

IN BRIEF

Man arrested for illegal arms supply

New Delhi: Delhi Police has nabbed a 38-year-old man for allegedly supplying illegal firearms and ammunition to criminals in Delhi and its neighbouring areas. Police said that they have also recovered five country made pistols from the possession of the accused. The accused has been identified as Ashok Kumar, a resident of Mathura district in Uttar Pradesh, who was arrested by the Delhi Police on Friday, they said. According to Atul Kumar Thakur, deputy commissioner of police (DCP), South district, to curb smuggling of firearms from Uttar Pradesh into Delhi, a police team was formed to collect intelligence and gather information regarding such racketeers. "On Friday, we received information that an illegal arms supplier, Ashok Kumar, would come to MB road here near Tughlakabad Fort to deliver a consignment of illegal firearms. Accordingly, our team laid a trap and he was nabbed," said the DCP. "Five country made pistols along with eight live cartridges were recovered from his possession and a case was registered against him at Sangam Vihar police station," said the DCP. "On interrogation, Kumar told police that he was earlier into farming but after shifting to his uncle's village, he came in contact with local criminals there. He was supplying arms and ammunition to criminals in Delhi-NCR for the last one year to make a quick buck," said the DCP. "On Thursday, he received the consignment of illegal arms and ammunition from another criminal in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh and was supposed to deliver it in Delhi-NCR," the DCP added.

3 held for robbing man's cell phone

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested three men for allegedly robbing a man of his mobile phone after choking him while he was waiting for some conveyance near a bus stand in National Capital. The incident occurred on the intervening night of Friday-Saturday. The accused were identified as Shavez (27), Rohit Prajapati (22) and Mohammad Nasir (32). Police said that they have also recovered the phone from the possession of the accused. According to Anto Alphonse, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), North district, the incident took place on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, when Neeraj, a resident of outer Delhi's Sultanpuri area, came to Old Delhi railway station to see off his sister who was leaving for Patna. "Neeraj was waiting for some conveyance near a bus stand on SP Mukherjee Marg to return home. At around 3 am, he was accosted by three persons and one of them choked him. They robbed him of his mobile phone and fled towards T-Point, SP Marg," said the DCP. "When the man raised the alarm, the picket staff deployed at T-Point around 100 metre away chased and apprehended two of the accused, later identified as Shavez and Rohit and the robbed mobile phone was also recovered from their possession," said the DCP. "A case under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered at Lahori Gate police station and during the course of investigation, the third accused Mohammad Nasir, who had managed to escape from the spot, was also arrested," said the DCP.

Cop among 2 injured in outer Delhi firing

New Delhi: Two unidentified men allegedly opened fire at a 54-year-old man, injuring him and his friend who is an assistant sub-inspector in Delhi Police, officials said. The incident took place at around 6 pm on Sunday at Alipur area of outer Delhi, they said, adding that the accused were absconding. Both the injured persons, ASI Sube Singh of the Seelampur police station and Mahendra are undergoing treatment at a nearby hospital, police said, adding that they are stable. Soon after the incident, Mahendra called up police and told them that two assailants fired upon him when he was with Singh in Alipur. Mahendra got injured when a bullet passed touching him, while Singh received a bullet injury on his right leg. Deputy commissioner of police (Outer North) Gaurav Sharma said a case has been registered and an investigation is underway.

Woman gangraped, brutally beaten up in Gurgaon; 4 held

Chandigarh, Oct. 4: A 25-year-old woman was allegedly raped and brutally beaten up by four men in Gurgaon, causing her severe head injuries, in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

All the accused, aged between 20 and 25, were arrested within hours of the crime, they said.

The incident took place in Gurgaon's DLF Phase 2, Assistant Commissioner of Police, DLF, Karan Goyal said over the phone. All the four accused, three of them delivery boys, have been arrested, he said.

Goyal said one of the four accused met the woman on Saturday night near Sikanderpur metro station in Gurgaon and took her to a realtor's office, where the crime took place.

The other three accused were present there. One of the accused worked at the realtor's office and had the keys to the complex, he said.

The ACP said the accused beat up the woman when she resisted their attempts. Her head was smashed against a wall. "She suffered a deep cut on her

▶ **THE ACCUSED** fled the spot after committing the crime. After hearing the woman's cries for help, a security guard in the complex alerted the police who reached the spot and took her to the hospital, the police said.

▶ **A case has been registered against the accused, who were nabbed within hours of the crime, under relevant provisions of the law, another police official said.**

head and was hospitalised in Gurgaon," he said.

The accused fled the spot after committing the crime. After hearing the woman's cries for help, a security guard in the complex alerted the police who reached the spot and took her to the hospital, the police said.

A case has been registered against the accused, who were nabbed within hours of the crime, under relevant provisions of the law, another police official said.

— PTI



National Akali Dal president Paramjit Singh Pamma and party activists shout slogans during a demonstration against rising incidents of rape in the country and demanded fast track court for all rape cases in New Delhi on Sunday.

— AFP

DU may announce cut-offs for UG programmes on Oct. 10

New Delhi, Oct. 4: The Delhi University (DU) plans to announce cut-offs for various undergraduate courses on October 10, two days ahead of the commencement of the admission process to allow students adequate time to choose courses and colleges.

The varsity is holding the entire admission process online for the first time due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to the schedule released by DU on September 25, admissions under the first cut-off list will begin on October 12 and end on October 14. The last day to submit fees will be October 16 and the new academic session will commence on November 18.

▶ **ACCORDING TO** the schedule released by DU on September 25, admissions under the first cut-off list will begin on October 12 and end on October 14. The last day to submit fees will be October 16 and the new academic session will commence on November 18.

Delhi University dean (Admissions) Shobha Bagai said the varsity will hold a webinar for applicants on Friday.

"We will be holding a webinar for students on how to calculate their cut-offs and choose courses and colleges on the dashboard. We will also be holding a meeting with

college conveners. There is a need to sensitise anybody, from colleagues in colleges to candidates, who tend to get anxious," she said.

Ms Bagai advised applicants to read the notices uploaded on the website.

"We are aiming to release cut-offs on October 10 so that the applicants have a day to go through it and make themselves familiar. We have requested the principals to share the cut-offs with us in time. It will depend on when they give us the cut-offs," she said.

Professor Balaram Pani, the dean of colleges, said all principals have been asked to share the cut-offs with the varsity by October 9.

— PTI

Great Golden Circus only recognised circus in India: CZA tells High Court

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) has told the Delhi high court that the Great Golden Circus in Gujarat is the only circus in the entire country which is recognised under the Wildlife Protection Act.

However, a notice has been sent to the circus to show cause why its recognition should not be cancelled for alleged violation of the provisions of the act with regard to maintenance and display of captive elephants, the CZA has told the high court.

The submissions were made by the authority in its affidavit filed before a bench of Justices Vipin

Sanghi and Rajnish Bhatnagar in response to PILs by the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisation (FIAPO).

PETA India, represented by advocates Aman Hingorani and Swati Sumbly, has claimed in its plea that due to the Covid-19 outbreak and resultant lockdown circuses are finding it difficult to feed the animals that are at various stages of starvation.

It has sought a direction to the Centre to immediately notify the Performing Animals (Registration) Amendment Rules of 2018, which expressly prohibit

▶ **FIAPO, which is a group of 100 organisations and works towards the protection of animal rights for over a decade, has challenged the constitutional validity of Sections 21 to 27 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act so far as they permit exhibition and training of animals in relation to circus acts**

training and exhibition of performing animals in circuses and "mobile entertainment facilities."

FIAPO, which is a group of 100 organisations and works towards the protection of animal rights for over a decade, has challenged the constitutional

**■ 38 fatalities in 24 hours, death toll reaches 5,510
2,683 new Covid cases in city take tally past 2.9 lakh**

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

The national capital recorded 2,683 fresh Covid-19 cases on Sunday, taking the tally to over 2.90 lakh, while 38 more fatalities took the death toll to 5,510, authorities said. This is the third day in a row that the city reported less than 3,000 new cases. Authorities reported 2,258 new cases on Saturday and 2,920 fresh cases on Friday.

Delhi reported 38 deaths on Sunday. The fatality count was 34 on Saturday, the lowest since September 25 when 24 fatalities were recorded.

Forty-eight deaths were reported on September 29, the highest in a day since July 16, when the city reported 58 deaths.

The Covid-19 caseload rose to 2,90,613 lakh with 2,683 more people contracting the viral disease. The death toll stands at 5,510, according to the

Drones used for surveillance over containment zones

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

To combat the threat of Covid-19, the Delhi Police has used drones for effective surveillance of containment zones in the national capital.

According to R.P. Meena, deputy commissioner of police (DCP), Southeast district, during the lockdown period, police had hired drones from Aerodyne India and it helped the police in fighting the pandemic.

"The drones helped policemen to monitor

the situation from a safe distance, thereby ensuring some distancing. The drones carried both day and night day surveillance and successfully collected data in the form of images and videos," said the DCP.

"The facility was used in the areas of all police stations of the southeast district, which proved to be effective in surveillance of the COVID situation and also helped us to take quick action to cut the risk of the spread of the disease," said the DCP.

Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital reported 3,037 fresh cases on Thursday, 3,390 cases on Wednesday, 3,227 cases

on Tuesday, and 1,984 cases on Monday.

Of the total cases reported in Delhi so far, 2,60,350 have either recovered, been discharged or

Schools to remain closed till Oct. 31 in Delhi: Govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

All schools in the national capital will continue to remain closed till October 31 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, Delhi government officials said on Sunday.

The Delhi government had earlier extended the school closure date till October 5 though the Centre had permitted calling students of Classes 9 to 12 to schools on voluntary basis from September 21.

During this Covid-19 crisis, it would not be appropriate to take any risk regarding children's health. Therefore, the Delhi government has decided to continue the closure of schools till October 31.

During this period, online education will continue in all schools, a Delhi government official

▶ **THE DELHI** government had earlier extended the school closure date till October 5 though the Centre had permitted calling students of Classes 9 to 12 to schools on voluntary basis from September 21

said on Sunday.

"All heads of schools have been authorised to call teachers and staff members for smooth conduct of online classes, teaching learning activities, and any other work during this period," the official added.

The Directorate of Education (DoE) has also directed all government and private schools that a message regarding wearing mask, following physical distancing, and maintaining hand hygiene is to be conveyed to students as a way to

combat Covid-19 situation before starting any online activity.

Universities and schools across the country have been closed since March 16 when the Centre announced a nationwide classroom shutdown as part of the measures to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

On March 25, the Central government had announced a nationwide lockdown to tame the spread of the virus. While several restrictions have been eased gradually in different phases of "Unlock" since June 8, educational institutions continue to remain closed.

However, as per the latest unlock guidelines schools, colleges, and other educational institutions can reopen outside containment zones after October 15.

migrated out.

As many as 50,832 tests were conducted to detect Covid-19 infection on Saturday, of which 8,963 were RTPCR/CBNAAT/TrueN

The health authorities have conducted around 4.66 lakh tests in the last 10 days — an average of more than 46,600 tests a day. The total number of tests conducted was 28,15,650 on September 25. It rose to 32,81,784 on Sunday. The case positivity rate during the last 24 hours was 5.28 per cent while the cumulative positivity rate was 8.86 per cent. The average death rate for the last 10 days stands at 1.29 per cent.

The number of active cases decreased from 25,234 on Saturday to 24,753 on Sunday. As many as 38 containment zones were added in the last 24 hours. The number of red zones was 2,696 on Sunday.

Noida: 1 more Covid death; recovery rate almost 90%

Noida, Oct. 4: Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar recorded one more fatality linked to Covid-19 on Sunday, taking the death toll in the district to 56, official data showed.

The total number of patients who have recovered from the infection crossed 12,000-mark and the recovery rate also reached almost 90 per cent, it showed. Also, 166 more people tested positive for the disease in the district, where the case tally has now reached 13,731, according to the data released by the UP Health Department for a 24-hour period.

However, the number of active cases fell to 1,333 from 1,538 on Saturday as 371 more patients got discharged during the period, it showed.

— PTI

4 held for extorting money by posing as power distribution company employees

New Delhi, Oct. 4: Four men have been arrested for allegedly extorting money from a person by posing as employees of a power distribution company, police said on Sunday.

The accused told the victim that a complaint regarding tampering of electricity meter installed at his house in west Delhi's Uttam Nagar has been received and extorted money from him, they said.

The accused — Rohit (34), Lalit (30), Vinay Kumar (30) and Rahul Attri (27) — told the police during interrogation that they previously worked in BSES, but after losing their jobs due to the Covid-19-induced lockdown, they decided to extort money from people

by fraudulent means, they said.

Police have recovered ₹3,000 along with two gold earring, which the accused had extorted from the resident of Uttam Nagar.

The incident took place on September 22.

Police said the four accused arrived at Sonu's house and introduced themselves as BSES employees. They told Sonu that they have a complaint against him for tampering with the electricity meter.

Of the four accused, two of them started checking the electric meter and threatened Sonu that if a case police complaint is filed, he will be punished. Then the accused told the victim that if he wanted to avoid all these problems,

he would have to pay ₹7 lakh, a senior police officer said.

But when Sonu expressed his inability to pay the amount, they reduced it to ₹3 lakh. However, the victim insisted that he was unable to pay even that much as he was jobless. Finally the accused agreed that the victim would pay them ₹30,000-40,000, he said.

Police said one of the accused also demanded ornaments of the victim's mother and took her two gold earrings.

The accused then took Sonu to a nearby ATM from where they made him withdraw ₹25,000. They also took away ₹6,000 from the victim's pocket and made him transfer ₹8,000 via Paytm into the

account of one of the accused, the officer said.

Based on Sonu's statement, a case was registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code at Uttam Nagar police station and during investigation, the driver of the alleged vehicle, which was used to take the victim to the ATM, was traced and apprehended, the officer said.

The driver revealed details about Vinay, who had contacted him and hired his vehicle, said Santosh Kumar Meena, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka).

The police then apprehended Vinay and subsequently all the remaining accused were also arrested, he said.

— PTI

Ex-JNU student leader Khalid sent to 14-day judicial custody

New Delhi, Oct. 4: A Delhi court on Sunday sent former JNU student leader Umar Khalid to judicial custody for 14 days in a case related to the communal violence in north east Delhi in February and directed prison authorities to provide him adequate security.

Metropolitan Magistrate Dev Saroha sent him to jail after he was produced before the judge on expiry of his police custody in the case related to riots in Khajuri Khas area.

The court directed the Jail Superintendent to provide adequate security to Khalid while taking proper precautions that no harm should be caused to him. It had earlier sent him to police custody for three days in the case.



Umar Khalid

Khalid was arrested under the stringent anti-terrorism law — Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act — in a separate case related to a larger conspiracy in the north east Delhi riots.

In application filed through his counsel advocate Trideep Pais, Khalid sought adequate security in prison so that he is not harmed by anyone in judicial custody.

In the plea, Pais sought

that Khalid may be permitted to communicate with his family, friends and relatives in accordance with jail rules.

Khalid also submitted that he has not signed any statements or documents during his police custody. The application sought permission for two legal interviews a week with his counsel using video conferencing facility for at least 30 minutes on each occasion outside the audible range of prison officials.

He sought permission to leave his cell early morning and be locked up at dusk in compliance with the Delhi prison rules, 2018, with adequate security arrangements and not to be confined to his cell for extended period of time.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

YSR Congress leader succumbs to Covid

Visakhapatnam :YSR Congress leader and former MLA Dronamraju Srinivas succumbed to Covid here on Sunday. He was 59 and survived by his wife, son and daughter. Srinivas got infected with coronavirus a month ago and was shifted to a corporate hospital for treatment after the initial home isolation period, YSRC sources said. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed shock and grief over Srinivas' death. "Srinivas was a soft spoken and committed party leader. The Dronamraju family always played a key role in North Andhra and the passing away of Srinivas is heartrending," he said in a statement. The chief minister conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family. Srinivas served as a Congress MLA twice from Visakhapatnam South. — PTI

Guj: 5 held in 2 rape cases in Jamnagar

Ahmedabad: Five people were arrested in two separate cases of rape in Gujarat, police said on Sunday. A 17-year-old girl was allegedly raped by four persons when she went to meet a friend on September 28, a Jamnagar C-Division police station official said. "Three of the four accused were arrested on Sunday, while one is absconding," he said. "She (girl) spoke about the incident to her mother two days ago after which a case under section 376D (gang-rape) of IPC and provisions of the POCSO Act was filed," the official said. In another incident, a 35-year-old woman was allegedly threatened and raped by two persons on several occasions in the last 15 days at Santrampur town of Gujarat's Mahisagar district, police said. The accused got the mobile number of the victim from a phone recharge booth, they said. — PTI

Sushant case: Lawyer for new forensic team

New Delhi: Actor Sushant Singh Rajput's family lawyer Vikas Singh said on Sunday that he was highly perturbed by the AIIMS' medico-legal opinion submitted to the CBI and would request the probe agency's chief to constitute a fresh forensic team in the case. Casting aspersions over the AIIMS' medical board ruling out murder in the death of Rajput, the senior advocate said how can the expert team give a conclusive opinion in the absence of the actor's body. "Highly perturbed with AIIMS report. Going to request the CBI director to constitute a fresh forensic team. — PTI

Get well soon: Sena to Ranaut

Mumbai: Following the AIIMS report confirming Sushant Singh Rajput's death as a suicide, Shiv Sena has taken potshots at actress Kangana Ranaut asking her to get mentally better for coming up with vile conspiracy and vulture theories. Without naming her, the party said those abused Mumbai police and cast aspersions on their credibility should apologize to them unconditionally. "After the AIIMS report, shouldn't all those who were gunning for Mumbai Police, abusing them, casting aspersions on their credibility offer them an unconditional apology? All those who came up with their vile conspiracy & vulture theories should really try to get mentally better soon," tweeted Sena leader Priyanka

K'taka: 2 tuskers die of electrocution

Bengaluru: Two elephants were electrocuted after they came into contact with a live wire inside the Bannerghatta National Park near here, forest department authorities said on Sunday. "Two elephants died of electrocution. I went to the spot Saturday and observed that there is an electric line near a water body and those electric poles are bent which caused the electrocution," Principal Chief Conservator of Forest Ajai Misra said. According to the forest department, the incident happened at Chikkondanahalli lake near the Ramadevarabetta forest when these jumbos had gone to drink water on Saturday.

PM, top BJP leaders meet to finalise Bihar list

Cong likely to finalise some of its candidates on Monday

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

The BJP central election committee (CEC) met at the party headquarters, which was also attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to discuss candidates for the Bihar polls. Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nityanand Rai, election in-charge and former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, national general secretary (organisation) BL Santosh, national spokesperson Shah Nawaz Hussain, state organisational secretary Nagendra also attended.

Earlier during the day, BJP president J.P. Nadda held meeting with the party's Bihar core group, which was also attended by Union home minister Amit Shah, national general secretary and Bihar in-charge Bhupendra Yadav and state unit chief Sanjay Mr Jaishwal among others.

"There can be difference of ideologies on many seats with the JD(U)... voters should be able to decide

CPI picks candidates in quota of 6 seats

Patna, Oct. 4: The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Sunday announced the names of candidates for six Assembly constituencies that the party was given under the seat-sharing arrangement of the Grand Alliance in Bihar. The CPI will be contesting Bakhri, Teghra, Bachhwara, Harlakhi, Jhanjharpur and Rupauli seats, the party's state secretary Ram Naresh Pandey said. Pandey, a two-time MLA, will contest Harlakhi constituency in Madhubani district again. — PTI

who they want as their candidate. The LJP wants to implement the Bihar vision document and the two parties have not been able to reach a consensus on it," the official statement by the party underlined. Suggesting that ties with

the BJP remain intact even as it parts ways with Nitish Kumar's JD(U), the party stressed: "However, we have a strong alliance with the BJP and even in Bihar, we want to continue this collaboration. There is no sourness in our relations. After the state elections, all the candidates who win will form a BJP-LJP government and follow the path of progress shown by PM Modi."

The Congress is likely to finalise some of its candidates for the Bihar assembly poll on Monday when the party's central election committee may meet virtually. The Congress Screening Committee on Bihar met here on Sunday and is learnt to have discussed the names of probable candidates for the upcoming elections in the state. The meeting of the screening panel, headed by Avinash Pande, was attended by Congress in-charge for Bihar affairs Shakti Singh Gohil, Bihar Congress chief Madan Mohan Jha and CLP leader Sadanand Singh among others.



Lok Janshakti Party workers celebrate after being separated from NDA ahead of Bihar Assembly Elections in Patna on Sunday. — PTI

Neta who accused Tejashwi of cash-for-ticket shot dead

Purnea/Patna, Oct. 4: A 37-year-old Dalit leader was gunned down at his residence in Bihar's Purnea district on Sunday and his wife alleged that it was a political killing as her husband was preparing to contest Assembly election as an independent candidate after he was expelled from the RJD.

After the killing, a video in which the deceased, Shakti Malik, accused RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav of seeking ₹50 lakh as donation to give him party ticket to contest the poll from Raniganj seat and threatening to eliminate him if he continues with his good work in the constituency, went viral.

The ruling JD(U) claimed that Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Prasad Yadav has exposed his true colours before the nation. Repeated efforts to reach senior RJD leaders for their reaction were unsuccessful.

Police said that three bike-borne men entered

▶ **AFTER THE killing, a video in which the deceased, Shakti Malik, accused RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav of seeking ₹50 lakh as donation to give him party ticket to contest the poll from Raniganj seat**

the house of Shakti Malik in Purnea in the morning and shot him in the head while he was sleeping, killing him on the spot, and fled. A country-made pistol and an empty cartridge were found from the spot, K Haat police station Station House Officer Sunil Kumar Mandal said. SP Vishal Sharma and Sadar Sub-Divisional Police Officer Anand Pandey visited the spot.

In the video that went viral, Malik claimed that he, along with the RJD's SC/ST cell state unit president, met Tejashwi Prasad Yadav in Patna where the RJD leader sought Rs 50 lakh as donation to give him party ticket to contest

Raniganj assembly constituency.

According to the video, when Malik said that he would let him know of his decision later, Tejashwi made a casteist remark against him and threatened to eliminate him.

It was not immediately clear when Malik made this statement to a Purnea based television channel. The deceased's wife also alleged that there is a political conspiracy behind her husband's killing and named several leaders who could be involved in it.

JD(U) spokesman Raviv Ranjan Prasad claimed that Malik was a Mahadalit and his family members' statements corroborate the allegations levelled by him. "We have been raising the issue of dynastic politics, corruption, Tejashwi's inexperience especially in dealing with alliance politics but the latest allegations has completely exposed him," Prasad told reporters. — PTI

Chouhan to meet Central BJP leaders to finalise candidates MP bypolls: Shivraj reaches Delhi

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, OCT. 4

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, on Sunday, left for Delhi to finalise candidates for the 28 Assembly constituencies which are going to by-polls on November 3.

Mr Chouhan was scheduled to meet Central BJP leaders to finalise candidates for the November 3 Assembly by-polls in the state which may prove crucial for survival of his government.

Earlier, Bharatiya Janata Party decided in principle to re-nominate the 25 ex-Congress MLAs who have resigned from the House and the grand old party leading to the



Shivraj Singh

▶ **SHIVRAJ CHOUHAN** was scheduled to meet Central BJP leaders to finalise candidates for the Nov. 3 Assembly bypolls in the state which may prove crucial for survival of his govt.

▶ **Earlier, BJP decided in principle to re-nominate the 25 ex-Cong MLAs who have resigned from the House leading to the collapse of the Kamal Nath govt in March**

collapse of the Kamal Nath government in March this year from their respective Assembly seats in the ensuing by-elections.

However, the party was yet to finalise candidates for three other Assembly constituencies—Joura, Agar, and Byabra—leading to the delay in the

release of the candidates' list.

By-elections in these three Assembly seats were necessitated following the death of sitting MLAs.

"State election committee of the party has recommended two names each for the three Assembly seats to

the Central election committee of party for finalisation of candidates for these constituencies," a senior BJP leader here said.

Filing of nomination for the Assembly by-elections would commence from October 9.

Congress has already announced its candidates for 24 Assembly seats. Similarly, BSP has come out with a list of its candidates for 18 seats.

Both the parties are expected to declare candidates in the rest poll-bound Assembly constituencies in a day or two.

While Bharatiya Janata Party has a strength of 107 in the 230-member MP Assembly, Congress has 88 MLAs.



A farmer burns paddy stubble at a farm on the outskirts of Amritsar on Sunday. — PTI

No more than 100 people can attend poll rallies: MP HC

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, OCT 4

Gwalior bench of Madhya Pradesh high court has directed to register FIR if the poll rallies being organised by political parties in the election-bound assembly constituencies in the state, comprised more than 100 people each. A court's directive came on Saturday in the wake of the spike in coronavirus positive cases in the state. The state has reported 1.33 lakh Covid positive cases and 2399 deaths till date.

The court's order came ahead of crucial byelections in 28 assembly constituencies in the state, scheduled to be held on Nov. 3. The court's directive was in response to PIL filed by advocate Ashish Pratap Singh.

The court has also appointed a 3-member-lawyer team to keep a vigil on the political activities in the state and report cases of breach of protocol, if found, to the court through its registrar. The petitioner has contended that the political parties attracted huge crowds in their rallies which has increased risk of spreading the virus.

The court in its interim order observed that the politicians, leaders, and functionaries of the state

Union minister R.V. Paswan undergoes heart surgery

New Delhi, Oct. 4: Union minister and Lok Janshakti Party patron Ram Vilas Mr Paswan has undergone a heart surgery, his son Chirag Paswan said on Sunday.

Ram Vilas Paswan (74), who has been in active politics for more than five decades and is one of the country's most noted Dalit leaders, has been hospitalised for the last few weeks.

He was operated upon at a private hospital in the national capital. He has long suffered from a heart condition, and family sources expressed confidence that he will soon return to good health.

In a tweet, Chirag Paswan said his father underwent a heart surgery due to sudden developments on Saturday evening, which forced him to cancel a party meeting and rush to his father's side.

If needed, the Union minister for consumer affairs, food and public distribution will undergo another operation in a few weeks, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and defence minister Rajnath Singh, besides other senior leaders, spoke to Chirag Paswan to enquire about the health of his father, Lok Janshakti Party sources said.

Mr Chirag Paswan thanked people for standing with him and his family in this hour of crisis.

A key meeting of the Lok Janshakti Party, a Bharatiya Janata Party ally, over the Bihar state elections was postponed yesterday due to Ram Vilas Paswan's health. — PTI

Data Protection Bill in Budget Session likely

New Delhi, Oct 4: The Personal Data Protection Bill, which proposes to put restriction on use of personal data without explicit consent of citizens, is likely to be tabled in the next year's Budget session of Parliament, according to a source.

The draft of the bill, approved by the Cabinet in December 2019, proposes a penalty of up to ₹15 crore and up to three-year jail term for company executives for violating privacy norms.

"The time for the joint committee on the Personal Data Protection Bill has been extended to the second week of the winter session. The final bill is expected to be tabled in Parliament in the Budget session after incorporating the suggestions of the committee," the source told PTI.

The bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in February and has been referred to a Joint

Parliamentary Committee of both the Houses, headed by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi, for examination and report.

The draft approved by the Cabinet in December mandates storage of critical data of individuals by internet companies within the country while sensitive data can be transferred overseas only after explicit consent of the data owner.

The bill has been drafted following a Supreme Court judgement in August 2017 that declared 'Right to Privacy' a fundamental right.

The need for a strong personal data protection regime was further highlighted by the apex court in its judgement in September 2018 in which it held Aadhaar as a constitutionally valid scheme but struck down some provisions in the Aadhaar Act. — PTI

BJP MP warns Didi of Guerrilla style rallies

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, SEPT. 4

In what may trigger controversy, BJP MP of Barrackpore Arjun Singh has threatened the Mamata Banerjee government of a "guerrilla" style rally by the saffron party which will "shake" its state secretariat: Nabanna in Howrah on September 8.

Giving the prelude of a violent political event, he also warned the ruling Trinamul Congress that "no obstacles" would be accepted by the BJP workers in its mission. To corner the TMC ahead of the Assembly Election in the state, the BJP Yuva Morcha has called the 'Nabanna Chalo Abhijan' on seven issues—SSC/TET corruption, fair recruitment process, jobs to the unemployed, increase in age-limit to appear on the examination, make PSC free of corruption, bribery for jobs and jobs instead of

▶ **GIVING THE prelude of a violent political event, he also warned the ruling TMC that 'no obstacles' would be accepted by the BJP workers in its mission**

allowance to the unemployed—to the state secretariat which houses the chief minister's office along with several cabinet ministers and top bureaucrats.

In the upcoming 'Nabanna Chalo Abhijan' Mr Singh on Sunday claimed, "No hindrances to our Nabanna Chalo Abhijan would be tolerated. It would be gheraoed at any cost. But the plan will not be revealed beforehand. The rally would be held in a guerrilla-style. Nabanna will be shaken." He was speaking at a blood donation camp in Narayanpur of his Lok Sabha constituency where another BJP MP Saumitra Khan was also present. The Bishnupur parlia-

mentarian, who is also the state BJP Yuva Morcha president, attacked state food supplies minister Jyotipriyo Mullick. "He is a rickshaw-puller. How dare he to tell something to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar? He has no qualification. Our Nabanna Chalo Abhijan can not be prevented anyway," he added.

BJP national secretary Anupam Hazra, who has been under quarantine at a private hospital after getting infected by Covid-19, said in a video message, "The gathering for our historic Nabanna Chalo Abhijan will be around two lakhs. This is our target. We are getting a spontaneous response from the people to our event. We are fighting with the TMC which is a more dangerous virus than Corona. I also personally want to go to Nabanna if the doctor allows me." He recently revealed his wish to hug the CM if Covid infects him.

SHORT TAKES

2 Navy personnel killed in glider crash

Kochi: A Navy glider on a routine training sortie crashed here on Sunday, killing two crew members, a Defence spokesperson said. The power glider took off from INS Garuda, a Naval air station here, and crashed near Thoppumpady bridge close to the naval base at around 7 am. Both the crew members of the glider — officer Lt Rajeev Jha (39) and Petty Officer Sunil Kumar(29) — were pulled out from the wreckage and rushed to the Naval hospital INHS Sanjivani. However, they were declared brought dead, the spokesperson said. A board of inquiry has been ordered by the Southern Naval Command into the incident, he said. According to the spokesperson, Kumar was an experienced glider pilot. Lt Jha, father of two children, hailed from Dehradun in Uttarakhand. Kumar, unmarried, belonged to Bhoj in Bihar. — PTI

2 new species of pipeworts found

New Delhi: Scientists from the Agharkar Research Institute in Pune have recently discovered two new species of pipeworts in the Western Ghats of Maharashtra and Karnataka, the Department of Science and Technology said on Sunday. The species reported from Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra has been named *Eriocaulon parvicephalum* (due to its minute inflorescence size), and the other reported from Kumta, Karnataka is called *Eriocaulon karaavalense* (named after Karaavali, Coastal Karnataka region), it said. Pipeworts (*Eriocaulon*) is a plant group which completes its life cycle within a small period during monsoon. It exhibits great diversity in the Western Ghats. Around 111 species of them are found in India. Most of these are reported from the Western Ghats and the eastern Himalayas, and around 70% of them are endemic to the country. — PTI

India to have clean energy railway: Goyal

Kolkata: The Railways has embarked on a massive electrification drive and by 2023, the country will have the world's largest 100% clean energy-driven rail transport system, Union minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday. The railway minister also said that work way underway to set up an infrastructure for generating 20,000 megawatt of renewable energy, which will provide power for running the entire network. "By 2023, the Indian Railways will be the world's largest 100 per cent electrified rail transport system," Goyal said at the inauguration of an underground station of the city's East-West Metro corridor. He said that "no other part of the world, not even the most-developed country", has launched such an ambitious project. — PTI

Maha: 'Raped' teen hangs self to death

Palghar: A 19-year-old woman allegedly hanged herself to death at her home in Palghar district in Maharashtra after she was raped by a man several times on the pretext of marriage, police said on Sunday. The woman's kin, however, claimed she was depressed after being chided and humiliated by police officials while lodging a complaint against the man. A senior police officer said the allegations levelled by the woman's family will be probed. The man lured her to a friend's house and raped her several times. He had promised to marry her but started ignoring her marriage requests by making excuses like temples are not open during the lockdown, etc. — PTI

Locals, supporters of BJP clash in Assam

Nalbari (Assam): Several persons, including police personnel, were injured when locals who were staging a protest against the entry of controversial BJP leader Satya Ranjan Borah in Nalbari district on Sunday clashed with his supporters, and police wielded batons and fired in the air to disperse them, officials said. Problem began in the morning when people blocked Dhamdhama-Kadamtal road at Garbhitor village to prevent Borah, who allegedly makes provocative comments against a community, from attending a meeting at Kadamtal village, they said. — PTI

UPSC Prelims exam conducted



Candidates arrive at an examination centre to appear in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Prelims exam 2020 in New Delhi on Sunday.

Sidhu attends Rahul-led tractor rally in Punjab

Moga, Oct. 4: Punjab MLA and former state cabinet minister Navjot Singh Sidhu on Sunday attended a tractor rally led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi here to protest the Centre's new farm laws.

Mr Gandhi arrived here on Sunday for holding tractor rallies across Punjab from October 4 to 6.

The rallies, named "Kheti Bachao Yatra", would cover more than 50 km in various districts and constituencies in three days.

Mr Sidhu's participation in the rally came three days after All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary in-charge of Punjab affairs Harish Rawat met him at his residence in Amritsar. After the meeting, Rawat said the cricketer-turned-politician would attend the tractor rallies. Addressing a public gathering here, Sidhu slammed the BJP-led Centre over the farm laws termed them an "attack on federal structure".

"They (BJP government) are robbing us of our rights," he said, adding the Centre had imposed a "system which had failed in Europe and the US".

These new legislations would adversely affect five lakh labourers and 30,000 commissioned agents, Mr Sidhu claimed.

When Punjab Cabinet minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa on the stage asked Sidhu to cut short his speech, he replied, "Brother, do not stop me today."

Slamming the BJP-led Centre over the issue of farm laws, Mr Sidhu said the Union government has turned "ungrateful" and was "trying to take away" fixed income of farmers.



N.S. Sidhu

Cong states to hold House session to defer farm laws

New Delhi, Oct. 5: Congress-ruled states are expected to hold special Assembly sessions to pass a bill to defer implementation of the three controversial farm laws that were cleared by the centre last month and which have triggered massive protests across the country.

A draft version of the bill, which has been drawn up by the party's central leadership and sent to states that it rules, outlines two provisions. The first allows the state government to decide on date of implementation of the centre's laws. The second ensures contract farming between the farmer and any company, or aggregator, cannot take place below a minimum support price (MSP).

It is unclear at this time if states where the Congress holds power in an alliance with other parties — such as

'Rahul disconnected with life of farmers'

Kozhikode: Union minister V. Muraliedharan on Sunday slammed the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his protests against the Centre's new farm laws and accused him of being "disconnected" from reality and indulging in "publicity stunts." Addressing the media here, the Minister of State for external affairs, alleged that the Congress, which championed reforms in the agriculture sector and included it in their manifesto has now gone back on its word.

Maharashtra and Jharkhand - will hold similar special sessions, or if states ruled by non-Congress and non-BJP governments — such as Kerala and Bengal — will follow suit.



Shooter Shreyasi Singh, daughter of late former Union minister Digvijay Singh, joins Bharatiya Janta Party in New Delhi on Sunday.

Indo-French satellites to trace illegal spillage of oil

New Delhi, Oct. 4: The constellation of maritime surveillance satellites for the Indian Ocean Region, to be jointly launched by India and France, will be able to trace illegal spillage of oil by ships, a senior French space agency CENS official said on Sunday.

In August last year, CNES and ISRO committed to developing and building a constellation of satellites carrying telecommunications and radar and optical remote-sensing instruments, constituting the first space-based system in the world capable of tracking ships continuously.

The monitoring centre will be based in India, the official added.

"With a revisit capability (of the satellites), this makes possible to task acquisitions several times a day. It will also be able to detect oil slicks and trace

► THE CONSTELLATION of maritime surveillance satellites for the Indian Ocean Region, to be jointly launched by India and France, will be able to trace illegal spillage of oil by ships, a senior French space agency CENS official said on Sunday

their origin," the official said. The main purpose of this is to trace illegal spillage of oil by ships. The Indian Ocean Region has several Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) and used by many ships every day.

The satellites will be operated jointly by France and India to monitor ships in the Indian Ocean.

The system will also cover a wide belt around the globe, benefiting a broad range of French economic interests, the official said.

Parts of the satellites will be built in both the countries and launched from India, he added.

CNES and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) are also operating a number of climate-monitoring satellites together.

"Trishna", a highly precise thermal infrared observer, will also be part of the fleet of Indo-French satellites. After a successful design phase led by a joint team of ISRO-CNES, the satellite is now set to enter its development phases in the coming months, the official said.

"It will provide continuous thermal monitoring at high resolution, its unmatched capabilities serving precious applications ranging from sustainable agriculture to drought forecasting and monitoring of urban heat islands," the official said. — PTI

Ulfa chief seeks anti-BJP regional front in Assam

Rebels want newly-formed outfits to unite

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, OCT. 4

The outlawed Ulfa (I) chief, Paresh Baruah, currently based in Ruili in Yunnan province of China, has been keeping a close watch on political developments in the state and mounting pressure on regional forces to unite against the ruling BJP-led alliance in Assam.

Refusing to divulge the names of political leaders to whom Mr Baruah has been in touch during these days, security sources said that in the wake of forthcoming Assembly polls in the state, the Unified Command of the security forces have decided to



Paresh Baruah

► AUTHORITATIVE security sources told this newspaper that Ulfa (I) chief Paresh Baruah called up leaders of newly floated political outfits and advised them at length to bring all the regional forces on one platform.

► ULFA (I) MAY try to group during the forthcoming Assembly polls

intensify the area domination in vulnerable districts of the state.

Informing that intelligence agencies had input about Ulfa (I) chief Paresh Baruah visiting Singapore recently, security sources however said that it could not be confirmed. Asserting that Mr Baruah has not visited Myanmar for the last several months, security sources said that Ulfa (I) may try to take advantage of the situation during the forthcoming Assembly polls to re-group the outfit. Security sources also admitted that Ulfa (I) chief was operating under the influence of Chinese agencies which also wanted to unite all the separatist outfits of the region

to wage a war against the Indian states.

Pointing out that all these issues came up for discussion during the Unified Command meeting, security sources said that representatives of Meghalaya, Arunachal and Nagaland police were also present in the meeting as the special invitees. The Unified Command has stressed the need of increasing coordination among security forces of neighbouring states of the region. Informing that Unified Command also discussed the growing menace of drugs at length, security sources said that all the forces have been asked to intensify vigil on the route of drug smugglers.

Army, Air IAF prepare to wage wars jointly

Leh, Oct. 4: Ten months after the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff and at a time when two National Defence Academy coursemates are heading the Army and the Air Force, the two forces are preparing to fight a war jointly against the Chinese forces opposite Eastern Ladakh sector.

As soon as one lands at the Leh airfield, one can see the Indian Air Force C-17s, Ilyushin-76s, and C-130J Super Hercules aircraft flying in with rations and supplies for the troops deployed on the forward locations opposite the Chinese forces.

"The instructions from the top at Air Headquarters are clear that whatever requirements are projected by the Army and other security forces here have to be fulfilled. The results are here for everybody to see," a senior Air Force commander posted in the Ladakh region told ANI about the combat support missions being carried out by his service.

Army Chief Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane and Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria are coursemates from NDA days and have been thick friends since then.

An Army officer deployed in a forward area said the fact that these days, the Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat and the chiefs of two services meet often to discuss and plan the action against the Chinese forces is also helping at the field level where the two forces have been operating jointly. — ANI

ISI may take advantage of farmer protest in Punjab

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

Central intelligence and security agencies are closely monitoring the situation in Punjab as it feels Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter Services Intelligence, is desperate to take advantage of the ongoing farmers agitation in the State and wants to open a new front in Punjab after Kashmir. Situation in Punjab remains tense as farmers are protesting against the recent farm bills cleared by the Centre.

Intelligence sources claimed that they were in constant touch with the State authorities as well to monitor the situation as report suggest that ISI would use the ongoing farmers agitation in Punjab to revive militancy in the State. Similar attempts have been made in recent months also when weapons were dropped close to the border using drones from Pakistan for subversive elements in Punjab.

Following this security was increased considerably all along the Indo-Pak border both by the BSF and the Punjab Police. Killing some religious and political leaders in the last few months was also seen as a desperate attempt to revive militancy in Punjab.

But now the intelligence and security agencies are extremely skeptical that in view of the ongoing agitation in the State's security situation might be compromised.

"In the past we have seen that ISI always tries to take advantage of such situation. They made attempts in Kashmir Valley also following abrogation of Article 370 but our security agencies did not let them succeed. Even in Punjab we will ensure that attempt by ISI to reactivate terror activities fail completely," a senior security official said.

C'garh minister terms rape of minor a 'small' incident

Hathras accused backed at meeting held at former BJP MLA's residence

Raipur, Oct. 4: Chhattisgarh minister and Congress leader Shivkumar Dahariya has termed the alleged rape of a 14-year-old girl in the state's Balrampur district as a "small" incident while talking about the Hathras case. After the BJP criticised Dahariya and the Congress for the comments, the minister said that his remarks were "misconstrued".

"(Former Chhattisgarh chief minister) Raman Singh is unaware that the big (rape) incident has occurred in Balrampur of Uttar Pradesh and not in Balrampur of Chhattisgarh," he said.

"The incident happened here is different from that of Uttar Pradesh. Such a tragic incident occurred in Hathras but why Raman Singh did not tweet about it? Why did he keep mum? He should answer whether what happened in Hathras was good. And when any small incident happens in Balrampur in Chhattisgarh, he (Singh) is

not doing anything else except criticising the state government," the urban administration minister told reporters on Saturday. He was responding to a query on tweets posted by Raman Singh on the recent incident of rape in Balrampur.

However, he later clarified that his remarks were misconstrued and he did

not call the Balrampur rape a small incident.

"My remarks on big and small incidents were wrongly presented. I was actually referring to a sequence of incidents happening after the Hathras gang-rape. In Hathras incident, the UP government did not provide proper treatment to the victim.

► THE joint family of Dhabaleswar Sahu of Angargaon village under Beguniapada block have lost all male members of the family to Covid-19 infection within three months

► With no earning hand, kin stare at an uncertain future

Covid kills all males of an Odisha family

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BERHAMPUR, OCT. 4

How cruel the Covid pandemic could be? Sample this. It has poached all the earning male members of a family in Odisha's Ganjam district.

A few months ago, the joint family of Dhabaleswar Sahu of Angargaon village under Beguniapada block was bubbling with joy and happiness. But today, the world's all sorrows have pervaded the family. Two brothers of Dhabaleswar and he himself succumbed to the coronavirus infection just within three

months. The eldest brother of the family had passed away one year ago.

Younger brother Krushna Chandra was the first member of the family who succumbed to the killer virus.

But before the anguish of losing him could heal, Krushna's elder brother Basudeva became the second victim just after three days. Mangaraj too passed away just after 24 hours of Basudeva's demise.

As the only male earning member of the family, Dhabaleswar too lost the fight against Covid-19 on September 30, 2020 while getting treatment in

gross negligence, my father died," Dhabaleswar's son Rangadhar Sahu alleged on Sunday.

The entire family now feels crestfallen following the series of tragic incidents that has cast a pall of grief over the area as well. With no earning member left in the family, widowed women and their children now look at an uncertain future.

"The whole village is shocked with the sad demise of four brothers. We will try our best to help the bereaved family," Bhagirathi Sahu, a local resident, said.

► THE joint family of Dhabaleswar Sahu of Angargaon village under Beguniapada block have lost all male members of the family to Covid-19 infection within three months

► With no earning hand, kin stare at an uncertain future

► Covid kills all males of an Odisha family

THE ASIAN AGE

5 OCTOBER 2020

Trump Covid +ve: The danger is still very real

America's President Donald Trump testing positive for Covid-19 was a surprise many may have anticipated. There is rum irony in dramatic events culminating in his coming down with the coronavirus just hours after having said that "the end of the pandemic is in sight." At 110 kg, his obesity would itself have placed him among the vulnerable and at the age of 74 he did himself no favours by playing down the threat for months on end while trying to open up the economy so that his prospects as a President seeking reelection would not be affected. Science may admit to no karmic influence handing down penalties like sicknesses but Trump did set himself up as a prime candidate for the omnipresent virus by ignoring most protective protocols like wearing a mask, which he did only on occasion while denigrating those like his opponent Joseph R. Biden for sporting a big mask at their infamous first debate. More significantly, Trump scorned the advice of scientists while imperilling millions of Americans.

Trump personally does not have the cushion of secretiveness of times past when US Presidents were seriously ill, including Woodrow Wilson in the 1918 pandemic

A source of comfort even as doctors say he is not yet "out of the woods" is humanity has had considerable experience with this virus for having studied it clinically in over nine months. Treatment protocols are far more advanced than when his friend from across the Atlantic, British PM Boris Johnson, suffered a near-death experience while in ICU last April. Campaigning fiercely while egging his nation on towards normalcy even as millions fell sick and more than 2,09,000 Americans died, Trump was flaunting his bravery while downplaying the threat to the world, dabbling in prophylactic doses of HCQ and even floating the wild idea of injecting patients with bleach. With his opponent also having to quarantine since he was at the debate with Trump, the American election scene has been thrown into total disarray and the presidential race fundamentally altered. And Trump personally does not have the cushion of secretiveness of times past when US Presidents were seriously ill, including Woodrow Wilson in the 1918 pandemic.

The Trump saga serves a dire warning that no one is immune to this insidious threat of a coronavirus and he is not necessarily more fortunate because he is the leader of a country very advanced in science and possessing most modern healthcare facilities. While Trump is getting the finest treatment possible, including Remdesivir and experimental cocktail of antibodies, most of 35 million patients around the world have had to do with much less while more than a million have died. The number of new cases is growing faster than ever before, not least in India where 80,000 plus cases on Sunday took the people infected past the 65 lakh mark. Good public health practices would still be masks, social distancing and hygiene, long after an effective vaccine is certified and manufactured on a scale proportionate to global population. No greater lesson on the need for humility may have been served to the world, especially in the face of an illness science does not yet fully understand. "Stay safe" is a message worth shouting from rooftops.

No one killed Sushant Rajput

There were no injuries on the body of deceased actor Sushant Singh Rajput other than those of hanging. No marks of a scuffle were present on his person, the AIIMS Forensic Medical Board, in its report submitted to the CBI, stated. This gives the lie to the entire charade enacted by TV channels as well as state governments and police administrations investigating a purported murder and connection to a drug cartel following the death.

Rajput's family had earlier accused his former live-in partner, Rhea Chakraborty, of abetting his suicide. This was used by some channels as well as the social media to run a vilification campaign against her. It was notwithstanding the fact that circumstances and evidence are crucial to prove that a person actually instigated another to take their own life. Mens rea cannot be assumed to be ostensibly present but has to be visible and conspicuous, the Supreme Court recently said. For the wrong decision taken by a[...] man of frail mentality another person cannot be blamed, the Punjab and Haryana high court in 2018 had said while quashing another case.

Ms Chakraborty and her brother now face a bail hearing in the Bombay high court in an NDPS Act case involving criminal conspiracy and "financing illicit traffic". Last month, the BJP had launched a "Justice for Sushant" campaign for the Bihar Assembly election, now less than a month away. Many believe that the entire show of investigation, and prosecution, accompanied by shrill and nonstop media broadcasts, have been aimed at both entertainment as well as a play at a competitive son-of-the-soil politics, to be rendered irrelevant as soon as the polls end.

Incidentally, the actor's autopsy report from Cooper Hospital mentioned that the ligature knot was present on the back of the neck that ruled out forcible hanging. Why then did some media outlets peddle hearsay, publicise conspiracy theories of a random hospital staffer about fractures and needles? Shouldn't these outlets be named and shamed?

Strangling and poisoning, the two allegations made by the actor's family, finally stand ruled out after the report's publication. The CBI, which has distinguished itself by being assigned, for the first time, to probe what had actually been a suicide, now has little option but to close the case.

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T. VENKATRAM REDDY
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Subhani



Democracy's discontent: Is India for the people?

Shikha Mukerjee

I deliberately ignoring the message delivered by spreading discontent reflected in hundreds of small to large, but certainly not mammoth protest meetings, rallies, highway blocks, railway blocks, stone pelting, mostly organised by mass organisations of farmers, workers, dalits and women, the Narendra Modi government on the one hand and the ruling BJP's other poster boy, Yogi Adityanath as Uttar Pradesh chief minister, are taking a calculated risk.

The leadership reflects the BJP's unshakeable confidence in its simple and direct appeal to right-thinking Hindus, who comprise the vast majority of voters in India. The rest don't really count.

Other identities, of the farmer, worker, women wanting to be safe, dalits expecting respect and dignity, are apparently so insignificant that they can be dismissed as politically irrelevant, because at the intersection between the BJP on the one hand and the Opposition, distributed across a multitude of political parties including the Congress, the appeal of Hindutva and Narendra Modi's popularity appears to be invincible. As of now, there is no data, no election results, nothing to suggest that the BJP is wrong in its assumption.

The growing international concern that human rights are being trampled in India, that labour rights are being trashed, that the rights of Muslims and other minorities, the marginalised, specifically dalits and women, are being dishonoured clearly means nothing to a sanguine BJP and its government at the Centre and the governments it controls in the states. Even the exit of its oldest ally, the Shiromani Akali Dal, from the BJP-led National Demo-

cratic Alliance over the three farm bills seems not to have disturbed the BJP.

This level of confidence manifesting itself as a supreme disregard or supercilious contempt of people's voices implies that the BJP is absolutely complacent and it believes it represents enough numbers of voters to win intensely competitive elections, including Bihar, in the foreseeable future. What would have been dangerously risky for other political parties seems to be easily disregarded by the BJP. The fact that farmers, which includes the rich landlords and the rest, that is about 80 per cent who are small cultivators, tenant farmers or share croppers, are equally angry and are collectively opposing the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, and the Essential Commodities Amendment Bill, because it strips both the rich and the poor of all protection as sellers and gives buyers infinite freedom to fix the market has cut no ice with the BJP. That farmers in Punjab, in Haryana, in Maharashtra, in some pockets of Uttar Pradesh, in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala and in the rest of India are against the changes in the laws has made no difference to Prime Minister Modi, who tweeted that history had been created.

The BJP has not reacted to the farmer-worker joint call for an all-India shutdown, or bandh, against the farm bills and the three labour codes passed by Parliament — the Industrial Relations Code Bill 2020, the Code on Social Security 2020 and the Occupational Health and Safety Bill 2020. These changes

effectively strip workers in about 80 per cent of units where they are employed from the right to strike, make them work longer hours and deny them overtime. The changes alarmed the International Labour Organisation sufficiently for it to issue a statement saying that the law was in violation of workers' rights which India is promised to uphold.

That there is an intersection between the rural and the urban and there is growing unrest that is impossible to ignore in rural and urban areas would have warned any other ruling party that there is political risk in persisting in dismissing protests by accusing the representative organisations of misleading the masses from which they draw their members and get support. There is mobility between rural and urban labour. The shock to the economy after demonetisation in 2016 sent urban labour back to the villages. The shock of the unplanned, abrupt lockdown of March 24 this year and the distress it triggered sent urban labour back to the villages.

There is no sign that the buildup of unrest, despite the convergence of urban and rural discontent, has reached a critical mass, which is why the BJP and the Narendra Modi government at the Centre are unperturbed. Even though the urban working class is accessing free kitchens run by trade unions, political parties, civil society organisations, and thousands have shifted into street vending as an alternative means of survival, the discontent has oddly and intriguingly bypassed and instead channelised its frustrations and anger against governments at the

state level. This transference of blame indicates that the credibility of the governments run by regional parties in the states, like Trinamul Congress, has sunk to an absolute low. Or that the BJP has succeeded in selling the idea to the masses that it is still their best bet in a very bad situation.

What makes the BJP the best bet for the economically and socially marginalised or vulnerable is that it is the big party, the party with the most power and popular projection via television and social media that is accessible on smartphones in even the most isolated communities in India. There must be something mesmerising about the big party that can reject the articulation of discontent by farmers and labour, magisterially push aside issues like the number of migrants who died en route to their villages, the mismanaged movement of migrants and the government's indifference to the human disaster.

It will take time for dalits and women in rural and urban areas, who are unsafe because powerful predators are being shielded to internalise the meaning and message of Hathras, which is that UP is run by a government that operates outside the limitations set by the principle of the rule of law. Each movement — farmers, labour, dalits, women — represent a set of discontents. By ignoring these representations, the BJP may assert itself as the big party, but it equally clearly signals itself to be an outsider to democratic politics, where the Opposition is not the party that lost in the elections but equally the institutions that represent segments of citizens with identities like peasant, labour, women and dalit. It brings the BJP irrevocably close to ticking all of the boxes that classify a political organisation as fascist — anti-labour, sexist, contemptuous of human rights and all the rest, militant nationalism, obsession with national security and majoritarian politics.

The BJP has not reacted to the farmer-worker joint call for an all-India shutdown, or bandh, against the farm bills and the three labour codes passed by Parliament

The writer is a senior journalist in Kolkata

LETTERS

'VISHWAGURU' INDIA

It's matter of tremendous joy and terrific significance to learn that 10 nations have expressed willingness to implement India's National Education Policy (NEP) in their countries, as per the Union education minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. NEP will be proven gamechanger in the long run and will benefit students of all categories. We need to implement NEP early, if possible by 2022. If there are some lacunae left, we can fill them. India should also take the initiative to hold a dialogue with SAARC nations.

Rahul Chouhan
Ujjain

DIALYSIS AT ₹600

THE DELHI SIKH Gurdwara Management committee (DSGMC) has announced the cheapest diagnostic facility. An MRI will just cost Rs 50 in the Gurdwara Bangla Sahib and dialysis at Guru Harkishan Hospital will cost only Rs 600. This is indeed a very noble step. The Sikh community in the past has done excellent work in providing food and shelter to poor. This will be another feather in their cap.

D.B. Madan
New Delhi

INCORRIGIBLE CBI

THE ALL INDIA Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) ruling out murder in the sensational Sushant Singh Rajput death case must put things in proper perspective. But the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will continue its probe on abetment of suicide. Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead on June 14 in his flat in Mumbai. The development must cheer the late actor's live-in partner, Rhea Chakraborty, who had come under a cloud in the case.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to Kajal Chatterjee (Oct. 3). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Anita Katyal

Political Gup-Shup



Lok Janshakti Party's national president Chirag Paswan and Rashtriya Janata Party leader Tejashwi Yadav have been in the news in recent weeks for the same reason: both young leaders were seen driving a hard bargain with their respective alliance partners in the seat-sharing negotiations for the forthcoming Bihar Assembly polls. But the two also have something else in common. According to reports from Patna, young Paswan and Yadav have been in touch with poll strategist Prashant Kishor who has told them that they should not be impatient as their electoral prospects in the coming poll are not very bright. He has instead advised them to bide their time and focus on the 2025 Assembly election by which time they would have added to their experience and attained a degree of gravitas. Realising that there's merit in Kishor's argument, Paswan and Yadav have decided on using this election to build their profile as both ministers. This exp-

lains their recent tough posturing.

After losing two allies, the Shiv Sena and the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Bharatiya Janata Party has stepped up efforts to persuade the AIADMK to formalise its entry into the National Democratic Alliance. The AIADMK has one foot in the door already as it has been extending full support to the Narendra Modi government on all major issues. The Southern party has apparently been offered a Cabinet berth to sweeten the deal. Given its brute majority in the Lok Sabha, the BJP actually does not need the crutch of alliance partners. But if the AIADMK comes on board, it will help the BJP correct the public perception that it is arrogant and is driving away its allies. At the same time, the BJP hopes such a development will strengthen its presence in Tamil Nadu as it one of the Southern states where it wants to expand its footprint.

Ever since it stormed to power in 2014 and emerged as the dominant political force in

the country, the Bharatiya Janata Party has adopted a pragmatic approach when it comes to inducting leaders from other political parties. The saffron party has been happy to give them tickets if they have the potential to win an election. Similarly, the party has no problem in inducting these "outsiders" as ministers. There was a time when the BJP drew the line at accommodating them in key party positions but not any more. This was once again evident from the composition of party president J.P. Nadda's new team members. A number of leaders once dubbed "outsiders" like D. Purandeswari, D.K. Aruna, Mukul Roy and Tom Vadakkan were given prominent positions in the party, once the preserve of those who had risen from the ranks and were steeped in the party ideology. Though this has led to a lot of resentment among the loyalists, the party is unconcerned as these appointments have been made with a firm eye on spreading its wings in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal, the states

these "newcomers" come from.

With speculation rife that Uttarakhand chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat is on his way out, his rivals in the Bharatiya Janata Party are busy positioning themselves for the top post. State tourism minister Satpal Maharaj is the latest to join the long list of chief ministerial contenders. Satpal Maharaj's ministry has recently hired a private public relations firm ostensibly to promote tourism in the hill state but the fact is that it has been promoting the minister. As a result, Satpal Maharaj's visibility in the press has increased. The minister has also visited Delhi several times in recent weeks despite the coronavirus pandemic as he believes his status as a religious guru gives him an edge over the others. But Satpal Maharaj faces tough in-house competition. Union minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and BJP media chief Anil Baluni are also in the race and both have a hotline to the leadership.

The outrage over the Hathras tragedy finally pushed the otherwise somnolent Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati to put out a statement demanding the dismissal of the Yogi government in Uttar Pradesh. This is a change from the recent past when Mayawati was virtually invisible and refrained from attacking the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Yogi government. Her periodic outbursts were instead directed at the Congress, especially its general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who has made a conscious effort to woo the Dalits in Uttar Pradesh, the BSP's support base. On her part, Priyanka makes it a point to visit victims of violence, particularly dalits, while tweeting regularly on the law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh. Realising that she could end up losing the perception war and the loyalty of her core voter, Mayawati finally roused herself to take on Yogi Adityanath.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

IN BRIEF

Shooting: Police officer killed

Myrtle Beach (US): A South Carolina police chief announced early Sunday the death of an officer following a shooting in Myrtle Beach. Officer Jacob Hancher was killed while responding to a call for service late Saturday, Myrtle Beach Chief Amy Prock said at a news conference. It's unclear what led up to the shooting, but witnesses told *The Sun News* they heard several shots around 10 p.m. Police had said on social media that an officer involved shooting had occurred around that time. The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division has been called in to investigate, news outlets reported. Hancher was a community service officer for four years and had been a police officer for less than a year, Prock said.

3 blow up ATM in restaurant

Philadelphia: Three men blew up an ATM in a Chinese take-out restaurant in Philadelphia while the establishment was still open but were unable to get any cash, police said. The men entered the Golden Chinese/American takeout restaurant in northwest Philadelphia shortly after 9 pm Friday and ordered food, police said. They then placed some kind of explosive device which damaged the ATM and the window and knocked items off shelves behind the counter, police said. The three went back into the establishment but were unable to remove the cash box that was still inside the damaged ATM, police said. The three then fled, one on a bicycle and the other two on foot. Police were searching for suspects and no arrests were immediately reported.

New Caledonia votes to be free

Noumea (New Caledonia): Voters in New Caledonia turned out in large numbers on Sunday to decide whether the archipelago in the South Pacific should get independence from France and break ties that were first established in the mid-19th century. Sunday's independence referendum is part of a three-decade decolonisation effort aimed at settling tensions on the archipelago between native Kanaks seeking independence and residents willing to remain in France. More than 180,000 voters were invited to answer the question: "Do you want New Caledonia to gain full sovereignty and become independent?" "Today is not a day like any other. Everyone woke up with the will to express oneself (through the vote). This is a historic day," Robert Wayaridri, 60, said. In Noumea, the capital, large lines of people waited to vote under the hot sun, sometimes for hours. Almost 80% of voters had already casted their ballots one hour before poll stations closed, according to the French ministry of the Overseas.

XI FOR CLOSER TIES WITH BANGLADESH

Beijing, Oct. 4: Chinese President Xi Jinping said he stands ready with Bangladesh leaders to better align the two countries' strategies and jointly promote the construction of his multi-billion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to take the strategic partnership of the two countries to new heights. Xi made the remarks in an exchange of congratulatory messages with his Bangladesh counterpart, Mohammad Abdul Hamid, on the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the bilateral diplomatic ties. Xi hailed the steady and long-term friendship saying he is ready to work with Hamid to better align development strategies with Bangladesh, step up cooperation under the framework of the BRI and push forward the China-Bangladesh strategic, cooperative partnership to a new level, official media reported. With over \$26 billion Chinese investments and \$38 billion funding commitments, Bangladesh is one of the largest recipients of China's infrastructure project. China has also offered zero-tariff treatment to 97 per cent of Bangladesh's exports by adding 5,161 more items to the existing list of 3,095 duty-free products. The BRI seeks to build rail, maritime and road links from Asia to Europe and Africa in a revival of ancient Silk Road trading routes.

Trump says he is 'starting to feel good', vows 'to be back'

Lalit K Jha
Washington, Oct. 4

President Donald Trump, who was admitted to a military hospital for treatment of Covid-19, said he has started to "feel much better" and thanked the American people and global leaders for their support.

I came here. Wasn't feeling so well. I feel much better now. We're working hard to get me all the way back. I have to be back because we still have to Make America Great Again, Trump said in a video message from the military hospital in a suburb of Washington on Saturday.

However, White House physician Sean Conley has said the President is "not yet out of the woods".

While not yet out of the woods, the team remains cautiously optimistic, Dr Conley said, adding that the plan for Sunday is to continue observation in between doses of Remdesivir, closely monitoring his clinical status while fully supporting his conduct of presidential duties.

Conley, in a memoran-

Starting to feel good, says Don

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Conley has said the president is "not yet out of the woods". "While not yet out of the woods, the team remains cautiously optimistic," Dr Conley said, adding that the plan for Sunday is to continue observation in between doses of Remdesivir, closely monitoring his clinical status while fully supporting his conduct of presidential duties.

Conley, in a memorandum, said the President had received Regeron's antibody cocktail on October 2. "President Trump continues to do well, having

dum issued late Saturday night, said the president had received Regeron's antibody cocktail on October 2.

"President Trump continues to do well, having

made substantial progress since diagnosis," Conley said, adding that the president completed his second dose of Remdesivir without complications.

—PTI



Azeri protesters tear and burn an Armenia national flag as they take part in a demonstration in Istanbul on Sunday in support of Azerbaijan in the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh.

— AFP

COURT TO HEAR NAWAZ SPEECH BAN APPEAL

Islamabad, Oct. 4: A Pakistani court will on Monday hear a petition seeking a ban on airing speeches of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on television channels, days after the top PML-N leader made blistering remarks from London targeting the country's powerful Army.

A citizen, Amir Aziz, filed the petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) and made 70-year-old Sharif, his brother Shehbaz Sharif, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) chairman and others as respondents, the *Express Tribune* reported.

IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah fixed October 5 as the date for hearing the petition, the paper said.

—PTI

Azerbaijan's No. 2 city hit in fighting with Armenia

Baku (Azerbaijan), Oct. 4: The fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces continued on Sunday over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, with Azerbaijan's second-largest city coming under attack.

Azerbaijani officials said Sunday that Armenian forces attacked Ganja, the country's second largest city. Hikmet Hajiyev, an aide to the Azerbaijani president, tweeted a video depicting damaged buildings, and called it the result of "Armenia's massive missile attacks against dense residential areas" in Ganja. It wasn't immediately possible to verify the authenticity of the video. Hajiyev said in another tweet that attacks on Ganja and other areas in Azerbaijan were launched "from territory of

Armenia." Armenia's Defence Ministry said that "no fire of any kind is being opened from the territory of Armenia in Azerbaijan's direction."

But Nagorno-Karabakh's leader, Arayik Harutyunyan, confirmed on Facebook he ordered "rocket attacks to neutralize military objects" in Ganja. His spokesman, Vahram Poghosyan, said the territory's army destroyed a military airport in Ganja, a claim Azerbaijani officials denied. The attack on the city killed one civilian and left four others wounded, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry tweeted. Harutyunyan said he ordered his forces to stop the attacks on Ganja to avoid civilian casualties. Nagorno-Karabakh's leader added that "proportionate and crushing" strikes targeting the

opponent's forces would continue, if Azerbaijan fails "to draw appropriate lessons." The fighting, which broke out on September 27 and has continued for eight straight days, is the biggest escalation in years in the decades-long dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh. The region lies within Azerbaijan, but is controlled by local ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia. Both sides said the hostilities have spread beyond the breakaway territory and accused each other of attacking areas outside Nagorno-Karabakh.

Ganja, with a population of more than 330,000, is located roughly 100 kilometres (about 60 miles) north of Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh's capital.

—AP

Bumpy situation till Xmas: Boris

UK records over 10K Covid cases in a day for the first time since mass testing began

London, Oct. 4: Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Sunday warned of a "bumpy" ride at least through to Christmas in December, as the UK recorded more than 10,000 Coronavirus cases in a day for the first time since mass testing for the deadly virus was put in place.

According to official figures, there were 12,872 new cases on Saturday, while a further 49 people have died within 28 days of testing positive for Covid-19. However, the government said a technical issue meant some cases from earlier in the week were not recorded at the time so these were included in Saturday's data. In his interview, the UK PM tried to strike a note of optimism over progress in beating the virus and said he believed over the "next few weeks and months" the "scientific equation will change, whether that is vaccines or testing". "I've got to tell you in all candour it's going to continue to be bumpy through to Christmas, it may even be bumpy beyond," Johnson told the BBC.

"This could be a very tough winter for all of us — we've got to face that fact," he said. While insisting his government was working "flat out" to fight the pandemic, Johnson said he took "full responsibility for everything that has happened since the pandemic began", admitting the National Health Service (NHS) led Test and Trace system was "not perfect". But he said scientific advisers had told him that by spring in March/April 2021 "things will be radically different and we will be in a different world".

Johnson said he understood people's "frustration" at differing rules and restrictions for different parts of the country but stressed that localised lockdowns was the right way to go and wait to see if the R number — of the rate at which the infection is transmitted — comes down as a result. "I'm a freedom-loving Tory. I don't want to have to impose measures like this, are you crazy? This is the last thing we want to do. But I also have to save life. And that's our priority," he said. "And as Prime Minister I couldn't take a course that could expose us to tens of thousands more deaths in very short order... we've got to continue to bear down on this virus, whilst protecting the economy. That's the balance we've got to strike," he added.

The interview this week coincides with his Conservative Party's

Market capitalism has failed: Pope

Rome, Oct. 4: Pope Francis says the Coronavirus pandemic has proven that the "magic theories" of market capitalism have failed and that the world needs a new type of politics that promotes dialogue and solidarity and rejects war at all costs. Francis on Sunday laid out his vision for a post-Covid world by uniting the core elements of his social teachings into a new encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti" (Brothers All), which was released on the feast day of his namesake, the peace-loving St. Francis of Assisi.

The document draws its inspiration from the teachings of St. Francis and the Pope's previous preaching on the injustices of the global economy and its destruction of the planet and pairs them with his call for greater



Pope Francis

human solidarity to address today's problems. In the encyclical, Francis rejected even the Catholic Church's own doctrine justifying war as a means of legitimate defense, saying it had been too broadly applied over the centuries and was no longer viable. "It is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war,'" Francis wrote.

—AP

Israel environment minister tests +ve

Jerusalem, Oct. 4: A member of Israel's Cabinet has tested positive for the Coronavirus as the country remains under lockdown while battling a second wave of infection.

Gila Gamliel, Israel's environmental protection minister and a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, announced on Twitter Sunday that she had tested positive. She was the fourth minister in Israel's government to test positive for Covid-19 since March. "I feel good and

hope to recover quickly with God's help," she wrote on social media.

The Israeli government imposed a nationwide lockdown on September 18 ahead of the Jewish High Holidays in an effort to rein in a runaway outbreak of the Coronavirus. The country has one of the highest daily infection rates per capita in the world. According to Health Ministry figures, Israel has recorded over 264,000 cases and almost 1,700 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic.

—AP

annual conference, being conducted virtually for the first time due to coronavirus restrictions on mass gatherings. The Tories have created a 3D virtual conference with a computer-generated auditorium, foyer and fringe meeting rooms. However, the system has not been smooth-sailing as the virtual platform crashed during a session with UK Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove.

—PTI

Russia reports 10,400 new daily cases

Moscow, Oct. 4: Coronavirus infections in Russia hit a new record on Sunday, with the government reporting over 10,000 new confirmed cases for the first time since mid-May. The 10,499 new cases

reported on Sunday bring the country's total to over 1.2 million. Russia currently has the fourth largest caseload in the world and has so far reported over 21,000 deaths. The Russian authorities insist there are no plans to impose a second lockdown in the country that has lifted most of the virus-related restrictions imposed in the spring.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday another lockdown is currently not being discussed in the government. At the same time in Moscow, which reported over 3,000 new cases on Sunday in the biggest surge in months, officials have recommended the elderly to self-isolate at home.

—AP

Rahman PDM head in Pak

Islamabad, Oct. 4: Firbrand cleric-cum-politician Maulana Fazlur Rahman has been unanimously appointed as the chief of the newly-formed Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), an anti-government alliance launched by 11 Opposition parties to oust Prime Minister Imran Khan. The decision was taken on Saturday during a virtual meeting of the Opposition parties attended by Pakistan Muslim League-

Nawaz (PML-N) supremo and three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Balochistan National Party chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal among other senior politicians.

According to PDM's steering committee convener Ahsan Iqbal, Sharif proposed 67-year-old Rahman's name as the alliance president and it was endorsed by PPP chair-

man Bilawal and others, the *Dawn* newspaper reported. Sharif had initially proposed that Rahman should be appointed as the president on a permanent basis, but the idea was opposed by Bilawal and Awami National Party (ANP) leader Amir Haider Hoti, who suggested that the office should be given on a rotational basis to leaders of the constituent parties, the paper reported, citing sources.

—PTI

CURBS | LIFTED

Muslims from outside the Kingdom could be allowed to perform pilgrimage from Nov. 1

Pilgrims return to Mecca as Saudis ease virus restrictions

Riyadh, Oct. 4: A very small, limited number of people donning the white terrycloth garment symbolic of the Muslim pilgrimage circled Islam's holiest site in Mecca on Sunday after Saudi Arabia lifted Coronavirus restrictions that had been in place for months.

The kingdom had taken the rare step of suspending the smaller "umrah" pilgrimage that draws millions year-round from across the world in early March as the Coronavirus morphed into a global pan-

demic and prompted countries to impose lockdowns and curfews to slow down transmission. But as nations begin to ease those restrictions, the Saudi government on Sunday started allowing a maximum of 6,000 pilgrims a day to enter the sprawling Grand Mosque in Mecca.

Only Saudi citizens and residents will be permitted to enter the mosque during this first phase of reopening, and each person has up to three hours to complete the pilgrimage. The Grand Mosque,

which is being sterilised and cleaned multiple times a day, houses the cube-shaped Kaaba that observant Muslims pray toward five times a day. Before visitors can enter the mosque to pray or perform the umrah, they have to apply and reserve a specific time and date through an online application to avoid crowding and maintain social distancing. Visitors can also select via the app their means of transportation and meeting points.

State TV showed on Sunday what appeared to be

fewer than 50 people circling the Kaaba at the same time and walking several metres (feet) apart. Typically, the mosque would be packed with worshippers from around the world crowded shoulder-to-shoulder at all times of the day and night. The second phase for loosening restrictions at the Grand Mosque comes into effect on October 18, allowing a maximum of 15,000 pilgrims and 40,000 for prayer from among residents and citizens based on allocated times via the app.

Muslim travellers from outside Saudi Arabia could be allowed to perform the umrah pilgrimage as early as November 1, the Interior Ministry has said. Saudi Arabia recently began easing some restrictions on international flights for the first time since March. The kingdom held a dramatically downsized, symbolic hajj pilgrimage in July due to concerns that it could easily have become a global super-spreader event for the virus.



Muslims pray around the Kaaba on Sunday.

—AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
aSensex	38,697.05	1.65
Nifty 50	11,416.95	1.51
S&P 500*	3,348.44	-0.86
Dollar (₹)	73.15	0.83
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.15	0.50
Euro (₹)	85.81	0.79
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,389▼37	0.07
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	39.27	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	0.704	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.692	0.015

* As of 9:30 PM IST

FPIs pull out ₹7,780 cr from stocks in Sept.

Snapping their three-month buying spree, overseas investors turned net sellers in Indian markets in September, withdrawing Rs 3,419 crore on net basis, due to uncertainty ahead of the US presidential polls and surging coronavirus cases. Foreign portfolio investors withdrew a net Rs 7,783 crore from equities while the debt segment saw inflows of Rs 4,364 crore. FPIs had been net buyers in India in the three months to August. .

China's Jingye shows interest in Tata Steel UK



Chinese steelmaker Jingye Group Co is exploring a takeover of the UK's biggest steel producer, Tata Steel Ltd, Sky News reported, citing unidentified banking sources. The firm, which took over British Steel earlier this year, has expressed a "tentative" interest to Tata Group as well as the UK government, but has failed to make substantial progress so far. There is no formal sale process at this stage, Sky said.

Tagoor Labs to produce favipiravir

Hyderabad-based Tagoor Laboratories said it has received licence from the drugs controller to manufacture favipiravir. The company said it is planning to enhance its production capabilities. Dr. P. Kasi Viswanadha Raju, managing director, said his company is aiming to manufacture favipiravir in quantities sufficient to meet the growing domestic demand. Favipiravir is a broad spectrum anti-viral agent.

Dassault, Shiv Nadar varsity set up research unit

Software industry major Dassault Systemes has established a research centre in collaboration with Shiv Nadar University in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida. The Shiv Nadar University-Dassault Systemes Centre of Excellence (SDC) is for research, innovation, design and entrepreneurship, and is also aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of multidisciplinary education, the varsity said in a statement.

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■ Saudi Arabia's pre-budget estimates Oil seen hovering around \$50 till '23

ABEER ABU OMAR & MATTHEW MARTIN OCT. 4

Saudi Arabia's finance ministry seems to think that oil prices will stay around \$50 a barrel for at least the next three years. That's according to Goldman Sachs Group Inc's analysis of the kingdom's pre-budget statement released on September 30.

"Using our own estimates for the breakdown of government revenues, we calculate that the numbers presented in the budget statement are based on an average oil price of around \$50 a barrel between 2020 and 2023," said Farouk Soussa, a London-based analyst at Goldman.

Brent crude fell 6.3 per cent to \$39.27 a barrel last week as more countries tightened restrictions to counter the coronavirus pandemic and US president Donald Trump got infected, causing traders to fret about the outlook for energy demand.

While oil at \$50 would represent a 25 per cent rise from current prices, it would still be far below the pre-pandemic level of around \$65 and less than Saudi Arabia needs to balance its budget.

Goldman's calculations are roughly in line with those of Cairo-based investment bank EFG Hermes, which said Saudi Arabia is basing next year's budget on an oil price of \$50 to \$55. Goldman is itself more



CHEVRON NIGERIA TO CUT 25% WORKFORCE

RUTH OLUROUNBI & CHUKWUDI EJIMOFOR OCT. 4

Nigeria's Chevron unit said it plans to cut 25 per cent of its workforce to become more efficient and reduce operating costs, the latest sign demand for global oil is wobbling under coronavirus and new restrictions to contain it.

"The aim is to have a business that is competitive and an appropriate-

ly-sized organisation," a company statement said. "We must make the necessary adjustments in light of the prevailing business climate."

The International Energy Agency last month trimmed its forecasts for fuel consumption for the rest of the year, warning tht at the global oil market was increasingly "fragile" as new outbreaks of coronavirus derail the recovery.

— Bloomberg

bullish, forecasting that Brent will climb to \$65 by the end of 2021.

Saudi officials expect the country's fiscal deficit to narrow to 5.1 per cent of gross domestic product in 2021 from 12 per cent this year as they cut spending, according to last week's statement.

The kingdom tends to take a relatively conservative view of crude prices in drawing up its budget and doesn't divulge its assumptions, leaving analysts to estimate them from other

projections. The finance ministry didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Sunday.

Saudi Arabia would need oil to trade at \$66 to balance its budget in 2021, according to estimates from the International Monetary Fund.

Saudi Arabia's caution on prices comes as oil giants including BP Plc and Total SE predict the era of growing global demand for energy is over or coming to an end barely a decade from now.

— Bloomberg

KUWAIT CENTRAL BANK DENIES PLAN TO DEVALUE DINAR

ABBAS AL LAWATI & FIONA MACDONALD OCT. 4

The Central Bank of Kuwait, which pegs the dinar to a basket of currencies dominated by the US dollar, affirmed its commitment to the country's exchange-rate policy, responding to reports of an impending devaluation.

"In light of recent online reports falsely speculating on the intent to devalue the national currency, the Central Bank of Kuwait reiterates its commitment to maintaining the Kuwaiti dinar exchange rate at a level that protects its purchasing power," it said in a statement on Sunday. "CBK will continue its adherence to policies that aim to bolster the local currency."

The speculation started swirling after the passing last week of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who has been succeeded by his half brother Kuwait

is facing the highest budget deficit in its history, brought on by the drop in oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic.

A potential solution to its liquidity crisis has been blocked by parliamentary opposition to a law that would allow the government to borrow.

Twelve-month forward contracts on the Kuwaiti dinar rose almost 60 points to 270 in the offshore market last month, signalling traders' concerns over the risk of a devaluation in the currency peg.

— Bloomberg

Micro units to gain from interest waiver

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 4



The government's suggestion of waiving compound interest on delayed payments during the moratorium period would predominantly benefit micro enterprises. While some small enterprises would also benefit from the waiver, medium-sized firms are feeling discriminated against. Industry is also keen to know whether banks will refund those who have already paid the compound interest.

The government on Saturday filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court that it was ready to bear the burden of an interest waiver for small borrowers.

Any individual or entity whose loan amount is less than Rs 2 crore, irrespective of whether they have availed of loan repayment moratorium or not, will be eligible for waiver of the compounding of interest.

This includes micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), education, housing, consumer durable, credit card, automobile, personal, and consumption loans.

Among the MSMEs in

India, only 15 per cent have access to the formal banking system. Reports suggest that 45 to 50 per cent of the MSMEs with loan outstanding have availed of moratorium.

According to Rajive Chawla, chairman of IamSMEofIndia, all the micro enterprises which have availed of the moratorium would benefit from the government decision and some of the small enterprises, too.

Medium enterprises are not likely to benefit from the waiver. "It is good that micro enterprises will get relief. But I wish they would have given it to all MSMEs, as it is not a waiver of interest but a waiver of interest of interest," he said.

"Even within MSMEs, medium enterprises are

being discriminated against in very many ways. Most of the policy support goes to micro and small enterprises. The policy biases force them to remain dwarfs without growing large," said Anil Bharadwaj, secretary general, Federation of Indian MSMEs (Fisime).

Faiz Askari, founder of SMEStreet, fears the waiver may disincentivise banks from providing loans to MSMEs in the future. "The number of MSMEs which are into the formal banking system itself is miniscule. Government should fully compensate the banks for the waiver so that they won't be reluctant to lend to MSMEs in future," he said.

However, Chawla believes banks will continue to lend MSMEs to meet priority sector lending targets. "Further, they lend to us for a higher interest rate compared to large corporates and there are a lot of other charges. The NPAs are also lower among MSMEs," he said.

MSMEs also want to have clarity on whether those who have already paid the compound interest to the banks will receive a refund.

Australia to pay half wages of trainee workers

TRACY WITHERS OCT. 4

Australia will provide a wage subsidy to encourage businesses to hire as many as 100,000 new apprentices or trainee workers as part of its budget strategy to

create jobs and boost incomes.

The A\$1.2 billion (\$860 million) program, which will pay for half of the apprentice's wage in the first year, will be available from Oct. 5, Prime Minister Scott Morrison

said Sunday in an emailed statement. "Apprenticeships are an important pathway to get young people into jobs and to ensure there is a skills pipeline to meet the future needs of employers," Morrison said.

— Bloomberg

Changi Airport warns of 'daunting' future

REINIE BOOYSEN & KRYSTAL CHIA OCT. 4

Changi Airport Group said the impact from the Covid-19 pandemic isn't abating as officials behind the world's best airport warned of a "daunting" period ahead.

Passenger traffic for Changi for the fiscal year ended March declined for the first time in more than a decade, as a slump in the last two months of the peri-

od wiped out earlier gains, serving as a harbinger of a deeper slump. To brace for "a prolonged crisis", Changi suspended operations in two terminals to save on operating costs as flights dropped to the lowest levels in its history.

"The battle with Covid-19 has only just begun," the company said in its annual report. "The future does appear daunting with the situation showing no signs of abatement."

According to the

International Air Transport Association, 25 million jobs are at risk in airlines and associated businesses such as travel and tourism. A third of the world's 26,000 passenger jets remain grounded, aviation data provider Cirium says.

Amid all the gloom in May, Changi was voted the world's best airport for an eighth consecutive year, according to a ranking by Skytrax.

— Bloomberg

RECORD RESERVES SIGNAL SHIFT IN RBI'S FOREX POLICY

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 4

RBI's pro-foreign portfolio investors (FPI) forex reserve policy is likely to continue but with lesser dollar buying, going forward. The central bank may allow the rupee to depreciate after amassing enough fire power to tackle the currency's volatility, analysts said.

The Reserve Bank of India has built all-time-high foreign exchange reserves (\$542 billion as on Sept. 25), which is positive for higher FPI inflow as sufficient reserves cut

exchange rate risks.

In September the rupee's stability against the US dollar improved as it hovered in the range of 72.75 to 74.05 compared to 76-77 in April-June.

Last month, the RBI bought \$8.7 bn of forex reserves up to Sept. 25 (vs. \$12.9 bn each in June July) and India's forex reserves touched a record \$545 bn on Sept. 18 before declining by \$3 bn in the following week.

The RBI has returned to forex reserve adequacy after nearly 10 years and the rupee is now past the risks of large deprecia-

tion seen in 2011, 2013 and 2018, said a report by Bank of America Securities.

"India's ability to manage a scenario of capital flight is supported by its ample forex reserves (at \$542 bn: up \$72 bn year to date) which cover around nine times import, five times short-term debt and are around three times the IMF reserve adequacy measure," said Nomura.

With adequacy of reserves, RBI will be more relaxed about buying foreign currency than before, Bank of America Securities said.

FLUSHING | MICROFIBRE Garments dislodge woven fibre particles into laundry wastewater

Washing machine is a heavy polluter

MARGARET RHODES OCT. 4

Mojca Zupan is a corporate lawyer doing just fine in 2016, when a museum exhibit changed her life.

The Plastic Garbage Project depicts the "the origins, life cycle, sense, and senselessness of plastic products." "I saw these big microscopic pictures of microfibres," Zupan says of the tiny grains of plastic that slough off synthetic textiles and seep into bodies of water. "It's ridiculous. Washing machines pollute so heavily."

She did some research. Technically, a solution for catching microfibers existed. But awareness of the issue was low. "I didn't

get the feeling that something would be done about it in the near future," Zupan says. "I became determined to change the washing machine industry." Within a year, Zupan had started PlanetCare and begun selling the company's first product, a filter that attaches to household washing machines and catches those tiny, polluting microfibres before they reach the world's oceans.

A washing machine generates microfibre waste in the course of doing its job. By soaking, churning, and scrubbing a garment, it inevitably dislodges woven fibre particles into the laundry wastewater.



Roughly the size of a water bottle, the PlanetCare filter sticks onto the side of the machine and has nozzles on either side connecting to the water hose and to the drain. The filter itself is a three-dimensional mesh sieve designed to catch fibers as small as 0.1 millimetre, or 90 per cent of the microparticles that

would typically flow back into the water supply. A starter pack with seven filter cartridges costs \$112. PlanetCare is based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Zupan's home. While most of its customers are in Europe, it does ship to the US.

These devices will hardly fix the world's microfibre problem, which is made more complicated by a lack of consensus around how to measure it. Some reports have found that a single garment sheds around 2,000 fibres in one wash cycle; others say a single load of laundry releases 700,000 fibres, flushing trillions of microfibres into waterways. In August, the journal Nature

Communications published a study documenting high levels of ocean microplastics, with a possible 12 to 21 million tonnes near the surface of the Atlantic. Prior to that, a 2015 Science report put that number at 12 million tonnes, max.

"This is of great societal concern," says Richard Lampitt, a scientist at the National Oceanography Centre in the UK and one of the authors of the report. Underfunded research, he adds, is part of the problem. "We still need more evidence on [how lethal this is]. But if it is, we need to make strenuous efforts to prevent this material from getting into the ocean."

— Bloomberg

OVER 1 LAKH LOCAL SHOPS, KIRANAS TO JOIN AMAZON FESTIVE SALES

New Delhi, Oct. 4: Amazon India on Sunday said it has enabled over one lakh local shops, kiranas and neighbourhood stores across the country through its various initiatives, a move that will help serve more customers this festive season.

More than 20,000 offline retailers, kiranas and local shops from "Local Shops on Amazon" programme will participate in "Great Indian Festival" for the first time, selling various items like daily essentials, large appliances and home decor products, a statement said.

This format helps shop owners establish a digital presence and expand their reach, while allowing customers to shop from local stores in their city.

The programme, which was launched in April this year, now has more than 20,000 retailers in 400 cities, including Meerut, Ludhiana, Saharanpur, Surat, Indore, Ernakulam and Kanchipuram. More than 40 per cent of the sellers are coming from outside the top 10 cities.

Amazon India's other programmes include Amazon Easy stores, "I Have Space" and Amazon Pay Smart Store.

"This festive season, we are focused on helping our sellers and other MSME partners grow their business and bounce back from the recent challenges. In the last few months we have seen businesses of all sizes increasingly adopt technology into their business," Amazon India vice-president Manish Tiwary said.

The integration of Amazon's programmes with one lakh-plus ubiquitous neighbourhood stores is a testament of the adaptability and inventiveness of Indian entrepreneurs, he added.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

Teen Swiatek
knocks out Halep

Paris: Polish teenager Iga Swiatek dumped top seed Simona Halep out of the French Open on Sunday with a crushing 6-1 6-2 victory to make her maiden Grand Slam quarter-final. Halep came into the fourth round clash on a 17-match unbeaten streak having defeated the 19-year-old Swiatek, ranked 54th in the world, 6-1 6-0 in 45 minutes at the same stage last year in the claycourt Grand Slam at Roland Garros. While there have been upsets in the women's draw, it's business as usual for Rafael Nadal among the men at the French Open. Against a player who loves him so much that he named his cat after him, Nadal showed no mercy with Sebastian Korda, seeing off the 20-year-old qualifier with a 6-1, 6-1, 6-2 thumping on Court Philippe Chatrier to reach the quarterfinals at Roland Garros for the 14th time. — *Agencies*

Tottenham hit
United for a six

Manchester: Manchester United suffered their joint heaviest Premier League defeat with a 6-1 home thrashing at the hands of Tottenham to further darken the bleak mood at Old Trafford. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men looked all at sea in their opening two games but sunk to a new low as Spurs ran riot on Jose Mourinho's return to his former club. Meanwhile, Arsenal teenager Bukayo Saka celebrated his first England call-up by putting the Gunners on course for a 2-1 win against Sheffield United. Saka was included in Gareth Southgate's squad for England's forthcoming internationals against Wales, Belgium and Denmark. West Ham posted a stunning 3-0 win at Leicester, ending the Foxes' perfect start thanks to goals from Michail Antonio, Pablo Fornals and Jarrod Bowen. — *Agencies*

Vincius, Benzema
do it for Real

Madrid: Goals from Vinicius Jr. and Karim Benzema plus some top class saves from Thibaut Courtois gave Real Madrid a 2-0 win away to Levante on Sunday for a third consecutive La Liga victory. Brazilian forward Vinicius, Madrid's match-winner in Wednesday's 1-0 win over Real Valladolid, also gave his side the lead at Levante, controlling a loose ball inside the area and taking his time to curl into the far corner in the 16th minute. The win took the champions top of the standings with 10 points after four games. — *Reuters*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Delhi Capitals from 7:30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

French Open: Matches from 2:30 pm on Star Sports, Select 2

WWE RAW

Bouts from 5:30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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Watto comeback!

Watson roars back to form as Chennai floor Punjab

Dubai, Oct. 4: Shane Watson and Faf du Plessis conjured up commanding unbeaten half-centuries as Chennai Super Kings demolished Kings XI Punjab by 10 wickets to snap their string of losses in the IPL here on Sunday.

CSK relished a much-needed victory after three defeats in a row, overhauling a 179-run target with remarkable ease.

Watson (83 not out) and Du Plessis (87 not out) ensured that there was no close finish this time, reducing the match to a 'no-contest' with their authoritative batting.

The seasoned Australian punished the KXIP bowlers with 11 fours and three sixes in his 53-ball unbeaten knock while Du Plessis hit 11 fours and a six from 53 balls to also remain not out.

Except Mohammed Shami, KXIP did not have a bowler who could trouble the opposition batsmen and CSK exploited it to the fullest. CSK moved to sixth spot from bottom with this confidence-boosting win.

Skipper KL Rahul hit a well-paced 63 to lead Kings XI Punjab to a competitive 178 for four after electing to bat but in the absence of good bowlers it was an onerous task to stop the experienced CSK brigade.

Rahul's risk-free 63 came off 52 balls with the help of seven fours and a six as he shared a 61-run stand with fellow opener Mayank Agarwal (26) and then raised a 58-run partnership with Nicholas Pooran (33 off 17).

KXIP looked set for a bigger total but both Pooran and Rahul were dismissed by pacer Shardul Thakur off successive balls in the 18th over.

CSK, like their rivals, also got to a solid start with openers — Du Plessis and Watson — creaming off 60 runs in the Powerplay overs.

They did not exactly set the field on fire but an effective strokeplay helped them begin the chase in right earnest.

The Australian-Protea duo blended caution with aggression, picking the right deliveries to attack. They raised the team hundred in the 10th over.

Watson got to his fifty with consecutive boundaries off Chris Jordan while Du Plessis raised his own with a single off the same bowler.

With Nothing working for KXIP, Watson and Du Plessis only became more dominant as the



SHANE WATSON			
R	B	6s	4s
83*	53	3	11

CSK opener Shane Watson en route to his unbeaten 83 against Kings XI Punjab in an IPL game in Dubai on Sunday. — *BCCI*

game progressed.

Earlier, Rahul and Agarwal were cautious. No lofted shot was played till the last over of the Powerplay with the two batsmen preferring to drive along the ground. It was also because Deepak Chahar and Sam Curran hardly pitched it short.

Even if Agarwal and Rahul opened their arms it was to slap the balls outside the off stump, when there was enough room to do that. CSK captain MS Dhoni introduced spin in the seventh over with Ravindra Jadeja, who created a chance too but Agarwal's hit fell just short of a diving Du Plessis.

Leg-spinner Piyush Chawla succeeded in getting the breakthrough when Agarwal pulled one straight to Curran. The openers added 61 runs in 8.1 overs.

Mandeep Singh, playing his first game of the season, joined his skipper and made an impact immediately. He creamed off two sixes off Chawla in the 11th over to start the fireworks.

Jadeja soon got rid of dangerous-looking Mandeep, who scored 27 off 16 balls.

Rahul, who had adopted a risk-free approach till then, completed his half-century with a six off Thakur and followed that up with a four. — *PTI*

SCORECARD

Kings XI Punjab: KL Rahul c Dhoni b Thakur 63, M. Agarwal c Curran b Chawla 26, Mandeep Singh c Rayudu b Jadeja 27, N. Pooran c Jadeja b Thakur 33, G. Maxwell (not out) 11, S. Khan (not out) 14. **Extras (lb 1, w 3) 4. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) 178.** **FoW:** 1-61, 2-94, 3-152, 4-152.

Bowling: D. Chahar 4-0-39-2, Bravo 4-0-38-0, Jadeja 4-0-30-1, Chawla 2-0-22-1.

Chennai Super Kings: S. Watson (not out) 83, F du Plessis (not out) 87. **Extras (w 11) 1. Total (for no loss in 17.4 overs) 181.** **Bowling:** S. Cottrell 3-0-30-0, M. Shami 3-4-0-35-0, H. Brar 4-0-41-0, C. Jordan 3-0-42-0, R. Bishnoi 4-0-33-0.

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 23
- RCB: 14
- Delhi: 8
- No result: 1

MEETING IN 2019

- Delhi Capitals beat RCB by 4 wickets in Bengaluru.
- Delhi Capitals beat RCB by 16 runs in Delhi.

FOR THE RECORD

- Yuzvendra Chahal who has taken 197 wickets at an average of 23.77 in 174 innings needs three more to become the fifth Indian and 39th bowler overall to complete a double century of wickets in T20.

- Shikhar Dhawan who has scored 956 runs at an average of 34.14 needs 44 runs to become the eighth batsman from Delhi to complete 1000 runs in IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ QAISER*

IPL POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	5	3	2	0	6	+1.214
Delhi Capitals	4	3	1	0	6	+0.588
Royal Challengers Bangalore	4	3	1	0	6	-0.954
Kolkata Knight Riders	4	2	2	0	4	-0.121
Rajasthan Royals	4	2	2	0	4	-0.317
Chennai Super Kings	5	2	3	0	4	-0.342
Sunrisers Hyderabad	5	2	3	0	4	-0.417
Kings XI Punjab	5	1	4	0	2	+0.178

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

Quinton takes
Mumbai to top

Sharjah, Oct. 4: Quinton de Kock was back amongst the runs with a sizzling 39-ball 67 before the bowlers did a commendable job in batsmen friendly Sharjah to power Mumbai Indians to a clinical 34-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

The swashbuckling duo of Hardika Pandya (28) and Kieron Pollard (25 not out) scored at their usual brisk pace but it was Krunal who propelled MI to 208 for five with 20 runs off a mere four deliveries in the last over.

Then, the MI bowlers did just enough to restrict SRH to 174 for seven.

Chasing 209, a formidable target even on the small Sharjah ground, SRH began with Jonny Bairstow sending Trent Boult's third delivery into the stands. Two fours and a six followed before Boult had the Englishman for a 15-ball 25.

David Warner (60 off 44 balls) got into the act with a couple of boundaries off Jasprit Bumrah. Manish Pandey had raced to 16 when Hardik Pandya dropped a sitter, his view blocked by the evening sun.

Pandey lofted Rahul Chahar over long-on for a massive six and Warner followed suit, hitting the leg-spinner for another maximum in the same over as SRH kept pace with the required run-rate.

The prolific Australian then cut his compatriot James Pattinson through the point region before smashing Krunal for a six and four to help SRH past the 100-run mark in the 11th over.

Attempting an upper cut against Boult, Kane Williamson was out caught by Quinton de Kock, after Bumrah bowled an excel-

SCORECARD

Mumbai Indians: R. Sharma c Bairstow b Sandeep Sharma 6, Q de Kock c & b Rashid Khan 67, S. Yadav c Natarajan b Kaul 27, Ishan Kishan c Pandey b Sandeep Sharma 31, H. Pandya b Kaul 28, K. Pollard (not out) 25, K. Pandya (not out) 20. **Extras (lb 1, nb 1, w 2) 4. Total (for five wickets in 20 overs) 208.** **FoW:** 1-6, 2-48, 3-126, 4-147, 5-188.

Bowling: S. Sharma 4-0-41-2, T. Natarajan 4-0-29-0, S. Kaul 4-0-64-2, A. Samad 2-0-27-0, R. Khan 4-0-22-1, K. Williamson 2-0-24-0.

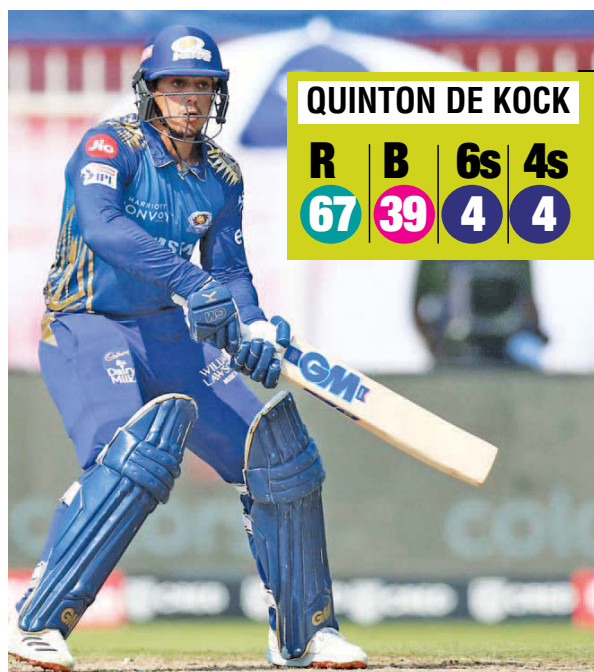
Sunrisers Hyderabad: D. Warner c Ishan Kishan b Pattinson 60, J. Bairstow c H. Pandya b Boult 25, M. Pandey c Pollard b Pattinson 30, K. Williamson c de Kock b Boult 3, P. Garg c Chahar b KH Pandya 8, Abhishek Sharma b Bumrah 10, A. Samad c Sharma b Bumrah 20, R. Khan (not out) 3, Sandeep Sharma (not out) 0. **Extras (lb 5, w 10) 15. Total (for seven wickets in 20 overs) 174.** **FoW:** 1-34, 2-94, 3-116, 4-130, 5-142, 6-168, 7-172.

Bowling: T. Boult 4-0-28-2, J. Pattinson 4-0-29-2, K. Pandya 4-0-35-1, J. Bumrah 4-0-41-2, K. Pollard 3-0-20-0, R. Chahar 1-0-16-0.

lent six-run over.

Last match hero Priyam Garg failed to replicate his performance but it was the big wicket of Warner, in the 16th over bowled by Pattinson, that almost sealed the game in MI's favour even as the required rate soared past 14 runs an over. For MI, there were two wickets apiece for Boult (2/28), Pattinson (2/29) and Bumrah (2/41).

Earlier, Rohit Sharma plonked Sandeep Sharma over mid-wicket for a six to start the proceedings but the MI skipper was out caught behind the very next ball as he chased a wide delivery, only to nick it to Jonny Bairstow. — *PTI*



QUINTON DE KOCK			
R	B	6s	4s
67	39	4	4

Mumbai Indians opener Quinton de Kock plays a shot against Sunrisers in Sharjah on Sunday. — *BCCI*

Karthik should bat after
Morgan & Russell: Gauti

Sharjah, Oct. 4: Two-time IPL winning Kolkata Knight Riders captain Gautam Gambhir believes current skipper Dinesh Karthik should bat after Eoin Morgan and Andre Russell and also wants Sunil Narine to be dropped from the top of the order.

Apart from a 23-ball 30 coming at no 3 against Mumbai Indians, Karthik has failed to produce any significant score despite batting ahead of Morgan so far in the tournament.

The wicket-keeper batsman scored 6 after coming on to bat at no 5 against Delhi Capitals on Saturday even as Morgan (44 off 18) and Rahul Tripathi (36 off 16) raised hopes of a successful chase after batting



Dinesh Karthik

at no 6 and 8 respectively. "Rahul Tripathi goes up the order, Dinesh Karthik plays at no 6, not before Morgan and not before Russell as well. Probably Sunil Narine goes to bat at 8 or 9. If Morgan bats no 4 and Russell at 5 and Dinesh Karthik to follow," Gambhir told

ESPNewsinfo.

The former India opener also felt Karthik miscalculated by giving the 19th over to spinner Varun Chakravarty (1/49) as it yielded 20 runs.

"Your best bowlers need to ball the 18th, 19th and 20th over, unfortunately it didn't happen. Pat Cummins, Sunil Narine -- if a spinner has to bowl. Even Mavi, he did a fabulous job in the previous games and so did Andre Russell. You have to go to give your best bowlers," he said.

"Yes Varun Chakravarty did bowl well in the first few overs but you cannot expect a young spinner to be bowling the 19th over and that too in Sharjah, probably it was a miscalculation," he added. — *PTI*

It's going to be a good challenge. They (RCB) have got a pretty good line-up, and have some big names. But, I think we have got a good team as well and the guys have been training really well. If we just execute our skills, perform the way we have been, I think it's going to be a very good game, and I'm sure we can out skill them

— **ANRICH NORTJE**

Delhi Capitals pacer says his team are capable of outperforming their opponents on Monday.

Kohli too finally got his touch back after three ordinary outings with an unbeaten 72 off 53 balls to guide RCB to a comfortable eight-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals.

And come Monday, the two skippers would look to lead from the front and outwit each other in what promises to be a thrilling contest.

While Shaw has so far looked quite in control at the top of the order for DC, Shikhar Dhawan's form would be a cause of concern for Iyer.

But on the brighter side,

Delhi seem to have finally got Rishabh Pant back in form as he dusted off his rustiness with a quick-fire 17-ball 38 against KKR.

To add to it, there is Marcus Stonis and Shimron Hetmyer waiting in the wings.

On the bowling front, Kagiso Rabada is the go-to man for DC even though he leaked runs against KKR the other day.

South African pacer Anrich Nortje has been brilliant for DC in the opening and slog overs

and bowled a brilliant penultimate over against KKR on Saturday.

Harshal Patel, as Ishant Sharma's replacement, did well enough to finish with 2 for 34 in 4 overs but the fit-again Ravichandran Ashwin and Stoinis went for runs.

RCB, on the other hand, have been served well by the young Devdutt Padikkal at the top. The left-hander, considered the next big thing in Indian cricket, is fourth in the run-scorers' tally with 174 from four games, including three fifties.

And if Aaron Finch too gets going, it would be difficult for any side to stop the marauding Bangalore openers.

Kohli's return to form is a relief for RCB's batting unit, which also has the likes of the in-form AB de Villiers, Shivam Dube and Gurkeerat Singh among others. — *PTI*



Shreyas Iyer is leading Delhi from the front. — *BCCI*

It's all about smart work, says Shreyas

Sharjah, Oct. 4: Delhi Capitals skipper Shreyas Iyer doesn't consider himself a "gifted player" and has attributed all those big sixes against Kolkata Knight Riders to the enormous "hard and smart work" that he had put in the gym sessions.

Iyer hit 88 off 38 balls with six sixes and seven fours in Delhi's 18-run win over KKR in an IPL game here on Saturday.

"I know the hard work and the smart work I have put in through my gym sessions, so I wouldn't say I am a very gifted player," Iyer said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"It was really necessary for me to take time at the start which I did in the earlier games as well. It was the right time for me to take on the bowlers and then rotate strike as well after that. "Luckily it worked out for

me. We keep talking about close victories and this was one of them. Really satisfied with the way everyone stepped up."

Losing captain Dinesh Karthik rued missing out on a couple of sixes in the middle overs which he felt probably cost them the match. "Maybe in between 10-13 overs we didn't get many boundaries, we lost a couple of wickets as well which sets you back in such run chases. To be honest, couple more sixes and we would have crossed the line," Karthik said.

Delhi seamer Anrich Nortje, who captured three wickets for 33, said they tried to exploit the conditions and focussed on mixing up the deliveries.

"We wanted to use the conditions to the best of our ability. There was a little bit of dew. Myself and KG (Kagiso Rabada) tried to get a few to go through.

We did it at the start. It got a little bit tough in the end, the ball was coming on nicely," he said.

"It was a bit difficult, proud that the guys pulled it through. We had different plans — try and change it up, not go with the same thing over and over again. Could have gone for a six, but luckily we got him (Morgan) out. Some balls gripped, that one gripped and we got the wicket."

Nortje said he and Rabada feed off each other's ideas.

"It's great bowling with him (Rabada), really enjoying the time we spend together. Trying to feed off each other, trying to find out what he thinks, what he does and it's nice to be in the same team with him," he said.

The 26-year-old from South Africa said they worked on their death bowling skills ahead of the match in Sharjah. — *PTI*