

IN BRIEF

Dengue prevention mission gains momentum in city

New Delhi: With the '10 Hafte 10 Baje 10 Minute' campaign of the Delhi government gaining momentum amongst various sections of the society, the fifth week of the campaign seeks to engage schoolchildren in creating awareness regarding measures to prevent dengue. Last week, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had asked all the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) to come forward and make the residents in their localities aware of the measures to be taken to prevent the most prevalent viral infection transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes. In the fifth week of the dengue campaign, the school children will be encouraged to do their homework by inspecting their houses at 10 a.m. for 10 minutes for signs of stagnant clean water, said a Delhi government statement on Saturday. After inspecting their houses and draining the accumulated water, the children will also be encouraged to call their friends and motivate them to inspect their houses for clean stagnant water and participate in the campaign as per the government's plan. Taking to social media last week, Kejriwal had tweeted, "Taking forward the campaign against dengue today on the fourth Sunday by replacing the water collected at home. In this way, we have to stop the breeding of dengue mosquitoes and protect our family and the entire Delhi from Dengue." The Delhi government has launched a telephonic helpline - 01123300012 and WhatsApp helpline - 8595920530.

'Extend emergency parole of convicts'

New Delhi: The Delhi Prisons department has requested the city government to extend the emergency parole granted to convicts by one month in view of the existing COVID-19 situation, officials said on Saturday. In a letter to the home department, it said the emergency parole can be given considering the current pandemic situation. According to the officials, there are currently 4,250 such inmates, comprising 3,100 undertrials on interim bail and 1,150 convicts on emergency parole, who are out of jails as part of the prisons department's recent decongestion drive. "We have written to the government to extend emergency parole of convicts by one month," a senior jail official said. The Delhi Prisons are overcrowded. Before the process of decongesting jails began in March, the population in jails was 180 per cent of the capacity — the three jails were housing 18,000 inmates against the capacity of 10,000. After the decongestion drive, the number of inmates has reduced to over 13,000. The official said Delhi's home department can take a decision on extension of parole given by it. Due to overcrowding of the city jails, it is very difficult to maintain social distancing inside the prisons.

Air quality may dip to 'poor' today

New Delhi: The national capital's air quality was recorded in the 'moderate' category on Saturday morning, and is likely to turn 'poor' on Sunday due to lowering temperatures and slow wind speed, a government forecasting agency said. Delhi recorded an air quality index (AQI) of 182 at 10:30 am, which falls in the moderate category. The 24-hour average AQI was 180 on Friday. An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'. "The air quality is likely to deteriorate to the lower end of poor quality on Sunday," the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) said. It said an increase in farm fires was observed on Friday around Punjab, Haryana and neighbouring border regions and it is likely to impact Delhi in the coming days. Also, there is a marked dip in minimum temperatures recorded in Delhi. On Friday, it settled at 20.6 degrees Celsius, which was two notches below normal and is likely to drop to 19 degrees Celsius by Wednesday. Low temperatures and stagnant winds help in accumulation of pollutants near the ground, affecting air quality. — PTI

City records 2,258 cases, 34 deaths in last 24 hours Covid-19 situation better, cases showing downward trend: JainAGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 3

Delhi health minister Satyendra Jain on Saturday said that the Covid-19 positivity rate in the national capital has decreased to 5.19 per cent. The national capital, meanwhile, reported 2,258 new cases and 34 deaths in the last 24 hours. Of total, 2,87,930 Covid-19 patients, 25,234 are active and 2,87,930 patients have recovered from infection. Total death toll stands at 5,472. This is the second day in a row that the city reported less than 3,000 new cases. Authorities reported 2,920 new cases on Friday. The city reported 34 deaths on Saturday, the lowest since September 25. Forty-eight deaths were reported on September 29, the highest in a day since July 16, when the city reported 58 deaths. The fresh cases came out of the 39,306 tests conducted the previous day, according to a bulletin issued by the Delhi health department. Mr Jain said "Out of

MRI scan at ₹50: 'Cheapest' diagnostic facility to start functioning from Dec

New Delhi, Oct. 3: The country's "cheapest" diagnostic facility will start functioning at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib in December and an MRI here will cost just ₹50, according to the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC).

A dialysis centre is also being set up at Guru Harkrishan Hospital on the gurdwara premises. It will start functioning next week. A dialysis procedure will cost only Rs 600, DSGMC president Manjinder Singh Sirsa said. Diagnostic machines worth Rs 6 crore were donated to the hospital. These include four machines for dialysis, and a machine each for

ultrasound, X-Ray and MRI, he said.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) services will be available for the needy for just ₹50. For others, an MRI scan will cost ₹800. A committee of doctors has been set up to decide who needs concession, Sirsa said.

In private laboratories, an MRI costs at least ₹2,500. People from lower income groups will be able to get an X-Ray and ultrasound done for just ₹150.

The machines are being installed and the diagnostic centre will be operational in the first week of December. These will be the most affordable diagnostic services in the country, Sirsa said.

— PTI

56,258 samples tested yesterday, 2,920 samples tested positive for Covid-19. The positivity rate has come down to 5.19 per

cent. There were 37 deaths yesterday, the death rate is 1.9 per cent."

"We had also said that in two-three weeks, the cases

will be reduced. These have started to decrease. The infection rate, which had reached 8-10 per cent, is now below 5 and half percent," he added.

The Delhi government has significantly ramped up testing in the past few days. The number of tests conducted and corresponding fresh cases reported ranged from 24,198 (2,312) on September 1 to 59,807 (3,390) on September 30. The number of Rapid Antigen Tests conducted on Friday stood at 45,153 while the RT-PCR, CBNAAT and True NAAT tests figures totalled 11,105. The number of tests done per million, as on Friday, was 1,67, 981 while the total number of tests stood at 31,91,646.

"But now cases have begun to come down and it's sort of stabilised. Also, the positivity rate has fallen to less than 5.5 per cent from 8.5-9 per cent recorded earlier. So the situation is far better now," he said.

The number of containment zones in Delhi jumped to 2,648 on Friday from 2,615 on Thursday.

Cops: 4 Kashmiri youth planning terror strikes in Delhi held

New Delhi, Oct. 3: The Special Cell of Delhi Police on Saturday said it has arrested a group of four radicalised Kashmiri youth who were allegedly planning terror strikes in the national capital.

In a statement, the police said the accused were nabbed from central Delhi's ITO area and were carrying four sophisticated pistols and over 120 rounds of ammunition.

The accused have been identified as Altaf Ahmad Dar (25), a resident of Pulwama, and Mushtaq Ahmad Gani (27), Ishfaq Majeed Koka (28) and Aqib Safi (22), all residents of Shopian, the statement said.

"Ishfaq is the elder brother of slain terrorist Burhan Koka, ex-chief of Ansar Ghajwat Ul Hind, an off-shoot of Al Qaeda in Jammu and Kashmir," police said. They said Burhan Koka was killed in an encounter in Shopian's Melhora area on April 29 this year along with two other associates.

After his death, his elder brother Ishfaq Majeed Koka was approached by the cadres of Ansar Ghajwat Ul Hind to work

for the terrorist outfit, police stated. "On Friday, police received information that a group of radicalised Kashmiri youth had collected a huge cache of arms and ammunition and will come to ITO and Daryaganj."

"Thereafter, a trap was laid near ITO and the accused were apprehended," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said. Preliminary interrogation revealed that Ishfaq was allegedly indoctrinated by present chief of Ansar Ghajwat Ul Hind to work for the cause of Jihad.

Ishfaq further indoctrinated Altaf Ahmad Dar, his cousin Aaqib and Gani, police claimed. As per instructions of their handler, they came to Delhi on September 27 and were camping at Paharganj, the DCP said.

During their stay in Delhi, they collected arms and ammunition, he said.

They had plans for a sensational terrorist activity and thereafter, they would be formally inducted in Ansar Ghajwat Ul Hind, Kushwah said. — PTI

Case registered against protesters at Jantar Mantar

New Delhi, Oct. 3: The Delhi Police on Friday registered a case against the persons who staged a protest demanding harsh punishment for the accused in the alleged Hathras gangrape case and some were demanding fair investigation in the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, violating NGT order, Supreme Court order, Section 144 of CrPC and other laws in view of Covid-19.

"Members of many political parties and different NGOs in different groups reached Jantar Mantar to stage a protest demanding harsh punishment for accused persons in Hathras Gangrape Case and some were demanding fair investigation in Sushant Singh Rajput death case," the police said in a statement.

As the protestors have violated order under section 144 CrPC in force and other laws regarding Covid-19, a case under section 188 of IPC, 3 Epidemic Act and 51(b) Disaster Management Act has been registered at Parliament Street police station against the protestors, police said. — PTI

HC pulls up UPSC, says its stand on vacancies for disabled absurd

New Delhi, Oct. 3: The Delhi High Court has termed as "absurd" the UPSC's argument that while the number of vacancies in the All India Civil Services may vary before the final selection of candidates, the number of seats for the disabled would remain fixed.

"You cannot say the number of reservations is fixed, but the number of vacancies might vary. What is this absurd argument? Either both are frozen or neither are frozen," a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan said to the counsel for Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

The bench was hearing a PIL challenging this

year's notice announcing the details of the civil services preliminary examination, which is to be held on October 4.

The plea claims that the notice neglects the minimum reservation to be provided to disabled persons.

The plea by NGO Sambhavana has alleged that in the exam notice only expected approximate vacancies are mentioned and not the four per cent mandatory reservation mandated under the law.

The observation by the court came after the UPSC said while the advertised vacancies in the All India Civil Services were 796, the number may go up by the

time the candidates are selected.

However, it also said that the seats for disabled persons would remain the same as was announced in the public notice.

It further said that it was not the persons who were unsuitable, "it is the environment which is".

"You (UPSC) should step into the shoes of the candidates who are preparing for two-three years for the civil services exam and give up other avenues of employment to focus on the All India Civil Services. Who asked you to keep the vacancies fluctuating? Keep it fixed," the bench said.

It listed the matter for

further hearing on November 16 by when the UPSC will clarify whether the number of seats for disabled would also increase if there is an increase in vacancies. The petition, filed through advocates Krishan Mahajan and Ajay Chopra, has contended that the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act of 2016 mandates that every government establishment shall reserve 4 per cent of its total vacancies for those with benchmark disabilities.

However, the UPSC exam notice only mentions "expected approximate vacancies" -- a category that does not exist under the law.

— PTI

Auto Taxi Cong Union protests 'arbitrary' challan of vehiclesAGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 3

Delhi Congress workers, along with members of party-affiliated Auto Taxi Congress Union, on Saturday staged a protest here against the Delhi government over "arbitrary" challan of vehicles.

Some of the protesters including Delhi Congress vice president Jaikishan and Veer Singh Dhinang were detained by police near Chandgi Ram Akhara, party leader Parvez Alam said. "The government agencies including traffic police are arbitrarily issuing vehicle challans in the garb of the Amended Motor Vehicle Act. The

THE DEMONSTRATORS demanded the withdrawal of the Motor Vehicles Amendment Bill 2019 as according to this Bill, the challan amounts have been doubled. Some of the protesters were detained by police.

protesters demanded

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to provide relief to auto and taxi drivers from these challans," Alam said. The detained protesters were taken by police to the Maurice Nagar police station.

The demonstrators demanded the withdrawal of the Motor Vehicles Amendment Bill 2019 as according to this Bill, the

challan amounts have been doubled. As the demonstrators assembled at the Trauma Centre for the gherao, the Delhi Police, as usual, acted in a high-handed manner to detain the Congress and Auto-Taxi Union members, and the auto rickshaw drivers who were standing as mere bystanders, were also rounded up.

Congress leaders said that due to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, auto-taxi drivers were in severe financial conditions, and even stationary vehicles are being issued challans by the traffic police after taking their photos, as these heavy challans are adding to their financial distress.

NCB arrests 4 Afghans with 380 gm heroin

New Delhi, Oct. 3: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday claimed to have busted an international module of drugs trafficking with the arrest of four Afghanistan nationals and seizure of about 380 gm of heroin. The contraband was seized from a parcel that arrived at a courier company in Delhi from Afghanistan on September 30 and contained a metal piston. "Further investigation resulted in the arrest of four Afghan nationals who were staying as refugees in Delhi," NCB zonal director K.P.S. Malhotra was quoted as saying. — PTI

Mander: Raids on children's homes an act of vendettaAGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 3

Human rights activist Harsh Mander said that two children's homes, with whom he had been associated in the past, were raided in Delhi. He said on that the raids were the government's attempt to defame him and target those who had peacefully protested against the Citizenship Amendment Act.

The Delhi Police have accused Mander of delivering a hate speech during protests against the law. He was named in the Delhi police's affidavit to the High Court along with several others on July 13.

Mander said that the raid was carried out by the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights at two homes named Ummeed Aman Ghar and Khushi Rainbow Home. The activist said that one of the reasons the homes were raided was to deter-

mine if the children had participated in anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests.

"NCPCR team in its 'raids' on the two homes had four central focuses. The most important was whether the children participated in the anti-CAA protests. The second focus was about my association with the homes. The children spoke about the occasional visits to meet them. The third focus was on foreign funding. As it happens, Ummeed is entirely funded from Indian donors. Khushi also is largely supported by Indian donors, but has some foreign donors as well. The fourth question was whether we had given shelter to any Rohingya children. My colleagues said that for us, we don't focus on the identity of any child; the only thing important for us is that she or he is homeless and in need of care and protection," said Harsh Mander.



Muslim clerics protest against Pakistan government for its alleged support to Yazeed, the murderer of prophet Mohammad's family, near Pakistan Embassy in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

Chahal surprises detractors, retains post as city BJP general secretarySHASHI BHUSHAN
NEW DELHI, OCT. 3

In the recent restructuring of Delhi BJP state organisation, Kuljeet Chahal has emerged as one of the most powerful leaders of the party, successfully retaining the important post of general secretary.

Mr Chahal is the only general secretary of the three who has been retained on the post. Rajesh Bhatia and Ravinder Gupta, who were general secretaries, have been replaced by Dinesh Singh and Harsh Malhotra.

Mr Chahal's detractors in Delhi BJP were sure that he would be the first to go in the restructuring process claiming that top state leaders, including state president Adesh



Kuljeet Chahal

Gupta, were not in favour of keeping him in the new team.

Mr Chahal, however, not only managed to be in the new team of Delhi BJP president Mr Gupta, but also successfully retained the coveted general secretary post.

A senior party leader told this newspaper that when everyone, including Mr Gupta's camp, was almost sure that he (Mr Chahal) and state vice president Rajiv Babbar will not make it into the new team, both not only

made an entry but also retained their positions.

"It shows the emergence of Mr Chahal and Mr Babbar in Delhi BJP and establishes a two-time general secretary as one of the most powerful leaders in the city unit or at par with Mr Gupta," he said.

For the last six years, Mr Chahal has been the permanent face of Delhi BJP state team despite being surrounded by countless enemies. He was vice president of the city unit during Satish Upadhyay's term and was appointed general secretary in Manoj Tiwari's team. Now, he has been reappointed as general secretary for another term in Mr Gupta's team.

"All the key organisational works for the last three-and-half years, which include a member-

ship drive last year or a recent campaign to reach out to farmers in the national capital to dispel misconceptions about the new farm laws, are overlooked by Mr Chahal," he said.

His followers in the party say that Mr Chahal is a master manager and his interpersonal skills, specially with top leaders in Central leadership, are unmatched by any other Delhi BJP leader.

"Mr Chahal is a fighter and never runs away in adverse situations. Despite Mr Gupta's camp repeatedly saying he will not be part of the new team, Mr Chahal never lost confidence and got himself reappointed to the same position claiming his work in previous terms," said one of Mr Chahal's followers.

SHORT TAKES

Class 8th student in Odisha kills self

Bhubaneswar: A Class 8th student on Saturday ended his life by hanging himself in Joda town of Odisha's Keonjhar district after his parents admonished him for spending long hours on online games paying huge sums of money. According to sources, the parents of the student had given him a mobile phone for online study purposes during the Covid lockdown period. However he spent most of his time playing an online game called 'Free Fire'. Few days ago, he lost a total of ₹96,000 including ₹61,000 from his father's account and ₹35,000 from his mother's account while playing the game. When father Binod Apat made inquiry in the bank, the bank authorities told him that the amount was deducted from his account due to online games played on his mobile phone.

India exports 50L HCQ tablets to Ecuador

New Delhi: India has recently supplied five lakh dosages of Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) to Ecuador, drawing praise from the South American nation. HCQ, essentially seen as an anti-malarial drug, was in huge global demand especially in the initial months of the Covid Pandemic as it was being administered to Coronavirus patients. Ecuadorian diplomats pointed out that "even though, the use and the effectiveness of HCQ for the treatment of patients diagnosed with Covid is still a matter of debate, nevertheless, this drug is widely used as an effective treatment for certain autoimmune pathologies", adding that "the donated medicine will be distributed to patients suffering from lupus and other autoimmune diseases". The drug was supplied by New Delhi a few weeks ago.

Odisha issues SOP on use of Favipiravir

Bhubaneswar: Odisha issues SOP on use of Favipiravir tablets, symptomatic patients in home isolation to avail the pills. The Odisha government on Saturday issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the use of Favipiravir tablet for the treatment of Covid patients in the state. In a letter, additional chief secretary Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra directed district collectors, CDMOs, superintendents of Medical College and Hospitals and municipal commissioners to ensure that Favipiravir tablet is administered in consultation with trained doctors after assessing the health condition of the concerned patient along with his/her written consent. As a lot of patients are now being allowed to remain in home isolation, there is a need to ensure Favipiravir tablet availability to eligible symptomatic patients.

C'garh: Naxals kill villager with axe

Raipur: A villager was axed to death by Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district, police said on Saturday. The incident took place in Gumalwada village under Nagarnar police station area on Friday night, an official said. "As per preliminary information, a dozen unidentified men dragged Budra Nag out of his house and killed him with an axe. Prima facie it seems the incident was executed by Naxals active along the Chhattisgarh-Odisha border. A police team rushed to the site in the morning and efforts were on to nab the culprits," inspector general of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P. said. — PTI

Lion cub found dead in Gir forest

Junagadh: A female lion cub was found dead in Dedakdi range of Gir forest in Gujarat's Junagadh district on Saturday, a forest official said. The carcass of a six to seven-month-old female lion cub was found in Dedakdi range of Gir West division forest, said D.T. Vasavada, chief conservator of forests (wildlife), Junagadh. No external injury were found on the carcass, which has been sent for post-mortem. Gujarat is the only abode of Asiatic lions, and a full-moon light observation carried out by the forest department in June estimated its population to rise 29 per cent to 674. — PTI

Past govts lacked courage to effect farm reforms: PM

'Those protesting want farmers to live in previous century'

Solang Valley, Oct. 3: Taking a swipe at the opposition's protest against farm reform laws, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday those parties also had the same idea but lacked the courage to implement these measures because they focussed on elections while his government looked at the country's and farmers' welfare.

Addressing his second public meeting after inaugurating Atal Tunnel in Rohtang in Himachal Pradesh, Modi said those protesting against the laws wanted farmers to live in the previous century, and are now jolted by his government's attack on middlemen.

The ruling BJP has cited the Congress manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls to assert that the opposition party had also promised the same laws which the Modi government has enacted to allow farmers to sell their produce outside state-controlled "mandi" but is now criticising them for political reasons.

Modi also spoke of the benefits of new labour sector laws and said reforms will continue as his government works to realise its goal of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India), asserting that regulations of the previous century will not work in a new century.

Our reforms have troubled those who have always worked for political benefits, he said, adding that new labour reforms have given women same salary and opportunities as men had so far.

3 die, 4 hurt in lightning strikes in Jharkhand

New Delhi, Oct. 3: Three people were killed and four injured in lightning strikes in Jharkhand on Saturday as rain and thundershowers were witnessed in eastern parts of the country.

Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality was recorded in the "moderate" category, and it is likely to turn "poor" in two days due to lowering temperatures and slow wind speed. Delhi's 24-hour average air quality index was recorded at 189 on Saturday. It was 180 on Friday.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

"As predicted, the PM2.5 contribution (in pollution) is increasing, which is a characteristic of winters. The air quality is likely to deteriorate to the lower end of poor quality on Monday," the SAFAR said. PM2.5 is tiny particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter. It can enter deep into the lungs and even into the bloodstream.

It said an increase in farm fires was observed on Friday around Punjab, Haryana and neighbouring border regions and it is likely to impact Delhi in the coming days. — PTI

■ Tshidawa had suggested tunnel at Rohtang to former PM

Dream of Vajpayee's friend comes true

Tholang, Oct. 3: The decades-long dream of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's friend, Arjun Gopal, came true on Saturday with the inauguration of Atal Tunnel at Rohtang in Himachal Pradesh.

Amar Singh and Ram Dev, sons of Arjun Gopal alias Tshidawa, said their father had suggested the construction of the tunnel to the former Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the strategically important all-weather Atal Tunnel, which reduces the



Members of various farmer organizations block railway tracks during a protest against the farm reform bills in Patiala district on Saturday. — PTI

Their mindset remained the same while the century changed, he said, attacking the opposition. "You can't enter the next century with the mindset of the past century," he said.

Modi said his government's reforms, including digitisation of services and direct transfer of money, have saved time and money while rooting out corruption.

The government is constantly trying to reduce problems of the masses, he said.

Modi stopped his address twice when he saw a person having some medical issues and directed officials to attend to him.

The prime minister also addressed a public meeting at Sissu village in Lahaul-Spiti region earlier in the day, where he asserted that a major transformation has been effected in the government's way of functioning and new schemes are no more based on the quantum of votes from an area as the only focus now is "development for all". — PTI

PM refers to Thakur as 'HP ka chhokra'

Sissu, Oct. 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday referred to Union minister Anurag Thakur as "Himachal Pradesh ka Chhokra", an apparent show of his support to the young Himachal Pradesh leader after Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury had attacked him using the similar phrase in Lok Sabha.

While Mr Chowdhury had used "Himachal ka Chhokra", a colloquial reference meaning the lad from Himachal Pradesh, as a jibe to attack Mr Thakur, the prime minister seemed to be using the similar words endearingly.

At Rohtang where he inaugurated Atal Tunnel, PM smilingly called Mr Thakur him "Himachal ka Chhokra (Himachal's boy)". — PTI



Manoj Jha

RJD MP moves SC against farm laws

New Delhi, Oct. 3: RJD MP Manoj Jha has moved the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of the newly enacted three agriculture laws, saying they are "discriminatory and manifestly arbitrary" and will expose marginal farmers to exploitation by big corporates.

Parliament has recently passed the three Bills — the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020. These have come into effect from September 27

after President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent. Mr Jha, a Rajya Sabha member from the RJD, has filed the plea in the top court through lawyer Fauzia Shakil. Besides Mr Jha, Congress Lok Sabha member from Kerala TN Prathapan and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) RS member from Tamil Nadu Tiruchi Siva had moved the top court against the farm laws. — PTI



An army convoy passes through the Atal Tunnel after its inauguration on the Manali-Leh route on Saturday. — PTI

■ Ansari was admitted to hospital after testing positive Covid -ve J'khand mantri dies

Ranchi, Oct. 3: Jharkhand's minority welfare minister Haji Hussain Ansari died on Saturday at a hospital in Ranchi, official sources said. He was 73. Ansari, a senior JMM leader, was admitted to the Medanta hospital around two weeks back after being diagnosed with Covid.

A spokesperson of the Medanta Hospital said that Ansari tested negative for Covid on Friday, which meant that he had recovered.

"Therefore, he did not die of Covid. He died this evening due to a cardiac arrest," the spokesperson said. Ansari's family said that he recently underwent heart surgery.

Health Minister Banna Gupta also said that Ansari's death did not happen due to Covid.

Chief minister Hemant Soren said that he played a leading role in the movement for Jharkhand.

"He was a mass leader with a simple sense and

Distressed woman Covid-19 patient dies, video goes viral

Chandrapur, Oct. 3: The video of a coronavirus-infected woman gasping for breath and then dying at a facility in Maharashtra on Saturday went viral on social media, prompting the district administration to call for a report on the incident while some protesters flayed the administration for lack of health infrastructure in the district.

In the video, the woman, who had been

admitted to the facility but was waiting for allotment of bed, can be seen pleading that she needed oxygen facilities quickly to survive.

District collector Ajay Gulhane said he had forwarded the video to the dean of the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) and the civil surgeon at the civil hospital here and asked them to submit a report.

The coronavirus facility is housed in GMCH.

— PTI

conviction. May God gives peace to the soul of Haji saheb and gives the family the strength to endure the hour of sorrow," he tweeted in Hindi. Ansari was a four-time MLA from the Madhupur assembly segment in Deoghar.

Union minister Arjun Munda has condoled the demise of Ansari and said that he was of a very simple nature.

Former chief minister Raghuvir Das also expressed deep condolences over Ansari's death and prayed for the peace of his soul.

— PTI

BSP announces second list of 10 candidates for MP bypolls

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, OCT. 3

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) on Saturday announced its second list of 10 candidates for the November 3 by-elections in 28 assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh.

Former minister Mahendra Singh Boudh who has recently joined BSP after resigning from Congress has figured in the second list of candidates of the party and has been given ticket for the Bhandar (SC) assembly seat.

BSP has earlier announced the first list of eight candidates for the assembly by-polls.

"BSP has decided to field candidates in all the 28 assembly seats that are going to by-elections in MP on November 3. The party will go alone in the ensuing assembly by-elections", state party president Ramakant Pippal said.

BSP which had earlier announced not to enter into fray in the upcoming assembly by-elections in the state has later made a U-turn by declaring that the party would field candidates in all the 28 poll-bound assembly seats.

Congress returned to power in MP in the 2018 assembly elections despite securing 0.13 per cent less votes than its traditional rival BJP in the polls.



People sit near a sea after the water level sank suddenly in Kanyakumari on Saturday. — PTI

No 1st use: India reaffirms nuclear weapons policy

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 3

India on Saturday reiterated its nuclear doctrine of "No First Use" against nuclear weapon states and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states.

India also reiterated its "long-standing and unwavering commitment to universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons".

New Delhi's position was reiterated by Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla at the "High-level Meeting to Commemorate and Promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons".

India's reiteration of its nuclear doctrine is significant, as it comes at a time when the armed forces are on alert at the borders, both at the LoC with Pakistan and the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, and also in readiness for any contingency to face a "two-front war", a euphemism for a hypothetical

Sino-Pakistani joint attack on India. Both these neighbours also possess nuclear weapons.

Foreign Secretary Shringla said, "India espouses the policy of 'No First Use' against nuclear weapon states and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. ... India reiterates its long-standing and unwavering commitment to universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, in line with the Final Document of the UN General Assembly on disarmament (SSOD-1)." He added, "India is pleased to participate in this High-Level Plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. ... We believe that nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework."

Bihar BSP president quits party, joins RJD

Patna, Oct. 3: The BSP of Mayawati which is part of a three-party alliance headed by Upendra Kushwaha of RLSP for Bihar polls, suffered a setback on Saturday when its state unit president Bharat Bind quit and joined RJD.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav gave membership of the party to the BSP leader. Mr Yadav released a picture admitting Bind into the party on his twitter and also the party's social media platform.

Mr Yadav, the younger son of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, wrote on his twitter handle that the Bahujan Samaj Party Bihar president joined them to lend support in making a new Bihar and remove anti-youth NDA. After being spurned by the NDA and discarded by the RJD-helmed mahagathbandhan, Kushwaha has forged an alliance with the BSP and a non-descript Janatantrik Party (Socialist) for the Bihar elections. — PTI

India test-fires new version of N-capable Shaurya missile

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 3

India, on Saturday, successfully test-fired the indigenously developed hyper-sonic nuclear-capable Shaurya missile, an advanced version of the Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) K-15 (B-05).

The test was carried out by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from a defence facility off Odisha coast, said reports.

The 10-metre-long nuclear-capable Shaurya missile has a strike range of around 800 kilometres.

Capable of carrying a payload of up to one tonne, the missile is a land variant of K-15 SLBM and can be stored in a composite canister, said sources. The missile is less vul-



nerable to anti-ballistic missile defence systems due to its high manoeuvrability, added sources.

The test-flight of Shaurya missile comes just a couple of days after the country successfully test-fired an extended range version of surface-to-surface supersonic cruise missile BrahMos off Odisha coast. The missile was tested on September 30 from Chandipur

Integrated Test Range (ITR) at 10.30 am in Balasore district, nearly 250 km from here.

The extended version of BrahMos is capable of hitting targets at more than 400-km range. The airframe and booster of this missile has been developed indigenously. The missile can be launched from submarines, ships, aircrafts, as well as from land platforms.

The affidavit does not state how much this waiver will cost the public exchequer as it is the government and not the banks which is going to bear the brunt of the waiver of compound interest for eight categories with a loan ceiling of ₹2 crores.

THE ASIAN AGE

4 OCTOBER 2020



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

A Kolkata 'Kumroween' & other Covid sacrifices

I could murder a malpoa right now. And that potoler dolma I've been drooling over in my dreams, the shorshe illish that dance in my peripheral vision, disappearing like chimera (or Nemo) when I look them in the eye. Some nights I wake in a chom chom sweat, and dig around my kitchen cupboards to find my dalmut hoard sadly depleted. Nor can Tesco's mango chutney fill the yawning achaar-shaped chasm in my gut. And when I think of mishti doi — oh boi. I melt into a puddle of yearning. My dwindling pile of panchphoron too, in its steel tiffin box, is not to be sneezed at (what will I have left then?).

It's been more than a year since we last travelled to Kolkata, the city of my birth, of my parents and oldest friends, of the spices, sweets, books and great memories I bring back yearly, and our stocks are all but gone. Cold turkey they call this sudden, enforced withdrawal, but it's kosha mangsho for me. As merry as our Sherwood curry may be, there are jhaals, jhols and ombols that can't be concocted outside Bengal. Not without an infusion of its tangy winter smog, monsoon winds that roll from the Bay, and Rabindrasangeet saturating the air no matter what the weather. Sniff as hard I might, I can smell none of this now.

Sure sign of Covid you say, but these notun gurer cravings and maacher muthia longings are symptoms of homesickness instead. Evading the former has unfortunately required the renunciation of the akash, batash, and barir ranna of Kolkata this year. Abetted by inept, often unfeeling governments, the Coronavirus has harvested death and deprivation everywhere. In Bengal alone so far there are a staggering 216,000 cases, and nearly 5,000 deaths, with Kolkata accounting for 70 per cent of it.

But just for a moment, shall we dwell on the lesser tragedies? Like the suspension of flights to Kolkata from much of Britain and the hijacking of my annual trip home. Since moving to Britain two decades ago, I have returned home for the harvest every year. Of a very different crop usually; the diurnal glide of crisp blue skies and mellow sun, long addas over favourite foods, slow, smoky evenings with family and friends, and pilgrimages to fondly remembered haunts. Including the biggest and brightest of festivals.

This pandemic has put paid to even that. It has hijacked not just my homecoming but mighty Durga's too. Kolkata's Durga Puja is an extravaganza so massive, so magnificent, so, er, mingly, it can only be a shadow of itself this socially-distanced year. The ocean of humanity that swamps the resplendent pandals and eye-popping illuminations won't be welcoming the Mother Goddess with their customary rapture this year, because they will, hopefully, stay home to prevent further dissemination of the killer virus. Which is as it should be. But because it is indeed the high point of the year for many and in these dismal times, a tonic for the soul, some puja organisers have been exploring alternatives, from virtual pujas to portable ones. Bearing the Devi round in a bedecked palanquin in Jodhpur Park, for people to see from the safety of their homes, is one such I gather. As if Corona Devi, flexing her spiky muscles to demonstrate her might, instructed the good folks of Kolkata — "Koro na!" But Kolkata peeps replied (cching Durga), "OK tata, but y' know? Ashche bochor abar hobe!"

The high point of our trip back however is quite another tradition. Timing it so the bulk of our visit is post-puja; quiet and contemplative after the fervour and din, we finish every trip with the tiny, homegrown celebration we've come to know as 'Kumroween'. It all started with October being the best time for us to visit India, but the kids didn't want to miss the trick or treating of an English Halloween. So we devised our own little fusion festival, a best-of-both-worlds hybrid that was all treats and no trick, incorporating an array of Bengali delicacies and bonhomie, with fancy dress, eerie party balloons and trim (on which we had fun scrawling a scary range of faces), and the pièce de résistance - a glowing Jack o' Lantern carved from an almost invariably misshapen kumro. Thus 'Kumroween', an invariably misshapen but always entertaining tradition was born. Over the years, patched together Gupis and Baghas have rubbed shoulders with Professor Lupin and Harry Potter, a cobbled Captain Hook has sung along with affable, unthreatening crocs, whilst pleasantly plump skeletons tucked into kochuri, aloor dom, and goja. Most of all, it has given us the opportunity to gather our family and friends round, to say hello, thank you, and au revoir, so quickly do our fortnights in Kolkata fly. Two splendid weeks of breaking bread, or indeed luchi, with family, catchup addas with friends lasting half the day, and storytime and play for our children with their beloved but rarely-seen Dida and Dadu, coalescing one last time on spooky, sparkling, slightly sad Kumroween night.

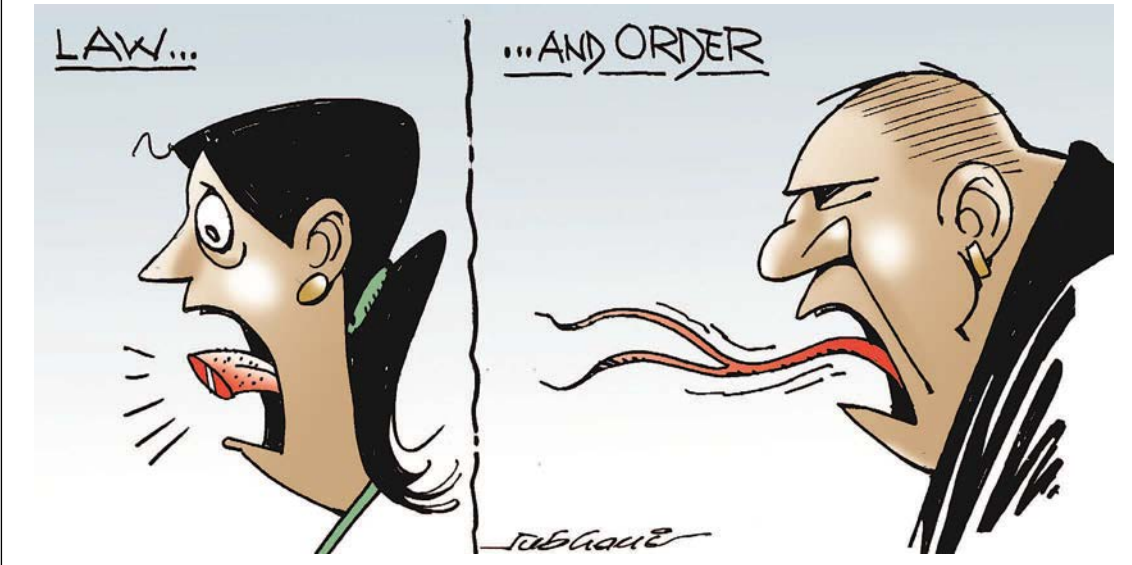
There can be no Kumroween this year. No festivities of any sort for us in Kolkata. In fact, no trip at all. Just sadness and long distance anxiety as every day brings the names and images of people we once knew, or knew of, who have succumbed to the marauding bug. With more to come. But malpoa, madugga, Mababa, and my mother city; you are on my mind. And if it is OK tata for this year, horn please, because ashche bochor abar hobe.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published *Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures*. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenhana.



The writer's children celebrate Halloween in Kolkata. — STEPHEN HANDLEY

Subhani



Napping media awakes, puts Yogi on the spot



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

The horrific Hathras rape outrage raises some deeply disturbing questions. First and foremost, is the role of the UP government and police. Why was the victim's body taken away forcibly from her home and cremated against her family's will in the dead of night? The family wanted to perform the last rites in the morning and then cremate her. But her parents and brothers were locked in their house.

Quite apart from the legal propriety of cremating the body when another autopsy was clearly warranted, there is a shocking insensitivity to this episode. The family of the young Dalit girl was in trauma. They had just lost a daughter to one of the most brutal rape incidents seen in recent times. To take away the dead body against the family's will, lock up family members, and forcibly carry out the cremation at 2:30 am, shows an unpardonable callousness to basic human emotions.

Why was the UP sarkar in such a tearing hurry? Quite clearly, there must be a reason. If it thought that with her cremation the matter may quickly die a natural death, the outcome was just the opposite. Thanks to the media, most of them brave young women, the entire nation was sickened by the pitiless, cruel and high-handed behaviour of the police. The visuals of the mother wailing at not being able to even see the face of her dead daughter were appalling.

The UP government seemed to have only one priority, which was to

claim that the girl was not gangraped. The state police cited the report of the Forensic Science Lab in Agra, which apparently said that no trace of semen was found. Surely, the police would know that the absence of semen is no proof that rape did not take place. Moreover, as against the forensic report, there is the dying declaration of the girl herself where she says that she was raped. Is this not proof enough? In the light of the victim's confirmation of rape, why was the body not subjected to a fresh examination by a panel that would include a senior gynaecologist? Was this the reason why the body was cremated in such unseemly haste?

There is also the visual of the district magistrate of Hathras obviously trying to intimidate the victim's family. The media will go away in a day or two, he can be heard telling the family; only the police will remain, so it would be better if you change your statement. This raises the question of why the UP police want to whitewash this gruesome incident. Who is UP chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, trying to protect? Is there a caste angle to this dastardly crime, which has something to do with the fact

Why was the UP sarkar in such a tearing hurry? Quite clearly, there must be a reason. If it thought that with her cremation the matter may quickly die a natural death, the outcome was just the opposite.

Who is the Yogi trying to protect? Is there a caste angle to this dastardly crime, which has something to do with the fact that the four accused are allegedly of the dominant Thakur caste, the same caste as the UP CM?

that the four accused who have been arrested are allegedly of the dominant Thakur caste, which is the same caste as the UP CM?

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), nearly 10 Dalit women are raped every day, with UP recording the largest number, 14.7 per cent of India's total. No doubt, UP is the most populous state in the country, but the fact remains that even nationwide — again as per NCRB data — crimes against Dalits have increased by 47 per cent in the period between 2014 and 2018. The rivalry between the BJP and the Congress has triggered a "competitive rape politics" where a rape in Rajasthan — a Congress ruled state — is being compared to the Hathras incident. This is deeply shameful. Both incidents were heinous and gruesome. But Yogi Adityanath, who dresses in saffron and calls himself a Yogi, must answer for the condemnable manner in which his administration and police acted in Hathras. Even now the victim's family is being barricaded by the police, their phones are being illegally tapped, and journalists or politicians of Opposition parties are not being allowed to meet them freely. Why?

The brutal Nirbhaya rape led to national outrage because it happened in the capital of the Republic. But the Nirbhaya of Hathras was not that fortunate. She was fatally assaulted on September 14, and — as per her own state-

ment — raped, her neck broken and her tongue cut. But national media hardly took any real notice of this shocking incident, until her death on September 29. On electronic media we were presented frenzied accounts of which actresses allegedly smoked hash, Rhea Chakraborty's bail application, and Kangana Ranaut's verbal tantrums. If the media had paused from its breathless chase of Bollywood actresses and focused on this case, perhaps the victim would have got better medical attention, and her life could have been saved.

The minimum that should be done now is to immediately suspend the Hathras DM. The Superintendent of Police (SP) has been suspended. The accused should be tried through a fast-track court in a time bound manner, and if found guilty, hanged like the Nirbhaya perpetrators. There is a demand that an investigation into the rape and murder should be entrusted to the CBI. But, a "caged parrot" may not be the solution. What this case needs is a time bound inquiry by a Supreme Court designated judge, which must also fix responsibility for the highly suspect role played by the UP government and the police. It would be good if the UP CM is asked a few questions, not only by his political opponents, but in a judicial process.

The writer, an author, is a former diplomat and in politics

What this case needs is a time bound inquiry by a Supreme Court designated judge, which must also fix responsibility for the highly suspect role played by the UP government and the police

LETTERS

YOGI MUST RESIGN

A couple of days of curfew-like situation, the DM pressuring the victim's family and a complete law and order failure — shouldn't this be enough for the CM Yogi Adityanath who has been so vocal in "establishing" Ram Rajya to take moral responsibility and resign? With numerous theories being floated from no rape to family participation in the last rites of the girl why doesn't the CBI take over and for a fair trial shift the family out of the state to a safer place? By the way, if no gang-rape had happened why the compensation, and a hurried and inhuman cremation? Did the administration fear truth would be revealed?

Syed Abdul Monim
Navi Mumbai

'SECULAR' POLITICS

THE AAP HAS decided to join protests being held in New Delhi against a tragic incident that took place in BJP-ruled UP. This is a subtle hint for the "secular" alliance called Mahagathbandhan that the youngest political party in the country is not averse to joining the 20-member anti-Saffron front during the 2024 general elections. A five-pronged contest is likely to erupt for the leadership of the Aghadi; the major claimants for the PM spot being RaGa (or P G-V?), Sharad Pawar, Mayawati, Mamata and Deve Gowda. A hunt for a "compromise" candidate may be launched if the "secular" brigade comes close to the magic mark.

Arun Malankar
Mumbai

NEED NEW FARM LAW

THE MODI GOVERNMENT'S so-called 'farmer-friendly' laws are facing protests since the farmers think the new laws will eventually end MSP support, notwithstanding denial. They want a legal guarantee that no procurement will happen below MSP. What the country needs is a new law overriding the recent ones.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

DHONI MUST GO

THE RECENT performances of M.S. Dhoni are pathetic. His age is not co-operating with him. He can no longer pull a rabbit out of the hat as he used to in the past. CSK, once considered as "Dad's Army", is headed for a fall. Dhoni's IPL days too are numbered.

C.K. Subramaniam
Navi Mumbai

COLLECTIVE FAILURE

ON OCTOBER 1, 2020, India reached the grim figure of one lakh Covid deaths. Governments may say that the case fatality rate is lower than the world average but it is no reason for solace. Some may say that heart disease, strokes and respiratory diseases have killed more than three lakhs in 2017 but this in no way diminish the grim reality that the authorities were ill-prepared despite the lockdowns. This is a collective failure in tackling the epidemic.

D.B. Madan
New Delhi

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

Hope alive for those shown the door in BJP reshuffle

Great expectations

The BJP organisational reshuffle has not disappointed anyone. It seems all those shown the door are hoping for "better" options. The party's former vice-president, Vinay Sahasrabudhe, is said to be angling for a Union Cabinet berth. Mr Sahasrabudhe is currently head of ICCR, enjoying a Cabinet rank. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would accommodate him as the country's education minister. Another axed vice-president, Prabhat Jha, is hoping to get a gubernatorial assignment. Ram Madhav, who was a party general secretary and a player in the north-eastern states and Jammu & Kashmir, is aspiring to head the party in his home state Andhra.

Swamy's allegation

Subramanian Swamy filing yet another complaint against Congress president Sonia Gandhi for allegedly giving "wrong"

information on her educational qualification is not news. In a letter addressed to the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Mr Swamy observed, "In our country, the educational qualification is highly valued and obtained after much effort. Hence our culture has given such high value to educational qualifications." Mr Swamy's focus on obtaining a higher educational qualification is being viewed with a lot of interest. Some cynics wonder why Mr Swamy, an astute politician, currently unhappy with the BJP leadership for its failure to "discipline" in-house Swamy-baiter Amit Malviya, has written this. Mr Malviya heads the BJP IT cell and weeks before the BJP organisational reshuffle, Mr Swamy had boasted that Mr Malviya would be removed. Nothing happened.

The controversy around Sonia's educational qualification was first raked up in 1999 when the Congress president reportedly attributed her English language course obtained in Cambridge to the University of Cambridge. Sonia had apologised, pointing that it was a "typing mistake".



By WAQYANAWIS

Man of many bosses

He has been described as an 'eighth wonder' of the world. Uttar Pradesh's senior bureaucrat Navneet Sahgal has a knack of bouncing back. The former principal secretary to chief minister Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav, has now become head of the information and public relations department under

chief minister Yogi Adityanath after the Hathras gang-rape outrage. Yogi, struggling to counter adverse media coverage, had no choice but to think of Mr Sahgal as his Man Friday. Mr Sahgal also holds the distinction of serving as personal secretary to Union minister Akhilesh Das who had belonged to the Congress during Manmohan Singh era. In a state where bureaucrats get marked over their alleged political affiliation, Mr Sahgal, currently additional chief secretary, is proving to be an exception. Exceptional.

Midnight 'news' alerts

Journalists covering the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) are both intrigued and annoyed for getting WhatsApp messages on almost a daily basis post-midnight. The message, attributing information to a prominent LJP leader, makes sensational claims such as LJP walking out of NDA or fighting all Bihar Assembly seats independently. While it disturbs the sleep of many scribes, mornings usher in business as usual within the NDA.

Abandoned Kamal Nath

All is not well between former Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath and senior party leader Digvijaya Singh. At one point when the Congress was in power for 15 months from December 2018 to March 2020, the Nath-Diggy jodi was a *bada bhai-chhota bhai* pair. But now that crucial Assembly by-polls have been announced in 28 seats, Digvijaya is not to be seen.

Kamal Nath, at 72, is fighting a lone and grim battle to regain a foothold in MP politics. Chances of dislodging Shivraj Singh Chouhan regime are slim as the BJP needs to win barely one third of the seats going to polls while the Congress would need almost all of them: the 20 out of 28 seats for Congress is seen as a figure that would rattle everyone in the BJP from Bhopal to New Delhi. The Nov. 10 verdict is keenly awaited when results of these by-polls would be declared along with the Bihar Assembly outcome.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power

IN BRIEF

**Reunification:
German anniv**

Berlin, Oct. 3: Germany is marking the 30th anniversary of its reunification on Saturday, drawing a generally positive picture of the progress made in knitting together east and west amid celebrations that are low-key because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Germany was reunited on October 3, 1990, after four decades of Cold War division. East Germany joined the western federal republic less than a year after the east's Communist rulers — under pressure from growing protests — opened the Berlin Wall and the rest of the highly fortified border between the two states. While much progress has been made since then, economic and other differences between the west and the less-prosperous east still persist.

**Sudan, rebels
seal peace deal**

Juba: Sudan's transitional authorities and a rebel alliance signed on Saturday a peace deal initialed in August that aims to put an end to the country's decades-long civil wars, in a televised ceremony marking the agreement. "The next biggest challenge is to work with all local and international partners to preach the agreement and its benefits," Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok tweeted on Friday upon his arrival at Juba, the capital of South Sudan. Reaching a negotiated settlement with rebels in Sudan's far-flung provinces has been a crucial goal for the transitional government, which assumed power after a popular uprising led the military to overthrow President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. Sudanese civilian leaders hope the deal will allow them to revive the country's battered economy by slashing military spending, which takes up much of the national budget.

**Afghan car bomb
attack: 15 killed**

Jalalabad: At least 15 people were killed and more than 30 others wounded in a car bomb attack that targeted a government building in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, officials said. The explosion occurred at an administrative building that also housed some military facilities in the Ghani Khel district of Nangarhar province, the governor's spokesman Attaullah Khogyani said. "The car bomb detonated at the entrance of the district headquarters building. Several armed attackers tried to enter the building after the attack but were killed by security forces," he said. Provincial police spokesman Farid Khan confirmed the details. He said most of the victims were Afghan security force members but several civilians were also among the dead. No one had so far claimed responsibility for the attack but Khan blamed the Taliban. Both the Taliban and the Islamic State group are active in the region.

**RICK MORANIS
PUNCHED
IN ATTACK**

Los Angeles, Oct. 3: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" star Rick Moranis was assaulted in an apparently random street attack in New York.

The 67-year-old actor was punched in the face by a random passer-by when he was walking on Central Park West near 70th Street, reported *New York Post*. A CCTV video footage, released by the police, showed a man dressed in black hoodie with a backpack on his shoulder punch Moranis with a closed fist directly into the face. Afterwards, the actor fell to the ground and the suspect nonchalantly walked away.

Moranis, who suffered pain in his head, back and right hip, went to a local hospital to be evaluated, police said. He later filed a complaint with the police. In a statement, Moranis' spokesperson said that the actor is doing "fine".

"Rick Moranis was assaulted on the Upper West Side yesterday. He is fine but grateful for everyone's thoughts and well wishes," the representative said. Moranis rose to prominence with his work on Canadian comedy sketch series "Second City Television".

He later became one of the most sought-after comic stars in the 1980s and 1990s.

His film credits include 1984's "Ghostbusters" and its 1989 sequel, "Spaceballs", "Parenthood" and "The Flintstones" remake.



A demonstrator holds up a placard reading "Fake news Trump tested positive" to protest against masks and virus restrictions during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in Konstanz, southern Germany, on Saturday.

— APF

Cavalier WH approach to Covid catches up with Don

Jinping wishes Trump, Melania speedy recovery

Washington, Oct. 3: Masks were rarely spotted in the West Wing. Crowds of people gathered shoulder to shoulder on the White House South Lawn. And Air Force One streaked across the sky from one massive campaign rally to another. With ready access to testing and the best public health minds at his disposal, President Donald Trump should have been the American safest from Covid-19. Instead, he flouted his own government's guidelines and helped create a false sense of invulnerability in the White House, an approach that has now failed him as it did a nation where more than 200,000 people have died. Marine One, the presidential helicopter, lifted off Friday to take Trump to a military hospital from the same White House lawn that less than a week earlier had been the site of his celebratory nomination of a new Supreme Court justice as he charged toward the November election.

Several people at the event, including a US senator, have since tested positive for the Coronavirus. Trump is now ensconced at Walter Reed Medical Center after running a fever and feeling fatigued following his early-morning revelation that he had tested positive for the virus. "He let the country down by disregarding the CDC, ignoring federal guidelines and acting like he was Superman," said presidential historian David Brinkley. "He did not just downplay the virus, he paraded around like a peacock, making fun of those who took it seriously."

From the pandemic's early days, Trump, by his own admission, played down the severity of the virus. He repeatedly suggested it would "disappear" and for a while was pushing for the American economy to fully reopen by Easter, just a month after the pandemic fully engulfed the nation. And he soon began resisting the advice of public health experts on his own coronavirus task force, including Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Deborah Birx. He publicly clashed with the heads of the Food and Drug

Beijing, Oct. 3: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday wished a speedy recovery to his US counterpart Donald Trump and first lady Melania who have tested positive for Coronavirus.

In a message to Trump, Xi, 67, said that after learning President Trump and Melania have tested positive for Covid-19, he and his wife Peng Liyuan extend sympathy to them and wish them a speedy recovery, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported.

Leaders and prominent figures from around the world on Friday sent their best wishes to Trump and his wife. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pre-

● **North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Saturday sent a message of sympathy to President Donald Trump and his wife Melania, wishing they would recover from the COVID-19 illness, state media reported. "He sincerely hoped that they would recover as soon as possible," the Korean Central News Agency reported.**

sident Ram Nath Kovind wished Trump and the first lady a quick recovery. "Wishing my friend @POTUS @realDonaldTrump and @FLOTUS a quick

recovery and good health," Modi tweeted.

"Our prayers and best wishes are with you during this time," Kovind said.

In a message posted on his official web page, Russian President Vladimir Putin wished Trump well, saying: "I am sure that your inherent vitality, good spirits and optimism will help you cope with the dangerous virus."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, also sent well wishes. "My best wishes to President Trump and the First Lady. Hope they both have a speedy recovery from Coronavirus," Johnson tweeted.

— PTI

2 US SENATORS, TRUMP EX-AIDE TEST VIRUS +VE

Washington, Oct. 3: Two US Senators, a former adviser to President Donald Trump, his campaign manager and three White House journalists have tested positive for Covid-19, joining several officials working at the presidential palace to have contracted the infection.

Republican Senators Thom Tillis from North Carolina, and Mike Lee from Utah confirmed they have been tested positive for Coronavirus.

"Over the last few months, I've been routinely tested for Covid-19, including testing negative last Saturday, but tonight my rapid antigen test came back positive," Tillis said. Hope Hicks, 31, is the closest aide of the President to have tested positive. Former White House counselor Kellyanne Conway also announced on Twitter that she has been tested positive. Trump Campaign Manager Bill Stepien tested positive as well. The White House Correspondents Association confirmed that three member journalists have tested positive.

— PTI

PENCE-HARRIS DEBATE ON

Washington, Oct. 3: The vice presidential debate between Mike Pence and Kamala Harris next week will go on as scheduled after President Donald Trump tested positive for the Coronavirus on Friday. An official with the Commission on Presidential Debates confirmed that no changes are anticipated to the Wednesday night debate in Salt Lake City. Both Pence and Harris underwent tests for the Coronavirus on Friday and tested negative. Pence's physician said in a memo that the vice president was not considered a "close contact" of anyone infected with Covid-19.

— AP

Azerbaijan Prez criticises mediators; fighting rages on

Baku, Oct. 3: Heavy fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan continued Saturday in their conflict over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, while Azerbaijan's president criticised the international mediators who have tried for decades to resolve the dispute. Fighting that started September 27 is the worst to afflict Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas since the 1994 end of a war that left the region in Azerbaijan under the control of ethnic Armenian local forces backed by Armenia.

Shushan Stepanian, a spokeswoman for the Armenian Defence Ministry, said that "intensive fighting is taking place along the entire front line," and claimed that Armenian forces had shot down three planes. Azerbaijan's defence ministry did not respond to the claim of planes being shot down, but said Armenian forces had shelled civilian territory within Azerbaijan, including the city of Terter. Nagorno-Karabakh officials have said more than 150 servicemen on their side have been killed so far. Azerbaijani authorities haven't given details on their military casual-

ties but said 19 civilians have been killed and 55 more wounded.

Nagorno-Karabakh was a designated autonomous region within Azerbaijan during the Soviet era. It claimed independence from Azerbaijan in 1991, about three months before the Soviet Union's collapse. Full-scale war that broke out in 1992 killed an estimated 30,000 people. By the time it ended in 1994, Armenian forces not only held Nagorno-Karabakh itself but substantial areas outside the territory's formal borders.

Several United Nations Security Council resolutions have called for withdrawal from those areas, which the Armenian forces have disregarded. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said in a television interview that the forces must withdraw from those areas before fighting can stop.

In the interview with al-Jazeera, a transcript of which was distributed Saturday by the presidential press office, Aliyev criticised the so-called Minsk Group of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has tried to mediate a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

— AP

Belarus: No foreign media credentials

Kyiv, Oct. 3: Belarus, rocked by weeks of protests against its authoritarian president and Western condemnation over a crackdown on dissent, on Friday rescinded the accreditation of all journalists working for foreign news outlets and said they must apply for new ones in a process that could take a week or more.

The action was the latest by Belarusian authorities against journalists and news media amid the wave of large protests that have occurred almost daily since the country's authoritarian president won a sixth term in a disputed Aug. 9 election. "In the current situation, we are forced to exercise our sovereign right and apply the necessary protective measures, including in the form of new provisions of the regulations,"

the Belarus Foreign Ministry said in a statement announcing the move.

The ministry said that journalists working for foreign media can apply for new credentials beginning Monday; temporary accreditation applications will be considered within five days, and permanent within 30 days.

The largest protests against President Alexander Lukashenko have taken place on Sundays. Earlier this week, authorities in Belarus suspended for three months the credentials of the popular independent news website tut.by, which has covered the protests. Some credentialled foreign journalists were deported in August, including two from AP, and the credentials of two Belarusian nationals working for AP were revoked.

— AP

Take legal step to bring Nawaz: Imran

Islamabad, Oct. 3: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has asked his party leaders to devise a legal strategy to bring back former premier Nawaz Sharif from the United Kingdom as in the absence of an extradition treaty between the two countries it would be difficult to get him extradited, according to a media report.

Presiding over the first meeting of a committee recently formed to counter the Opposition, Prime Minister Khan on Friday asked Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders to foil all moves of the Opposition aimed at destabilising the government and "maliciously" the Army, the *Dawn* News reported.

The government had

earlier sent a request to the British government for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader's repatriation to ensure that he faces the corruption cases pending against him in the courts.

Sharif has been living in London since November last year when he was allowed to go there for medical treatment.

A source privy to the meeting told *Dawn* that the prime minister was committed to bringing back Sharif from London and directed the committee members to devise a legal strategy because in the absence of an extradition treaty between Pakistan and the UK, it would become difficult to get him extradited.

— PTI

NEW | STUDY Killings of at least 30 transgender or non-gender conforming people documented in 2020

Sexual, gender minorities more likely to be crime victims

Phoenix, Oct. 3: The first study of its kind found that people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or gender non-conforming are nearly four times as likely to be victims of violent crime than those outside such communities.

Although other research has long shown that LGBTQ people and gender minorities are disproportionately affected by crime, the study published in *Science Advances*, a multidisciplinary journal, on Friday looked at data that has only been collected since 2016, making for the

first comprehensive and national study to examine the issue. It found that members of such communities, referred to as sexual and gender minorities, experienced a rate of 71.1 violent victimisations per 1,000 persons a year, compared with 19.2 per 1,000 a year among non-sexual and gender minorities. But it was the fact that sexual and gender minorities are victims of such a variety of crimes at such disparate rates — and who they're victimised by — that surprised researchers, said lead author Andrew R. Flores, an assistant profes-

sor at American University. For example, researchers found that such a population is much more likely to be victimised by someone they know well than a person who is a non-sexual and gender minority.

The fact that sexual and gender minorities are victimised by people close to them at such higher rates "does kind of raise questions hopefully future research can address about the nature of these incidents and the nature of these relationships," Flores said. "There are certain socialisations that goes in that. I think many people are so-

● **THE STUDY also found that sexual and gender minorities are burglarized at twice the rate of other households, and that they're more likely to be victims of other types of property theft.**

cialised and have a certain disdain for trans and queer people," said Tori Cooper of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a national organisation that advocates for the LGBTQ community. Cooper is the director of community engagement for the organisatio-

n's Transgender Justice Initiative. A survey of more than 12,000 LGBTQ teens around the country released in 2018 by the Human Rights Campaign found that 67% report they've heard family members make negative comments about LGBTQ people. Cooper said transgender people are particularly vulnerable, especially by partners or people close to them.

The HRC has documented the killings of at least 30 transgender or non-gender conforming people in 2020 alone. The majority were Black and Latina transgender women. "The-

re's an incalculable amount of transphobia ... that plays into these relationships," Cooper said. The new study didn't have a large enough sample of surveys by transgender people to come to a conclusion about their specific victimization rates, but Flores said other research has shown they are particularly vulnerable.

The study also found that sexual and gender minorities are burglarised at twice the rate of other households, and that they're more likely to be victims of other types of property theft. The study is based

on a national crime survey conducted by the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics, which until 2016 had not asked respondents about their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Trump administration, without seeking public comment, announced that it was moving the sexual orientation and gender identity questions from the general demographic section of its national crime survey to a part of the survey only pertaining to victims. This will limit what researchers can learn about crime disparities.

— AP

OUR CRITIC'S RATING

Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

Forgotten wars, B-grade beauties and a tuber that costs €1,20,000

SUPARNA SHARMA

New Delhi, Oct. 3: Most normal people live their lives, and sometimes they go to the movies. But some, like me, live their lives just so they can go to the movies.

That is why I have, over the years, found friends and places conducive to movie addiction.

One such annual outing is the Toronto International Festival (Tiff). Spread over 11 days in September, Tiff challenges movie addicts with 400-odd films. And for the especially unshackled ones, those who will battle sleep and the longest human queues to catch a gore-fest, it has a special section called Midnight Madness to showcase the year's craziest, bloodiest, most mind-bending B-grade glories.

B-grade, the name derives from Hollywood of the 1930s and 40s when big budget films had an add-on — a less-publicised, cheaper, shorter feature (like the B-side in music). These films cost less, but have, over the years, come into their own as an art form with their own set of rules.

B-grade films are in an excited state of being. They are loud — the music, camerawork, the sets, costumes — and dialogue are quotable one-liners in the middle of hyper action. Cinematically, they are creative, edgy, risky, always risqué.

All things are exaggerated in these deliciously crazy films which pay homage to all sorts of myths — Roman, Greek, Ottoman and those contained in comic books.

This year's truncated digital version of Tiff had just three films in the Midnight Madness section and I managed to catch two.

VIOLATION

Violation, a debut feature in English by Madeleine Sims-Fewer and Dusty Mancinelli, is a high-strung rape-revenge thriller-horror movie about two sisters, Greta and Miriam, who are tied to each other by kinship and deep childhood grouches.

Violation opens with an aerial shot of a car on a long road winding through wooded hills, spooking us with memories of *The Shining*. The setting is a forest where the younger sister lives with her husband. The elder one is visiting with her husband.

There's tension between the sisters, between one set of husband-wife, one set of in-laws. Also, one sister can't hold thoughts in her head. She blurts it all out.

There's talk of hunting, long walks through an eerily quiet jungle with the camera huddling up next to the humans as it catches animals with fangs foraging for food. And then the film moves to a wooden cabin which



■ Notturmo



■ Quo Vadis, Aida?



■ Violation



■ Truffle Hunters



■ Shadow in the Cloud

seems like the setting of some forbidden fornication.

It's an elaborate setup to murder, drain, slice and dispose and has been planned with a long shopping list. It's supposed to be over in one fell swoop, but some people are more durable than they seem.

A head is smashed, but it comes alive. There's an attempt to suffocate it with plastic bags and tape, there is slashing, blood, beating, throttling, hanging upside down, canisters, plastic sheets, ice box, a saw and much puking and scrubbing.

The film's narrative feels jumbled up, as if the screenplay was broken into pieces and then rearranged as a puzzle. But it's not. *Violation* is meticulously, cleverly paced, with one thing leading tangentially to another, and then a previous fight, an argument making sense.

This adds intrigue. As does the intimate camera which catches the slightest movements, zooms in on creepy-crawlys.

Violation's lust for high tension and gore is boundless. Its gaze at all that is nauseating is unflinching. No matter what is oozing out of where, it likes to look.

B-grade films are not for the faint hearted. And this one made me want to throw up.

SHADOW IN THE CLOUD

The clear winner of this year's Midnight Madness, however, is *Shadow in the Cloud*, a mid-air action-horror-thriller directed by New Zealander Roseanne Liang.

It is set in 1943, in a plane — a B-17 named "The Fool's Errand" — with an

all-male, testosterone-raging, ball-grabbing crew. Just as it's about to take off from the Auckland Allied Air Base, a beautiful blonde babe with an arm in a sling climbs on board.

She, Capt. Maude Garrett (Chloë Grace Moretz), is in uniform and is guarding a bag rather possessively. It's a top secret mission, she says. The rather obnoxious men are irritated by her presence, her box and start behaving like a pack of jerks.

"Oh, I got a big package for you right here, sweet heart," one says, and Garrett is sent off to sit in solitary confinement — in the ball turret (an orb dangling from the plane's belly). It has a seat, a view and two heavy machine guns, loaded.

Imagine a film where the camera is trapped, throughout, in the dicky of a car with a character. *Shadow in the Clouds* is that claustrophobic film.

The camera is always focused on Garrett as she listens to the men taunting, humiliating, harassing her. She endures, responds, tries to fend them off gently till she sees real threats looming — Japanese fighter jets, and a gremlin on board.

Shadow in the Clouds, an exceptionally well-written and directed feminist film about a breast-feeding mommy who slays monsters and a**holes, is deliciously random, but with the chops to execute it all in style and with finesse.

Chloë Grace Moretz (Hit-Girl from *Kick-Ass*) electrifies the film with her sensuous presence and makes the thrilling ride riveting, hugely satisfying.

QUO VADIS, AIDA?

Perhaps the biggest compliment to a feature film is to wonder mid-way if it's a documentary.

Bosnian film *Quo Vadis, Aida?* by writer-director Jasmila Banjac feels like we really are in the middle of the Srebrenica massacre of July 1995, when 8,372 Bosniak men and boys were slaughtered by units of the Bosnian Serb Army under the command of Ratko Mladic.

The film is set in the UN military base operated by Dutch peacekeepers, and it stays mostly with UN translator Aida (Jasna Duracic) as she tries to save her family of two sons and husband even as 30,000 men, women and children clamour for UN protection.

Human history is pockmarked by wars, genocide, but few are as devastating as the massacre of Srebrenica where the UN peacekeepers didn't just fail to stop the murders of Bosnian Muslims who had sought refuge there, but actively handed over young boys and men to Bosnian Serb forces knowing that they would be killed.

We watch in shock as armed Bosnian Serb soldiers are allowed into the mission and they start throwing food at the very people they will soon take away for slaughter, all under the aegis of the UN.

Quo Vadis, Aida? is a direction marvel as it captures large, surging crowds awaiting rescue and then riding busses to their death.

In 2005, Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General of the UN described the

Srebrenica mass murder as the worst crime on European soil since the Second World War, and a tragedy that would haunt the UN forever.

Quo Vadis, Aida? is a heart-breaking reminder of that deadly folly, and a warning.

It is Bosnia's official Oscar entry, and a strong contender.

NOTTURNO

A young boy wakes up early each morning and waits by the side of a road hoping to find work.

A group of elderly grieving matriarchs walk through what looks like a make-shift, now abandoned, jail. This is where their sons died. They wait as they touch the walls, recalling, remembering, saying, "Here you were tortured, beaten..."

Children at a psychiatric clinic paint memories on sheets of paper — of life with ISIS, of "being sad, scared", of being beaten for no reason. They draw sketches of Yazidi women tied up, of Al Baghdadi, of hangings, slit throats.

If peace has a pace and a sound as it begins to return tentatively, cautiously to a land wrecked by violence and loss, Gianfranco Rosi's documentary *Notturmo* captures it as is.

There is very little dialogue in the film that he shot over three years on the borders between Iraq, Kurdistan, Syria and Lebanon, but the constant sound of bullets circles the *azaan*.

Notturmo shows us snapshots of life trying to raise its head from the debris of tyranny, death, beatings, occupation, the ISIS apocalypse.

City walls are riddled with bullets,

tiff

A charming story ring-fenced by an anti-dalit worldview

SUPARNA SHARMA

Sudhir Mishra, director of the beloved *Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi* (2003), has been shooting duds for a while. But with *Serious Men* he seems to have regained his form, if not his sharp politics.

Serious Men is an entertaining, well-made film that tells the story of Ayaan Mani, a Dalit man who resents being invisible, and when he is seen he is subjected to daily humiliations, lucrative offers to convert, vote-bank politics. The film's plot is about a desperate man's desperate attempts to make sure his child, born in a pool of fraud by a hotel's poolside, amounts to something. Except that the seemingly sweet, benign story of *Serious Men*, which is rooted in reality, is ring-fenced by a worldview that is seriously anti-dalit.

While the film is sympathetic to men like Mani, it sets out to teach him a lesson. Merit, *Serious Men* says, is everything, it's the great equalizer, and not opportunity. This karmic cycle of misdemeanours and comeuppance only sucks Mani into its orbit, not similarly fraudulent upper caste men.

Serious Men, based on a novel of the same title by Manu

Joseph, opens with the posturing of an impatient, serious man who frowns and growls at the world. It seems to be in his way as he is rushing about doing very important things. Astro-physicist Aravind Acharya (Nassar) acts as if he's on emergency duty to save the world with his discovery of alien microbes. They hold answers to humankind's profound questions, he believes, and is in the pursuit of another round of government funding for his spatial explorations.

Everyone around Acharya defers to him, assuming that what sounds like gibberish to them are words of wisdom, for he is a man of greater knowledge, superior intellect and with a plan.

But Ayyan Mani (Nawazuddin Siddiqui), a dalit Tamilian, sees through Acharya and intently watches how he fakes his way through the world.

Mani is Acharya's clerk, a la Massey Sahib, and is summoned to be shouted at for doing or not doing something, often just for being.

Throughout the film Mani addresses us directly, sharing with us what it means to be invisible, how IQ is not connected to social status or caste, how posturing

is power, all the while picking up Acharya's small gestures that stitch together a VIP identity. It includes Acharya leaning and whispering into a female assistant's ears during meetings.

Mani watches how others worship at this altar of bullshit, and he wants a piece of it.

He too wants to be like them, the serious men. And with people lower than him in stature, cunning and gumption, Mani tries out the same urgent, intemperate demeanour, complete with nonsensical chatter, irritability and fancy neck-ties. It works.

But it's too late for Mani. So all his hopes are pinned on his child. Oja (Indira Tiwari), Mani's wife, is oblivious to his project.

Adi (Aakash Das) seems like a bright kid who is shy and hard of hearing.

A convent school rejects him at first. But when, a few years later, Adi is hailed as a genius in the dalit chawl, called "Abdul Kalam", the school admits him.

In class, Adi often gazes out of the window, and when the teacher asks him what he's thinking, he talks of photosynthesis for humans, about the "arrow of time", and when probed further, he snaps, "I can't deal with primitive minds like you".

Enter a father-daughter politician duo — Keshav (Sanjay Narvekar) and Anuja Dhavre (Shweta Basu Prasad) — who, impressed by his scientific knowledge and the awe he inspires in the dalit chawl, pick on Adi, and recruit him.

They have an agenda. A high-rise housing complex where Mani's dingy, rat-infested chawl squats.

Mani, who often uses his caste to get his way, is more than willing. And all goes as per plan till the day when, Sayani, Adi's school friend, is being thrashed by her mother for doing badly in an exam and lying about it.

Mani's plan and Adi's formidable reputation begin to unravel. Exam papers were bought, and there were a father's instructive surrations into his son's ears.

As Mani's life begins to spiral out of control, affecting Adi the most, he turns his sights on his boss, Acharya.

Serious Men

CAST: Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Indira Tiwari, Nassar, Sanjay Narvekar, Shweta Basu Prasad

DIRECTOR: Sudhir Mishra

STREAMING ON:: Netflix

RATING: ★★



James Bond's No Time To Die pushed again, to '21

LINDSEY BAHAR

The release of the James Bond film "No Time To Die" has been delayed again, this time to 2021, because of the effects of COVID-19 on the theatrical business.

MGM, Universal and Bond producers, Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli, said on Twitter Friday that the 25th installment in the franchise will now open globally on April 2, 2021.

"No Time To Die" was originally supposed to open in April 2020 but was pushed back to Nov. 12 in the U.K. and Nov. 20 in the U.S. It was one of the first Hollywood films to abandon its release before cinemas in the U.S. shut down in mid-March because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The film from director Cary Joji Fukunaga stars Daniel Craig as 007, Rami Malek, Lashana Lynch and Ana de Armas.

In a related move, Universal moved its "F9," the ninth installment of the "Fast & Furious" franchise starring Vin Diesel to May 28. Its previous April 2 release date would have put it in direct competition with Bond.

Other major studios have made similar decisions over the past few weeks.

Cinemas remain closed in New York and Los Angeles, two of North America's biggest markets.

"Ticket sales for Warner Bros.' "Tenet," the first blockbuster to open in theaters worldwide after months of coronavirus-related closures, have not been as strong as hoped for in the U.S.

The Walt Disney Co. last week delayed the planned 2020 releases of a handful of major movies until 2021. They include Marvel's "Black Widow" and Steven Spielberg's "West Side Story." Universal delayed "Candyman" to next year.



SHORT TAKES

IPL player reports corrupt approach

New Delhi: A cricketer, competing in the Indian Premier League in the UAE, has "reported a corrupt approach", putting BCCI's anti-corruption unit (ACU) on a high alert. The 13th edition of the IPL in being held in the UAE in a bio-secure environment, which has significantly reduced the chance for persons with dubious credentials approaching the player directly. The threat though still remains by and large due to the online network of corruptors. BCCI ACU chief Ajit Singh confirmed the development to PTI. "Yes (a player has reported approach)," Singh, the former DGP of Rajasthan Police confirmed the news. "We are tracking him. It will take some time," he said when asked if the alleged corruptor or "person of interest" has been nabbed. As per anti-corruption protocols, the name of the player (Indian or overseas) or franchise is not revealed for confidentiality purposes. — PTI

Tsitsipas through to fourth round

Paris: Greek fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced to the fourth round of the French Open on Saturday after his opponent Aljaz Bedene retired with an ankle injury while trailing 6-1, 6-2, 3-1. Slovenian Bedene, who defeated Tsitsipas in straight sets when they met at Rotterdam earlier this year, first called for the physiotherapist on Court Suzanne Lenglen to get treatment on his right ankle after going down 5-0 in the opening set. After returning to court Bedene won the first game to get on the scoreboard and then got his ankle strapped before the start of the second set. Tsitsipas, the reigning ATP Finals champion, kept his focus and went about his business smoothly, hitting 28 winners and breaking the 56th-ranked Bedene's serve five times before he decided he could no longer continue. — Agencies

Neymar sizzles in PSG's big win

Paris: Neymar scored his first goals of the season to help Paris Saint-Germain make up some lost ground in the French league with a 6-1 rout of visiting Angers. PSG moved up to second in the sixth round after winning four games straight. The defending champions started with two defeats. Kylian Mbappe, who also scored, had the first big chance at Parc des Princes in the fifth minute saved by the quick reacting Angers goalkeeper Paul Bernardoni. But the home side did not have to wait long for the breakthrough, a fine goal from Alessandro Florenzi in the seventh minute. The Italian defender lifted the ball over an opponent with his fist touch, then lobbed it over another defender inside the far post with his next. — AP

Union Berlin rout Mainz 4-0

Berlin: Former Germany striker Max Kruse launched Union Berlin to a 4-0 rout of Mainz for their biggest ever Bundesliga win and their first of the season. Finland forward Joel Pohjanpalo also scored, just seconds after coming on for his debut, to wrap up an unhappy start for new Mainz coach Jan-Moritz Lichte. Former assistant coach Lichte took over Mainz on an interim basis on Monday when the club fired Achim Beierlorzer after losing their first two games and players boycotted a training session in support of a demoted player, Adam Szalai. — AP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Mumbai Indians vs Sunrisers Hyderabad from 3.30 pm; Kings XI Punjab vs Chennai Super Kings from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

French Open: Matches from 2.30 pm on Star Sports, Select 2

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Leicester City vs West Ham from 4.30 pm; Arsenal vs Sheffield United from 6.30 pm; Manchester United vs Tottenham Hotspur from 9 pm; Aston Villa vs Liverpool from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

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DELHI DHAMAKA

Shreyas leads from front as DC down KKR in run-feast

Sharjah, Oct. 3: Shreyas Iyer showed his class with a captain's knock and pacer Anrich Nortje honoured his skipper's heroics by bowling a splendid penultimate over in Delhi Capitals' 18-run victory over Kolkata Knight Riders in a thrilling IPL match here on Saturday.

Iyer's (88 no off 38 balls) magnificent power-hitting after Prithvi Shaw's opening act propelled Delhi Capitals to an impressive 228 for four after being put into bat first by Dinesh Karthik.

If Iyer and Shaw weren't not enough, Rishabh Pant (38 off 17 balls) dusted off his rustiness with a quickfire knock.

The target was difficult but not impossible but Delhi produced the best effort by a pace bowling unit on a placid track with KKR finishing at 210 for 8.

Harshal Patel, as Ishant Sharma's replacement, did well enough to finish with 2 for 34 in 4 overs while the ever-improving Nortje (3/33 in 4 overs) was also

SCORECARD

Delhi Capitals: P. Shaw c Shubman Gill b Nagarkoti 66, S. Dhawan c Morgan b Varun 26, S. Iyer (not out) 88, R. Pant c Shivam Mavi b Russell 38, M. Stoinis c Varun b Russell 1, S. Hetmyer (not out) 7. **Extras (w 2) 2. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) 228.** **FoW:** 1-56, 2-129, 3-201, 4-221.

Bowling: Cummins 4-0-49-0, S. Mavi 3-0-40-0, C. Varun 4-0-49-1, S. Narine 2-0-26-0, A. Russell 4-0-29-2, K. Nagarkoti 3-0-35-1. **Kolkata Knight Riders:** Shubman Gill c Pant b Mishra 28, S. Narine b Nortje 3, N.

Rana c sub (AR Patel) b HV Patel 58, A. Russell c Nortje b Rabada 13, D. Karthik c Dhawan b HV Patel 6, E. Morgan c Hetmyer b Nortje 44, P. Cummins c HV Patel b Nortje 5, R. Tripathi b Stoinis 36, K. Nagarkoti (not out) 3, Shivam Mavi (not out) 1. **Extras (b 4, lb 2, nb 2, w 5) 13. Total (for eight wickets in 20 overs) 210.** **FoW:** 1-8, 2-72, 3-94, 4-117, 5-117, 6-122, 7-200, 8-207.

Bowling: K. Rabada 4-0-51-1, Nortje 4-0-33-3, R. Ashwin 2-0-26-0, M. Stoinis 4-0-46-1, H. Patel 4-0-34-2, A. Mishra 2-0-14-1.

impressive.

However, it was Kagiso Rabada (1/51 in 4 overs), who dismissed the dangerous Andre Russell (13) cheaply, was taken to task by Eoin Morgan (44 from 18 balls) and Rahul Tripathi (36 off 16 balls) in

the 18th over that got KKR 23 runs.

With 31 to get from 12 balls, Nortje bowled a superb 19th over getting rid of Morgan and only giving five runs in the process.

With 26 needed off the last over,



SHREYAS IYER			
R	B	6s	4s
88	38	6	7

Delhi skipper Shreyas Iyer in action against KKR. — BCCI

Upbeat Sunrisers take on MI

Sharjah, Oct. 3: Boasting an explosive batting lineup that complements their effective death bowling, Mumbai Indians will have their nose ahead in the IPL match against Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Sunday.

To add to SRH's worry, doubts remained over lead seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar's participation in the match. Bhuvneshwar picked up an injury on Friday night and was unable to complete his final over in the game against Chennai Super Kings. He walked off the field with the help of the team physio.

In the event the experienced seamer misses out, table-toppers Mumbai will fancy their chances more at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium, whose boundaries are much shorter than Dubai and Abu Dhabi and have been a paradise for power-hitters.

The defending champions, having humbled a strong Kings XI Punjab in their last game, are unlikely to make any changes to the winning



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Priyam Garg (left) and Abhishek Sharma. — BCCI

combination. Skipper Rohit Sharma is in sublime form and he can pummel any attack into submission on his day. Rohit has scored 170 runs from four games this season.

While the poor form of Quinton De Kock is worrisome, the prolific Suryakumar Yadav would be more than keen to convert his starts. The biggest positive for the

defending champions is that their middle-order has finally delivered with Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya and Kieron Pollard launching into opposition attacks with their big-hitting prowess. Young Kishan has been the find for MI, after his blistering yet responsible knock against Royal Challengers Bangalore. — PTI

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 13
● SRH won: 7
● Mumbai: 6

MEETING IN 2019

● Mumbai beat Sunrisers by 40 runs at Hyderabad.
● Mumbai beat Sunrisers in Super Over at Mumbai.

FOR THE RECORD

● David Warner holds the record for the most number of 50+ scores in IPL. He has made 48 fifty plus scores (four hundreds and 44 fifties) in 130 innings.

● Trent Boult who has played 99 matches since 2009 will complete his century of matches in T20.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

Hopefully, this year shows these kids what they're capable of.

— DAVID WARNER
SRH captain on performance of youngsters Priyam Garg and Abhishek Sharma

CHENNAI SEEK TURNAROUND IN CLASH OF KINGS

Dubai, Oct. 3: Hit hard by a start that least defines them, Chennai Super Kings would be desperate to find answers to their predicament when they take on Kings XI Punjab in an IPL match here on Sunday.

So used to be on top of their game in the previous editions, sitting at the bottom of the points table now with three losses in four matches is an unknown territory for the Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led side.

Nothing has worked for them despite having the resources. They even made three changes to their playing XI against Sunrisers Hyderabad but neither comeback of Ambati Rayudu nor the presence of Dwayne Bravo could lift the gloom. A misfiring top-order, save Fav du Plessis, combined with inadequate run-flow in the middle overs and the habit of leaving way too much for the climax, proved to be their bane.

— PTI



RCB skipper Virat Kohli en route to his first half-century of the IPL season. — BCCI

Kohli back in form, RCB win

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 3: Captain Virat Kohli roared back to form with an unbeaten 72 and stitched a 99-run stand with Devdutt Padikkal (63) to power Royal Challengers Bangalore to a comfortable eight-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in an IPL match here on Saturday.

This was after wrist spinner Yuzvendra Chahal snared three wickets in an impressive bowling show that helped them restrict RR to 154 for 6.

Kohli's knock came off 53 balls with seven fours and two sixes. It was RCB's third win in four matches.

Padikkal yet again produced an impressive innings before he was dismissed by Jofra Archer in the 16th over after hitting six fours and one six.

The young RCB opener allowed his captain to get in and settle down before Kohli produced some of his trademark shots later on to accelerate.

The RCB needed 31 runs after Padikkal's dismissal and another in-form batsman AB de Villiers (12 not out) ensured that his side reached the target with five balls to spare. Having failed to score big in his earlier three innings (14, 1, 3), Kohli took time to settle down and scored mostly in ones and twos initially.

Padikkal continued his good form having scored 56, 1, 54 in his three earlier innings. He reached to his fifty in 34 balls. He was the

SCORECARD

Rajasthan Royals: Jos Buttler c Padikkal b Saini 22, Steve Smith b Udana 5, Sanju Samson c & b Chahal 4, Robin Uthappa c Udana b Chahal 17, Mahipal Lomror c Padikkal b Chahal 47, Riyan Parag c Finch b Udana 16, Rahul Tewatia (not out) 24, Jofra Archer (not out) 16. **Extras (LB-1, NB-1, W-1) 3. Total (for six wickets in 20 overs) 154.** **FoW:** 1-27, 2-31, 3-31, 4-70, 5-105, 6-114.

Bowling: I. Udana 4-0-41-2, Washington 4-0-20-0, N. Saini 4-1-37-1, Y. Chahal 4-0-24-3, A. Zampa 3-0-27-0, S. Dube 1-0-4-0.

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Devdutt Padikkal b Archer 63, Aaron Finch lbw b Gopal 8, Virat Kohli (not out) 72, AB de Villiers (not out) 12. **Extras (B-1, W-2) 3. Total (for 2 wickets in 19.1 overs) 158.** **FoW:** 1-25, 2-124.

Bowling: J. Archer 4-0-18-1, J. Unadkat 3-0-31-0, S. Gopal 4-0-27-1, T. Curran 3.1-0-40-0, R. Tewatia 4-0-28-0, R. Parag 1-0-13-0.

dominant batsman in RCB's opening stand of 25 runs with Aaron Finch who was out in the third over with a score of 8.

Earlier, Chahal returned with figures of 3/24 from his four overs to restrict RR to 154 for 6.

Chahal jumped to joint top spot in the bowlers' chart with Kings XI Punjab's Mohammed Shami on eight wickets.

— PTI

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	4	3	1	0	6	+0.588
Royal Challengers Bangalore	4	3	1	0	6	-0.954
Mumbai Indians	4	2	2	0	4	+1.094
Sunrisers Hyderabad	4	2	2	0	4	-0.084
Kolkata Knight Riders	4	2	2	0	4	-0.121
Rajasthan Royals	4	2	2	0	4	-0.317
Kings XI Punjab	4	1	3	0	2	+0.521
Chennai Super Kings	4	1	3	0	2	-0.719

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

NUMBERS GAME — CSK vs KXIP

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 22
● CSK won: 13
● Punjab won: 9

MEETING IN 2019

● Chennai Super Kings defeated Kings XI Punjab by 22 runs at Chennai.
● Kings XI Punjab beat Chennai Super Kings by six wickets at Mohali

FOR THE RECORD

● Mohammed Shami who has taken eight wickets at an average of 14.75 in four innings is the joint highest wicket-taker this edition.

● M.S. Dhoni who has smashed 299 sixes in 287 innings of 321 matches needs just one more to become the 21st batsman to complete a triple century of sixes in T20 cricket

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

Young guns manifest the richness of Indian cricket



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

Insane hitting by batsmen, especially in the death overs, has been one of the major talking points of the IPL's second week. Power-hitters like Rohit, Rahul and Samson from the top order, and Pollard and Hardik Pandya as finishers, have peppered the grounds with sixes galore.

Then there is Rahul Tewatia, who hit five sixes in an over to transform defeat into victory for Rajasthan over Punjab, making a Himalayan tar-

get of 223 look like a stroll in the park. And Watson, Warner, Russell, Bairstow, Morgan and Pant — who binge on sixes — haven't yet got into full throttle!

Interestingly, while flat pitches, fast outfield and small grounds (Sharjah) have enabled several scores of 200+ plus already, apart from two stirring Super Over finishes, bowlers haven't exactly been rendered inconsequential.

Shami, Cummins, Rabada among pacemen

and Chahal and Rashid among spinners have been quite superb. If they've sometimes still finished on the losing side, it is because their batsmen failed them.

For India's superstars, it's been a mixed bag so far. Rohit has hit splendid form and, after losing the first match, has inspired Mumbai to the top of the table as much with his batting as tactical nous in crunch situations.

M.S. Dhoni was able to lift his batting form against Sunrisers yet is still short of the vigour of old that would help him win matches off his own bat. His problems are compounded by the fact that CSK are also bottom of the points table currently.

That RCB were able to

clinch a thrilling Super Over climax against Mumbai Indians, and he hit the winning shot, is only small redemption for Virat Kohli. He's otherwise had three batting failures in a row, and despite two victories, RCB still look undercooked.

The highlight of the past week for me, however has been the performance of young Indian players, manifesting the richness of cricket talent in the country as well as the role played by the IPL in exposing them to the world.

Take the match between CSK and SRH on Friday. While Warner and Rashid played big roles in the team's success, it was the rollicking partnership between 19-year-old Priyam Garg and 20-year-

old Abhishek Sharma which turned things around.

All looked lost when Warner and Williamson were dismissed off successive deliveries before Garg and Sharma played with great intrepidity to break CSK's stranglehold. SRH's young bowlers Natarajan, Khaleel and Samad played their part splendidly too.

This is not an isolated example where India's youngsters have shone. KKR, who have invested in Shubman Gill, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Shivam Mavi and Varun Chakravarthy have started reaping rewards already.

Gill is becoming widely regarded as India's best young batsman. Coach Ravi Shastri, who I spoke to, thinks very highly of

him and sees him as someone who should be a "regular fixture for India in all formats."

Leg spinners Ravi Bishnoi (Punjab) and Rahul Chahar (Mumbai) have caught the eye too even if they haven't claimed as many wickets as Chahal or Rashid.

Getting into a slightly older age group, there is Navdeep Saini, Sanju Samson, Prithvi Shaw, Rishabh Pant, Shreyas Iyer who are also serving their teams with great efficiency, some of them with excellence.

A bulk of these players have come from the under-19 teams, but the IPL showcases their talent to India's selectors, coaches and captain whose business it is to track performances of

players, especially youngsters. The importance of the IPL in fast-tracking players into the Indian team is evident from what's happened in the past 12 years: R. Ashwin, Rahane, Jadeja, Rahul, even Rohit and Kohli to an extent have benefited from playing in the league.

Of course, not everybody who has excelled in the IPL has made it to the India team or been able to sustain a place, as the examples of Paul Valthaty, Manpreet Gony, Pawan Negi and several others highlight.

Having got the platform and the attention, it is still up to the player to make the most of the opportunity. An India career does not come free, whatever the earnings in the IPL.