

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2020



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Priyanka hits out at UP govt over rising 'lawlessness' in state



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Chinese FM slams US Indo-Pacific strategy, calls it a 'huge security risk'

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Star kids seems to prove wealth and privilege are no safeguards against ailments that affect mind



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Actress Manushi Chhillar poses for a photograph at YRF Studios in Mumbai on Tuesday. — PTI

Chemical poured on 3 dalit sisters while asleep in UP village

Gonda: Three dalit sisters suffered burn injuries allegedly when someone poured a chemical on them while they were sleeping on the roof of their house in Paksa village, the police said on Tuesday. The three are undergoing treatment at the district hospital and they are out of danger, according to doctors. Superintendent of police Shailesh Kumar Pandey said the incident took place on Monday night when they were sleeping on the roof of their house. — PTI

30 farmer bodies, govt to talk today

Chandigarh: Thirty protesting Punjab farmers' bodies on Tuesday decided to hold talks with the Centre over the new farm laws in New Delhi on Wednesday. The decision to this effect was taken by representatives of 29 farmers' organisations at a meeting. — PTI Full report on Page 3

Loan issue: SC will hear petitions today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would hear a batch of pleas on Wednesday which have raised issues concerning the six-month loan moratorium period announced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. — PTI Full report on Page 4

COUNTERPOINT



Keep an eye on him... he is wearing a saffron colour mask these days!

WEATHER

Max: 34°C
Min: 22°C
RH: 48%
Rain: Nil
Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Adhika Aswayuja
Bahula Dwadasi till 11.46 am
Star: Purvaphalguni till 8.35 pm
Varjyam: 6.04 am to 7.31 am
Durmuhurtam: 11.38 am to 12.25 pm
Rahukalam: Noon to 1.30 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.52 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.21 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 3.17 AM
MOONSET TODAY 4.31 PM

PDP's chief Mehbooba Mufti freed after a year

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, OCT. 13

Former J&K chief minister and People's Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti was released from detention late Tuesday evening, over 14 months after she and hundreds of politicians and activists were taken into preventive custody ahead of the Centre's abrogating of Article 370 and splitting the state into two Union territories on August 5 last year.

Many leaders and activists, including the PDP chief, were later detained under the J&K's stringent Public Safety Act. While most key political figures, including two other former CMs Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, were freed earlier this year, Ms Mufti remained in custody even after being shifted to her home, which was declared a "subsidiary jail" in April.

PDP spokesperson Suhail Bukhari said Ms Mufti will address a press conference Friday to express her views on Article 370's abrogation, J&K's bifurcation and her detention. The PDP had said Monday it will not accept the bargain of (restoration of) statehood for J&K against the special status it enjoyed under Articles 370 and 35A.

Ms Mufti's daughter Iltija wrote on her mother's Twitter handle: "As Ms Mufti's illegal detention finally comes to an end, I'd like to thank everybody who supported me in these tough times. I owe a debt of gratitude to you all."



The Akshardham Temple is seen illuminated after it reopened for the public following months of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

Don't need your certificate to prove my Hindutva: CM

Uddhav, Maha gov in spat over Hindutva, secularism

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, OCT. 13

A war of words broke out between Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari and chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday over the reopening of temples in the state. Both leaders sent hard-hitting letters to each other. While Mr Koshyari questioned Mr Thackeray's commitment to Hindutva, the CM retorted saying that he doesn't need the governor's certificate. NCP chief Sharad Pawar also backed the CM and wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to protest against the "intemperate language" used by the governor.

The Maharashtra governor had written a letter to Mr Thackeray on Monday urging him to reopen the places of worship in the



In the very Preamble of our Constitution the word 'secular' is added that equates and shields all religions and hence the chair of the chief minister must uphold such tenets of the Constitution. Unfortunately, the governor's letter to the chief minister invokes the connotation as if written to the leader of a political party

— SHARAD PAWAR
In a letter to PM Modi

state. He said it was ironic that while the state government has allowed the opening of bars, restaurants and beaches, "gods and goddesses have been condemned to stay in the lockdown".

"You have been a strong votary of Hindutva. You had publicly espoused

your devotion for Lord Ram by visiting Ayodhya after taking charge as chief minister. You had visited the Vitthal Rukmini Mandir in Pandharpur and performed the puja on Ashadhi Ekadashi. I wonder if you are receiving premotion to keep postponing the reopening of the places of worship time and again or have you suddenly turned 'secular' yourself, the term you hated?" Mr Koshyari wrote to Mr Thackeray, who also sent a strongly worded response to the governor.

Informing the governor that his government will consider his request to reopen temples, Mr Thackeray wondered if Hindutva meant merely reopening places of religious worship to Mr Koshyari. Responding to ■ Turn to Page 3

China objects to Rajnath's inauguration of bridges, border infra 'LAC talks positive, constructive'

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, OCT. 13

The Indian and Chinese armies said in a joint statement on Tuesday that Monday's military talks at the corps commander level between India and China was "positive and constructive", and both sides agreed to earnestly implement the understanding by their leaders to not turn differences into disputes, and jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in the border areas.

It said both agreed to maintain dialogue and communications through military and diplomatic channels and arrive at a mutually acceptable solution for disengagement as soon as possible.

New 14 Corps chief takes over



Lt. Gen. P.G.K. Menon (left) takes charge as the new commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps from Lt. Gen. Harinder Singh. ■ Report on Page 3

"The two sides had a sincere, in-depth and constructive exchange of views on disengagement along the Line of Actual Control in the western sector of India-China border areas. They were of the view that these discussions were positive, constructive and had enhanced understanding of each other's positions," said the joint press

India economy may contract by 10.3%, but bounce back next year'

IMF predicts 8.8% growth in India 2021

Washington, Oct. 13: The Indian economy, severely hit by the coronavirus pandemic, is projected to contract by a massive 10.3 per cent this year, the International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday.

However, India is likely to bounce back with an impressive 8.8 per cent growth rate in 2021, thus regaining the position of the fastest growing emerging economy, surpassing China's projected growth rate of 8.2 per cent, the IMF said in its latest "World Economic Outlook" report.

Released ahead of the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, the report said global growth would contract by 4.4 per cent this year and bounce back to 5.2 per cent in 2021.

America's economy is projected to contract by 5.8 per cent in 2020 and grow by 3.9 per cent the next year, the IMF said.

China is the only country, among the major economies, to show a positive growth rate of 1.9 per cent in 2020, it said.

The IMF in its report said that revisions to the forecast are particularly large for India, where gross domestic product (GDP) contracted much more severely than expected in the second quarter.

"As a result, the economy is projected to contract by 10.3 per cent in 2020, before rebounding

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► 20 states allowed to raise ₹68,825cr via borrowing to meet GST shortfall

by 8.8 per cent in 2021," it said. In 2019, India's growth rate was 4.2 per cent.

According to the IMF, India is among those likely to suffer the greatest damage from global warming, reflecting its initially high temperatures. For India, the net gains from climate change mitigation-relative to inaction-would be up to 60-80 per cent of GDP by 2100.

While estimates of losses from climate change are somewhat smaller for colder regions (for example, Europe, North America, and east Asia), these are likely underestimations as they do not include a number of damages (for example, rise in sea levels, natural disasters, damage to infrastructure from thawing of permafrost in Russia) and negative global spillovers from large economic disruptions in other parts of the world.

Last week, the World Bank said India's GDP this fiscal is expected to contract by 9.6 per cent.

"India's GDP is expected to contract 9.6 per cent in the fiscal year that started in March," the World Bank said in its latest report. — PTI

Media remark on sub judice matters is contempt: A-G

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 13

Attorney-general K.K. Venugopal on Tuesday expressed concern over the electronic and the print media commenting on sub judice matters having potential to influence judges dealing with the case and said that it bordered on contempt of court.

Mr Venugopal told a bench of Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice Krishna Murari, "Today, electronic and print media carry on discussions seeking to influence the thinking of judges. This is doing great damage to the institution."

"When I see TV and a bail application is coming up, the TV is flashing conversations between the accused and someone. This may be damaging to the accused and it comes up during the bail hearing. This is contempt of court."

Attorney-general Venugopal urged the court to consider this issue in the course of hearing the 2009 contempt case against activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan and then *Theleka* editor, Tarun Tejpal.

Mr Bhushan alleged misconduct against Justice S.H. Kapadia for being a part of the bench that decided the case of Niyamgiri mining lease in favour of Sterlite, a subsidiary of Vedanta, whose shares he allegedly owned.



US President Donald Trump tosses face masks into the crowd as he arrives for a campaign rally at Orlando Sanford International Airport in Sanford, Florida, on Monday. Just a week after his release from the hospital, President Trump returned to the campaign trail on Monday for the first time since contracting the coronavirus. ■ Report on Page 6 — AP

IN BRIEF

Delhi govt realises ₹50L tax in 22 raids

New Delhi: In a special anti-tax evasion drive, the Delhi government's Trade and Taxes department raided on 22 commercial establishments and realised over Rs 50 lakh taxes, an official statement said. The department's 22 teams led by assistant commissioners conducted the raids at 29 premises belonging to the commercial enterprises on Monday. "An amount of Rs 50.34 lakh has been realised as tax from the raids conducted yesterday," the statement said. The premises of non-existent dealers were sealed and some incriminating documents seized by the department. The anti-tax evasion drives to nab fraudulent transactions will continue, it said. The department has intensified its effort for identification of taxpayers who are misusing the GST system and defrauding the government of its legitimate taxes through bogus invoice creation without movement of goods, fraudulent interstate sale to avoid tax scrutiny by the department and such other methods.

Postpone board exams to May: Govt

New Delhi: The Delhi government has urged the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) not to conduct board exams next year before May and further reduce the syllabus as schools still continue to remain closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In a letter to the CBSE, the Directorate of Education (DoE) said that due to the Covid-19 pandemic a major chunk of time of the 2020-21 academic session (approximately seven months) could not be utilised for classroom teaching-learning process as schools in Delhi are closed till October 31. "Though online and semi-online teaching-learning activities are being conducted through live classes as well as worksheets or activity sheets, it cannot replace the physical classroom teaching-learning process," the DoE said in the letter. "In order to provide students with a reasonable time to study in person in schools, it is requested that the ongoing academic session be extended beyond March and CBSE board exams be conducted not before May, 2021. Consequently, the next academic session may commence from July, 2021," it added.

Woman arrested for duping businessmen

New Delhi: A 25-year-old woman was arrested for allegedly duping various businessmen of over ₹2 crore in the city, police said on Tuesday. They said one Ashok Kumar, along with 10 other victims, alleged that directors Abhishek Tyagi and the woman of one VPG Stores Pvt Ltd induced them for delivery of goods against post-dated cheques. After receiving the goods, the company stopped payment. The amount involved in the present case was around ₹2.60 crore, police said. During investigation, it was emerged that the directors of the company actively induced the victims to supply goods such as rice, dry fruits, edible oils to the company after issuing post-dated cheques, a senior police officer said. "They initially cleared some cheques to win the confidence of the victims, but after getting goods worth crores of rupees, they issued instructions to the bank to stop the payment and used to sell the products at lesser price to various other businessmen engaged in the business of similar articles," Joint Commissioner of Police (Economic Offences Wing) O P Mishra said.

Missing company owner found dead

New Delhi: The owner of a cable manufacturing unit was found dead in Sahibabad Industrial Area Site 4 on Tuesday, a day after he went missing, police said. The body of Ajay Panchal (40) was found in the morning, they said. Panchal had left his factory, located in Rajendra Nagar industrial area, around 1 pm on Monday for some work. His mobile phone was found switched off some minutes later. The cause of his death would be ascertained after the post-mortem. A case of kidnapping was initially registered and it has now been converted into a murder case, police said.

■ Maximum wind speed 12 kmph, minimum temperature 19.8°C

Delhi's air quality worst in 8 months due to calm winds

New Delhi, Oct. 13: The national capital's air quality hit an eight-month low and was recorded just a notch shy of the "very poor" category on Tuesday, largely due to calm winds and low temperature that allowed accumulation of pollutants.

According to the Ministry of Earth Sciences' Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, an increase was also observed in farm fires in Punjab, Haryana and neighbouring regions of Pakistan, but its impact on the capital's air quality was marginal.

The city's air quality index (AQI) hit "very poor" levels in the morning and stood at 306 at 11 am. Thereafter, the pollution levels dipped slightly

■ Ventilation index is the speed at which pollutants can get dispersed. A ventilation index lower than 6,000 sqm/second, with average wind speed less than 10 kmph, is unfavourable for dispersion of pollutants.

due to an improvement in the ventilation index.

The 24-hour average AQI was recorded at 300 at 4 pm, which falls in the "poor" category. The last time the air quality hit such a poor level was on February 12 when the AQI was 320.

It was 261 on Monday, 216 on Sunday and 221 on Saturday. Dwarka Sector-8 (AQI 390) Wazirpur (AQI 372), and Mundka (AQI

352) recorded the highest pollution levels on Tuesday.

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

V K Soni, a senior scientist at the India Meteorological Department, said the dip in the air quality can be attributed to low wind speed which allowed accumulation of pollutants.

"The ventilation index has improved slightly and no drastic change is expected in the AQI," he said.

Ventilation index is the speed at which pollutants can get dispersed. A ventilation index lower than

6,000 sqm/second, with average wind speed less than 10 kmph, is unfavourable for dispersion of pollutants.

PM10 levels in Delhi-NCR dropped from 300 microgram per cubic meter (µg/m3) at 9 am — the highest this season so far — to 293 by 5 pm µg/m3. PM10 levels below 100 µg/m3 are considered safe in India.

PM10 is particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometers and is inhalable into the lungs. These particles include dust, pollen and mold spores.

The levels of PM2.5 — finer particles which can even enter the bloodstream — were 128 µg/m3. PM2.5 levels up to 60 µg/m3 are considered safe.

— PTI



Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal launches the process of sprinkling of the newly-developed bio-decomposer solution on the farm fields to prevent stubble burning in New Delhi on Tuesday.

— ASIAN AGE

2 minor sisters die, their kid brother injured after being hit by speeding car

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 13

In a fourth accident in past five days in the National Capital, two sisters, aged seven and four, died, while their minor brother and a 55-year-old family friend sustained injuries after they were hit by an unidentified car while crossing a road in northwest Delhi's Model Town. The incident occurred on Monday night near Gurdwara Nanak Piao on GT Road.

Police said that Jaspal Singh, his wife, three children and friend Milap Singh were going to visit

an acquaintance in a car when the incident occurred.

According to Vijayanta Arya, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Northwest district, a police control room (PCR) call was received around 11.49 pm about an accident near Gurdwara Nanak Piao by some unknown vehicle following which an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) was dispatched for the spot.

"Initially, two injured children were admitted to Pentamed hospital by their parents and subsequently referred to AIIMS

Trauma Centre, while Milap Singh and a four-year-old girl child were hospitalized by the PCR vehicle in Trauma Centre, Civil Line, and referred to Safdarjung hospital," said the DCP.

"During treatment, the seven-year-old girl admitted to AIIMS Trauma Centre and her four-year-old sister admitted to Safdarjung hospital succumbed to injuries. Milap Singh and the six-year-old injured boy are still undergoing treatment," said the DCP.

"During initial investigation, it was found that on the way, they had

stopped at a CNG station opposite Gurdwara Nanak Piao. Milap Singh got out of the vehicle and proceeded to cross GT Road along with Jaspal Singh's three children when the accident took place," said the DCP.

"All four persons, including Milap Singh and three children, got injured in the accident. The offending vehicle and its driver are yet to be traced. Police teams are looking at CCTV footage from the adjoining areas to identify the vehicle and ascertain the sequence of the accident," said the DCP.

8-year-old boy raises ₹2 lakh for exam fee of over 100 poor students

New Delhi, Oct. 13: An 8-year-old student of a private school in Delhi managed to raise around Rs 2 lakh to pay the board exam fee of more than 100 government school students who could not afford the fee due to financial hardships.

Adhiraj Singh, who studies in Class 3, started the noble deed after he got to know from his mother, a teacher at the government school situated in Begumpur, that some students at her school were unable to pay the exam fee.

Moved by their plight, he took out Rs 12,500 from his piggy bank and deposited the fee of five students. Now, he has raised around Rs 2 lakh which would be enough to pay the fee of over 100 students within two weeks.

The last date of paying the board examination fee for Class 10 and Class 12 is October 15.

Among the students who would receive the help, 86 are from Class 12 and 16 from Class 10. Their exam fee is around Rs 2,250 to Rs 2,400.

"I heard my mother talk-

AIIPA pays fees for 190 students

SHASHI BHUSHAN
NEW DELHI, OCT. 13

The All India Parents Association (AIIPA), a non profit organisation, has come forward to help schoolchildren, who are unable to deposit CBSE's examination fee. The association has collected Rs four lakh to pay up fees of 190 Class 10 and 12 students of the Delhi government-run Sarvodaya Co-ed Senior Secondary School in Moti Bagh.

AIIPA president Ashok Agarwal and Teena Sharma (AIIPA member) handed a demand draft of Rs 4,44,250 collected through crowdfunding to the school principal.

ing to someone on the phone. She looked worried. She told me that some students were not able to pay their CBSE exam fees. Then I thought of paying fees for five students. Later, I noticed that there were

DU online admission portal slows down on second day

New Delhi, Oct. 13: Slow speed of the online admission portal of Delhi University hampered the process of admission to undergraduate courses on Tuesday, a college principal said.

The university's first completely-online admission process began on Monday amid the coronavirus pandemic, with more than 19,000 applications being received on the first day. Only 1,628 of the applications received on Monday have been approved.

Only 1,628 of the applications received on Monday have been approved.

Ramjas College principal Manoj Khanna said the university admission portal was slow in the initial few hours and it was only after 2 pm that the speed increased.

He said they could only process 60 applications till 2 pm since it was taking almost 30 minutes for the process.

"There are 550 applications that have been cleared by respective

▶ The university's first completely-online admission process began on Monday amid the coronavirus pandemic, with more than 19,000 applications being received on the first day. Only 1,628 of the applications received on Monday have been approved.

▶ The university received over 3.54 lakh applications for nearly 70,000 undergraduate seats. Wednesday is the last day of admission. This year, the admission process is being completely held online due to the coronavirus pandemic.

departments and I have cleared 200 of them. We will try to clear the rest by 9-10 pm," he said.

He said he spoke to varsity officials who informed him that the portal was receiving close to 30,000 hits.

Payal Mago, the principal of Shaheed Rajguru College of Applied Sciences for Women, said they have had 160 admissions till now.

The teacher in-charges calculate the best of four

percentage, then the documents are verified online and the final admission is approved by the principal, she said.

The varsity received over 3.54 lakh applications for nearly 70,000 undergraduate seats. Wednesday is the last day of admission.

This year, the admission process is being completely held online due to the coronavirus pandemic.

— PTI

City records 45 Covid deaths, 3,036 cases in 24 hours

New Delhi, Oct. 13: The national capital recorded 45 Covid-19 fatalities on Tuesday, taking the death toll due to the disease to 5,854, while 3,036 fresh cases took the infection tally to over 3.14 lakh, authorities said.

The number of daily cases recorded from October 2-12 stood below the 3,000-mark every day. On October 10 and September 29 as well, 48 fatalities were reported in the city, the highest number of deaths recorded in a day since July 16 when Delhi saw 58 fatalities.

The 3,036 fresh cases on Tuesday were detected after 54,957 tests were conducted the previous day. Forty-five more fatalities have been recorded, taking the coronavirus death toll to 5,854, according to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department.

The tally of active cases on Saturday rose to 21,490 from 20,535 the previous day. The total number of cases has climbed to

3,14,224, the bulletin added. Noida recorded 105 new Covid-19 patients on Tuesday, pushing the district's case tally to 15,188, official data showed.

The number of active cases came down to 1,557 on Tuesday from 1,579 on Monday, according to the data released by the UP Health Department for a 24-hour period.

Also 125 patients were discharged during the period, as the overall number of recoveries reached 13,571, the seventh highest in the state, according to the data. The death toll stayed at 60 on Tuesday, with a mortality rate of 0.39 per cent, it stated.

The recovery rate of patients rose slightly to 89.35 per cent from 89.13 per cent the previous day, according to the data.

There were 38,082 active cases across UP on Tuesday, while 3,97,570 patients have recovered

across the state and the death toll linked to Covid-19 climbed to 6,466, it showed.

— PTI



Demonstrators hold placards during a protest in New Delhi on Tuesday to condemn the alleged gangrape and murder of a teenage woman in Bool Garhi village at Hathras in Uttar Pradesh.

— AFP

Fake call centre busted, 3 held for duping people who lost jobs due to Covid

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 13

With the arrest of three persons, the Delhi Police on Monday claimed to have busted a gang who under the fake call centre had duped hundreds of job seekers by promising them jobs in an airline. Police said that the accused targeted those who lost their jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Those who have been arrested are the gangs' mastermind Shadab Malik, 26, and his accomplices Priyanka Goswami, 22, and Kumud Ranjan Kamlesh, 40.

According to Devendra Arya, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southwest district, Malik and Goswami posed as husband and wife and lived at a rented apartment in Noida from where they ran the fake call centre.

"The woman would introduce herself as an officer working with the HR department of Air India. The matter came to

light after a victim, Anwesha Datta Gupta, filed a complaint against a job fraud at the Palam police station here. Gupta told police that he was duped of Rs 71,875 by the accused persons on the pretext of a job opportunity with an airline," said the DCP.

In Noida, three young men, who allegedly exploited a loophole on an e-commerce firm's website to make online shoppers pay them instead of the company for their purchases, have been arrested for cyber fraud, police said Tuesday.

The accused provided shoppers links to purchase branded mobile phones at heavily discounted prices from Amazon, a senior official said.

They exploited a loophole in the Amazon website that allowed them to take screenshot of booked products which they sent to gullible buyers, saying their product has been booked at a discounted rate.

SHORT TAKES

POLLS TO 11 RAJYA SABHA SEATS IN UP, UPKHAND ON NOV. 9

New Delhi: Elections to 10 Rajya Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh and one in Uttarakhand, falling vacant next month, will be held on November 9, the poll panel announced on Tuesday. Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Arun Singh and Neeraj Shekhar(BJP), Chandrapal Singh Yadav, Ram Gopal Yadav, Ram Prakash Verma and Javed Ali Khan (SP), Rajaram and Veer Singh (BSP), and Panna Lal Punia (Cong) are the 10 members from Uttar Pradesh retiring on November 25. Actor-politician Raj Babbar's (Cong) term as Rajya Sabha member from Uttarakhand also ends on November 25. As per practice, counting of votes will take place on November 9 evening after polling concludes. The notification for the elections will be issued on October 20, the EC said.

TRP FRAUD PROBE: MUMBAI POLICE ARRESTS 1 MORE

Mumbai: The Mumbai crime branch, probing the TRP scam case, arrested the person who paid money to the arrested accused for soliciting the viewers by bribing them to watch Republic TV for boosting the viewership of the channel. The officials arrested the person from Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh and was associated with Hansa Research as relationship manager. He had fled after the crime branch arrested Vishal Bhandari, to whom he paid money for paying the households. The arrested accused was identified as Vinay Tripathi, who was apprehended from his native where he had fled after the case was filed and first arrest was made. Probe in the TRP scam has revealed that Tripathi allegedly paid ₹1000 to Bhandari for paying ₹200 to five houses. They were asked to keep Republic TV channel on for boosting the TRPs of the channel. "Tripathi was brought to Mumbai and is being questioned further to ascertain further links in the chain," said officials. He was remanded to police custody for further investigation in the case. The crime intelligence unit (CIU) of Mumbai crime branch has also summoned few others for recording statements. The CIU has arrested four persons, including owners of Fakta Marathi and Box Cinemas, who have been named in the case along with Republic TV. Earlier, the crime branch arrested four accused on October 9. They have been remanded in police custody till Oct. 13.

'LAC talks positive, constructive'

■ **Continued from Page 1**
Monday, including 10 strategic bridges in Jammu and Kashmir and eight in Ladakh. The Chinese foreign ministry said "neither side should take any action in the area to complicate the situation and China opposes any infrastructure construction for military monitoring and control". At the corps commanders' meeting at Chushul, on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control, India again insisted that China withdraw its troops from all friction points in eastern Ladakh, and restore the status quo ante of April 2020 in Pangong Tso and Gogra Post-Hot Springs. The Chinese Army has also been preventing Indian patrols in the Depsang sector. India has made it clear that since it was China which had first transgressed, the PLA will have to make the first disengagement move. Both sides seem prepared to keep their armies at these high-altitude mountains during the winter when the temperatures dip well below zero degrees and bone-chilling winds make survival extremely difficult. This was the last meeting under 14 Corps commander Lt. Gen. Harinder Singh who will take charge as Commandant of the Indian Military Academy later this month. In the last corps commanders' meeting, both sides had agreed to stop sending more troops to the frontline, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground, and avoid taking any action that might complicate the situation.

'UP govt's narrative has abetted crime'

Priyanka's outburst comes after attack on 3 sisters in Gonda

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 13

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi on Tuesday hit out at the Uttar Pradesh government over the rising 'lawlessness' in the state. The latest attack comes over the alleged pouring of a chemical on three sisters in Gonda in Uttar Pradesh.

Three sisters suffered burn injuries when someone allegedly poured a chemical on them while they were sleeping on the roof of their house in Paksa village of Gonda, police said on Tuesday. Tagging a video in which the father of the girls is narrating the incident to media persons, Priyanka Gandhi tweeted, "This man's three daughters aged 17, 10 & 8 were asleep in their home when someone entered and threw acid on them." She further added, "The Uttar Pradesh government's



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

politically motivated narrative of justifying and protecting perpetrators of crimes against women has only emboldened criminals across the state." Superintendent of police Mr Shailesh Kumar Pandey said the incident took place on Monday night when the girls were sleeping on the roof of their house. An unidentified person poured a chemical on the eldest girl and some of it fell on her younger sisters as well who were also sleeping with her. Asked if it was an acid attack, the superintendent of police said, "The chemical used in the attack is yet

▶ **THREE SISTERS** suffered burn injuries when someone allegedly poured a chemical on them while they were sleeping on the roof of their house in Paksa village of Gonda

to be ascertained. It will be clear after a probe by experts."

The Congress has also been attacking the Uttar Pradesh government over the Hathras incident in which a 19-year-old Dalit woman from the district was allegedly raped and attacked by four men.

She later succumbed to injuries at a Delhi hospital. Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi were stopped twice from visiting Hathras later they were allowed to go. They charged the government of being unable to control violence especially against woman in the state.

Magistrate seeks transfer of Akbar's defamation case

New Delhi, Oct. 13:

After hearing for two years, a court of additional chief metropolitan magistrate Tuesday asked the district judge to transfer the criminal defamation complaint of former union minister M.J. Akbar against journalist Priya Ramani to another judge on the ground that the court was designated to hear cases filed against lawmakers. Additional chief metropolitan magistrate (ACMM) Vishal Pahuja, who had started the final arguments in the case on February 7 this year, said the case in hand is not filed against MP or MLA and needs to be transferred to the "Competent Court of Jurisdiction". Mr Pahuja said his court was designated to try the cases filed against the lawmakers by a circular passed on February 23, 2018, and

since this case was "not filed against MP/MLA", he was marking the matter to Principal District and Sessions Judge to consider re-assigning the case to another metropolitan magistrate.

Mr Akbar had filed the criminal defamation complaint against Ms Ramani in March 2018. If transferred before another court, the judge would start hearing the final arguments again.

"As the present matter is not filed against MP/MLA, hence, cannot be tried by this court and needs to be transferred to the Competent Court of Jurisdiction." "Let this matter be put up before the court of principal district and sessions judge (Rouse Avenue District Courts) for October 14 for further appropriate orders," the ACMM said. — PTI

Blast blows off roof of Kolkata club, none injured

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, OCT. 13

A powerful explosion blew the roof of a club, allegedly linked to a TMC leader, near famous Gandhi Bhawan at Beliaghata in north Kolkata early Tuesday triggering panic in the city ahead of Durga Puja festival.

Though no one was injured in the blast, the police suspect that either explosives or bombs were stockpiled at the blast site which instantly attracted the BJP to train guns of lawlessness on the ruling party. At around 6 am residents of Beliaghata Main Road woke up to a deafening sound. Rushing out of their homes they found the first-floor room of a two-storeyed building housing the club: Belegnata Gan-dhimath Friends Circle damaged with its roof and wall of the first floor blown off partially.

Lt. Gen. Menon takes over as new chief of 14 Corps

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, OCT. 13

Amidst heightened tensions with China there has been a change in Army leadership in Ladakh. Lt. Gen. PGK Menon, on Tuesday, took over the command of Leh-based 14 Corps, also known as 'Fire and Fury Corps,' from Lt. Gen. Harinder Singh.

Lt. Gen. Singh will take over as Commandant of the Indian Military Academy (IMA) after completing his one year tenure with the 14

Corps. The Fire and Fury Corps looks after the frontlines with both China and Pakistan in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Lt. Gen. Menon was already part of the Indian delegation during the 6th and 7th Corps Commanders meeting between India and China to ease the military stand-off. The next Corps Commanders meeting will be held under his leadership.

Lt. Gen. Menon has had a distinguished career in the Indian

Army, tenating a number of important commands and staff appointments. He is also The Colonel of the Sikh Regiment.

The officer commanded a Rashtriya Rifles unit in Kashmir valley, an Infantry Brigade along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, and an Infantry Division in the Eastern sector. Prior to assuming Command of Fire and Fury Corps, he was tenating the appointment of Director General Recruiting in New Delhi.



The busy Ganapati Rao Road at One Town is seen inundated following heavy rains in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

— C. NARAYAN RAO

Farm bodies from Punjab to hold talks with Centre today

Chandigarh, Oct. 13: Thirty protesting Punjab farmers' bodies on Tuesday decided to hold talks with the Centre over the new farm laws in New Delhi on Wednesday.

The decision to this effect was taken by representatives of 29 farmers' organisations at a meeting here.

The BKU (Ugrahan), which did not attend meeting, has also decided to participate in the meeting called by the Centre in New Delhi.

Our three members will participate in the meeting in Delhi, said BKU (Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Khokrikalan.

A seven-member panel has also been formed to hold talks with the Centre, said

BKU (Rajewal) chief Balbir Singh Rajewal while addressing the media here. The leaders included in the panel are Balbir Singh Rajewal, Darshan Pal, Jagjit Singh Dalewal, Jagmohan Singh, Kulwant Singh, Surjit Singh and Satnam Singh Sahni.

Rajewal said as per the invitation sent by the secretary of the Union Agriculture Department, the Centre wants to hold talks with them.

We are going because if we continue to reject the invitation, then they will say we are not ready for any talks. We do not want to give them any excuse. We will go there, said Rajewal.

Earlier on Monday, the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh

Committee, a farmers' body in Punjab, decided not to attend the meeting called by the Union agriculture department on October 14.

The farmers' organisations, whose agitation against the laws has disrupted rail traffic and severely impacted coal supply to thermal power plants in Punjab, had last week rejected the Centre's invitation to participate in a "conference to address their concerns" on October 8.

BKU (Dakaunda) president Buta Singh Burjigill said their statewide agitation, including the "rail roko" stir, will continue.

We will decide the future course of action at a meeting on October 15, said Mr Burjigill. — PTI

CBI takes charge of Hathras case, quizzes victim's family

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI OCT. 13

A team of CBI officials, along with forensic experts, on Tuesday visited the spot where a 19-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly gangraped in Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh.

Sources further said that the CBI also quizzed victim's family members, including her brother.

"The CBI spoke to the family members at their residence in detail about the sequence of events on the day of the crime", sources said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE (Through e-Tendering)	
Name of work with its location	Signalling work in connection with sectional signal maintenance contract in section of ADSTE/PS of Delhi Division.
App. Cost of the work (₹)	₹85,10,676/- only
Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	₹1,70,200/- only
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3 rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055
Date & Time for upload the tender/closing of tender	Tender uploading/closing date & time 04.11.2020 upto 15:00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board/location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T complete details of the tender can be seen etc.
Tender No. : 558-Sig-16-M-TENDER-1350 Dated: 13.10.2020 2208/20	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE	
The Deputy Chief Engineer /Const.-II Northern Railway, State Entry road, New Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender (Single packet) for the following work:	
1 Name of work & location	Construction of Multi purpose hall above soil mechanics lab, improvement of canteen kitchen and repair to chhajja, mummy etc. at CAO/C office complex at Kashmere Gate, Delhi
2 Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 99.72 lakh (Rs. Ninety nine lakh seventy two thousand only)
3 Earnest Money Amount to be deposited Online	Rs. 1,99,500/- (Rs. One lakh ninety nine thousand five hundred only)
4 Completion period of work	12 (Twelve) Month
5 Sale/availability of tender document on Railway website	Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 15.10.2020 to 05.11.2020 upto 11:30 hrs.
6 Last date and time for uploading of tenders	05.11.2020 upto to 11:30 hours. Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website w.e.f. 22.10.2020 to 05.11.2020
7 Date and time of opening of tender	05.11.2020 at 11:30 hours (immediately after close of uploading of tender (D2).
No. 53-G-C-K.GATE-DLI Dated : 09.10.2020 2199/2020	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE	
Name of work	Hiring of Multi Utility Vehicle for attending, breakdowns, inspections and collection/purchase of light/petty material for Electrical Coaching Depots of Delhi Division for three years.
Tender No.	30-Elect-5T-Chg-2020-21
Approx cost of the work in (Rs)	Rs. 20,30,400/-
Cost of tender form	Rs. 3,540/-
Address of the Office	Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/Chg/Northern Railway New Delhi
Earnest Money	Rs. 40,600/-
Period of completion of work	36 Months
Last date & time of submission of tender	10.11.2020 up to 15 00 hrs
And opening of tender	10.11.2020 at 15 01 hrs.
Website and notice board	www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. DEE/Chg/DLI
2207/2020	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL



General public is here by informed that one girl Namely: Rajani, D/o Rohit, R/o Jhuggi No. 245, Shri Ram JJ Camp South Campus, New Delhi, Age: 20 Years, Height: 4'9", Built: Medium, Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Suit Salwar and Footwear Sleeper Blue Colour has been missing since 17.03.2018 from her house in the jurisdiction of PS South Campus, Delhi.

In this regard a FIR No. 58/2018 U/S 365 IPC, dated 22.03.2018 has been lodged at P.S. South Campus, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this girl but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in SHO
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> P.S. South Campus, Delhi
Fax: 011-24368639 Ph No. 011-26177179, 7065036223
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/329/SW/2020

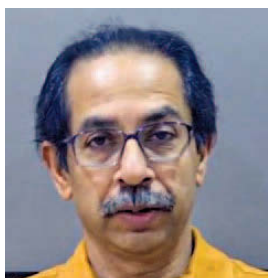
NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE			
Northern Railway Central Hospital, New Delhi for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders through www.ireps.gov.in for the following items. For detail information please log on to website www.ireps.gov.in			
Tender No.	Item Description	Tender Due Date	Tender invited by
82201214H	Tab. Canagliflozin 100mg or Equivalent	03.11.2020 at 11.00 hrs.	Dy. CMM/Northern Railway Central Hospital, New Delhi
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2208/20			

Uddhav, gov in spat over Hindutva

■ **Continued from Page 1**
the governor's secularism jibe, Mr Thackeray wrote: "Isn't secularism a key component of the Constitution, by which you swore while taking the oath as state governor?"

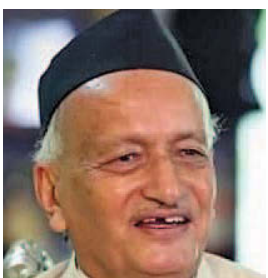
"I don't need your certificate for my Hindutva. While considering the sentiments and beliefs of the people, it is also important to take care of their lives and it is wrong to impose and lift the lockdown suddenly," Mr Thackeray wrote.

Interestingly, the governor's letter to the CM came in the wake of two days protests by the BJP demanding reopening of temples. The BJP on Tuesday held protests outside temples in various cities in Maharashtra. In



Mumbai, BJP workers led by MLC Prasad Lad and Leader of the Opposition in Legislative Council Praveen Darekar tried to enter the famous Siddhivinayak temple as part of an agitation. In Pune, BJP activists staged a demonstration outside the famous Tambadi Jogeshwari temple.

Supporting the governor's letter, BJP leader Ashish Shelar said: "The



CM cannot deny the fact that he has deviated from Hindutva which was followed by his father (Bal Thackeray). The people who have insulted late freedom fighter V.D. Savarkar are now sharing power with him. He did not even touch the feet of Lord Vitthal when he went to Pandharpur as CM a couple of months back to perform the annual Ashadhi Ekadashi pooja. He does

need a certificate of governor Koshiyari who himself has come from Uttarakhand, the land of gods."

Meanwhile, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar also wrote a letter to the PM regarding the letter by Mr Koshiyari. Mr Pawar wrote to the PM: "I am sure he too would have noticed the intemperate language that has been used. In the very Preamble of our Constitution the word 'secular' is added, that equates and shields all religions, and hence the chair of the chief minister must uphold such tenets of the Constitution. Unfortunately, the governor's letter to the chief minister invokes the connotation as if written to the leader of a political party."

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
-----Tel: 0194-2458088, Email ID: senmehcdh@jksb.in-----

Gist of e-tender
NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/156/e-tendering
Dated 10.10.2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir UT , e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the Registered, reputed & experienced firms as detailed in the NIT for below mentioned works:-

S.No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Earnest Money (Lacs of Rs)	Time of completion (in Days)	Position of funds
1	Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Medical Gases Pipeline system at CHC Keeri along with operation for 01 year and Maintenance for 02 years.	57.80	2000	1.156	30	Available
2	Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Medical Gases Pipeline system at SDH Urialong with operation for 01 year and Maintenance for 02 years.	69.07	2000	1.38	30	Available
3	Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Medical Gases Pipeline system at CHC Hajinalong with operation for 01 year and Maintenance for 02 years.	38.43	2000	0.77	30	Available

1. Downloading of Bids: The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q.), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jk.tenders.gov.in from 10.10.2020 (08.00 hrs) and can be downloaded from 10.10.2020 (08.00 hrs) to 16.10.2020 (12.00 hrs) in two (02) covers.

2. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 11.10.2020 (10.00 hrs) to 16.10.2020 (12.00 hrs).

3. Opening of Bids: The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on at 17.10.2020 12.00 hrs or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

No. MHCHD/TS /4517/23 Dated: 10.10.2020
DHPC-726020 DATED 13.10.2020

SD/-
Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

THE ASIAN AGE

14 OCTOBER 2020

Demand stimulus on offer is too little

Spending to resuscitate the pandemic-hit economy will face longer delays because of the stalemate over making up for the revenue shortfall by way of GST. In the absence of an agreement on how to cover the Rs 2.35 lakh crore shortfall expected by March 2021, state governments will be left largely to their own devices to work out how to pick themselves up after heavy expenditure on tackling the coronavirus and looking after the sick over the last several months, in which time their SGDP would have also slackened considerably. The data flow on Monday from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) are indicators of the extent of the bind the Indian economy is in even as rising headline inflation flashes warning signs over the future of the accommodative stance of RBI's monetary policy, because rising inflation may not be transitory as the MPC may have perceived it to be.

All the fiscal stimulus put together would amount to just about 1.2 per cent of GDP, including the grandstanding announcements. The much trumpeted ₹20 lakh crore stimulus had more to do with lines of credit to industry and MSMEs...

countries like the US, UK, Japan and South Korea made to come to the aid of those worst hit by the pandemic — people, companies and trade.

In the final analysis, the Centre has shown a distinct lack of imagination in opening up the purse strings at a time when governments had to contribute the most to get the economies going again. Handing out lollipops to babus and the rich by way of tax write-offs through the purchase of consumer durables in lieu of leave travel concession is indicative of a conservative mindset just when a lot more was called for. Cash doles to the poorest — which some state governments did attempt but with too little in their kitty to make a real difference to lives and livelihoods of the most stricken — and tax breaks to the middle class to stimulate festive demand would have been ideal ways to show that governments at the Centre and the states were willing to cover the interests of all. The enormity of the growth hit will become known as we transit from the strict lockdowns to the final “unlock”, which is when the relatively small size of the demand stimulus will show up how niggardly the Centre has been and that very quality is reflected in its reluctance to fulfil sovereign guarantees on the GST growth shortfall.

Keep Bollywood unfettered

Bollywood, cricket, politics. There is hardly an Indian citizen not occupied by any of the above. If there is a single activity that has a hold on the minds of the general public, and is arguably the lever to mould them, it is that of storytelling as performed by Indian cinema. A story has more power than it is usually given credit for. It is, at its core, the purveyor of an idea. More than television news, newspapers or literature in the various languages, the Hindi film industry is the single largest vehicle of ideas, and for long it has enacted its roles of both thought pioneer as well as force multiplier against Indian conservatism, caste tyrannies and non-egalitarian power structures. That role is now being challenged.

Quite aside from propaganda assisted by sections of the media that this industry is a den of drugs, nepotism, corruption and other venal vices, all of which are nonetheless pervasive in almost every field and walk of life, and the hounding of personalities like Deepika Padukone and Anurag Kashyap whose political opinions differ from the official line, both have, at different times, registered their protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, there is the very noteworthy departure from the trend of realist and experimental, creative, filmmaking that had begun in the early Oughties and continued to entertain us through the Twenty-tens. Starting from *Uri: The Surgical Strike* through *Kesari* to *Manikarnika*, many prominent and officially publicised films released in the last two years, including super-duper hits like *War*, *Pad Man* and *Padmaavat*, had a militaristic or moralistic theme. Wearing its patriotism on its sleeve, the National Film Development Corporation organised an online patriotic film festival as part of the Independence Day celebrations this year. It must be remembered that the Joseph McCarthy era witch-hunts and Hollywood blacklists effectively ended the careers of hundreds of directors, actors and writers.

Very recently, auteur Karan Johar has tweeted that the “film fraternity” will come together to celebrate the hoary “valour, values and the culture of India”. It is, however, less unexpected than the tweet of his industry colleague, Vivek Agnihotri, who has publicly opined that Bollywood has “destroyed Indian culture”. The crony capitalist nexus is well-known. Now with government forces infiltrating erstwhile independent institutions like banks, universities and the judiciary and the nationalist versus anti-national rhetoric drowning all reason, alarm bells have rung. It is time to issue a caveat. What we are witnessing today is the rise of “Godi Bollywood” following a similar rise of the “Godi media”.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Editor in Chief

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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



RAW & IB set to teach tax officers about ‘tradecraft’

Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers trying to nab economic offenders will now get an edge after undergoing training from spooks. Officers from the nation's premier intelligence agencies, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Intelligence Bureau (IB), have been roped in to train them in intelligence “tradecraft”.

Sources say that revenue officers from the Enforcement Directorate, income tax, Serious Fraud Investigation Office, CBI and Directorate of Revenue Intelligence will be training in gathering intelligence and handling digital and forensic evidence. The training programme is being conducted by the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB) of the finance ministry.

Apparently, nine course modules have been developed. While RAW and IB sleuths will conduct training

of Group A officers of the Indian Revenue Service, some other modules are open to officers starting from superintendent level up to principal commissioners. Other courses include investigating economic crimes in the securities market, trade-based money laundering and also legal aspects. Hopefully, after training these “specialists” will make economic offenders think twice before violating the law.

TRANSFER TRAVAILS OF A SENIOR COP

Frequent transfer is a fait accompli in government. But Pimpri-Chinchwad police commissioner Sandeep Bishnoi who was recently transferred has approached the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) challenging his transfer order. He was moved out from his post in less than a year. He has been succeeded by Krishna Prakash, a

1998-batch IPS officer.

Mr Bishnoi has stated that “such abrupt transfers without justification or valid reason is contrary to law and ought to be set aside”. Mr Bishnoi and Mr Prakash are part of a major reshuffle carried out by the state government in which around 50 officers were transferred.

Mr Prakash is the third police commissioner of Pimpri-Chinchwad in two years after the state government established the commissionerate in the industrial town, as law and order became a challenge following a rise in the number of street crimes and cases of vandalism. Mr Bishnoi's predecessor, senior IPS officer R.K. Padmanabhan, too was transferred before completing two years in office.

ADHOCISM MAY UNDERMINE RAILWAY REFORMS

After the heady announcement

heralding long-awaited reforms, Indian Railways is moving cautiously on the implementation. Some observers are surprised at the slow pace. From the time when Covid-19 struck and passenger rail traffic almost stopped, the Railways have had plenty of time on its hands to consider its internal rearrangement.

While all posts of members of the Railway Board are ex-cadre now and should be filled with suitable officers, based on seniority and residual service, the railway ministry is edging ahead with great caution. Sources say that the post of director general of HR (DGHHR) was filled with an Indian Railway Personnel Service (IRPS) officer, even though more senior officers from other cadres are eligible and available. It is also being reported that the post of member, traffic and rolling stock, is likely to be given

to an officer from the Indian Railways Service of Electrical Engineers (IRSEE). Similarly, there seems to be a proposal to appoint the member (finance) from the Indian Railways Accounts Service (IRAS).

So far so good. But there is some grumbling among the Indian Railways Service of Engineers (IRSE) and Indian Railways Service of Mechanical Engineers (IRSME), which seem to have lost out on apex grade posts to the other services in the new plan.

According to sources, the railway ministry is still not drafted the recruitment rules, which may explain the sense of ad-hocism prevailing in the ministry's actions.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian) on Twitter. Let's multiply the effect.

Subhani



Can CMs help India set up political alternative?



Sanjiwan Sahni

How will a credible challenger to the incumbent Prime Minister emerge?

The current wisdom, and most opinion polls, indicate that the PM's popularity is overwhelming, leading to the TINA (there is no alternative) factor.

The largest Opposition party's leadership, even as it asks the government the right questions, fails to make any impact. There is a lack of credibility in its present leadership and little hope that it will improve in a hurry.

The divided Opposition also hasn't been able to throw up a candidate who will hold appeal on a pan-India basis. Many chief ministers and other regional leaders have local spheres of influence, but don't have a presence in most areas outside their direct domain. As a result, the nation doesn't have a credible leader in sight who could effectively take on the PM, let alone be considered as a replacement.

The question is — how will one emerge?

Over time, India has thrown up regional leaders, particularly CMs, who had the ability and in fact have shouldered the responsibility of leading the country. Even the present PM falls into that category. Experience as a CM is an important ingredient in the grooming of a Prime Minister. It's not necessarily a sufficient one, but certainly an indicator of where potential challengers could emerge.

Recent developments, including but not limited to a steep decline in economic performance, most recently reflected by the 23.9 per cent negative GDP growth; using majoritarianism to impose divisive steps like the CAA, NRC, and the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution, are illustrative. The domination of multimedia communications to reinforce this divisive agenda, dilution

of protective democratic institutions are all well known, but have not been catalysts of bringing about changed electoral attitudes. This is not new. But it seems that recent developments which have aggravated friction in Centre-state ties could become a powerful trigger, which if properly institutionalised and propagated, might provide the route to change.

What is suggested is the creation of an institutionalised forum that could become one of the supportive pillars of democracy. The compulsion to create such an institution will come from the growing Centre-state rifts. The reneging on GST commitments, intruding on the states' domain in agriculture to pass legislation without due consultation, amending laws to take control of the cooperative finance sector and authoritarian use of the Disaster Management Act for centralised pandemic management are some examples.

These should become the trigger for states (in practice, non-BJP states) to join hands in a formal forum. This could comprise the CMs and leaders of the Opposition as members. This would obviously be across party lines, but the membership wouldn't be decided by political parties. It would comprise the elected representatives in states, including CMs and LOPs, and it could in turn create a body of experienced bureaucrats, legal experts and eminent citizens both to advise the forum headed by CMs as well as act as spokespersons.

The CMs will have credible reach in their states and perhaps beyond. The spokespersons and experts would send appropriately approved messages on behalf of the forum, not themselves. Therefore, it would not rest on their individual credibility, but messaging from a mass based politically credible entity.

Think of such a body that could include people

like Raghuram Rajan, Arvind Subramanian, Ravish Kumar, P. Chidambaram, Kapil Sibal, Derek O'Brien, Shashi Tharoor and others that the CMs/LOPs and other leaders with their ear to the ground would choose. In essence, good communication skills would be backed by experience to send collective messages on matters of importance to the people.

The focus of coordination would be Centre-state relations, but clearly it would also include matters of importance to the nation as a whole.

The process of creating such an institution is far less complex and more administratively feasible than trying to create alliances between parties and multiple states. The forum also has the advantage of creating a competitive environment where state CMs and LOPs could compete for visibility to get their points of view across to their constituents and also become examples for a wider audience. This process would throw up potential leaders who would get wider acceptability from their states as well as the national audience.

There are several important issues that remain on the backburner, but which need to be debated and brought to the forefront. For the present, we will use one example as an illustration of what if collectively rather than individually brought into the public domain would help bring a new important discourse of material relevance to change the course of events in India.

Today, the nationalism card is equated with propagating India's strength. Combined with majoritarianism, aggressive stances have been taken both internally and now increasingly externally.

What is suggested is the creation of an institutionalised forum that could become one of the supportive pillars of democracy. The compulsion to create such an institution will come from the growing Centre-state rifts.

Electoral benefits have followed.

However, there is no mention, leave alone widespread understanding, of the costs of such a policy. The costs of controlling Kashmir after Article 370's abrogation, internal insurgencies, and in some ways the minorities, must be researched, assessed and broadcast. The aggressive stances with Pakistan and China have now been supplemented by differences with Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. All these entail huge costs, which the country can ill afford to bear, keeping in mind the fragile economic situation, the high level of poverty and the government's inability to provide the required stimulus.

There is no way India can achieve the growth levels it aspires to with the continuation of policies that in fact are fighting internal-external battles at the expense of funding and alleviating poverty.

What is the alternative?

Modern defence systems can offer maximum deterrence through nuclear capability and technological edge, including digital and IT innovations. This combined with diplomacy should be our key negotiating stance externally. Even Pakistan uses nuclear deterrence to keep us from taking any major military initiatives.

Internally, the divisive agenda should be replaced by policies that help the State carry along all its citizens. Most important, and relevant to the suggested changes, is cooperation rather than friction between New Delhi and the states. No other initiative will be more conducive to rapid progress all around and achieving the growth targets needed to alleviate poverty. Only a collective forum can initiate a meaningful dialogue on issues like nationalism. With properly researched facts, political will and diplomatic endeavours, this is eminently achievable. A transformation could follow peace could replace aggression all around.

The writer is a management and economic adviser

LETTERS

WHAT A SHAME!

An advertisement by Tanishq, a jewellery brand and division of Titan, has been pulled off air after it was trolled on social media with the #boycott-Tanishq hashtag for featuring an interfaith baby shower. The people took it as a promotion of “love jihad”. There's no space for love and religion harmony in India with bigotry at its peak. Some Hindu people act to disrespect other religions and communities. They are promoting hate everywhere. Do not trust them, even if they approach you with anodyne, godly messages.

Komal Pandey
Mumbai

G.O.A.T. PRETENDER

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, “Indefatigable Nadal” (Oct 13). The way in which Rafael Nadal crushed Novak Djokovic in the 2020 French Open final to claim a 13th French Open title and move level with Roger Federer with 20 Grand Slam titles was electrifying to watch. Nadal can boast of a phenomenal 100-2 record of wins and losses at the French Open. He has rendered age insignificant by playing like a champion. Truly, he has ended up challenging the great Roger Federer in laying claim to the GOAT (Greatest of All Time) tag.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

THANK YOU, COURT

REJECTING A PLEA seeking a ban on the halal method employed by the Muslim community to slaughter animals for meat, the Supreme Court said on Monday that the courts cannot interfere with the food habits of people. It further said that the courts cannot determine who can be a vegetarian or not. The petition was filed by an organisation, Akhand Bharat Morcha, challenging Section 28 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. The court pointed out that Section 28 protects not just halal but jhatka too, because it provides that killing of animals in a manner required by the religion of any community will not be an offence under the law. That's why the court expressed that the petition is mischievous in character. The Supreme Court's decision has raised the credibility of the judiciary among the masses.

Noor Ahmad
Hyderabad

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

IN BRIEF

Muslims protest in Indonesia

Jakarta: Thousands of conservative Muslims marched in Indonesia's capital on Tuesday demanding that the government revoke a new law that say will cripple labour rights. Authorities blocked streets leading to the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, where clashes between riot police and rock-throwing demonstrators, including workers and students, broke out last Thursday. The protests spread and turned violent in some cities across the world's most populous Muslim nation, but calm had largely returned to Jakarta over the past four days.

US hits Taliban with airstrikes

Lashkar Gah (Afghanistan): American forces carried out several airstrikes in support of Afghan security forces under attack by the Taliban in southern Helmand province, a spokesperson for the US military in Afghanistan said on Monday. Colonel Sonny Leggett said the recent Taliban attacks in Helmand are "not consistent" with a US-Taliban deal signed in February and undermine ongoing intra-Afghan peace talks. He said the airstrikes do not violate the February deal. The Taliban "need to immediately stop their offensive actions in Helmand Province and reduce their violence around the country," Leggett said in a statement on Twitter, quoting Gen. Scott Miller, the commander of the US Forces in Afghanistan.

Indian-origin patron wins award in US

Washington: Indian-origin philanthropist Harish Kotecha has been awarded the prestigious Sandra Neese Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his work in the US for meeting the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The lifetime achievement award from the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHYC) was presented to Kotecha, who is founder and president of Hindu Charities for America (HC4A), at its 32nd annual conference on October 9, a statement said.

49 stranded Indians return home

Dubai: A total of 49 Indians, who were stranded for several months in the UAE after being abandoned by their employers, have been repatriated after the Indian mission here helped them secure their passports and security deposits from two companies, a media report said on Tuesday. The expats were abandoned and unpaid for the last six months after two Dubai-based carpentry firms owned by Indians shut during the Coronavirus pandemic without informing their staff, the Gulf News reported. Left to fend for themselves, the expats reached out to the Indian Consulate in Dubai in July and sought help to return home.

VIRUS REINFECTION MIGHT SEVERE SYMPTOMS

Houston, Oct. 13: Covid-19 patients infected with the Coronavirus for a second time might experience more severe symptoms, according to a study which is the first to confirm a case of reinfection with the virus in the US.

The study, published in the journal *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, found evidence that an individual with no known immune disorders or underlying conditions was infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus in two separate occurrences. According to the scientists, including those from the University of Nevada in the US, the patient, a 25-year old male, was infected with two distinct SARS-CoV-2 variants within a 48-day time frame, while testing negative in between infections.

The study noted that the patient's second infection was more severe, resulting in hospitalisation with oxygen support, indicating previous exposure to Covid-19 may not translate to guaranteed total immunity. The patient tested negative for the virus after testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 in April 2020, the researchers said. Then in June 2020, after experiencing severe Covid-19 symptoms, including fever, headache, dizziness, cough, nausea, and diarrhoea, the patient was hospitalised and tested positive for a second time.

Trump holds 1st rally since Covid

Busy schedule of the Prez comes amid unanswered question of travel impact on his health

Sanford (US), Oct. 13: Just a week after his release from the hospital, President Donald Trump returned to the campaign trail on Monday for the first time since contracting the Coronavirus as he tries to stage a late comeback in the election's final stretch. "It's great to be back in my home state, Florida, to make my official return to the campaign trail," Trump declared in front of a crowd of thousands of supporters, standing shoulder-to-shoulder, mostly without masks, despite the ongoing pandemic.

"I am so energised by your prayers and humbled by your support" he said. Trump, whose doctor said on Monday for the first time that he had received a negative test for Covid-19, is pushing to correct a stubborn deficit in national and battleground state polling. His Sanford rally on Monday night was his first stop in a busy week that will include events in Pennsylvania, Iowa, North Carolina and Wisconsin. The robust schedule underscores the work Trump needs to do as he tries to win over voters just three weeks before Election Day. And it comes amid still-unanswered questions about the impact so much travel so soon could have on the 74-year-old president's health.

The progression of Covid-19 is often unpredictable, and there can be long-term complications. After Air Force One lifted off from Joint Base An-

draws, the president's doctor released an update on his health that said Trump had tested negative for the virus — and had done so on consecutive days.

His doctor, Navy Cmdr. Scott Conley, said that the tests, taking in conjunction with other data, including viral load, have led him to conclude that Trump was not contagious.

For days, the White House had sidestepped questions as to whether Trump had tested negative. Conley over the weekend said that the president met Centers for Disease Control and Prevention criteria for safely discontinuing isolation and that by "currently recognised standards," Trump was no longer considered a transmission risk.

Trump, eager to return to campaigning, says he is now "immune" to the virus — a claim that is impossible to prove given limitations in what scientists know about the Coronavirus. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, said on Monday that those who recover from Covid-19 are likely to be immune for a limited period of time, but there are cases emerging of people getting reinfected weeks or months later. Fauci, speaking as Trump was prepared to depart the White House for Florida, questioned the wisdom of holding such an event. He noted that test positivity rates are climbing in parts of the Sun Belt. "We know that that is

Amid poll fears, Microsoft targets malware network

Washington, Oct. 13: Microsoft announced legal action on Monday seeking to disrupt a major cybercrime digital network that uses more than 1 million zombie computers to loot bank accounts and spread ransomware, which experts consider a major threat to the US presidential election. The operation to knock offline command-and-control servers for a global botnet that uses an infrastruc-

ture known as Trickbot to infect computers with malware was initiated with an order that Microsoft obtained in Virginia federal court on Oct. 6.

Microsoft argued that the crime network is abusing its trademark. "It is very hard to tell how effective it will be but we are confident it will have a very long-lasting effect," said Jean-lan Boutin, head of threat research at ESET, one of

several cybersecurity firms that partnered with Microsoft to map the command-and-control servers. "We're sure that they are going to notice and it will be hard for them to get back to the state that the botnet was in." Cybersecurity experts said that Microsoft's use of a U.S. court order to persuade internet providers to take down the botnet servers is laudable.

— AP

NIKKI HALEY SLAMS BIDEN, HARRIS FOR THEIR POLICIES

Washington, Oct. 13: Popular Republican politician Nikki Haley has hit out at Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden for being a "status quo" on China and wanting to revive the Iran nuclear deal while accusing his running mate and Senator Kamala Harris for advancing the leftist agenda.

Indian-American Haley, 48, had so far refrained from publicly criticising 55-year old Harris, has now come out in open against the California Senator's policies, which the former US Ambassador to the UN said was reflective of Harris' leftist agenda.

"Harris pledged to repeal the 2017 tax cut and invest in the American people, revealing the left's fundamental philosophy that government is better equipped to spend people's money than the people themselves," she said in a tweet. Haley is one of the most popular Republican politicians in the US after Trump and is seen as party's potential presidential candidate in 2024. The two-term Governor of South Carolina, Haley was the first Cabinet-ranking Indian-American in any presidential administration.

— PTI

Bipartisan Christian group opposes Don

Washington, Oct. 13: A group of prominent Christians from both sides of the aisle, including a past faith adviser to former President Barack Obama, is forming a political action committee designed to chip away at Christian support for President Donald Trump in the final weeks of the 2020 campaign.

Dubbed Not Our Faith, the new super PAC plans to roll out six-figure TV and digital ads focused on Christian voters - particularly the evangelical and Catholic voters who helped power Trump to victory in

2016. Its first digital ad, set to run in Michigan and Pennsylvania, takes sharp aim at Trump's claim to a foothold with Christians.

The ad says Trump "has used Christianity for his own purposes," invoking imagery of the Republican president's photo on outside a historic Washington church amid this summer's racial justice demonstrations. Urging Christians to break from Trump, the ad states that they "don't need Trump to save them. The truth is that Trump needs Christians to save his flailing campaign."

— AP

● **TRUMP'S DOCTOR** said that the tests, taking in conjunction with other data, including viral load, have led him to conclude that Trump was not contagious.

asking for trouble when you do that," Fauci said.

Some medical experts have also voiced skepticism that Trump could be declared contagion-free so soon. And it was unclear what — if any — added precautions and safety measures the campaign planned to take to prevent the trip from further spreading a virus that has already infected so many of the president's closest aides and allies, including his campaign manager and the head of the Republican Party.

— AP

Japan protests against China for coast invasion

Tokyo, Oct. 13: Tokyo has lodged protests to Beijing over the entry of Chinese coast guard ships into Japan's territorial waters off disputed East China Sea islands and their refusal to move out for a third day on Tuesday, Japanese officials said.

The two Chinese ships entered the Japanese-claimed waters on Sunday morning, appearing to approach a Japanese fishing boat carrying three crew members. They have remained there, while ignoring repeated warnings and exit demands by the Japanese side, Japanese coast guard officials said. Chinese coast guard vessels routinely violate territorial waters around the Japanese-controlled southern islands of Senkaku, which China calls Diaoyu and also claims.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato said on Tuesday that it was "extremely regrettable" that the two Chinese coast guard ships were still in Japanese waters. Japan "strictly protested" to the Chinese side and demanded that the Chinese ships immediately move out of Japanese waters, Kato said. He said Japan would firmly defend its territorial waters, land and airspace "with a sense of urgency." Japanese coast guard officials said the fishing boat with the three crew members was safely protected, but declined to give any other details.

The Japanese government says Japan has had ownership of the islands since the late 1890s under international law. Tokyo also says Beijing started claiming its ownership around 1970 when possible undersea oil deposits near the islands were reported. Japan sees China's military development and increasingly assertive stance in the East and South China seas as a major security threat.

Japan's military invasion of China in the 1930s and 1940s remains a sore spot between the two sides. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian repeated China's position.

"The Diaoyu Islands and its affiliated islands are China's inherent territory," he said at a regular news conference in Beijing on Monday. "It is

TAIWAN BANISHES CHINA SPYING ACCUSATIONS

Taipei, Oct. 13: Taiwan on Tuesday dismissed new spying allegations by China as a further attempt to smear the government of the self-governing island democracy that Beijing claims as its own territory.

The remarks follow a report on Monday night by Chinese broadcaster CCTV featuring a taped confession from a man identified as Cheng Yuchin, the second such report in as many days. On Sunday, CCTV broadcast a confession by a man identified as Li Mengju, whose name is also spelled Lee Meng-chu, who like Cheng said he had been working to destabilise China and harm the ruling Communist Party's reputation. In the same report, CCTV said security personnel had solved more than 100 spying cases as part of an initiative dubbed Operation Thunder 2020.

Taiwanese Premier Su Tseng-chang called the accusations an attempt by Beijing to "defame and create fear," while the foreign ministry's head of European affairs, Johnson Chiang, called the allegations "pure defamation and calumny."

CCTV's airing of videoed confessions have prompted lawsuits abroad amid accusations that the accounts were coerced and that the broadcaster is merely a propaganda arm of the Communist Party. The latest reports come amid increasing Chinese diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan aimed at compelling the administration of President Tsai Ing-wen to recognise Beijing's claim that the island is a part of Chinese territory. While the sides share strong cultural and economic links, a strong majority of Taiwanese reject any moves toward political union with China.

— AP

China's inherent right to carry out law enforcement patrol in the waters of the Diaoyu Islands, and the Japanese side should respect this."

— AP

Day of the Race



A demonstrator paints the helmet of a riot police officer near a statue of Christopher Columbus which was surrounded by a metal fence for protection, during Columbus Day in Mexico City, on Tuesday, October 12 commemorates the arrival of Columbus to America in 1492, which in Mexico is called the 'Day of the Race'. — AFP

Chinese FM slams US Indo-Pacific strategy, calls it a 'huge security risk'

Kuala Lumpur, Oct. 13: The United States poses a "huge security risk" to Asia by pushing to boost engagement with the region, China's foreign minister said on Tuesday during a tour of Southeast Asia, where Beijing and Washington are locked in a battle for influence.

Speaking in Malaysia, Wang Yi said the US's real aim is "to build an Indo-Pacific NATO," in a strategy he said harkened back to the Cold War. Washington is trying to "stir up confrontation among different groups and blocs, and stir up geopolitical competition

● **WANG'S TONE** is typical of China's increasingly hard-line approach to disputes with Washington.

while maintaining the pre-dominance and hegemony system of the US," Wang said at a joint news conference with his Malaysian counterpart, Hishammuddin Hussein. "In this sense, this strategy itself is a huge security risk," Wang said.

Wang also urged Southeast Asian nations, which are aiming to draw up a code of conduct with China in the South China

Sea, to remove "external disruption" in the disputed waters, but did not elaborate. Wang's tone is typical of China's increasingly hard-line approach to disputes with Washington as it seeks to capitalise on political divisions within the US and a perceived decline in America's global influence to advance its own foreign policy aims.

China's aggressive moves to assert its territorial claims in the South China Sea, through which a third of global shipping passes, have drawn rebuke from the United States and become a flashpoint for a region in which Southeast

Asian nations Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei all have rival claims. Hishammuddin said the disputes over the South China Sea must be resolved peacefully through regional dialogue.

The US says its Indo-Pacific engagement framework supports sovereignty, transparency, good governance and a rules-based order, among other things. By using the term "Indo-Pacific," the US also wants to propagate the idea that the region stretches far beyond China's backyard and the tiger economies of East Asia to include the Indian Ocean.

— AP

POWER | ABUSE

Proposal was based on weaknesses, exploitation, says govt

Cyprus scraps 'golden passport' scheme

Nicosia, Oct. 13: Cyprus said on Tuesday it will scrap its controversial "golden passports" scheme for foreign investors next month over alleged abuses uncovered in a television programme.

Government spokesman Kyriakos Koushos said the cabinet had agreed in an emergency meeting to abolish the scheme as proposed by the finance and interior ministers. "The proposal of the two ministers was

based on long-standing weaknesses, abuse and exploitation of the provisions of the investment programme," Koushos said.

Koushos said the scheme, which has generated seven billion euros (\$8.25 billion), would be brought to an end on November 1.

The Cypriot government would "fully examine its policy to encourage investment," he added, after the completion of an investigation into the scheme.

The move came hours after Qatar-based broadcaster *Al Jazeera* aired an hour-long programme showing its reporters pretending to represent a Chinese businessman keen to acquire a Cypriot passport despite him having a criminal record. "Posing as representatives of a fictitious criminal character, our undercover reporters were ushered through the application process for the Cyprus Investment Programme

by lawyers, property agents, leading eventually to high ranking politicians," *Al Jazeera* reported.

Those involved — a Cypriot lawmaker and the parliament speaker — denied any wrongdoing.

But the lawmaker, Christakis Giovanis, later resigned from parliament and the positions he held in the left-wing AKEL party.

And the speaker, Demetris Syllouris, said he was standing down until a



Donald Trump

I'LL GIVE YOU'LL A BIG FAT KISS, SAYS TRUMP

Sanford (US), Oct. 13: Deprived of his beloved campaign trail for 10 days by Covid-19, President Donald Trump took center stage again on Monday in Florida, vowing that he is in "great shape" with 22 days to go until he faces Joe Biden in the election.

"I went through it and now they say I'm immune," Trump told a cheering crowd in Sanford, near Orlando, few of whom wore masks.

"I feel so powerful. I'll walk in there, I'll kiss everyone in that audience. I'll kiss the guys and the beautiful women, just give you a big fat kiss."

Trump's medical team announced he had tested negative and was no longer contagious as he jetted to Florida — the first of four battleground states he plans to visit over the next four days. His claim of immunity is unproven.

— AFP

SECOND J&J VACCINE TRIAL HALTED OVER ILLNESS

New Brunswick (US), Oct. 13: A late-stage study of Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine candidate has been paused while the company investigates whether a study participant's "unexplained illness" is related to the shot.

The company said in a statement on Monday evening that illnesses, accidents and other so-called adverse events "are an expected part of any clinical study, especially large studies," but that its physicians and a safety monitoring panel would try to determine what might have caused the illness.

The pause is at least the second such hold to occur among several vaccines that have reached large-scale final tests in the US. The company declined to reveal any more details about the illness, citing the participant's privacy. Temporary stoppages of large medical studies are relatively common. Few are made public in typical drug trials, but the work to make a Coronavirus vaccine has raised the stakes on these kinds of complications.

Companies are required to investigate any serious or unexpected reaction that occurs during drug testing. Given that such tests are done on tens of thousands of people, some medical problems are a coincidence. In fact, one of the first steps the company said it will take is to determine if the person received the vaccine or a placebo. The halt was first reported by the health news site STAT.

— AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,625.51	0.08
Nifty 50	11,934.50	0.03
S&P 500*	3,520.22	-0.40
Dollar (₹)	73.35	-0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.61	-0.14
Euro (₹)	86.45	0.09
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,989▼133	0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.55	0.83
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.904	0.005
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.737	-0.038

* As of 8:30 PM IST

SIP inflows drop for 6th month in September

Investment in mutual funds through SIPs remained lacklustre with inflow dropping for the sixth-consecutive month to Rs 7,788 crore in September amid a challenging economic environment. The trend is expected to reverse only slowly as investors feel more confident to save more once their own income stream stabilises, said Vidya Bala, co-founder of Prime-investor.in. The industry added 7.37 lakh folios last month.

Deepak Kochhar sent back to ED custody



A special court in Mumbai remanded Deepak Kochhar, husband of former ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar, in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate till Oct. 17. Deepak Kochhar was arrested by the ED in Sept. under the PMLA in the ICICI Bank-Videocon money laundering case. He was remanded to the ED custody till Sept. 19, but it was suspended after he tested positive for coronavirus and was sent to judicial custody.

EPFO launches WhatsApp helpline service

Retirement fund body EPFO has launched a WhatsApp helpline service for speedy redressal of grievances of its subscribers, the labour ministry said. This facility is in addition to other means of grievance redressal forums which include EPFIGMS portal, CPGRAMS, social media platforms (Facebook & Twitter) and a 24x7 call centre. With WhatsApp, PF subscribers can interact directly with EPFO's regional offices.

Piaggio offers up to ₹10K benefits on Vespa, Aprilia

Italian automaker Piaggio announced benefits worth up to Rs 10,000 on the purchase of Vespa and Aprilia scooters as part of festive sales offer. The offer entails insurance benefit of up to Rs 7,000, complementary accessories worth upto Rs 4,000 and e-commerce booking benefit of Rs 2,000. The release stated, could be availed by Nov. 16, Piaggio India said. The firm is also offering free service.

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■ Permanent income loss for India in 2020

\$6 tn wiped off global economy

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 13

The lockdown measures in India could lead to a sharp recession in 2020. Despite a projected rebound in 2021, the contraction registered in 2020 could translate into a permanent income loss for the country, finds the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad).

In the wake of the pandemic shocks, the global economy will contract by an estimated 4.3 per cent this year, leaving global output short by over \$6 trillion by the year end of what economists had expected it to be before the Covid-19 pathogen began to spread, says the Unctad Trade and Development Report 2020.

The UN agency expects South Asia and South-East Asia to contract 4.8 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively, in 2020 and recover 3.9 per cent and 4.3 per cent, respectively, in 2021.

"In the case of India, the baseline scenario is a sharp recession in 2020 as strict lockdown measures to stem the virus' spread brought many productive activities to a halt across the country. Although we expect a rebound in 2021 in line with the growth rates of the Indian economy in recent years, the contraction registered in 2020 is likely to translate into a permanent income loss," finds the report.

The Unctad expects India's GDP to contract by



5.9 in calendar year 2020 and grow by 3.9 in 2021.

In short, the world is grappling with the equivalent of a complete wipe out of the Brazilian, Indian and Mexican economies, said the report. And as domestic activity contracts, so goes the international economy; trade will shrink by around one-fifth this year, foreign direct investment flows by up to 40 per cent and remittances will drop by over \$100 billion.

Among G20 countries, Argentina, Brazil, India, Mexico and South Africa have all implemented austerity in the past years but are now struggling to access reliable sources of finance.

Looking at the global demand scenario of the past two years, Unctad has placed India in its third group of "fast-growing global demand drainers". This includes countries whose growth of domestic absorption is relatively faster than the rest of the world, but such absorption does not grow nearly as close as the growth of

their own income. In other words, they exhibit a spending pattern by which their growth of income benefits from additional demand emerging from the economies in the first two groups of "outright global expansionary stances" and "slow-growing global demand backers". But they used it not to add to global demand but rather to accumulate external financial assets.

Talking about the monetary policy, Unctad finds that in the largest developing economies, the central-bank interest rate came down substantially in Brazil, the Russian Federation, India and South Africa, where monetary easing had begun before the pandemic shock. Of the five "BRICS" economies, as of mid-2020, only the People's Bank of China has not cut its interest rate substantially. This idiosyncrasy reflects China's unique financial structure and the fact that consumer prices were accelerating in China until the beginning of 2020.

China's stock market tops \$10 trillion

Oct. 13: Chinese domestic equities are worth more than \$10 trillion for the first time since 2015, when a record crash erased half the market's value in months and saddled millions of investors with losses.

The world's second-largest stock market has added \$3.3 trillion since a low in March, helped by Beijing's policies to encourage equity trading, a flurry of new listings and the strengthening yuan. Stocks have been close to the \$10 trillion milestone since July, when China's government acted to tame a speculative rally that had suddenly pushed a gauge of large caps near a 12-year high. The country's total market capitalisation is now \$10.04 trillion and just shy of the all-time high, according to data compiled by Bloomberg as of October 12. The US has the world's most valuable stock market at \$38.3 trillion.

Chinese shares have rallied since a long holiday break on optimism the government will introduce reforms to turn the region around Shenzhen into a global technology hub and that the ruling Communist Party will introduce policies to stimulate demand when it holds a major meeting later this month. Equities surged over the summer as margin debt climbed at the fastest pace since 2015 and turnover soared.

—Bloomberg

Covid cover can be renewed or merged into other policy

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, OCT. 13

The insurance regulator on Tuesday allowed insurance companies to offer policyholders who have bought Covid-specific insurance covers to either renew, migrate or port their policies.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) on Tuesday issued revised guidelines in this regard. By the guidelines, 'Corona Kavach' and 'Corona Rakshak' policies of any tenure can be renewed for further terms of three-and-a-half months, six-and-a-half months or nine-and-a-half months, as per the option exercised by the policyholder, subject to the underwriting policy of the insurer.

Both the policies can be renewed till March 31, 2021. Similarly such policyholders can also port to a comprehensive



health plan.

Where the policy is renewed, an additional waiting period of 15 days should not be imposed and the coverage has to be continued seamlessly.

During renewal, policyholders can enhance the sum insured. For any increase in the sum insured, the waiting period shall start afresh only for the enhanced portion of the sum insured, said the regulator.

Renewals may be done before the expiry of the existing policy contract

said the Irdai in a circular issued to non-life and pure health insurance companies.

Inaugurated in July, Corona Kavach is an indemnity plan that will cover hospitalisation expenses. The cost of treatment for any comorbid condition, including pre-existing comorbid conditions along with the treatment for Covid-19, will be covered under this policy.

The sum insured in Corona Kavach policy ranges from Rs 50,000 to Rs 5 lakh. On the other hand, Corona Rakshak is a fixed benefit plan in which if a policyholder is diagnosed with Covid-19 and hospitalised for three days, a fixed amount (sum insured) will be paid by the insurance companies. For Corona Rakshak Policy, the minimum sum insured would be Rs 50,000 and the maximum limit is set at Rs 2.5 lakh.

Wipro net falls 3.4%; buyback at ₹9,500 cr

New Delhi, Oct. 13: IT services major Wipro on Tuesday posted a 3.4 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 2,465.7 crore in the three months ended September and projected revenue growth in the December quarter even as it announced a plan to buyback shares worth up to Rs 9,500 crore.

The Bengaluru-based company, which had a net profit (attributable to equity holders of the company) at Rs 2,552.7 crore in the year-ago period, recorded

almost flat year-on-year revenue growth at Rs 15,114.5 crore in the latest September quarter.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the company's net profit climbed over 3 per cent while revenue was up by little over 1 per cent.

Wipro CEO and MD Thierry Delaporte said the demand environment has improved from the first quarter even though the pace of decision making remains a bit slower on the larger deals.

The buyback proposal,

which is subject to shareholders' approval, will involve purchase of up to 23.75 crore equity shares, representing 4.16 per cent of the company's total paid-up equity capital, at Rs 400 per share. The buyback size will be up to Rs 9,500 crore and the price of Rs 400 per scrip is more than 6 per cent higher than the company's closing price of Rs 375.5 apiece on the BSE on Tuesday. Wipro's rival TCS unveiled a Rs 16,000 crore-share buyback plan last week. —PTI

Upside seen for beaten down Vedanta stock

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 13

Vedanta, which failed in its bid to delist from the stock exchanges last week, is back in brokerages' focus, with a positive outlook, as the valuation of the stock, after the sharp slump post-delisting fiasco, is looking attractive.

Vedanta fell more than 15 per cent on Monday from a high of Rs 122 to Rs 94.8 on the BSE, as the company's delisting process got aborted on Friday. But on Tuesday Vedanta gained 2.78 per cent to close at Rs 99.65 on the BSE.

"While the stock will continue to stay listed on the exchanges, and may bear the brunt of failed attempt at de-listing in the near term, the focus will be on how Vedanta will utilise the \$3.15 billion (the debt it raised for delisting) and what could be the operating performance over the next few quarters," said Hemang Jani, head-equity strategy, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"Discussion around capital allocation will dominate investor concerns, while the operating performance of mining com-

panies is getting better due to firm commodity prices globally. Historically for companies announcing the de-listing, the stock (post failed attempt at de-listing) tends to reach the levels before the buy back, which in case of Vedanta was around Rs. 85-90. Book value of Vedanta as of March 31, 2020 was Rs 147," Jani said.

"While a buyback may not be considered in order to make the next attempt at delisting successful, a generous dividend can be expected given the strong cash on the balance sheet and the need of liquidity by promoters. But, any increase in inter company loans will be a negative," Jani added.

Vikas Jain, senior research analyst, Reliance Securities said, "The delisting for Vedanta has failed as the floor price was very low and in the reverse book building it could not get the desired quantity of shares. We believe as the share price has already declined by 40 per cent over the past three days and buyback is being cancelled we could see some bounce back to near-term highs of 120 levels."

GST: Centre permits 20 states to raise ₹68,825 crore

New Delhi, Oct. 13: The Centre on Tuesday permitted 20 states to raise Rs 68,825 crore through open market borrowings to bridge the GST revenue shortfall.

The decision came a day after the GST Council meeting failed to reach a consensus over the Centre's proposal of states borrowing against future GST collections to make up for the shortfall.

The projected total compensation shortfall in the current fiscal stands at Rs 2.35 lakh crore.

The Centre had in August given two options to the states—to borrow either Rs 97,000 crore from a special window facilitated by the RBI or Rs 2.35 lakh crore from the market. It had also proposed extending the compensation cess levied on luxury, demerit and sin goods beyond 2022.

The Department of Expenditure has granted permission to 20 states to raise an additional Rs 68,825 crore through open market borrowings, an official release said. —PTI

Fiscal impact of festival package to be 0.16-0.2% of GDP: Analysts

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 13

The government measures announced on Monday to boost consumer demand by Rs 1 lakh crore would have a fiscal impact of Rs 31,600 crore to Rs 40,000 crore on the Centre, depending on how they play out. The expenditure will translate into 1.16 per cent to 0.2 per cent of the GDP.

According to analysts, apart from the Rs 25,000-crore additional capital expenditure provided for various infrastructure/capacity building projects, the fiscal impact of the other components in the package is negligible.

Barclays India estimates that the actual fiscal cost of the measures will be Rs 31,600 crore or 0.16 per cent of the GDP. SBI estimates that Rs 40,000 crore is the maximum additional cash outgo for the Centre during the current fiscal, which is around 0.21 per cent of GDP.

In a bid to boost to manufacturing and consumption in the economy, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday announced payment of

cash in lieu of Leave Travel Concession and Rs 10,000 festival advance to government employees, with certain riders. Besides, she also announced additional capital spending and Rs 12,000 crore interest-free loan to states.

The government estimates the LTC scheme would cost Rs 5,675 crore for the Centre and Rs 1,900 crore for public sector banks and enterprises. As the employee has to buy goods and services worth three times the travel fare and one time the leave encashment received, the GST collected at 12 per cent and above will largely offset the extra cost that may be incurred on the government's balance sheet.

For instance, an employee eligible for business travel will get Rs 36,000 per person. For a family of four this works out to Rs 1,44,000. The total purchases he has to make works out to Rs 4,32,000 and on this he would pay a GST amount of Rs 1,03,680.

"The scheme is unlikely to work unless the government decides to pay the GST component also over

and above the fare entitlement amount as is done by many PSBs. We believe only around 10-15 per cent employees would use the LTC Scheme, says the SBI research report, Ecowrap.

Kruti Shah, economist, Emkay Global Financial Services, feels the demand projections are difficult to achieve. "The estimates could be achieved only if consumers behave in the way they are expected to. While some government employees might opt it, purchases worth Rs 28,000 crore by private sector employees (as assumed by the government) are very unlikely," she said.

As for the interest-free festival advance of Rs 10,000 for employees, up to a total of Rs 4,000 crore, the money will come back to the government in 10 instalments and 6 or 7 per cent interest incurred on this Rs 4,000 crore by the government will have almost nil impact.

"Similarly, the Rs 12,000-crore interest-free 50-year loan to states will have to be repaid and the interest part will not be a major burden on the Centre," said Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist, Barclays.

Maruti Alto hits 40L sales milestone in 20 years

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 13

Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest car maker, on Tuesday said its popular Alto hatchback had hit the 40-lakh sales milestone over a span of 20 years in the fiercely competitive car market.

Undoubtedly, the Alto has established itself as a decent entry-level car in the market. The current version of the Alto starts at Rs 2.94 lakh at Delhi showroom.

The Maruti Suzuki Alto underwent various changes in the last 20 years, becoming a bit more feature-rich with every upgrade.

Launched back in 2000, the car has been the preferred choice of many first-time buyers.

The Alto has been ruling the Indian market by being the best selling car for the past 16 years.

The entry level car benefits from its compact design, easy manoeuvrability, high fuel-efficiency, upgraded safety, comfort features and low cost of acquisition. It today also offers features such as touchscreen Smart-Play infotainment system, ABS with EBD, dual tone interiors and dual airbags, among others.

Maruti Alto is India's first BS6 compliant entry-level car with aerodynamic design and latest safety features. It has a certified fuel efficiency of 22.05 km/litre for petrol and 31.56 km/kg for CNG.

Alto reached the milestone of 10 lakh sales in 2008 which doubled to 20 lakh units in 2012. This was followed by 30 lakh units in 2016 before reaching 40 lakhs in August 2020.

"Nearly 76 per cent of Alto customers have selected it as their first car in 2019-20 which has further increased to 84 per cent for the current year," Shashank Srivastava, ED, marketing & sales at Maruti Suzuki India, said.

CHANGING | ENERGY-MIX

Renewables will push coal off the grid, taking 80% of demand growth by 2030

Three takeaways from IEA's energy outlook

JAMES HERRON OCT. 13

Once a year, the International Energy Agency attempts to impose some order on the chaotic world of oil, gas, power and carbon by publishing detailed scenarios on how the next few decades might unfold.

Here are the three big takeaways from the 2020 World Energy Outlook, published on Tuesday:

Forecasting is harder than ever

Predicting the future of energy is an even greater challenge than usual this year, coming after what the IEA described as a disruption not seen since "World Wars and the Great Depression." Just about every global trend in fuel and power demand pivots

on questions more suited to an epidemiologist than an energy expert: Will there be an effective and widely available vaccine for Covid-19? Will habits learned during lockdown, such as remote working and an aversion to flying, outlast the pandemic?

The IEA attempted to cut through this knot by offering one main scenario in which the pandemic is brought under control next year, and another that features prolonged virus outbreaks and lockdowns.

The gulf between the two outlooks is vast.

In the former, oil use recovers by 2023, in the latter it takes as long as a decade. Global electricity demand in 2030 in the pessimistic case is 27,000 terawatt hours lower than in the main scenario, equivalent to twice the consumption of Japan.



Coal is dying, long live solar

The fuel that was once the staple of utilities will probably never return to pre-pandemic levels of demand. By 2040, coal's share of the energy mix will fall below 20 per cent for the first time since the industrial revolution, the IEA said.

No peak on the horizon

Predictions of peak oil demand are very much in fashion, as even oil giants like BP Plc say consumption may never again reach the heights seen in 2019. The IEA, formed in response to

the oil shocks of the 1970s and duty-bound to preserve the security of energy supplies, has long resisted such predictions.

The agency stuck to that position this year. Even its most pessimistic Covid-19 scenario showed petroleum consumption regaining pre-pandemic levels by the latter part of this decade, and plateauing there in the 2030s.

"In the absence of a larger shift in policies, it is still too early to foresee a rapid decline in oil demand," the report said.

Even so, the agency tiptoed closer than ever to an acknowledgment that the petroleum industry is facing an historic change. "The era of global oil demand growth will come to an end in the next decade," Birol said.

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Ronaldo tests Corona positive

Lisbon: Cristiano Ronaldo has tested positive for coronavirus, the Portuguese football federation announced on Tuesday. Ronaldo "is asymptomatic" and "will not play against Sweden" in Wednesday's Nations League match, the federation said on its website.

The 35-year-old Juventus forward, who has been voted the world's top player five times, played in Portugal's goalless Nations League draw against France on Sunday.

Ronaldo has scored 101 goals for Portugal and will be a huge absence for his team against Sweden as they aim to hold on to top spot in their group.

The test result also means Ronaldo is a doubt for Juventus' Champions League group match with Barcelona on October 28, which was set to pit Ronaldo against his old rival Lionel Messi. — *AFP*

Tokyo to hold gymnastics meet

Tokyo: Tokyo is planning to hold an international gymnastics meet next month that will exempt non-Japanese athletes from a 14-day quarantine period, an approach that might foreshadow planning for next year's postponed Olympics.

The Japanese Gymnastics Association announced the meet will feature athletes from the United States, Russia, China and Japan. The one-day event is set for November 8 at the Yoyogi National Gymnasium. The Japanese news agency Kyodo reported that 2,000 fans will be allowed to attend, and it said athletes' travel will be restricted while in the country. Kyodo said the non-Japanese athletes will take a polymerase chain reaction test before they leave home, and will also be tested daily in Japan. — *AP*

Wawrinka edges Evans in 1st round

St. Petersburg: Stan Wawrinka saved three match points to achieve a comeback win over Dan Evans and reach the second round of the St. Petersburg Open, after the tournament was disrupted by an unnamed player's coronavirus case. Serving to stay in the match at 5-6 down in the second, Wawrinka gave Evans three chances to seal the match but saved them all and then won the second-set tiebreaker and deciding set to complete a 3-6, 7-6 (3), 7-5 victory.

Wawrinka next plays Evgeny Donskoy after the Russian wild card beat Egor Gerasimov 6-4, 7-6 (4). Cameron Norrie managed a surprise win where his fellow British player Evans couldn't. Norrie hit 16 aces on his way to a 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 win over the eighth-seeded Taylor Fritz. — *AP*

Alex, Stefan look to extend good run

Aragon: Fresh off the best result of the year so far, the Repsol Honda Team land in Spain for the first of two races in Aragon primed for more as Marc Marquez continues his rehabilitation at home. A pair of unforgettable rides in Le Mans saw Alex Marquez charge from 18th to second, taking a debut podium in just his ninth race and his first-time racing in the wet while Stefan Bradl shot through the field to take eighth after starting 21st. The Repsol Honda team arrives back in Spain for the Aragon Grand Prix with renewed vigour. Claiming Honda's 849th premier class podium, Alex Marquez proved to the world why he is a double World Champion and now a factory MotoGP rider.

Live on TV

CRICKET
IPL: Delhi Capitals vs Rajasthan Royals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD
BADMINTON
Denmark Open: Matches from 12.30 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, 3
TENNIS
St Petersburg Open: Matches from 3.30 pm on Sony Six, HD
WWE NXT
Bouts from 5.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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A KING-SIZE WIN

All-round Chennai beat Sunrisers by 20 runs

Dubai, Oct. 13: Chennai Super Kings defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by 20 runs in their IPL match, here on Tuesday.

Shane Watson top-scored for the CSK with a 42-run knock while Sandeep Sharma was pick of the bowlers for SRH. The pacer took two wickets and conceded only 19 runs in his four overs.

Kane Williamson scored 57 for SRH while Dwayne Bravo and Karn Sharma took two wickets apiece for CSK.

Earlier, Watson and Ambati Rayudu shared a 81-run stand but Sunrisers Hyderabad did well to restrict Chennai Super Kings to 167 for 6.

Watson's 42 off 38 balls was studded with one four and three maximums, while Rayudu's hit three boundaries and two sixes in his 34-ball 41-run knock.

Jadeja (25 not out) and Dhoni (21 off 13 balls) played quick cameos smashing a total of five fours and two sixes between them in a stand of 32 in just 2.4 overs.

SRH bowlers did a commendable job, claiming four wickets for 47 runs in the last six overs. Sandeep Sharma (2/19), Khaleel Ahmed (2/45) and T. Natarajan (2/41) picked two wickets apiece.

Desperate to snap their two-match losing streak, CSK elected to bat. The three-time champions sent young England all-rounder Sam Curran instead of Watson to open the innings with Faf du Plessis.

Sharma drew first blood for the Sunrisers, remov-

SCORECARD

Chennai Super Kings: S Curran b S. Sharma 31, F du Plessis c Bairstow b S. Sharma 0, S. Watson c Pandey b Natarajan 42, A Rayudu c Warner b K. Ahmed 41, M.S. Dhoni c Williamson b Natarajan 21, R Jadeja (not out) 25, D. Bravo b K. Ahmed 0, D Chahar (not out) 2. **Extras:** (lb-3, wd-2) 5. **Total:** (For 6 wkts, in 20 overs) 167. **FoW:** 1-10, 2-35, 3-116, 4-120, 5-152, 6-152. **Bowling:** S. Sharma 4-0-19-2, K. Ahmed 4-0-45-2, S. Nadeem 4-0-29-0, T. Natarajan 4-0-41-2, Rashid Khan 4-0-30-0. **Sunrisers Hyderabad:** D. Warner (c) c & b Curran 9, J. Bairstow b Jadeja 23, M. Pandey run out 4, K. Williamson c Thakur b Sharma 57, P. Garg c Jadeja b Sharma 16, V. Shankar c Jadeja b Bravo 12, Rashid Khan hit wicket b Thakur 14, S. Nadeem c & b Bravo 5, Sandeep Sharma (not out) 1, T. Natarajan (not out) 0. **Extras:** (w-6) 6. **Total:** (for 8 wkts, in 20 overs) 147. **FoW:** 1-23, 2-27, 3-59, 4-99, 5-117, 6-126, 7-146, 8-146. **Bowling:** D. Chahar 4-0-28-0, S. Curran 3-0-18-1, R. Jadeja 3-0-21-1, S. Thakur 2-0-10-1, K. Sharma 4-0-37-2, D. Bravo 3-0-25-2, P. Chawla 1-0-8-0.

ing du Plessis in the beginning of the third over. The South African sneaked one to Jonny Bairstow off the very first ball he faced for a golden duck. Curran was off to a bright start, smashing Ahmed for the first boundary of the match in the second over. — *PTI*

IPL POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	7	5	2	0	10	+1.327
Delhi Capitals	7	5	2	0	10	+1.038
Royal Challengers Bangalore	7	5	2	0	10	-0.116
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	4	3	0	8	-0.577
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	3	5	0	6	+0.009
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.390
Rajasthan Royals	7	3	4	0	6	-0.872
Kings XI Punjab	7	1	6	0	2	-0.381

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

Royals eye revenge against Delhi

Dubai, Oct. 13: Bolstered by the arrival of Ben Stokes, Rajasthan Royals will hope for a stronger show from their slightly off-colour top order when the side try to settle scores against second-placed Delhi Capitals in their return leg IPL match here on Wednesday.

The Capitals had beaten RR by 46 runs last week and Steve Smith's men will look to return the compliment when they meet for the second time in the tournament.

The last time the two teams clashed, RR didn't have Stokes in the ranks and even though the England all-rounder didn't set the stage on fire in his first game but his presence inspired the former champions to snap a four-match losing streak with a five-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"With Stokesy back, it



brings a nice balance to us. He just bowled one over as he just got out of a lockdown and is just working back into things," Smith had said.

While Stokes will be an important cog in the RR wheel, the team will also have to fix their top order which has been short of runs in the last five games, leaving too much for the lower-order to get. Skipper Smith and

Sanju Samson have failed to make any significant contribution with the bat since setting the Sharjah ground on fire in their first two matches.

Jos Buttler produced a superb 44-ball 70 against Mumbai Indians but didn't capitalise on the starts in the last two matches.

Delhi, on the other hand, were brought down by Mumbai in their last game and Shreyas Iyer's

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 21
- Rajasthan: 11
- Delhi: 10

MEETING IN 2019

- Delhi Capitals beat Rajasthan Royals by 6 wickets in Jaipur.
- Delhi beat Rajasthan by 5 wickets at Delhi

MEETING IN CURRENT EDITION

- Delhi beat Rajasthan by 46 runs at Sharjah.

FOR THE RECORD

- Rishabh Pant, who has smashed 99 sixes in 60 innings, needs just one more to become the 21st batsman to complete a century of sixes in IPL.
- Steven Smith will become the 107th player to complete a double century of matches in Twenty-20 cricket.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

men will look to shrug off the odd defeat and get back to the top with a professional display. — *PTI*



Shane Watson of Chennai Super Kings en route to his 42 against Sunrisers Hyderabad in an Indian Premier League match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. — *BCCI*

GAYLE HINTS AT PLAYING AGAINST RCB

Dubai, Oct. 13: Senior Kings XI Punjab batsman Chris Gayle has hinted that he may get his first IPL game of the season against Royals Challengers Bangalore on Thursday, having recovered from a bout of food poisoning.

"To all the fans out there, the wait is over. The Universe Boss is back. I know you all have been waiting for such a long time, the wait is over unless something dramatic happens to the Universe Boss again, which I hope not," Gayle said in the short video.

KXIP had earlier posted photos of Gayle returning to the nets on Monday.

"He is fine now and it is likely that he will be playing the game against RCB (on Thursday)," a team source said. — *PTI*

DENMARK OPEN | BADMINTON

Lakshya off to winning start

Odense, Oct. 13: Fast-rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen made a successful return to competitive badminton, beating Christo Popov in straight games in the opening round of the \$750,000 Denmark Open, which marked the resumption of the international calendar after a coronavirus-forced break of seven months.

The 19-year-old Indian, who claimed five titles including two Super 100 tournaments last year, produced a clinical performance to outwit Popov 21-9 21-15 to reach the second round.

He will take on the winner of the match between Denmark's Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus and Belgium's Maxime Moreels.

"I moved quite well, that was the key. In the second game he had a lead but I had made a few mistakes, I was able to cut down on them and find my rhythm," Lakshya, who is currently ranked world no.27, was quoted as saying by Badminton World Federation (BWF).

"I'm very happy to be playing again after seven months and it felt very normal on the court." Lakshya looked in good touch as he moved well on the court and found his



Lakshya Sen

touch from the word go.

The Indian jumped to a 11-8 lead at the break in the opening game and didn't allow his opponent to make a comeback, reeling off three points to move to 14-8. The second game was a more competitive affair as both the players fought tooth and nail, moving neck-and-neck till 12-12.

After that, Lakshya once again broke off and moved to 15-12 and 16-14 before closing the match comfortably.

Denmark Open Super 750 event is the only event happening this year as the BWF was forced to cancel multiple tournaments and postpone the Asia leg and the World Tour Final to next year. — *PTI*

GAMES-BOUND SHOOTERS TO TRAIN AT BIO-SECURE CAMP

New Delhi, Oct. 13: The Karni Singh Range will be divided into four "risk" zones to ensure that Olympic-bound shooters can safely resume training at a two-month long national camp which will be conducted from Thursday in a bio-bubble to ward off the Covid-19 threat. The Sports Authority of India and the National Rifle Association of India will take joint responsibility of conducting the camp in a secure environment.

"In order to maintain a secure bio-bubble whereby the athletes can train safely and to prevent a coronavirus outbreak, the responsibility of maintaining the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be shared by the Sports Authority of India and the NRAI," read a statement from SAI on Tuesday.

The camp had earlier been postponed twice because of the pandemic and is expected to feature 32 shooters (18 men and 14 women), eight coaches, three foreign coaches and two support staff. All 15 Olympic quota winners will be a part of it. The exercise will take place at a total cost of ₹1.43 crore. — *PTI*

SFI undecided about nat'l swimming meet

New Delhi, Oct. 13 Swimming Federation of India (SFI) on Tuesday ruled out the possibility of conducting any competition in the country unless the pools are reopened for training in all the states following the coronavirus-induced break.

Last month, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had announced the reopening of pools used for training of sports persons across the country from October 15.

The restriction on swimming pools were in place since March 24 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"On October 15, not all swimming pools will open, may be one or two. Pools are maintained by clubs, state governments etc. So it would not be possible to conduct national competitions if all states do not

allow reopening of pools," Virendra Nanavati, SFI Executive Director, said during a virtual press conference.

"So we have to wait for 4-5 months and see if it is possible to have competitions," he added.

The governing body also said that strict action will be taken against swimmers, who violate the SOPs laid down by the sports ministry to ensure a safe return for the sport following the coronavirus-induced break.

"The swimming pools will open with strict SOPs in place and we cannot deviate from the SOPs by even 1 %. Already our swimmers have been affected by the six months break due to Covid-19," said R.N. Jayaprakash, president of the SFI. — *PTI*

It's time for Rahul to take a leaf out of Kohli's book



Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

Over the weekend, the Indian Premier League (IPL) highlighted the tale of two captains — Virat Kohli and K.L. Rahul. For Kohli, winning the IPL is his last frontier as the glittering crown is the only one missing in his cupboard. He showed his intent, as a captain, in his last innings against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at the Dubai International Stadium.

He was face to face with his predecessor (for India), Mahendra Singh Dhoni,

and was well aware of the importance of the success of this match as he navigated his team, Royal Challenger Bangalore (RCB) to a win. Rahul, on the other hand, is in charge of a team that looks like one that's on a downhill race on the sand dunes of the Arabian desert with just one victory in the seven matches they have played so far, even as he continues to get runs.

RCB and victories are two words that, somehow, don't fit into the general thinking of the fan. From

2008, when the IPL kicked off, till the last season the team has flattered to deceive its fans with no silverware on their shelves. Kohli, the only member of the original side, has been judged, as a captain, more for his role in the (mis)fortunes of RCB than for India for the past eight seasons since he took on the leadership.

It just maybe that the match against CSK on Saturday could be a turning point in Kohli's tryst with IPL as the skipper of RCB. Till his unbeaten innings of 72 against Rajasthan Royals (RR) in RCB's fourth IPL fixture, he had not tasted the joy of scoring a fifty in eight innings — a rarity for someone considered one of the world's best in all formats of the game.

His 90-run knock against CSK came in trying circumstances, having lost compatriot AB de Villiers for a duck and was left with lesser known partners to build a competitive total.

What we saw was vintage Kohli who shrugged off all the rust accumulated with lack of match practice and emerged as the champion that we know.

Watching his 52-ball innings was like going through a master class of correct batting and the only typical Twenty20 (T20) shot he essayed, a falling sweep extracting maximum runs, came on the first ball of the last over — the 47th he faced. It was almost like Kohli, the captain, had spoken with Kohli, the batsman.

At the half-way stage of

IPL, RCB is sitting pretty with eight points from six games (as one writes this) and are showing all indications of being a contender to qualify for the final stages of the league. The two teams that have a lot of soul searching to do as the matches progress, CSK and Kings XI Punjab (KXIP), are probably looking for some succour in the desert. They are left with wooden spoons, at this point in time, languishing at the bottom of the table with four and two points respectively.

Their current plight may be self-inflicted given the players they selected. While CSK's problems are obvious, team KXIP's morale must have delved down further after losing a match they should have cantered home with. Like

in the case of RCB and it's skipper, KXIP now faces the same in reverse with Rahul under fire for lack of changing gears. It must be hurting Rahul to have the Orange Cap (for the highest aggregate scorer in the tournament) in his kitbag but not much points in the team kitty.

While Rahul is being criticised for his strike rate of 127.58 for his 74-runs off 58 balls, the real problem facing the team lies elsewhere.

The main issue is their dependence of top three batsmen, including an informal Mayank Agarwal and Nicholas Pooran and no one in the middle to build further on a good start. The lack of power coming from the blade of Glenn Maxwell is hurting KXIP much more than Rahul's

strike rate.

It is a similar situation with a few other teams in the IPL who are also top heavy and tend to struggle in the middle by not converting the starts into big totals.

While Kohli's RCB was boosted by stability in their bowling attack, thanks to consistent shows by youngsters Navdeep Saini and Washington Sunder, his personal show of leading from the front has made the team look well-balanced and ready for more challenges. For KXIP, the coming week is crucial with matches slated against RCB and leaders, Mumbai Indians. Rahul could well take a leaf out of Kohli's book. Maybe it's time for Rahul the batsman to have a word with Rahul the captain.