions in the Sri Lankan refugee camps in Tamil Nadu and called upon him to take initiative to get them Indian citizenship. He also said that the Indian government could offer the Sri Lankan Tamils dual citizenship as several other foreign countries have done. He also said that the Chinese were showing aggressive interest in strengthening its economic activities in Sri Lanka. While setting up the Hambantota Port, the Chinese had taken steps to set up wind and solar energy projects on three islands.

VIHE, Hyderabad aims to furthering the vision of Swami Vivekananda of life building : CJI

Hyderabad, Sep 12 (UNI) Stating that he was delighted to be part of the 22nd Foundation Day Celebration of Vivekananda Institute of Human Excellence (VIHE), Hyderabad, Chief Justice of India N V Ramana on Sunday said it is praiseworthy to note that the VIHE has completed 21 years of devoted service with an aim to furthering the vision of Swami Vivekananda of 'life-building, character-making and nation building', through education and training. "I am told that, from its inception, the VIHE has been offering various self-improvement programs to students, youth, professionals, and elders across diverse fields. I am impressed to know that approximately 19 lakh participants have benefitted from these programs. I congratulate the institute for this achievement", Justice Ramana said this during his chief guest address through virtual mode to mark the 22nd Foundation Day of VIHE, Hyderabad and 128th anniversary of historic Chicago address of Swami Vivekananda.

The CJI said that Swami Vivekananda once said, "My hope of the future lies in the youths of character- intelligent, renouncing all for the service of others." Swami also said "all the power in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark".

He said it is widely believed that the character of the nation, depends on the character of its youth. Young minds are usually the most reflective.

These emotions can be often moulded to achieve greatness, but the greater challenge in this path is the ability to differentiate between right and wrong choices. The youth often perceive every action with a



clear set of principles- they don't tolerate either injustice towards themselves or towards others. They don't compromise with their ideals, come what may. They are not only selfless but are also adventurous. The youth are willing to sacrifice for the cause they believe in. It is these unadulterated minds and pure hearts which form the backbone of our nation, Justice Ramana said. Stating that history is a witness to the power wielded by the youth, he said, the story of India's freedom struggle would be incomplete, without the names of youth leaders like BIR-SA Munda- the young tribal leader who mobilized the tribal community against the formidable British regime and secured their land rights, or the trio of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru who valiantly fought for a free India till their last breath. The CJI said the inspiring tales of Manyam Veerudu- Alluri Sitarama Raju, the revolutionary leader who was shot during the resistance movement still continues to inspire generations.

54th Annual Ganesh Navratri Utsav at Mitra Youth Association..

TSIT Hyderabad Bureau (12 September) : On the occasion of 54th Annual Ganesh Navratri Utsav Celebrations at Mitra Youth Association, Chatrinaka Hyderabad. On Sunday Ganapati Omam and Anna Prasadam were performed by Committee Members. Chatrinaka Circle Inspector Syed Jailani, Sector S.I Mahesh Yadav and Admin S.I Ganesh Babu participated and performed special puja to Ganapati and participated in Anna Prasadam program. MYA General Secretary S.P.Kranthi Kumar, Members B.Varun, C.Raghu, B.Kotes, T.Ravi Kiran, I.Rahul, B.Nithin Chary, Vinay Kumar, B.Vigneshwer, S.Karan K.Anirudh, B.Venkatesh, K.Saroj, K.Sushrith, Mukesh and others looked over the arrangements and around 400 members were feeded on this occasion.



Heavy to very heavy rain likely in North Coastal AP & Yanam in next 24 hrs : Met

Amaravati, Sep 12 (UNI) Heavy to very heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam during the next 24 hours, Meteorological Centre said on Sunday. In a bulletin here, it said that heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam during the same period.

Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam during the next 48 hours. Squally winds with speed reaching 45 to 55 Kmph guesting to 65 Kmph is likely to occur in North West Bay of Bengal and adjoining Central Bay of Ben-

Heavy rain likely in Telangana on Sep 13 & 14 : Met



Hyderabad, Sep 12 (UNI) Heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in Telangana on Monday and Tuesday, Meteorological Centre said on Sunday. In a bulletin here, it said that thunderstorm accompanied with lightning is likely to occur at isolated places in the state during the next three days. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at a few places or at isolated places in Telangana during the next five days, the bulletin said. Southwest monsoon has been weak in the state during the last 24 hours. Rain occurred at a few places in Telangana during the same period, the bulletin added.

Mega COVID vaccination drive a big hit, exceeds 20 lakh target in TN

Chennai, Sep 12 (UNI) In a first of its kind initiative in India, the Tamil Nadu government created a record of sorts by vaccinating more than 20 lakh people on a single day in a mega camp organised across the state in a bid to make the State free from COVID and to prevent outbreak of a possible third wave. This is the highest vaccination jabs administered to the people on a single day as the drive was organised on Sunday to cover all left out

unvaccinated eligible population in the State. The government has targeted to inoculate 20 lakh people above 18 years in 40,000 centres from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm across the state. The target far exceeded the expectations as 20.11 lakh people were vaccinated by 1630 hrs, thanks to the awareness created by the government on the importance of getting vaccinated. Health Secretary Dr J Radhakrishnan thanked the people for turning out

in large numbers in vaccination centres and help the government surpass the target. Stating that in some places the allotted vaccine doses got exhausted, he said the vaccination will continue till 7.00 PM in all the centres across the state, or till the stocks last. Dr Radhakrishnan said another special mega camp would be held to enable those who got the first dose of today to get their second dose. Following the Intensive Pulse Polio

immunisation (IPPI) model, the vaccination was administered in over 40,000 booths established in primary health centres, government run hospitals, noon meal centres, schools, bus stands, railway stations and other locations where people would congregate in the state. Under the IPPI, the State has 40,399 regular booths and 2,652 additional booths, taking the total number of booths to 43,051 where the vaccination was being

administered. The State government has made elaborate arrangements to vaccinate 20 lakh people above 18 years in these booths and received both first and second doses. In order to avoid the third wave (of the Covid-19), the state is implementing the Covid-19 vaccination. It is very essential to attain the Covid-19 free status and also protect our people from the virus", Health Minister Ma Subramanian said.

Mobile vaccination booths were also operated to vaccinate the elderly and senior citizens. In several districts, people were lured for vaccination with attractive offers of top prizes like silk saris, mobile phones and other gifts. In Namakkal, free egg-five for first dose and ten for second dose--were given as freebies, which drew public to vaccination centres in large numbers. As people thronged the booths to get vaccinated.

America's strategic mess is creating a dangerous void

By Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

While most observers were expecting a breakdown following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, the world was amazed at the speed with which the prophecy was fulfilled.

Some say it was a mistake, but the truth is that when the same mistake happens more than once, it is no longer a mistake but a flaw in decision making — and the US decision-making process has been majorly flawed because it lacks an overarching strategic framework. So, even when the US scores a win, it is limited and short-lived.

Policies are crafted in a haphazard manner driven by partisanship. Barack Obama wanted to stop the war his predecessor started. His decisions catered more to public fatigue with the fighting than to the advice of his generals on the ground. Moreover, he wanted to be true to his campaign promise. Obama sensed the general mood. The American people were fed up sending their young men and women to Iraq, and felt increasingly disturbed by America's deteriorating image around the world, especially since there were no weapons of mass destruction, the main reason behind the war.

But, in fact, the so-called surge worked well, reconciliations were made, violence was reduced, order was established, and reconstruction was carried out and paid for by Iraqi oil. However, the layman did not see this, and Obama catered to the average American preferences rather than to the overall national interest. The US withdrawal, conducted hastily and with no proper security structure put in place before consolidating the gains of the surge, led to the rise of Daesh.

Donald Trump, on the other hand, rode the anti-Obama wave. He wanted to undo everything his predecessor did and, in turn, Joe Biden is working on dismantling all of Trump's policies. One might argue that a reset every four or eight years is a good thing, allowing a periodic review of policy. However, this review is rarely, if ever, based on strategic considerations. Instead it is based on populism, as in the case of Obama's decision to withdraw prematurely from Iraq, or on a personal grudge, as in the decisions by Biden and Trump to undo the work of their predecessors.

That is why there is no consistency in any policy. Decisions are taken

in the hope of immediate solutions or pseudo-solutions, regardless of their long-term effects. During the Cold War, different presidents had less leverage on policy since they were bound by a strategic framework around which there was a political and popular consensus: Containment of communism. An overarching strategy guided US policy and, hence, there was consistency. The US wanted its allies or so-called allies to be stable and prosperous in order to prevent communism from spreading. Nation-building was a strategic necessity. The Marshall Plan that followed the Second World War did not come out of a void but was based on an overall strategy of confronting communism.

A bipolar world was much more orderly than the unipolar world we witness today. Since the end of the Cold War, the US has not found a foe from which it can derive a strategic framework for its policies. China, Russia and Iran are in no way a replacement for the Soviet Union.

China might become a replacement further down the road if it adopts a more assertive foreign policy. However, so far, it is mainly looking after its

economic interests around the world and has not shown that it is seeking to export its communist model.

Iran has an anti-US ideology, but its reach is restricted to the Middle East, unlike the Soviet Union, which sponsored communist regimes around the world. Russia, on the other hand, has overplayed its capacity, and has been able to flex its muscle only to fill the void the US willingly left.

As a result, there is no genuine existential threat that offers the US a basis for its foreign policy. During the Cold War, the average American saw in the communist expansion in Africa or Asia a direct danger to his Midwest hometown, but today the average American does not share the same worldview. There is no clear existential threat that can define the national interest. The 9/11 attacks created an existential threat as terrorism reached the US mainland and, hence, world affairs became of central importance.

However, the sentiment created by the terror strikes cannot be compared to general perception of communism. To start with, terrorism is a fluid concept, Osama Bin Laden was one man, and Al-Qaeda is a clandestine organization, unlike the So-



viet Union, which was a well-defined country with clear objectives as well as a strong conventional army and a nuclear arsenal.

The absence of an existential threat means there is less interest and engagement in world affairs, and US foreign policy is reduced to optics.

This is severely affecting stability around the globe. Despite the criticism Biden is facing for his decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, the reality is that the US is bound to make similar mistakes since it has no strategic foundation for its decision-making

process. Each president wants to take decisions that improve his rating in the hope of winning a successive term.

However, policy stops at that — it is not deep-rooted and has no real substance. Biden's slogan is that America is back, but America is more absent than ever. Despite former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's efforts to re-establish American "swagger," Trump's policy was more isolationist than all of his predecessors' approaches and the trend will likely continue.

Would fintech force banks to disappear?



By Talat Zaki Hafiz

With today's dependence on the use of online banking to replace in-person visits to branches, it is expected that bank branches around the world will disappear one day, sooner or later. This assumption is based on many factors, such that online banking services offer a wide range and variety of web-based financial services that make the accessibility of banking services and financial transactions easier, faster and less costly.

Also, online banking can be accessed via personal computers or mobile apps at all times, regardless of

the official working hours of the bank. All a customer needs to access his or her bank account from anywhere is a secure password and a good internet connection.

One of the major advantages of online banking comes especially during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown periods, when both business and individuals appreciate access to fast-paced banking.

Online payments in Saudi Arabia during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic last year witnessed a significant increase in volume. For example, MADA payments through point-of-

sale devices increased by 67 percent to 543 million transactions compared to the same period in 2019, while online payments via the internet increased by 406 percent to 20.8 million transactions during the same period.

Bank branches are here to stay, and fintech companies will complement their work

It is believed that fintech and digital banking will force banks around the world to close down more branches in the near future. Saudi Arabia is not so different from the rest of the world, especially with its banking sector containing very strong digital network in-

frastructure that can support all types of electronic payment channels.

It is also believed that the Saudi Central Bank's recent approval for two digital banks to operate in the Kingdom (STC Bank and Saudi Digital Bank) is a clear indication that most banks in Saudi Arabia will begin to shift to the digital world. A recent national survey conducted in the Kingdom by a Fintech Saudi team supported that argument. It revealed that only two out of 10 customers visited their bank branch in a month's time and 93 percent of customers primarily conduct their banking transactions electronically. Additionally, three out of four customers use at least one fintech solution.

Also, one major target of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 is to move towards a cashless society, with increased fintech activity and open banking policy helping to support the potential shift of society toward digital banking. Also, one major target of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 is to move towards a cashless society, with increased fintech activity and open banking policy helping to support the potential shift of society toward digital banking.

It is worth noting that the number of bank branches in the Kingdom dropped by about 5 percent as of June 2021 compared to the same period last year. There are now 1,969 branch-

es across the Kingdom. Likewise, the number of bank remittances services centers fell by It is worth noting that the number of bank branches in the Kingdom dropped by about 5 percent as of June 2021 compared to the same period last year. There are now 1,969 branches across the Kingdom. Likewise, the number of bank remittances services centers fell by

about 4 percent, and now number 724. This decrease is not necessary because banks are downsizing the number of branches, rather than re-locating or reopening them in different structures that focus on enhancing digital banking.

In my opinion, bank branches are here to stay, and fintech companies will complement their work. But certainly, there will be a radical change over time in the structure of bank branches and the way they provide services to their customers. Banks will lean very much toward traditional banking, but in a balanced way that adapts digitization in serving customers and digitalization in processing financial transactions. This

would mitigate any of the unforeseen risks of full-fledged digital banking, such as technology disruptions, lack of personal relationships, privacy and security concerns, and limited services.

Iran's ties with Taliban a concern for Arab nations

By Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

Like the rest of the world, Arab countries are closely following developments in the Afghanistan arena. Middle Eastern nations fear that the war-torn country will once again descend into a devastating civil war, just like the one that began in the late decades of the 20th century.

There is no question that the bitter experiences of Afghanistan's recent past are concerning to regional countries, primarily the Arab nations. Taking this into consideration, the official declared positions of most Arab countries and Gulf states — except Qatar, which appears to be a strong backer of the Taliban — can be understood.

Chief among these concerns is the establishment of an ideologically driven state that adopts an extremist interpretation of religion in all its forms, which could turn Afghanistan into a new global terror center, attracting extremists and redeploying them across the world; as was the case with the rise of Al-Qaeda and the extremist offshoots it inspired and spawned. It is often

forgotten that Iran facilitated the passage of Al-Qaeda operatives who carried out the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Therefore, it is extremely important to continue to closely monitor the close relations between Iran and the Taliban.

The stereotypical image of the Taliban continues to loom large over the Afghan scene, despite the movement attempting to moderate its image and promises. The reason why these promises are not taken seriously is the recollection of events in Afghanistan's neighboring country, Iran, after the fall of the shah's regime in 1979. At that time, Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters made promises to Iranians at home, as well as to neighboring countries. He called on the new political system to work for cooperation, affinity and Islamic unity. However, the regime quickly reneged on these promises, revealing an extremist ideological worldview both domestically and abroad. Iranians and people all across the region have suffered the gloomy consequences ever since.

At present, we are witnessing several Iranian overtures to the Taliban. Numerous media reports and Iranian officials have alluded to these overtures. In addition, delicate monitoring of the ongoing developments in Afghanistan, moment-by-moment assessments and close monitoring of the signals sent periodically by Iran point to a growing warmth in the relations between Tehran and the Taliban.

These Arab concerns are not illusory. Indeed, they are based on an all-too-tangible reality, which includes deep-rooted relations between the Taliban and the clerical regime in Iran that have grown over the past two decades, with Tehran providing the Taliban leadership with logistical services, while it also hosted Al-Qaeda leaders in Tehran. Iran has even permitted the Taliban to open a clandestine office in the eastern city of Mashhad close to the border with Afghanistan.

Many analysts adopt the classical approach when examining the relationship between the Taliban and Tehran, arguing

that because the two have opposing extremist sectarian ideologies they will have divergent and conflicting relations. While this was true prior to 2001, the nature of this relationship changed massively after the US invasion of Afghanistan, with strong ties being formed (although some may insist that this relationship is based on realpolitik, necessity and shared interests), including the aforementioned provision of Iranian logistical and intelligence services to the Taliban. The latter's officials have regularly visited Tehran to meet with senior officials.

In reference to the proximity between the two, we can mention the 2016 US drone strike that killed the former Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour while he was returning from Iran.

Those who have monitored the comments and remarks made by Iranian officials regarding the Taliban would have noticed a softer tone toward the movement. For example, in a December 2020 interview conducted by the Afghan Tolo TV channel with then-Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, the host asked about Iran's position on the Taliban. Zarif attempted to avoid giving a direct answer. After relentless pressure from the host, Zarif said: "As you pointed out, the Taliban killed eight of my colleagues before doing so with others.

Therefore, our definition of the Taliban is that the Taliban has committed many terrorist acts. Before naming the Taliban as terrorists, the Taliban is a group in Afghanistan that has committed terrorist acts and it is necessary now to consider the Taliban as part of a future solution, not (the whole) future solution for Afghanistan. There is a big difference in it." When pushed again, Zarif added: "Look, the Taliban has committed many terrorist acts. Regarding recognition of the Taliban as a terrorist group, we have not removed the Taliban (from our list of) terrorist groups, in our laws."

Here, it is necessary to point out that the new generation of Taliban leaders may not necessarily embrace the same complex ideological tenets espoused by the movement's founding fathers. There is now a more pragmatic approach and political objectives that significantly impact the decision-making process in the Taliban's top leadership. As a result, the Taliban has no problem turning a blind eye to the fact that Iran played a pivotal role in the fall of its former government. But the Taliban's next approach with regard to Iran depends on the nature of its relations with the remaining actors, especially the US and China. The nature of their relationship changed massively after the US invasion of Afghanistan.

174 Palestinians injured in West Bank clashes

Ramallah, Sep 12 (UNI) At least 174 Palestinians were injured during clashes with Israeli soldiers in the West Bank as protesters were showing their support for the Palestinians incarcerated in Israeli prisons, authorities said on Saturday.

In a statement, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society said that among the injured, 25 were wounded by rubber bullets, adding that an ambulance driver and a photojournalist were also hurt during the clashes on Friday, reports Xinhua news agency.

The rest of the injured suffered from pains after inhaling tear gas fired by the Israeli soldiers to disperse the demonstrators in the villages of Beita, Huwara and Beit Dajan near the northern West Bank city of Nablus.

Thousands of Palestinians participated in a demonstration called "a day of rage" to show solidarity with six Palestinian prisoners who broke out of an Israeli prison earlier this week.

The protesters went to the Israeli army checkpoints and roadblocks, confronting the Israeli soldiers.

Witnesses said the protesters threw stones at Israeli soldiers who fired teargas and rubber bullets to disperse them. The tension between Israel and the Palestinians has been mounting since the escape of the Palestinian prisoners on Monday from the Gilboa Prison in northern Israel through a tunnel they dug.

Israel's security forces said on Friday night they captured two of the prisoners near the city of Nazareth in northern Israel.

The Israeli police believe the other four escapees have managed to reach "Area A", areas in the West Bank that are under full civil and security control by the Palestinian Authority.

8 people dead, 5 injured in China gas explosion

Beijing, Sep 12 (UNI) An explosion and subsequent fire caused by the leakage of a liquefied gas cylinder killed eight people and injured five others on Saturday in a residential building in the city of Dalian in China's Liaoning province, according to local authorities.

The accident took place around midnight in the city's Pulandian district, reports Xinhua news agency.

Firefighters and local police immediately rushed to the scene. The fire was put out at around 2.30 a.m.

The injured have been sent to local hospitals and are in stable condition. The residents of the building have been evacuated. An investigation into the accident's cause is underway.

US envoy to Russia summoned over election meddling

Moscow, Sep 12 (UNI) The Russian Foreign Ministry said that it summoned John Sullivan, the US Ambassador to Moscow, over Washington's meddling in the upcoming State Duma or parliamentary elections.

According to the statement published by the Ministry on Friday, Sullivan was summoned for a meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, reports Xinhua news agency.

During the meeting, the Russian side said it has irrefutable proof that US "digital giants" violated Russian legislation with regard to the preparation for elections.

The Ministry further said it is inadmissible to interfere in Russia's internal affairs.

The US State Department admitted that Sullivan discussed matters of bilateral relations with Ryabkov at the Foreign Ministry but did not mention about the envoy being summoned, TASS News Agency reported.

"On Friday, September 10, Ambassador Sullivan did meet with Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov to discuss a range of bilateral matters in support of (US President Joe) Biden's desire for a stable and predictable relationship with Russia," she said.

'EU economy rebounding but not yet out of danger'

Brussels, Sep 12 (UNI) Despite a stronger than expected second quarter, the European Union (EU) must remain vigilant about the Covid-19 pandemic and potential supply bottlenecks, European Commissioner for Economy Paolo Gentiloni said.

Speaking at a press conference on Friday, he also spoke about the risk of growing inflation throughout the EU, "which we consider temporary", reports Xinhua news agency. "It is crucial that we keep the macroeconomic policy mix supportive. Of course, transforming this generalised support gradually into a more targeted and selective one, but without thinking that now is the time for restrictive policies. This would be quite dangerous," he said.

Gentiloni said Europe was "not only looking for an (economic) rebound" but "a sustained and sustainable growth". He said 18 national economic recovery plans had been approved so far, with work continuing on the rest.

During a meeting of the eurozone Finance Ministers, they discussed "the uneven impact of COVID-19 across economic sectors and regions", as well as medium-term policy actions to avoid further divergences.

3rd UAE plane with humanitarian aid lands in Kabul

Kabul, Sep 12 (UNI) A third plane from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) carrying humanitarian aid landed at the Kabul airport, following which the cargo was delivered to the Taliban leadership, the media reported.

"They are supporting us so those in need will receive the aid," TOLO News quoted Yousuf Ahmadi, a spokesman for the Taliban, as saying on Friday shortly after the flight arrived in the Afghan capital.

The humanitarian aid, consisting of food and medicine, will continue coming to Kabul until the end of September, according to Haji Obaidullah, head of the Association of Afghan Businessmen in the UAE.

Earlier this week Bahrain sent 30 tons of food and medicine to Af-

ghanistan. Meanwhile, Abdul Hadi Hamdan, who is in charge of Kabul airport, said that food, clothing and medicine provided by various countries had arrived at the airport, and he said the airport will soon become operational for civilian flights as well.

"So far, those flights that carry humanitarian aid have landed at the airport," Hamdan said.

Meanwhile, officials of the Pakistan Consulate in Kandahar say that 12 tonnes of food and medicine provided by Islamabad arrived in the city on Friday.

"More of such support will arrive. And we hope trade between the two countries also should increase," said Naeem Khan, Pakistan General Consul in Kandahar.

Canberra, Sep 12 (IANS) Australia's overall Covid-19 caseload has topped the 70,000 mark after more than 200 new infections were reported on Saturday.

On Saturday morning, there were 2,069 locally acquired cases reported across the country, taking the total number of confirmed infections since the start of the pandemic to 71,972, reports Xinhua news agency.

The nationwide Covid death toll stood at 1,084.

Of the new cases, 1,599 were from New South Wales (NSW), Australia's most populous state and the cur-

Australia's Covid caseload tops 70K mark



rent epicentre of the pandemic, where the health department also recorded eight deaths.

"There have been 170 Covid-19 related deaths in NSW since June 16, 2021," said the state-

ment from NSW Health. Victoria, the second-most populous state, reported a further 450

Guterres underlines importance of engaging Taliban, aiding Afghans

United Nations, Sep 12 (UNI) UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said engaging the Taliban and providing humanitarian aid to the Afghan people are crucial for avoiding both a humanitarian catastrophe and an economic meltdown.

"These are two things that are interlinked and they depend on how they evolve for the moment, what is important is to have engagement, that engagement is necessary, and at the same time, there is an absolute priority, which is humanitarian support," he told reporters at the UN headquarters in New York.

The Secretary-General also stressed the importance of countries to engage the Taliban "in an effective way".

Noting that the UN has been in Afghanistan since 1947, Guterres said that the UN has "a key role to play" in humanitarian aid to a people that are now in a desperate situation.

"We believe that a dialogue with the Taliban is absolutely essential at the present moment," he stressed.

Speaking about the economic situation in the country, the UN chief noted that "an economic meltdown of Afghanistan is in nobody's interest".

"We need to find ways to avoid a situation that would be catastrophic for the people," he added.

Regarding the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the mandate of which expires next week, Guterres said it would be difficult to create a new mandate given the country's current unpredictability.

Food, job insecurity now primary concerns in Afghanistan: UN

Geneva, Sep 12 (UNI) Food and job insecurity are now the primary causes of concern for families in Afghanistan, Anthea Webb, deputy regional director for the World Food Program (WFP), told a UN press briefing.

With winter setting in and the economy on the verge of collapsing, their worries are also growing, she said via a conference call on Friday. Quoting from the latest survey of the WFP, she said that 93 per cent of

households in Afghanistan have no sufficient access to food now, reports xinhua news agency.

The randomised phone survey, carried out from August 21 to September 5 in all provinces in the country, revealed that three in four Afghan families have been reducing portions or borrowing food.

"They are buying cheaper food, foregoing more nutritious options such as meat, dairy products and vegetables. Parents are skipping

meals entirely to allow their children to eat," Webb said. She added that food insecurity in Afghanistan had already been widespread before August 15, with 81 per cent of households reporting insufficient food consumption, with one in three Afghans signalling acute food insecurity.

"It is now a race against time to deliver lifesaving assistance to the Afghan people before roads are cut off by snow," the UN official said.

She told reporters that the main reason the situation had gotten so much worse over the past month was that many Afghans did not have access to the money they needed to buy enough food.

New UN envoy vows to revitalise peace process in Yemen

United Nations, Sep 12 (UNI) New UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg has vowed to revitalise the peace process by engaging with the parties to conflict and regional and international players.

"By now, it should be obvious that the peace process has stalled for too long. The conflict parties have not discussed a comprehensive settlement since 2016. This has left Yemenis stuck in an indefinite state of war, with no clear way forward," he told the Security Council in his first briefing as the top UN envoy for Yemen.

It is therefore long overdue for the parties to engage in peaceful dialogue under UN facilitation to

discuss the terms of an overarching settlement, in good faith and without preconditions, Xinhua news agency quoted Grundberg as saying.

"The UN's approach to ending the conflict must be inclusive. To define the best way forward, I intend to assess past efforts, identify what has worked and what hasn't, and listen to as many Yemeni men and women as possible. The way forward must be guided by the aspirations of the Yemeni people," said Grundberg, who took up office on September 5.

He pledged to spare no effort in trying to bring together actors across conflict lines, to engage Ye-

menis from all political perspectives and societal components and from all parts of the country, to discuss under UN auspices how they can find common ground and resolve their differences without resorting to force.

The envoy said his first consultations with Yemeni, regional and international actors will start soon.

Grundberg said he will shortly travel to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to meet with the Yemeni president and other government officials and also looked forward to meeting with the Houthi leadership and other Sanaa-based actors, as well as other political actors throughout Yemen.

Palestine slams Israeli PM for supporting settlement expansion

Ramallah, Sep 12 (UNI) Palestine has slammed Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett for saying that he supports the expansion of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories.

In an official statement sent to Xinhua news agency on Friday, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it condemns Bennett's remarks he made in a meeting held on Thursday

in the West Bank. During the meeting, Bennett promised "not to freeze the advancement and approval of building plans for new Jewish homes in the West Bank's settlements", the Israeli media reported.

The Palestinian statement condemned Bennett's meeting and his remarks "provocative and never show any credibility toward a mutual trust-building and restoring calm, security

and stability". "Telling the settlers that he supports developing and building settlements and, at the same time, saying that the settlements won't be annexed is a policy of playing with words and expressions," the statement said.

Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which are claimed by the Palestinians, in the 1967 Middle East war and has controlled them ever since.

The Jewish settlements are considered a violation of international law by most of the international community.

Direct peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians stopped in 2014 after the US sponsored it for nine months without making any progress due to deep differences on issues of Israeli settlement and recognising a Palestinian state.

Djokovic overcomes Zverev in five sets, to clash with Medvedev for title



New York, Sep 12 (UNI) Alexander Zverev may have spoiled world No. 1 Novak Djokovic's dream of a Golden Slam at the Tokyo Olympic Games, but the Serbian did not let the German halt his pursuit of the Grand Slam at the US Open as the winner of 20 majors won 4-6, 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 on Saturday (IST) to set up a title clash with Russia's Daniil Medvedev.

Djokovic battled past the fourth-seeded Zverev at Flushing Meadows and moved within one win of

becoming the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to complete a Grand Slam by claiming all four major trophies in a single season.

"I would like to say thank you, because the atmosphere was amazing, the best atmosphere of the tournament so far," Djokovic told the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd.

"These are the moments we live for. These are the kind of unique opportunities that we dream of every day when we wake up and are trying to find motivation

to go out there and do the same things over and over again," Djokovic told atp-tour.com.

"It pays off when you are playing in this incredible stadium with this atmosphere. Thank you so much for making it special."

For most of the clash, Djokovic was patient. But after securing a double-break lead in the decider, the world No. 1, who is currently tied with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on 20 Slam titles apiece, stepped on the gas to tri-

umph after three hours and 33 minutes. Djokovic, who will play second seed Daniil Medvedev for history on Sunday, has already won the Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon this year. A victory against the Russian would give him 21 major crowns.

"I'm going to treat the next match like it's the last match of my career," Djokovic said.

Zverev was by far Djokovic's toughest test yet. For the 10th time this year at a major, the Serbian lost the opening set. But this occasion felt

more dangerous, as the German had not only beaten him six weeks ago, but he entered the match on a career-best 16-match winning streak.

"Alexander is a big champion. He's someone that I admire on and off the court. We get along very well, he's definitely one of my best friends. We train a lot, we see each other a lot in Monaco, [which] he uses as a base," Djokovic said. "He's a great guy and an even better player. I knew coming onto the court today that it was going to be a great battle."

A more relaxed bubble in UK resulted in Covid getting into India camp: Hussain

London, Sep 12 (UNI) Former England skipper Nasser Hussain has said that the Indian cricketers had "enjoyed a more relaxed bubble here in the UK" and that ultimately resulted in Covid getting into the tourists' camp.

The fifth and final Test between India and England, that was scheduled to begin on Friday, was cancelled due to the emergence of a Covid-19 case in the Indian camp. Assistant physiotherapist Yogesh Parmar tested positive a few days after head coach Ravi Shastri, bowling coach Bharat Arun and fielding coach R Sridhar had tested positive.

India coaches and players had reportedly attend a book launch at a London hotel outside their bubble, as revealed by Sportsmail, two days before the fourth Test at The Oval," the Daily Mail had reported.

"They have enjoyed a more relaxed bubble here in the UK and ultimately that is how Covid has got into the camp -- but it is too easy for us to preach to the India team



to play the game on the back of a round of negative PCR tests and double vaccinations," said Hussain in his column for Daily Mail.

The former skipper added that he didn't want to blame the Indian cricketers for deciding not to play the fifth Test as life inside the bio-bubble is very tough.

"I don't blame the players (for not playing the fifth Test) because I experienced similar environments

major series it is not just the fast bowlers being treated regularly.

"Those India players, who have spent as much time living life in a bubble as the England players this year, would have feared the consequences of testing positive themselves and remaining locked away again."

Hussain said that when the news of the assistant physiotherapist testing positive for Covid-19 emerged, it was the proverbial last straw for the Indian players and they became jittery.

"When something like this hits it feels like the final straw and you develop a get-me-out-of-here mentality. As for the theory that India have pulled out because they are 2-1 up? I just don't buy it. The theory that India pulled out of the Test because they were 2-1 up in the series is nonsense. Virat Kohli and his team want to create history, as they did when they won in Australia earlier this year. And to have done it properly. They did not want to win by default."

"Yes, these players are handsomely paid but that does not make the hotel isolation any easier. And so when India's physio and his assistant tested positive, India got fidgety. Physios are the closest of close contacts and by the end of a

IPL 2021: RCB to fly Kohli, Siraj to UAE on charter flight



New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) India skipper Virat Kohli and pace bowler Mohammed Siraj, who both represent Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), will reach the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for the second leg of the Indian Premier League (IPL) on a charter flight from London.

The duo will reach Dubai on Sunday morning on a flight arranged by their franchise.

"Keeping the safety and security of our players as the utmost priority, Royal Challengers Bangalore have arranged a special charter flight for captain Virat Kohli and Mohammed Siraj to ensure their safe transit to the UAE," said RCB

in a statement on Saturday. "The players will be flying out at 11.30 PM (UK time) on Saturday and will arrive in Dubai early Sunday morning. Both, Virat and Siraj will undergo 6-day quarantine in Dubai before joining the team bio-secure bubble," added RCB.

The fifth and final Test between India and England, that was scheduled to begin on Friday, was cancelled due to the emergence of a Covid-19 case in the Indian camp.

Assistant physiotherapist Yogesh Parmar tested positive a few days after head coach Ravi Shastri, bowling coach Bharat Arun and fielding coach R Sridhar had tested positive.

Third win for Rajini, Jagan in National Motorcycle Championship

Chennai, Sep 12 (UNI) Veterans Rajini Krishnan (RACR) and Jagan Kumar (TVS Racing) posted brilliant but contrasting victories in their respective categories to light up the second round of the MRF MMSC Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship at the MMRT, here on Saturday.

Rajini, 41, stamped his authority and class while winning the race in the premier Prostock 301-400cc category after starting from P6 while Jagan Kumar, 31, exchanged leads with arch-rival and pole-sitter Rajiv Sethu (Idemitsu Honda SK69 Racing) before clinching the cliff-hanger with a last-lap overtake as the two crossed the finish line with little separating them. Both Rajini and Jagan thus notched their third consecutive wins

in the championship having scored a double apiece in Round-1 last month, according to a release issued by the organisers.

Also scoring maximum points was 20-year old from Thrissur, Anfal Akdhar (Rockstar Racing) in the Novice (Stock 165cc) category.

Rajini, 41, rode his Yamaha R3 with craft and guile that reflected his vast experience as he bided his time after starting from P6 before making a decisive move, to move to the front of the pack and stayed there with ease.

The local star, who had won both the races in Round-1 last month, was confident personified to finish ahead of Rockers Racing's Soorya PM from Chennai, who could not defend his pole position,

and Hyderabad's Rahil Shetty (Gusto Racing).

Later, Jagan and Sethu battled hard but fair. Starting from pole position, Sethu yielded ground to Jagan but midway through the six-lapper, the Honda ace regained the lead to set up a last-lap humdinger. The pair took the last corner of the last lap in tandem and raced side-by-side to the finish line where Jagan just about got his nose in front for a thrilling win as Sethu, for the third race in a row finished second. Behind the pair, KY Ahamed finished third after close fight with his TVS Racing teammate Deepak Ravikumar who ran wide entering the home straight on the last lap.

Earlier, starting the six-lap race from P3 on the 38-bike grid, Anfal Akdhar had to fight

hard for his victory as he received close attention from pole-sitter Allwin Sundar (AS Motorsports) and Alwin Xavier (Sparks Racing), also from Thrissur. Sundar, winner of both races in Round-1 last month, eventually fell out of contention due to some issues with his bike, leaving Akdhar and Xavier to fight for the top honours. Akdhar managed to keep his wheel in front as he crossed the finish line just ahead of Xavier.

The results (Provisional - all 6 laps unless mentioned):

Championship: Prostock 301-400cc (Race-1): 1. Rajini Krishnan (RACR, Chennai) (11mins, 21.868secs); 2. Soorya PM (Rockers Racing, Chennai) (11:23.279); 3. Rahil Shetty (Gusto Racing, Hyderabad)

(11:23.414). Pro-Stock 165cc (Race-1): 1. Jagan Kumar (TVS Racing, Chennai) (11:46.731); 2. Rajiv Sethu (Idemitsu Honda SK69 Racing) (11:46.778); 3. KY Ahamed (TVS Racing) (11:47.691).

Novice (Stock 165cc) Race-1: 1. Anfal Akdhar (Rockstar Racing, Thrissur) (13:05.852); 2. Allwin Xavier (Sparks Racing, Thrissur) (13:05.980); 3. Sarvesh Balappa (Sparks Racing, Hubballi) (13:17.967).

One-Make Championship organized by Madras Motor Sports Club:

Idemitsu Honda India Talent Cup - NSF 250R (Race-1): 1. Kavin Quintal (Chennai) (11:08.113); 2. Mohsin Peramban (Valanchery) (11:22.860); 3. Sarthak Chavan (Pune) (11:22.959 - incl 10-sec penalty for jump start).

New Zealand arrive in Pakistan after 18 years, but ODI series not a part of Super League

Islamabad, Sep 12 (UNI) The New Zealand team has arrived in Pakistan after 18 years for a white-ball tour featuring three ODIs and five T20Is. The Tom Latham-led side landed at the Islamabad airport on Saturday and headed to the hotel where they will serve a three-day mandatory isolation before starting practice from September 15, according to the itinerary released by Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

New Zealand had abandoned its tour of Pakistan in 2002 after a bomb exploded outside the team hotel in Kara-

chi. The explosion happened two hours before the start of the second Test. The Black Caps returned to play five ODIs in 2003, which was its last trip of Pakistan.

The 2021 trip also brings former Sri Lankan cricketer Thilan Samaraweera back to the country. Samaraweera was a member of the Sri Lankan team attacked by militants near the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore in 2009. After Sri Lanka abandoned the tour immediately, Samaraweera was treated for shrapnel shots in the left thigh and took three months after surgery to remove the bul-



let to get back on the field. He is now serving as a member of the coaching staff of the New Zealand team on their tours of Bangladesh and Pakistan.

In the meantime, the three ODIs scheduled to be played on September 17, 19, 21 in Rawalpindi will not be

counted in the ICC ODI Super League and will be played as a bilateral series. Pakistan have 40 points from four wins out of nine matches, standing at sixth place in the table. New Zealand have won all three matches, picking 30 points and are ranked tenth in the table.

Durand Cup: Luna penalty seals debut win for Kerala

Kolkata, Sep 12 (UNI) Indian Super League (ISL) side Kerala Blasters started their Durand Cup campaign with a 1-0 victory on debut against the Indian Navy Football Team at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK) on Saturday.

Uruguayan midfielder Adrian Luna scored the match-winner off a spot-kick in the 72nd minute.

Scores remained level at half-time and given how wasteful both teams were in either half, it seemed that the 130th Durand Cup was heading for its first goalless draw.

The Navy team did an incredible job in their opening game when they came back from a goal down to win against Delhi FC and had they only tucked away from the biggest chance

they had on Saturday in the 74th minute, they could have ensured passage to the quarter-finals.

The opportunity sprung out of a Navy counterattack. Ultimately, it was squandered, not once but twice. First, Sreyas VG had to put his shot away with only Albino Gomes to beat, but the Blasters custodian palmed it away. Only for the ricochet to fall straight at the feet of PM Britto, who had an open goal to aim for. The former East Bengal winger, however, astonishingly shot wide.

The breakthrough goal came two minutes earlier, following an erratic challenge inside the box by Navy's Dalraj Singh, which was adjudged to be yellow-card worthy and a penalty was awarded to Kerala.



SRK & DEEPIKA

According to the media reports, "Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone are starting the shooting for YRF's Pathan today at YRF Studio.

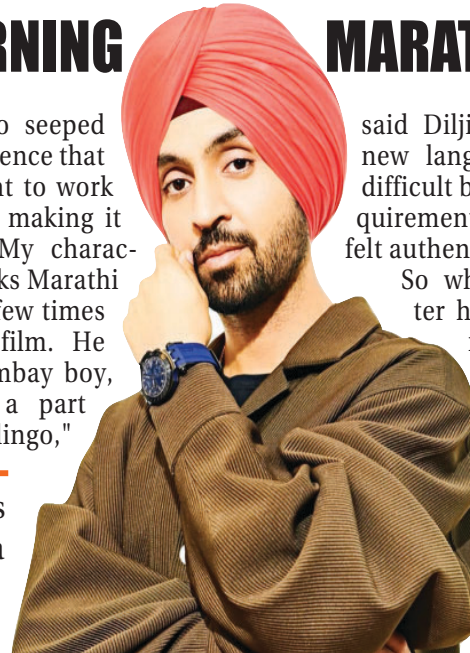


DILJIT DOSANJH ON LEARNING MARATHI FOR HIS NEW ROLE

Punjabi star Diljit Dosanjh had to learn Marathi for his latest release, Suraj Pe Mangal Bhari, and he admits that picking up a new language was not an easy task. "The things that a man must do for love! My character had to learn Marathi for his lady love and I had to for the love for my film. It's the kind of movie

that's so seeped in innocence that you want to work towards making it better. My character speaks Marathi quite a few times in the film. He is a Bombay boy, so it's a part of his lingo,"

"Picking up a new language is always difficult but that was a requirement in this film. It felt authentic.



MARATHI FOR HIS NEW ROLE

said Diljit. "Picking up a new language is always difficult but that was a requirement in this film. It felt authentic.

So when my character had to woo Fatima's character, he used these adorable Marathi lines. Those scenes are kinda heartwarming. It was such a joy to see the

work you've put in come alive on screen. It's the kind of simple, uncomplicated love that we don't celebrate enough anymore," he added.

The comedy drama helmed by Abhishek Sharma released on November 15.

It is the first new Bollywood release after the theatres reopened following the long break due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Diljit even tweeted to thank fans who ventured out to watch the film during the pandemic.

start rolling for the action flick 'Pathan', today!

After the gap of two years, Shah Rukh Khan is ready to back with a bang with his next YR film titled action flick 'Pathan' which will be helmed by Hrithik Roshan's 'WAR' director Siddharth Anand. Along

with King Khan, John Abraham and Deepika Padukone are also portraying key roles in the film. Now, after a wait of a long time, Shah Rukh Khan is back on the film sets and starts rolling for the YRF Pathan. Along with him,

Deepika has also joined the actor on the film sets on today. Earlier it was reported that SRK & Deepika will begin the shooting of Pathan after Diwali. Well, John Abraham who is portraying the antagonist role in the film will

join the Pathan cast and crew in the month of January or February. John Abraham who plays the villain will join the sets in the next schedule in January/February. The Siddharth Anand directorial hits cinemas in 2021!! As per the

media sources, John Abraham is getting a whopping amount of Rs. 20 Crore for his role in Pathan. Well, the film will witness Shah Rukh Khan and John pitted against each other.



KIARA ADVANI AND VARUN DHAWAN'S FIRST-LOOK FROM 'JUGJUGG JEEYO' WILL MAKE YOU GO WOWW!



I believe in my own happiness!

JASMIN BHASIN:

Jasmin Bhasin is slowly but steadily advancing her game in Bigg Boss 14. The actor, who is currently locked up in the house, is being loved for the way she is conducting herself in the house as well as her fashion style. Her easy-breezy outfits, comfortable shorts and sundresses are being

loved in the house. Before she went in, we got a chance to have a candid chat with her, and here is what she has to say about her sense of fashion. "For me, fashion is something that makes me feel comfortable. I should feel comfortable carrying it, wearing it and also makes me feel sassy," she says,

adding, "My party clothes are comfortable shoes and clothes in which I can look classy, as well as I, can dance comfortably. I love wearing dresses, casual dresses, shorts, t-shirts, hoodies, track pants." She has a few favourite brands as well who she is loyal to. "I like Gucci because they make really

cool hoodies and dresses. I love Forever New dresses also Zara," she says. And what about traditional wear? "I like wearing a simple salwar kameez or a saree when I go for a puja, while for weddings, I like wearing lehengas," she says.

MIRZAPUR ACTOR DIVYENNDU SHARMA : Now people look at me as a complete actor



Mirzapur actor Divyenndu Sharma has impressed us with his performance in the show. However, we all still know him as Liquid from Kartik Aryan's Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAMA. It has been 9 years since Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAMA had released and we still see a crazy fan following for the film. Divyenndu Sharma was just amazing and brilliant as Liquid in the film. However, his performance as Munna Bhaiyya from Mirzapur gained him fame. Divyenndu was seen in many popu-

lar films like Chashme Baddoor, Dilliwali Zaalim Girlfriend, Toilet: Ek Prem Katha and Batti Gul Meter Chalu. All of his characters in these film have been iconic and fans have loved his performance. He was also seen in the web show, Permanent Roommates.

SOHA ALI KHAN GETS BACK TO BASICS



Kiara Advani, the diva of Bollywood has teamed up with Varun Dhawan for her upcoming film 'Jugjugg Jeeyo'. Directed by Raj Mehta, the film will be a romantic comedy that also stars Anil Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor and both are paired romantically for the first time. Kiara, who is currently

in Chandigarh shooting for 'Jugjugg Jeeyo' has taken it to Instagram to share the first look from the film. Kiara shared some pictures with Varun Dhawan which seemed to be a part of the photoshoot for the film poster. In the pictures, both can be seen twinning with the same denim pants

and shirts. While sharing the first look, Kiara wrote, "#JUGJUGGJEEYO Happy Husband, Happy Life!". From the caption, it's pretty clear that Varun and Kiara are playing a married couple in the film. Not only Kiara, but Varun also shared the same pictures on his Instagram handle.

Soha Ali Khan is getting back to routine after Diwali festivities, which includes her regular fitness regime. The mother of one took to Instagram to share a boomerang of herself getting ready

for a workout session. "Post Diwali workout mode on! #workoutmotivation #backtobasics," she wrote with the video. Soha had shared healthy feast ideas for the festival season a while back because she feels it is

easy to get carried away during festivals. "The best way to avoid that is by making sure your spread includes healthy foods like almonds, which are a great snack to munch on anytime of the day and they have health

benefits across weight and diabetes management, heart and skin health. And with all the festivities abuzz, it's important to also keep energy levels up," she said.

Kareena Kapoor and Taimur experience mountain bliss with Malaika Arora

A video has also been doing the rounds on the internet where Kareena, Saif, Malaika, Arjun and Taimur can be seen taking a stroll on the streets of Dharamshala. "No Photo", Taimur can be heard saying to the people who were clicking pictures and videos.



Manushi Chhillar on Wednesday walked down the memory lane and recalled the moment when she was crowned Miss World three years ago on this day.

"It was an absolute honour for me to bring back the Miss World crown to India three years back. It was a really proud and humbling moment for me to win it for my country. It is an extremely competitive event and everyone participates to win but I'm glad I made so many friends there," she said. Manushi also shared her favourite highlights from the day when she was declared winner. "For me, there were many highlights (from the night) but my favourite would be hearing everyone scream India on the final night! I love

our tradition and culture and the Miss World platform gave me an opportunity to showcase it to the entire world. It was amazing to see the other participants dance on my country's song and throughout our time there, they would request me to play Sanjay Leela Bhansali ji's 'Nagada sang dhol' and try to dance on it. I love that song and wanted to perform on something that was folk and had a hint of the movies, because everyone recognises Bollywood internationally," she added.

In an interview with her mother Mandy Teehey for the newsletter The Newsette, Selena opened up about going public with her mental health struggles, reports eonline.com.

"For me, I had to give up social media, so I would go through these periods when I wouldn't (use my accounts)," she said.

The singer-actress continued: "But I got so angry that my story was twisted into so many different things. The first time I posted (again), I was like, 'I claim my own story, so if you don't hear it from me, then it's not true'. Did I go and get help? Yes I did. But I'm not ashamed. I feel better and I feel like

Singer Selena Gomez says her mental health story was twisted a lot, which made her angry.

I can understand a lot of things now." "I think that was my moment when I knew (nobody) was going to take my story away from me. And I really do believe that I made the circle, if you will, of making the media look like s**t if they're making fun of someone who has mental health issues," Selena added.

SELENA GOMEZ :



My mental health story was twisted into so many things

MANUSHI CHHILLAR RECALLS WINNING MISS WORLD TITLE 3 years ago; says, 'It was an absolute honour to bring back the crown to India'

Malaika Arora is having a great time in the scenic Himachal Pradesh hill town, where her beau Arjun Kapoor is shooting for Bhoot Police along with Saif Ali Khan, Yami Gautam and Jacqueline Fernandez.

Actress Kareena Kapoor and her son, Taimur, have also accompanied Saif for the shoot, and it seems they are leaving no chance to explore the hills in their free time.

On Tuesday, they paid visit to one of the most popular cafes in Dharamshala. Sharing a glimpse from their afternoon getaway, Malaika posted a picture of her soaking in the winter sun along with Kareena and little Taimur.

"Mountain bliss #timitain @kareenakapoorkhan #dharamshala," she wrote. She also shared a couple of other photos from the book cafe on her Instagram story.

Base effect pushes up domestic PV sales in Aug



New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) Low base effect along with pent up demand pushed India's domestic private vehicle (PV) sales higher on a year-on-year basis in August.

However, challenges pertaining to electronic components' availability, coupled with high operating and ownership costs due to rising commodity prices capped the sales' uptrend.

Accordingly, sales of passenger vehicles increased to

2,32,224 units in August as compared to 2,15,916 units sold during the corresponding period of 2020.

On a sequential basis, August PV sales were lower than July's level of 2,64,442 units.

The data furnished by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) does not include sales figures from some key players such as Tata Motors.

The PV sales data comprises cars, utility vehicles and vans.

Air India launches direct flight from Hyd to London



Hyderabad, Sep 12 (UNI) Air India's first ever direct flight from Hyderabad to London was launched from the GMR Hyderabad International Airport here on Friday.

The national carrier's flight AI 147 took off from the Hyderabad International Airport on Friday morning. Senior officials from the airport, Air India and other stakeholders were present at the terminal on the occasion.

Non-stop Air India flights will operate between Hyderabad and the Heathrow Airport twice a week -- Monday and Friday.

Air India Flight A 147 will depart from Hyderabad at 1.30 a.m. on Monday and arrive at the Heathrow Airport at 7.30 a.m. (local time).

The same flight will depart from Hyderabad at 5.30 a.m. on Friday and arrive in Lon-

don at 11.30 a.m. (local time).

The return flight AI 148 will depart from London at 9.45 a.m. (local time) and arrive in Hyderabad at 11.35 p.m.

"Europe has been the most favoured destination for Indians. The non-stop Air India flight to London will establish seamless air connectivity to Europe.

This long-awaited popular new route will help leisure travellers, students seeking admissions to educational institutions in London and extend opportunities for businesses and MICE travellers in the coming years. We are hopeful that the Air India flight will receive tremendous acceptance from the people of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and nearby states," said Pradeep Panicker, CEO, GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd.

Centre releases Rs 9,871 cr to states under PDRD grant

New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) The Centre on Thursday released Rs 9,871 crore to state governments under the sixth monthly installment of the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit (PDRD) grant. According to the Finance Ministry, with this installment, a total amount of Rs 59,226.00 crore has been released to the eligible states as PDRD grant in the current financial year. This grant is provided to the states under Article 275 of the Constitution. "The grants are being released as per the recommendations of the Fifteenth Fi-

nance Commission in monthly installments to meet the gap in revenue accounts of the states post devolution," the ministry said. "The Commission has recommended these grants to 17 states during 2021-22."

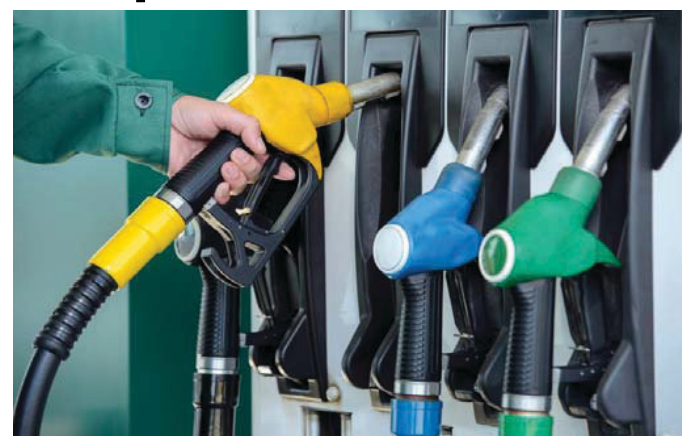
As per the ministry, the eligibility of states to receive this grant and the quantum of grant was decided by the commission based on the gap between assessment of revenue and expenditure of the state after taking into account the assessed devolution for the financial year 2021-22.

OMCs hold fuel price revision; Brent trades above \$72/bbl

New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) Oil marketing companies (OMC) kept the petrol and diesel prices unchanged for the fifth consecutive day on Friday even as the Brent crude on the Intercontinental Exchange was trading above the \$72-per-barrel-mark.

In the national capital, petrol was sold for Rs 101.19 per litre. Similarly, price of the fuel in the other key metros of Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata stood unchanged at Rs 107.26, Rs 98.96, Rs 101.62 per litre, respectively.

In tandem with petrol price,



diesel price also remained unchanged on Friday. In Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, the fuel was sold for Rs

88.62, Rs 96.19, Rs 93.26 and Rs 91.71 per litre respectively.

Global crude prices increased on Friday. The November contract of Brent crude on the Intercontinental Exchange is currently trading above the \$72-per-barrel-mark.

Across the country as well, petrol and diesel prices remained static on Friday, but their retail rates varied depending on the level of local taxes in a particular state. Under the pricing formula adopted by oil companies, rates of petrol and diesel are to be reviewed and revised by them on a daily basis. The new prices become effective from morning at 6 a.m.

The daily review and revision of prices is based on the average price of benchmark fuel in the international market in the preceding 15-days and foreign exchange rates.

However, the fluctuations in global oil prices have prevented OMCs to follow this formula in totality and revisions are now being made with longer gaps.

This has also made companies keep increasing fuel prices whenever there is a mismatch between globally arrived and pump price of fuel.

India's merchandise exports to touch \$98 bn during Q2 of FY22

Chennai, Sep 12 (UNI) Export-Import Bank of India (India Exim Bank) on Friday said it forecasts India's total merchandise exports to \$98.45 billion for the second quarter of FY22. According to India Exim Bank, India's merchandise exports during the second quarter of FY22 is expected to be \$98.45 billion and non-oil exports to be \$85.63 billion as against \$74.02 billion and \$66.73 billion respectively logged during the previous year corresponding period.

The rise in India's exports could be attributed largely to the low base effect, pick-up in growth in advanced economies and the resultant increase in global import demand, India Exim Bank said.

Increase in commodity prices



have also contributed to the increase in India's exports.

Forecast of growth in India's total merchandise exports and non-oil exports are released by India Exim Bank on a quarterly basis, during the first week of the months of June, September, December, and March for the corresponding quarters. The next growth forecast for the third quarter -- October-December 2021 -- would be released during the first week of December 2021, India Exim Bank said.

JioPhone Next in advanced trials, to be rolled out before Diwali

Mumbai, Sep 12 (UNI) Jio and Google have announced that they have made considerable progress towards launching the much-awaited JioPhone Next, the made-for-India smartphone being jointly designed by the companies. It is a first-of-its-kind device featuring an optimised operating system based on Android and Play Store.

"The device and the operating system will offer premium capabilities that have until now been associated with more powerful smartphones, including voice-first features that enable people to consume content and navigate the phone in their own language, deliver a great camera experience, and get the latest Android feature and security updates," said a statement. Both companies have begun testing JioPhone Next with a limited set of users for further refine-



ment and are actively working to make it available more widely in time for the Diwali festive season.

This additional time will also help mitigate the current industry-wide, global semiconductor shortages. JioPhone Next is built with exciting features like the Google Assistant, automatic read-aloud and language translation for any on-screen text.

Global oil futures rise over supply concerns in US

New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) Crude oil futures rose on Friday following continued supply concerns over Hurricane Ida's impact on the offshore output in the US.

Currently, the November contract of Brent crude futures on the Intercontinental Exchange is trading at \$72.50 per barrel, higher by 1.47 per cent from its previous close. Similarly, the October contract of WTI crude on the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) was trading at \$69.13 per barrel, higher by 1.45

per cent from its previous close.

As per reports, the hurricane has severely impacted the daily output and producers in the Gulf of Mexico who are still struggling to restart operations days after Ida swept through the region.

A week back, US President Joe Biden's administration had announced to release 1.5 million barrels of crude oil from the country's Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to address the fuel shortage caused by Hurricane Ida.

'Climate-tech startups raised \$1.2 bn in last 5 years'

New Delhi, Sep 12 (UNI) A ground-up study, which puts a spotlight on the investment activity in the Indian climate-tech sector over the past five years, has found that 120 climate-tech startups raised \$1.2 billion during the period.

There was a sustained growth in both volume and value of equity deals in the sector between 2016 (18 deals worth \$102 million) and 2019 (58 deals worth \$506 million), before a dip in 2020, owing to the pandemic.

"This shows that a new wave of climate-tech is blooming in India. A total of 120 climate-tech start-ups raised this funding over 200 rounds from 272 unique investors over the past five years," said a report titled 'Early-stage Climate-tech Startups in India: Investment Landscape Report 2021', prepared by the Impact Investors Council (IIC), Climate Collective and Arete Advisors.

Apart from the finance, the second finding of the report is that the sustainable mobility leads the action, followed by energy.

Climate-tech is a broad term comprising several sub-segments, of which sustainable mobility (including Electric Vehicle manufacturing, clean logistics and novel components) has seen the highest investment activity (84 deals, \$705 mil-

lion). It is followed by energy (including clean energy generation from new feedstocks, energy access, energy storage and energy optimisation products) that saw 44 deals amounting to \$301 million.

"Both these sub-segments, i.e., mobility and energy are ahead on the maturity curve, and the benefit from favourable regulatory environment and easy-to-capture impact metrics. Climate-smart agriculture, waste management and circular economy, and environment and natural resources - are the other sub-segments gradually beginning to gain traction in terms of new innovative business models as well as investments," the report said.

Third take away of the report is that a host of enablers lend climate-tech in India the potential for disruptive growth.

"Even as the number of start-ups working on novel technologies (be it green hydrogen generation, alternative proteins, or carbon capture to name a few) grows, the enabling ecosystem in India including incubators and accelerators, policy advocacy groups, and think tanks is also expanding," the report found.

It warned that the sector is presently at a nascent stage and needs mainstreaming.

ECB sets 'moderately lower pace' for bond buying

Frankfurt, Sep 12 (UNI) The European Central Bank (ECB) decided to leave its key interest rates unchanged and set a "moderately lower pace" for the Covid-19 pandemic-related bond buying.

"Based on a joint assessment of financing conditions and the inflation outlook, the Governing Council judges that favourable financing conditions can be maintained with a moderately lower pace of net asset purchases under the pandemic emergency purchase program (PEPP) than in

the previous two quarters," the ECB said in a statement on Thursday.

Earlier this year, after its March and June meetings, the ECB decided that purchases under the PEPP in the second and third quarters would be conducted at a significantly higher pace than during the first months of the year, reports Xinhua news agency.

Thursday's announcement came as eurozone inflation surged to three percent in August, the highest in ten years, according to a flash estimate

published last week. The ECB also left other policy measures largely unchanged. Eurozone key interest rates will remain at record low levels, with the base interest rate, marginal lending rate and deposit rate unchanged at 0.00 per cent, 0.25 per cent and minus 0.50 per cent, respectively.

The PEPP, first rolled out in March last year to cushion the impact from the pandemic and expanded twice thereafter, has a total envelope of 1.85 trillion euros (\$2 trillion) and is set to run until at least

the end of March 2022.

The 3 per cent rise in eurozone headline inflation in August, together with a jump in core inflation to 1.6 per cent, had largely exceeded analysts' expectations.

At a press conference on Thursday, ECB President Christine Lagarde reiterated that the surge in inflation is expected to be temporary.

"Summing up, the euro area economy is clearly rebounding. However, the speed of the recovery continues to depend on the course of the pandemic

and progress with vaccinations. The current rise in inflation is expected to be largely temporary and underlying price pressures will build up only gradually," Lagarde told reporters.

According to the ECB, the inflation upswing mainly reflects the strong increase in oil prices since around the middle of last year; the reversal of the temporary value-added tax (VAT) reduction in Germany; delayed summer sales in 2020; and cost pressures due to supply chain issues.

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It warned that the sector is presently at a nascent stage and needs mainstreaming.

The sector accounted for only 9 per cent of the invest-

ment flows to total impact investing flows (which also include financial inclusion, healthcare, agriculture, education etc.).

Most deals were 'early-stage' and of smaller ticket sizes - 68 per cent received seed stage funding, and 83 per cent of the transactions were \$5 million or lower in size.

"An overwhelming proportion of investors and entrepreneurs called out the 'lack of patient capital' as one of the biggest weak links in the present ecosystem."

Reframing child and adolescent health for the SDG era

Over the past two decades, the epidemiology of global child health has changed markedly, alongside our understanding of what works to improve the health and well-being of children and adolescents. As countries seek to recover and rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic, a series of papers published today in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) supplement calls for a substantial evolution in this thinking, to meet the changing needs of all of today's young people.

Patterns of childhood death and disease are changing dramatically

Trends show that preventable deaths are now highest in the newborn period, though pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria, compounded by malnutrition, continue to take a heavy toll on children under the age of five. This is particularly the case among the most



marginalized populations in countries of sub-Saharan Africa where the child population is expected to grow in the coming decades.

In some countries, however, mortality is increasing in older adolescents (15-19

years) due to road traffic accidents, interpersonal violence and self-harm. An increasing number of children and adolescents survive, but are affected by injuries, developmental disabilities, non-communicable diseases

and poor mental health. Overweight and obesity among children and young people are rapidly on the rise, as many countries face a double burden of malnutrition from both under and over-nutrition.

These challenges are likely to be compounded by demographic shifts. An increasing number of children will be living in urban centres in coming years, limiting opportunities for clean air and physical activity and leading

to serious strains on health-care services in these areas without other interventions.

The health and wellbeing of children and adolescents must be at the center of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) by 2030. Countries can only thrive and prosper if they invest in early childhood and adolescence, and optimize support for the key formative moments for a child's future health – by using what is called a 'lifecourse approach'. With this in mind, improving a child's health can no longer be thought of as purely a matter for the health sector, the series shows. Policies, services and information must be put in place as part of whole-of-government, and whole-of-society solutions. The papers in this series highlight the challenges and opportunities that now need to drive the global, regional and national child and adolescent health agendas. WHO and UNICEF are working together to re-envision the global child health agenda, with work underway to design and update the tools that will help countries put the new vision into practice.

Alcohol-free wine maybe just as good for your heart as real wine



London, Sep 12 (UNI) While wine has long been linked to lower risk of heart disease, a new study shows that alcohol-free versions may also give you all the health benefits of the real stuff. According to researchers at Anglia Ruskin University, it's not the alcohol, but the benefit of wine comes from antioxidants in grapes, the Daily Mail reported.

The team analysed data from nearly 450,000 people aged 40 to 69 to look at impacts of moderate alcohol consumption on their

health. The study, published in the journal Clinical Nutrition, showed a 40 per cent reduced risk of coronary heart disease among people who drank up to 11 glasses of wine a week compared to non-drinkers and binge drinkers.

The same reduced risk was found among those who regularly drank non-alcoholic versions, suggesting the goodness of grapes, the report said.

Grapes are high in antioxidants called polyphenols, which can improve

the function of the inner lining of the heart and increase levels of good cholesterol.

On the other hand, drinking a moderate amount of beer, cider, or spirits, was linked with about a 10 per cent increased risk.

There is an "undeniable protective beneficial relationship" and drinking grape-based alcohol, lead researcher Dr Rudolph Schutte, Associate Professor at the university was quoted as saying.

"This relationship is also

seen for alcohol-free wine, so it suggests the benefits are thanks to the polyphenols in the wine rather than the alcohol," he said.

However, the positive associations between wine and health benefits are offset by other risks, especially from cancer, the report said.

Those who drank low levels of beer, cider and spirits had higher levels of heart and cerebrovascular disease, cancer and mortality, the study found.

The researchers noted that their findings "do not support the notion that alcohol from any drink type is beneficial to health", the report said.

Schutte said drinking alcohol, even at low levels, can be damaging to health.

"A group of non-drinkers will contain individuals who abstain from alcohol due to various pre-existing health reasons, making this reference group surprisingly high-risk.

"Comparing a group of low to moderate drinkers to this 'risky' reference group could wrongly indicate that alcohol is beneficial to health," Schutte said.

Oxygen therapy may put a brake on Alzheimer's: Study



Oxygen therapy halted the build-up of plaque on the brain -- a key characteristic of Alzheimer's disease, in a mice model, as per a novel study. The study, by scientists at Tel Aviv University in Israel, showed that breathing pure oxygen for some time in a pressurised -- or hyperbaric -- chamber can boost the functioning of the human brain. In animals, the therapy helped fight the build-up of brain plaque, the Times of Israel reported.

"I don't think this can 'cure' Alzheimer's in humans, but it may be able to significantly slow its progression and severity," lead author Professor Uri Ashery from the varsity's Sagol School of Neuroscience, was quoted as saying.

"Further studies are needed, but people could possibly start

benefiting from this in just a few years," Ashery added.

The team published their findings in the peer-reviewed journal Aging.

In the animal trial, which involved 15 genetically-modified mice that mimicked degeneration caused by Alzheimer's, the therapy led to the prevention of amyloid plaques forming on the brain and the removal of some existing amyloid plaque deposits, the report said.

Amyloids -- non-soluble proteins -- are believed to be connected with severe degenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's.

"We had a control group of similar mice that did not receive the oxygen therapy, and they grew many more amyloid plaques," said Ashery.

"Among those who received the therapy, only a third of

the number of new plaques appeared, and existing large plaques reduced their size, on average, to a half of what they were," Ashery noted.

Blood flow to the brain decreases with Alzheimer's, but the researchers reported improved blood flow to the mice brains. The team also monitored six people over the age of 60, who have experienced signs of cognitive decline.

After 60 sessions of oxygen therapy over 90 days, their blood flow to the brain was improved by an average of 20 per cent, and results in memory tests were improved on average by 16.5 per cent, according to the report. While the human sample size was small, it may reflect the benefits of the oxygen therapy, as observed in mice, working on humans.

India's top cancer facility, TMC Mumbai, appeals for blood

The Tata Memorial Centre, the country's leader in cancer care, is facing an acute blood shortage and on Sunday issued a public appeal for donations.

"We are facing a shortage of blood at the Tata Memorial Centre. Please step up to donate blood - its perfectly safe, and you'll save lives," the TMC's plea on social media said. Providing its blood bank phone numbers

(022-24177000), it has also offered to go to housing societies to conduct blood donation drives. TMC Director Dr C.S. Pramesh said that it runs hospitals in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Varanasi, Vizag, Guwahati, Sangrur, and Muzaffarpur, while another at Chandigarh will be operational by November, and said people can also go and donate blood at any of these locations.



"We would be very happy to organize camps in housing societies where there are a reasonable number of donors. We've done that right through the pandemic, with strict adherence to physical distancing and all precautions," he assured.

During the past 18 months of the pandemic, several social organisations, political parties, corporates and even Janmashtami and

Ganeshotsav mandals have regularly conducted blood donation camps to fill the yawning demand-supply gap. The Tata Memorial Hospital was started by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust in February 1941 as a centre with enduring value and a mission for concern for the people of India. In 1952, the Indian Cancer Research Centre was established as a pioneer research.

Google One adds 5TB storage plan for \$24.99/month

Tech giant Google is adding a 5TB storage plan for \$24.99/month on the Google One app.

According to 9To5Google, the new tier is \$24.99/month, falling directly in line with the pricing of the 2TB and 10TB offerings. The new plan is also available for \$249.99/year, savings of 17 per cent compared to monthly payments.

The plan comes with all of the same benefits of the 2TB tier, with 10 per cent back on Google Store purchases, faster access to Google support, family sharing, and a VPN for Android phones.

The report mentioned that, when Google Photos ditched its unlimited, compressed storage offering earlier this year, users in need of storage only had a couple of reasonable plans to turn to. The first was the \$1.99/month 100GB



offering, followed by a 200GB plan for \$2.99/month. In a poll, by the tech website, back in June, most of the users reported they were using those two plans, the report said. For \$9.99/month, though, the 2TB plan offers significantly more storage and other perks, but for those with even higher storage requirements, the next step up of \$49.99/month for 10TB could easily be out of reach for some, it added.

Tesla pushes its full self-driving Beta v10: Report

Electric vehicle maker Tesla has started pushing its 'Full Self-Driving Beta v10' software, a version that CEO Elon Musk called "mind-blowing", to its early access fleet. The software enables Tesla vehicles to virtually drive themselves both on highways and city streets, but it is still considered a level 2 driver assist since it requires driver supervision at all times, reports Electrek.

The driver remains responsible for the vehicle, needs to keep its hands on the steering wheel, and be ready to take control, the report said. Musk has been promising a wider release of the Full Self-Driving (FSD) Beta software to customers who purchased the FSD package, but the release has been delayed for a while. More recently, the CEO has linked the wider release to Tesla pushing a new FSD Beta version 10 update, which has been expected after two more "point releases" in the coming weeks. That release was also pushed ahead but two weeks ago,



Musk said it would be coming on September 10 and is now being pushed for customers in the early access fleet. Several Tesla owners in the early access programme have reported receiving the new software

update, as per the report. The driving visualisations have been updated. They look very clean above, but they change with the situation. The Tesla CEO said the wider release (download button) should come by

the end of September and therefore, they only have a few weeks to test it in the early access fleet. Musk had been testing the new software internally for the last few weeks.

TCL won't release foldable phone in 2021: Report

Consumer electronics brand TCL is reportedly pausing its plans to release a lower-cost foldable phone this year. In an email to The Verge, the company confirmed that its clamshell-style foldable phone, codenamed Project Chicago, was in

mid-development when the company decided to put it on indefinite hold.

According to TCL, the delay is due in part to rising production costs and supply chain shortages, the report said. "Although the foldable market is growing each year, it is

still a premium product category," Stefan Streit, chief marketing officer of TCL was quoted as saying. "In combination with recent component shortages, the Covid-19 pandemic and rising costs in foldable production, TCL has made the difficult decision

to suspend the launch of its first commercially available foldable smartphone until the company can produce and bring it to market at a price point that's accessible to as many consumers as possible," Streit added.

Streit added that the

company is "closely monitoring the market to determine the best time to launch a foldable smartphone".

TCL showed off a few foldable prototypes last year, and again earlier this year at CES 2021, as well as a "rollable" screen design.

realme 8s 5G stands strong with powerful chipset, battery

Following the successful launch of the realme GT 5G series, the global smartphone brand realme is aiming to cater to more users with the launch of two new phones amid the upcoming festive season in the country. The realme 8s 5G and realme 8i are the recent smartphones launched by the company.

The realme 8s 5G comes in two storage variants 6GB+128GB and 8GB+128GB priced at Rs 17,999 and Rs 19,999, respectively. While realme 8i is priced at Rs 13,999 for the 4GB+64GB and Rs 15,999 for the 6GB+128GB variant.

realme 8s 5G is powered by the world's first MediaTek Dimensity 810 5G processor and features a lot of other interesting features. A

We used its 8GB+128GB storage variant for a while and here's how it fared. The smartphone with the universe blue colour variant that we used has looked classy. It is light weighted and has a camera bump on the back and a punch-hole selfie sensor on the front with slim bezels.

We found that the smartphone can easily be used single-handedly.

In terms of display, the smartphone has a 6.5-inch display that has a resolution of 2400*1080 pixels and an aspect ratio of 20:9. It has a refresh rate of 90Hz and a maximum 180Hz sampling rate.

With a 600 nits brightness peak, even in the bright light, we found that the content on the screen is clearly visible as we did not face any issues and the colour reproduction remained intact even when we viewed the screen from different angles.

As far as cameras are concerned, the smartphone comes packed with a triple rear camera setup that houses a 64MP primary sensor and two 2MP sensors for black and white and macro photography.

There's a 16MP selfie sensor for selfies



and video calling that supports AI beauty mode, portrait mode, etc. We found that the images clicked from the rear and selfie sensors were crisp and clear under direct sunlight or bright light. However, pictures clicked under low light conditions were a little pixelated. But, the camera app has a variety of night filters that might surely help you click some amazing pictures. The smartphone is powered by the world's first MediaTek Dimensity 810 5G processor. It offers a comprehensive suite of connectivity features to ensure faster, more reliable connections on both 5G SIM slots. realme 8s 5G supports 5G+5G dual SIM dual standby and SA/NSA dual networking mode, covering the global mainstream network bands.

In terms of gaming, we noticed that the device is ideal for gaming as it could handle most mid-to-heavy games compared to other phones in this segment and it did not lag while multitasking. A realme 8s 5G runs on Android 11 with realme UI 2.0 on top.

Perseverance's rock sample to give insight into Mars' history

NASA's Perseverance Mars rover has now collected two rock samples, giving scientists insight into Mars' history. The first sample named "Montdenier" was collected on September 6, and a second, "Montagnac", from the same rock on September 8, the US space agency said in a statement.

Analysis of the rocks from which the Montdenier and Montagnac samples were taken show signs that they were in contact with water for a long period of time, boosting the case for ancient life on the Red Planet.

It looks like our first rocks reveal a potentially habitable sustained environment. It's a big deal that the water was there for a long time," said Ken Farley of Caltech, project scientist for the mission, which is led by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Southern California.

The rock that provided the mission's first core samples is basaltic in composition and may be the product of lava flows. The team also found salts within these rocks.

These salts may have formed when groundwater flowed through and



altered the original minerals in the rock, or more likely when liquid water evaporated, leaving the salts.

The salt minerals in these first two rock cores may also have trapped tiny bubbles of ancient Martian water. If present, they could serve as microscopic time capsules, offering clues

about the ancient climate and habitability of Mars.

According to the team, the level of alteration seen in the rock that provided the core samples -- as well as in the rock the team targeted on their first sample-acquisition attempt -- suggests that groundwater was pres-

ent for a long time. This groundwater could have been related to the lake that was once in Jezero, or it could have traveled through the rocks long after the lake had dried up. Though scientists still can't say whether any of the water that altered these rocks was present for tens of thousands.

Morning after, Apple, epic challenger split points over size of breach in payment wall

Both Apple and legal challenger, Epic Games, seem headed for appeal against a 185-page ruling delivered in a California court on Friday.

"It's a split decision," Stanford don Mark Lemley, who studies antitrust issues and technology, put it succinctly to NPR. "It will improve competition on the edges, but it's not the fundamental change that Epic and advocates of

the antitrust case would have hoped for." NPR discloses a funding relationship with Apple.

On Friday, US district judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers created ripples worldwide, agreeing that Apple is forcing folks to pay for apps and in-app items through its App Store, where it usually takes a 30 per cent slice of the payment as commission. Rogers, who famously grilled

Apple chief Tim Cook for four hours earlier this year, told the company to ease up and let in other payment options within 90 days.

But that, as Stanford's Lemley argued, seems a lot less than what Epic sought. First, an appeals process ensures that no changes will come anytime soon.

Next, Rogers has upheld that the App Store's overall structure is legal

and Apple does not have an illegal monopoly over how developers can process payments for mobile games.

Epic, meanwhile, has been violating Apple's rules and allowing customers to buy credits for its popular game, Fortnite, through its own system on a 30 per cent discount (because there is no Apple levy involved). This, in effect, challenges Apple to kick

it out. Here the judge has ruled that Epic is in breach of contract on \$12 million of revenue. So, as the judge said, Epic owes Apple 30 per cent of that amount, per the terms of its contract.

Epic has a "Project Liberty" PR blitz, including a #FreeFortnite hashtag and a video mocking a famous Apple ad from 1984. Unless revised by the appeals court, Friday's ruling

means the bill for this PR and hashtag will be \$3.6 million. The "split decision" includes Apple's justification of the commission. Here, the judge has said that "the 30 per cent is not tied to anything in particular and can be changed," without specifically ordering Apple to do so.

To Epic's embarrassment, she has noted that while the litigant chose to target Apple

(and Google) over the fee, Nintendo's Switch, Microsoft's Xbox and Sony's PlayStation, all charging a similar cut on game sales, have been left alone.

"Antitrust law doesn't let you complain that the prices are too high," Prof Lemley explained. "You have to show that some sort of conduct is preventing competition." That said, Epic's breach in the famed walled garden

is there to see. It could trigger the most consequential changes yet to the multibillion-dollar mobile economy. The judge hasn't gone as far as Epic Games had hoped, yet she has dug a foundational faultline in the all-powerful fortress over how apps are distributed on iPhones and iPads. No surprises, however, Epic is unhappy that Apple hasn't been declared.



Talasanu urges HC permission for Ganesh idols immersion in Hussain Sagar, govt to file review petition

Hyderabad, Sept.12 (NSS): Animal Husbandry Minister, Talasanu Srimivas Yadav today stated that the government will file a review petition in the high court on its orders against immersion of PoP idols in Hussain Sagar.

The Minister appealed to the High Court to give permission for Ganesh idols immersion now as usual without any conditions.

Along with MLA Danam Nagender, Srimivas Yadav has visited big Ganesh at Khairatabad in the city here. They performed special pujas at the big Ganesh as part of festival.

Speaking on the occasion, Srimivas Yadav has stated that the high court has to give permission for Ganesh idols immersion in Hussain Sagar. Since there is no chance to make



facilities for temporary ponds in the city given situation the court has to give a relief to pandals and people. By the time of high court orders came the idols have already been reached the pandals a day in advance, he said. On behalf of the government, the Minister stated that the officials concerned will be pressed into service to see that the waste

materials removed in two days from the Hussain Sagar after immersion.

As per the court orders to protect environment from pollution the government will take responsibility for removal of related debris and waste from the lake in 48 hours, he assured. And now the court has to consider giving permission for Ganesh idols immersion barring

any conditions in Hussain Sagar, he reiterated.

There is no alternative for the purpose and the people are seeking a reprieve, the Minister said.

If the court gives instructions well in advance the pandal organisers and the government will take steps for alternative arrangements. We will make efforts from next year to follow the same, he said.

The city is known for Ganesh festival and a large number of throng to visit Khairatabad big Ganesh for the festival. The Minister further said that the high court justice aware of conditions prevailing in Hyderabad. The High Court has to ensure the idols immersion is allowed to relieve people of the tense moments whether it will allow as there is no alternative.

BJP looks to again rake up 'Telangana Liberation Day' issue

Hyderabad, Sep 12 (UNI) The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is once again looking to rake up the issue of 'Telangana Liberation Day, this time to apparently draw political mileage in the ensuing bypoll to the Huzurabad Assembly constituency. Union Home Minister Amit Shah set to address a public meeting on September 17 in Nirmal district, the saffron party will be making another attempt to cash in on the sensitive issue.

For several years, the BJP has been pushing the state government to officially celebrate Telangana Liberation Day. On September 17, 1948, the then Hyderabad state was merged with the Indian Union following India's military action 'Operation Polo', popularly known



as 'police action'. The public meeting to be addressed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah will be held at Veyi Udala Marri. It is said that Nizam's 'Razakars' (volunteers) had allegedly killed 1,000 people fighting against Nizam's government near a banyan tree at Udala Marri. The place later came to be known as Veyi Udala Marri. Political analysts say that the BJP, which has been projecting itself as an alternative to

the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), is looking to strengthen itself by raking up emotive issues. This will not be the first time that a Central minister will be addressing a public meeting to mark the day. In 2017, then Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh had addressed a public meeting organised by the BJP in Nizamabad.

Addressing that public meeting, Singh had said that the 13-month period from August 15, 1947 to

September 17, 1948 was a dark chapter in India's history as the ruler of Hyderabad state committed repression on people, who wanted to merge with India. He paid tributes to India's first Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel for launching 'police action' to force the Nizam to merge Hyderabad state with the Indian Union. In 2019, then BJP state chief K. Laxman had announced that Amit Shah would address a massive public.

Sai Tej was riding bike beyond permissible limits: Police

Hyderabad, Sep 12 (UNI) Tollywood actor Sai Dharam Tej was driving the bike at around 75 km per hour, much beyond the permissible speed of 30-40 kmph on the road at the time of accident, said police. Sai Tej was injured when he fell off the bike on the road (Durgam cheruvu bridge to IKEA road) near Novartis company in Madhapur area at around 8 p.m. on Friday night.



The actor, nephew of megastar Chiranjeevi, sustained multiple injuries and was admitted to a hospital, where his condition is stated to be stable.

While wishing for the speedy recovery and well-being of Sai Tej, Cyberabad police said the unfortunate incident would not have happened had he exercised caution and drove the vehicle within the permissible speed limits and had strapped his helmet properly.

"Based on the analysis of the evidence at the scene of incident and along the route, it is found out that the bike was driven at speed beyond the permissible speed on the road which is 30 kmph to 40 kmph. On the calculation of the average speed based on the CCTV footage, it has been found out that the bike was driven at an average speed of around 75 kmph near the accident spot," a police official said.

As he was driving the vehicle in rash and negligent manner, a case under sections 336 and 279 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and section 184 of Motor Vehicles Act was registered against him at the Raidurgam police station of Cyberabad police commissionerate.

The police also found that Sai Tej was driving the bike at an average speed of be-

yond 100 kmph on the Durgam Cheruvu Bridge (Cable Bridge). After scanning CCTV footage, the police said the biker was overtaking other vehicles recklessly. Sai Tej is said to have purchased the pre-owned bike Triumph (Registration No. TS07GJ1258) from one Bura Anil Kumar, resident of LB Nagar but had not got it registered on his name till now.

Previously, an e-challan for a penalty of Rs 1,135 was booked on this motorcycle on August 2, 2020 at Madhapur for overspeeding at 87 kmph on a road with a permissible maximum speed limit of 40 kmph. Interestingly, the challan was paid by some unknown person on Saturday. This is being verified as part of the investigation, said M. Venkateshwarlu, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Madhapur, Cyberabad. The condition of the vehicle, the experience of the person to drive such vehicle on roads and the condition.

Katanguru Ramgopal Reddy honoured with VIBGYOR award

DR SRINIVAS VOORADI SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT Hyderabad, Sept 12: Lion Katanguru Ramgopal Reddy has been honoured with the State-level award 'VIBGYOR' for the sixth consecutive year from 2016 in a programme held in Hotel Marriott in Hyderabad on Sunday. The Award was presented to Lion Ramgopal Reddy by former International Director Sunil Kumar and former Multiple Lion Prabhakaran Mohan for being the best District Communicator. After receiving the award, Ramgopal Reddy thanked former District Governor Multiple Vice Chairman Tamma Lakshmi Narasimha Rao for rendering advice besides the members of the various Lions Clubs in the



erstwhile Warangal District and the members of the Tricity Club. District Governor Mucha Raji Reddy, Vice District Governors Kanna Parashuramulu, N.Venkateshwar Rao, Past Multiple Secretary Potlappalli Srinivasa Rao, Past District Governors Pokala Chander, K.Govinda Raj,

Cabinet members T.Venkat Reddy, T.Vishweshwar Rao, Ch.Prasad, Dr Ajith Kumar, K.Rajamouli, A.Mahesh Kumar, Chandrashekhara Arya, K.Venkat Reddy, N.Sudhakar Reddy, and Thirunagari Narendar congratulated Lion Ramgopal Reddy on the occasion.

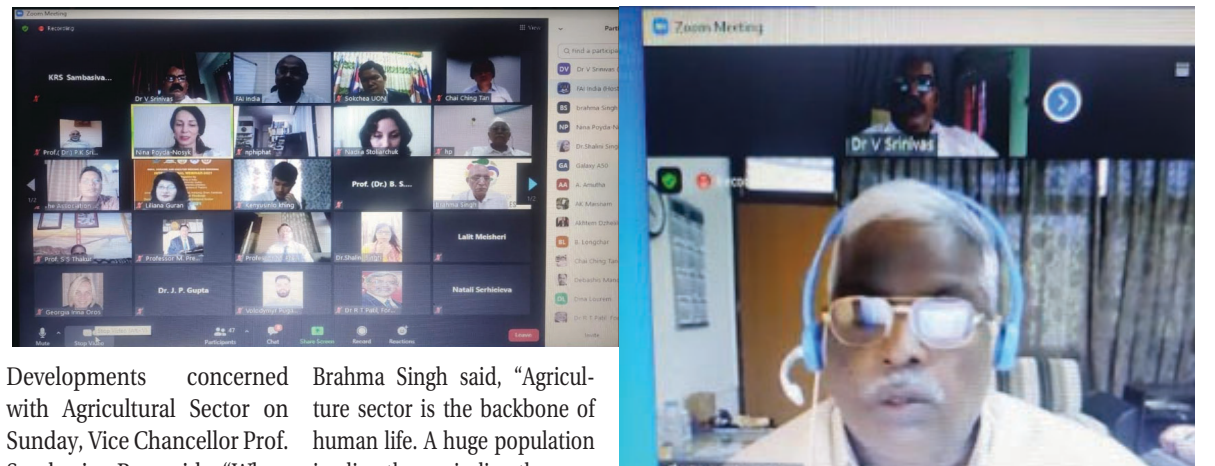
Heavy to very heavy rain likely in North Coastal AP & Yanam in next 24 hrs : Met

Amaravati, Sep 12 (UNI) Heavy to very heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam during the next 24 hours, Meteorological Centre said on Sunday. In a bulletin here, it said that heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam during the same period. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam during the next 48 hours. Squally winds with speed reaching 45 to 55 Kmph gusting to 65 Kmph is likely to occur in North West Bay of Bengal and adjoining Central Bay of Bengal off North Andhra Pradesh Coast during the next three days. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at few places or at isolated places during the next five days, the bulletin said. Southwest monsoon has been weak in Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam and Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours.

International Webinar on 'challenges and threats and post-pandemic development in agriculture sector' held

DR SRINIVAS VOORADI SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT Hyderabad, Sept 12: "Corona pandemic wreaked havoc not only affecting normal life but also the food supply chain. Mizoram though a small State with many natural biodiversity spots too has got affected by Corona pandemic as the State depends mostly for commodities on neighbouring other States causing a lot of hardships for the common man," said Vice Chancellor of Mizoram Central University Prof. K.R.S.Sambasiva Rao.

Delivering inaugural address in India, Ukraine and Greater Mekong Sub-Regional International Webinar-2021 jointly organized by FATER Academy of India, Mizoram Central University, Institute of Agrarian Economics of Ukraine, The Association of Researchers of Thailand and the University of Management and Economics of Cambodia on "Challenges and Threats Post-Pandemic



Developments concerned with Agricultural Sector on Sunday, Vice Chancellor Prof. Sambasiva Rao said, "When supply of food chain has been held up, many people have been deprived of nutritious food." Stating that India has managed to restore the supply of food chain, Prof.Rao said that agricultural labourers lost their jobs because of migration from their workplace and added that the Indian government had been making efforts to provide agricultural rural employment.

Participating as the chief guest, former Director of Horticulture of DRDA Padmasri Dr

Brahma Singh said, "Agriculture sector is the backbone of human life. A huge population is directly or indirectly connected or involved with agriculture in production, processing, storage, transportation, marketing, distribution and catering. Stating that agriculture is labour-intensive, Dr Brahma Singh said that agriculture was the most affected sector in India. Prof. Brahma Singh said that the corona pandemic had adversely affected production and marketing through labour and logistical constraints. He further said that education was another sector that had been very much affected and

shifted to virtual teaching and questioned about the research that had been left out. He suggested to the government to engage the services of women in the countryside in value-addition activities such as processing through SHGs. In order to protect the livelihood of the people associated with agriculture, the government should increase spending on social safety nets and provide low interest loans, he added. Earlier, General Secretary of FATER Academy of India Prof.

Pankaj Srivastava presented the annual report of 2020-2021 and the founder President of FAI Prof.P.K.Srivastava explained the objectives of the webinar. Prof.B.S.Bisht delivered the presidential address while Prof.M.Premjit Singh, H.E.Moun Vessana, Prof.Phipat Nonthanathorn, Prof.Chai Ching Tan, Uon Sokchea, Zinaida Zhyvko, Prof.Nina Poyda Nosyk and Liliana Guran spoke on the occasion. Inaugural session was followed by lectures and paper presentations.



VICE PRESIDENT, SHRI M. VENKAIHAH NAIDU VISITING THE MAHAKAVI BHARATHIYAR MEMORIAL CENTRE, IN PUDUCHERRY