

IN BRIEF

Biker crushed to death by truck

Noida: A 21-year-old man riding a motorcycle died on Friday after allegedly getting crushed under the wheels of a truck in Uttar Pradesh's Noida, police said. The pillion rider, who got injured in the accident that occurred at around 6.30 am near the Iskon temple, under Sector 24 police station limits, is hospitalised, the police said. The motorcycle riders were moving towards the 31/25 roundabout from Gijhor village. The truck was coming down from the elevated road when it hit the motorcycle and one of the riders got under its wheels, a police spokesperson said. The deceased has been identified as Prem Kumar, a native of Samastipur in Bihar while the pillion rider Aqeel alias Mohammed Azhar, from Darbhanga in Bihar, has been hospitalised, the spokesperson added. The two were staying in rented accommodations in Gijhor village here, according to the police. Further proceedings in the case are being carried out, the police said. The driver of the truck, registered in Haryana's Gurgaon, fled from the spot along with the vehicle after the incident, according to officials.

₹25L illicit liquor seized, 2 arrested

New Delhi: Whiskey worth ₹25 lakh being illegally transported from Haryana to West Bengal was seized in Greater Noida by the Uttar Pradesh police, officials said on Friday, adding two men who were injured in a gunfight with the security personnel were arrested. Deputy commissioner of police, Greater Noida, Rajesh Kumar Singh said around 350 cartons of the liquor (Imperial Blue) were seized from a truck which was going from Ambala to Kolkata. The liquor seized is estimated to be worth ₹25 lakh, he said. The officer said the truck was intercepted in Dadri police station area late on Thursday night after a gunfight broke out between the policemen and the two accused, who got hit on their legs. The accused got injured in retaliatory firing and were taken to a hospital for treatment before being taken into custody, DCP Singh said. The liquor cartons were hid in between pieces of gypsum in the truck, he said. Those held have been identified as Hardeep Kumar, a native of Fatehgarh district in UP, and Haakim Yadav, who belongs to Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, police added.

Fake cops decamp with gold, ₹2 lakh

Ghaziabad: Three robbers, wearing fake police uniform, stole gold and cash worth over Rs 2 lakh from a weighing-bridge owner's house early on Friday in Modinagar area here, police said. The incident took place around 3 am at the house of businessman Sameer Siddiqui in Kidwai Nagar Colony on Gurudwara Road, SHO of Modinagar police station Jai Karan Singh said. An FIR would be registered after getting a complaint as Siddiqui, who runs a weighing bridge in Sikhera Road, has to check the value of gold ornaments that were stolen, the SHO said. The three robbers in fake police uniform reached the house of Siddiqui and pressed the bell asking him to open the door on the pretext of conducting a search based on cash stolen from an ATM by his nephew Shadab. When they insisted on conducting a search, he opened the door and the robbers immediately entered the room and emptied the almirah. — PTI

Speaker, Kejri pay tributes to Mahatma

New Delhi: Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and Speaker Ram Niwas Goel paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at the Delhi Assembly on Friday on his 151st birth anniversary. They also paid floral tributes to former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on his birth anniversary. Speaking on the occasion, Goel said Gandhi's belief in a simple life had been a beacon of hope for the marginalised people. "Mahatma Gandhi was the primary leader of India's independence movement. Achievements of his life are unique in political history," the Speaker said. Deputy Speaker Rakhi Bidan, minister Rajendra Pal Gautam and others also paid tributes on the occasion. — PTI

Covid: AAP govt asks officials to draw up massive campaign

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 2

As cases still continue to rise, the Delhi government has directed its departments and various agencies to come up with an intensive action plan against Covid-19 in view of the upcoming festive season and winters. With 2,920 new cases, city's Covid-19 tally crossed the 2.85 lakh mark, while 37 fresh fatalities took the death toll to 5,438 on Friday.

On September 29, 48 deaths were reported, the highest number of fatalities recorded in a day since July 16, when the city saw 58 fatalities. The fresh cases reported on Friday came out of the 56,258 tests conducted the previous day.

According to government sources, the chief secretary of Delhi has issued directions to all the departments, corporations and autonomous bodies to come up with an intensive action plan against Covid-19 in view of the upcoming festive season and winters. The action plan is to be submitted by Saturday.

"The cabinet secretary of the central govern-

ment had called a video conference meeting on Thursday regarding launching of the intensive and focused Covid-19 campaign by all state governments during the festive and winter season. The cabinet secretary and secretaries of different ministries also highlighted key points which are to be covered in the campaign," he said.

The positivity rate stood at 5.19 per cent while the recovery rate was 88.83 per cent, the bulletin said, adding the case fatality rate stood at 1.9 per cent. The death rate of the last 10 days is 1.19 per cent. The cumulative positivity rate since March stands at 8.95 per cent.

Delhi government has significantly ramped up

Noida: 157 cases push Covid-19 tally to 13,421

Noida, Oct. 2: Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar recorded 157 new Covid-19 cases on Thursday, pushing the district's caseload to 13,421, official data showed.

The number of active cases rose to 1,504 from 1,494 on Thursday and 1,492 on Wednesday, according to the data released by the UP health department for a 24-hour period.

Also, 147 more patients got discharged during the period, as the total number of recoveries reached 11,863, it showed. The district, adjoining Delhi, has so far recorded 54 deaths linked to the pandemic with a mortality rate of 0.40 per cent, the data showed. — PTI

testing in the past few days. The number of tests conducted and corresponding fresh cases reported ranged from 24,198 (2,312) on September 1 to 59,807 (3,390) on September 30.

Home isolation cases shoot up after gradual fall in September

New Delhi, Oct. 2: After showing a gradual decline in the last week of September, the number of Covid-19 patients under home quarantine in Delhi has risen in October, according to official data.

The number of Covid-19 patients under home isolation was 19,213 on September 21 and 18,464 the following day. The figure fell further to 17,834 on September 23, when the number of containment zones stood at 1,987.

The cases under home isolation, however, showed a rising trend on September 24 (17,995) and September 25 (18,096). From September 26-30, the cases of home isolation fell gradually for five con-

Diabetics at higher risk, say experts

New Delhi, Oct. 2: Compromised immunity along with withdrawal of certain medications pose an increased risk to diabetic patients who contract coronavirus, experts said on Friday.

According to the serological surveillance report submitted by the Delhi government in the high court on

Wednesday, it was stated that diabetes mellitus was observed to be a risk factor for subclinical infection.

Dr Vimal Gupta, the senior consultant of endocrinology at Fortis Hospital in Vasant Kunj, said that coronavirus, besides affecting the lungs, also affects the pancreas. — PTI

secutive days until October 1, when the count rose to 15,899 and the number of containment zones stood at 2,616.

The national capital recorded 40 Covid-19 fatalities on Thursday, taking

the death toll to 5,401, while 3,037 fresh cases pushed the tally to over 2.82 lakh, authorities said.

Speaking on the fall recorded in home isolation cases, experts had earlier said that the

■ Protest held at Jantar Mantar against Hathras gangrape & murder

CM joins protesters, demands severe punishment for culprits

SUNIL THAPLIYAL
NEW DELHI, OCT. 2

Civil society activists, students, women and members of various political outfits gathered at the Jantar Mantar here on Friday to demand justice for the Hathras gangrape and murder victim.

The protest was initially supposed to be held at the India Gate but was later shifted to the Jantar Mantar owing to the prohibitory orders in place in the Rajpath area. Delhi police on Thursday said that no gathering is allowed around India Gate due to imposition of Section 144 CrPC.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal joined the protest over Hathras rape case at Jantar Mantar on Friday. "We have assembled here in grief. I pray to God that our daughter's soul gets peace. I request the Uttar Pradesh government with my hands folded, hang the guilty as soon as possible. They should get such a punishment that no one will dare commit a crime like this again," Mr Kejriwal said.



People from various organisations protest against the alleged gangrape of a Dalit woman in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

"I will visit #Hathras. Our struggle will continue till the time UP CM doesn't resign, & justice is served. I urge SC to take cognizance of the incident," Mr Azad tweeted.

CPM General Secretary Sitaram Yechury and CPI leader D Raja also participated in the protest. Bhim Army Chief Chandrashekhara Azad and his supporters came to Jantar Mantar on Friday evening in protest against

the government for what they say is not doing enough to stop crime against women.

"The UP government has no right to stay in power. Our demand is that justice should be served," said Mr Yechury.

"The silence of the central government and the top leadership of the BJP on such a heinous crime and the UP government's response thereafter speak volumes about the authori-



Bharatiya Kisan Union members stage a protest after being stopped by the police on their way to pay tribute to former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on his birth anniversary at DND in Noida on Friday. — PTI

Fake Armyman arrested for cheating people at Rly stations

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 2

A 28-year-old man has been arrested by Delhi Police who used disguised himself as Army personnel at railway stations in city and cheat the persons by asking them for help in ATM Booth.

Police said that the accused used to swap ATM cards of the victims and then he used to withdraw money from their account.

The accused has been identified as Sunil Kumar Dubey, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Mirzapur area.

Dubey disclosed that he targeted specifically Army personnel at railway stations and cheat them by exchanging the ATM cards.

— PTI

■ NDMC flags off cycle ride tour to launch pilot project 6 km cycling corridor to come up in Delhi

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 2

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Friday launched pilot project 'Cycle4Change' to promote cycling in its area. The NDMC has dedicated a six kilometres pilot corridor from India Gate to Jor Bagh Metro Station via Lodhi Garden for Cycling.

The NDMC also organised a Cycle ride tour on the dedicated corridor. The cycle rides tour will continue till October 10, three hours in the morning between 6 am to 9 am and two hours in the evening from 5 pm to 7 pm everyday in the dedicated pilot corridor from

Bikaner House (India Gate) to Humayun Road, Amrita Shergill Marg, Lodhi Garden Gate No.6, Lodhi Garden Gate No.11, Avenue Road-II, Lodhi Colony Block-17, Lodhi Colony Cycle Plaza and Jor Bagh Metro Station. E-Bike, Scooters and Motorcycles are not allowed on cycle tracks. To ensure safety of the participants especially for women and children, NDMC has deployed Marshals during the specified timings.

After flagging off the cycle ride tour, the chairperson N D M C, Dharmendra said that at the time when the physical and sports activities have been drastically cur-

tailled in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, NDMC has initiated a move toward normalcy and road safety by organizing pilot cycle rides in New Delhi area. "To elevate the safety, convenience and experience of cyclists, NDMC has dedicated this pilot corridor of

6 km for unique cycling experience around the playful recreational space surrounded by gorgeous wall paintings."

The Secretary-NDMC, Amit Singla invited citizens to take part in the cycle ride and bring their own cycle or they can hire on rent the smart bike from the Smart Bike Stations in New Delhi area. Smart Bikes are already available in public bike sharing systems at 50 Smart Stations.

"Based on the success of this pilot project, many more corridors will be dedicated in other areas under jurisdiction of NDMC in the coming winter seasons," said Mr Singla.

Woman held for duping on promise of high return

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 2

The Economic Offices Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested a 40-year-old woman from Gujarat for allegedly duping people on the pretext of inducing them to invest in various schemes for high returns.

According to Dr O.P. Mishra, joint commissioner of police, EOW, one Parveen Kumar Singh, along with his woman friend, was operating a society called Jai Maa Laxmi Co-operative Thrift and Credit Society Ltd and running a shop Arpit Cloth Store at Mandawali, Fajalpur.

"They induced people of Mandawali area who visited their shop to invest in various schemes, including interest earning scheme, loan scheme, flat booking scheme and lucky draw scheme," said the Joint CP.

"The accused cheated around 200 people of the Mandawali area to the tune of more than ₹2 crore on the pretext of investing in different schemes to earn high profit," said the Joint CP.

"During investigation, it came to notice that neither any society in the name of 'Jai Maa Laxmi Co-operative Thrift and Credit Society' was registered with RBI as NBFC nor any Parveen Kumar Singh and his woman friend registered with RBI," said Joint CP.

"They were not authorised to collect the money from public directly in any scheme. The accused were absconding. The woman was traced at Surat, Gujarat through social media. Thereafter, a police team reached Gujarat on Thursday and apprehended the woman," said the Joint CP.

14 auto-lifters arrested, over 100 bikes recovered

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 2

The Delhi Police has arrested 14 people and recovered over 100 stolen two-wheelers from their possession.

With their arrest police claimed to have busted a nexus between auto lifters, middlemen and snatchers active in National Capital.

The accused have been identified as Vikram (35), Rashid (41), Jogender (25), Asheem (28), Suraj (22), Manish (20), Deepak (29), Sumit (25), Sumit (25), Nikhil (20), Rohit (25), Amit (25), Yogesh (23) and Sagar (22).

According to A Kaon, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer district, after receiving specific inputs regarding the nexus police formed two teams called Eagle Squad.

"The Eagle squad started a thorough checking of suspected vehicles in the area with the help of ZIPNet and seized various stolen motorcycles and scooters.

On September 25, police found two vehicles lying unattended in Industrial Area Phase-I, Mangolpuri. The vehicles were found stolen from the areas of Tilak Nagar and South Rohini, said the DCP.

Thereafter, a trap was laid and after sometime, four suspicious persons came near bikes and were apprehended when they tried to take away the vehicles. On their instance, 10 more accused persons, involved in such kind of activities, were also arrested, said the DCP.

SHORT TAKES

36-year-old woman gangraped in Mathura

Mathura: A 36-year-old woman was gang-raped in a roadside marriage home in Mathura where she had taken a night shelter with her family members, police said on Thursday. The woman was raped by two men of the marriage home on Wednesday night, said Mathura city superintendent of Police Uday Shankar Singh. He said the police managed to nab one of the accused while a second one is on the run. He too would be arrested before soon, he added. Mr Singh said the incident happened in Saini Seva Sadan, a marriage home on the Mathura-Goverdhan road, falling under the Highway police station. The woman along with her family members, including two other women and a male member and a driver were on their way to Bharatpur when their car developed a snag. — PTI

DRI seizes smuggled gold worth ₹17.5cr

Kolkata: In one of the largest gold recoveries in recent times, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 33.5 kg of the yellow metal from a truck in Siliguri, a DRI release said on Friday. The gold is valued at ₹17.5 crore, it said. The agency officials acting on a tip off intercepted the truck on Friday morning. The truck was on way from the Indo-Myanmar border in Rajasthan, the release said. The four occupants of the truck during interrogation said that they were coming from Guwahati and denied carrying any contraband items with them. On being grilled further they confessed that they were carrying 202 pieces of smuggled gold which were hidden in their luggage, it said. They confessed that the gold pieces were smuggled from Myanmar through the border in Manipur and were being carried to Sri Ganganagar for delivery. — PTI

Shivraj, Kamal Nath spar over Iifa event

Bhopal: The IIFA is a "tamasha" and Madhya Pradesh will not host it, state CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Friday. The event, which was to be held between March 27 and 29 in MP under the then Kamal Nath-led Congress government, had to be postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. "What is the need for IIFA? There is Covid spread and people are in trouble. I don't like IIFA type tamasha. It won't be held (in MP)," Mr Chouhan said when queried about the event. "I have come to know that money has been collected from industrialists. Information has come in that ₹4 crore was taken from a company in the name of IIFA. I have asked for information from other places as well from where money came in," Chouhan claimed. — PTI

Modi trying to bring Ram Rajya: Guj CM

Ahmedabad: Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani on Friday said Mahatma Gandhi dreamt of a Ram Rajya (an ideal society) in the country and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to turn the Father of the Nations vision into reality. Speaking on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, Rupani termed the under-construction a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya as the "manifestation of Ram Rajya" as envisioned by the Father of the Nation. "Gandhiji believed in Lord Ram. Ram Rajya was Gandhiji's idea. Even his last words were Hey Ram. — PTI

2 held for raping 16-yr-old girl in MP

Satna: Two men have been arrested for allegedly raping a minor girl in Madhya Pradesh's Satna district, police said on Friday. Lalla Kol (22) and Indrabhan Kol (25) were booked for gang-rap under section 376 of IPC and also under the Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, said inspector K.K. Sharma. The girl, who is 16 years old, had lodged the complaint on Wednesday. The accused accosted her in her village on Monday night, and took her into a forested area at knife point and raped her, she told the police. — PTI

■ UP government also orders 'narco-analysis polygraph tests' on everyone involved in case

Hathras top cop, 4 other officials suspended

Lucknow/New Delhi, Oct. 2: Uttar Pradesh government on Friday suspended the Hathras SP and four other police officers over their handling of the gangrape-murder case even as local authorities made clear that the Dalit victim's village was off-limits for the media.

The government also decided that "narco-analysis polygraph tests" would be conducted on everyone involved in the case. This decision is expected to include the rape victim's family as well, particularly in context of the state government's autopsy report that contradicted the victim's allegation that she had been gang-raped on 14 September.

A TMC delegation was stopped from meeting the victim's family and its members alleged they were pushed around by officials.

"In view of the current situation, no political representatives or media personnel would be allowed entry into the village till the SIT (Special Investigation Team) completes its probe," Hathras additional SP Prakash Kumar said.

The Yogi Adityanath government continued to draw flak over the alleged gang-rape and the subsequent death of the 19-year-old woman.

Samajwadi Party workers took out a protest in Lucknow, and were lathi-charged by police.

There were protests also in Aligarh, Mathura and Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. Students, civil rights activists and political workers gathered at Delhi's Jantar Mantar in the evening. Several political leaders, including from the Aam Aadmi Party and the Left, joined the protest. In Hathras district, a group of Trinamool Congress MPs was stopped one and half kilometers from the victim's home, a party statement said.

Derek O'Brien, Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar and Pratima Mandal, and former MP Mamata Thakur travelled in separate cars to avoid detection and met up 25 km ahead of Hathras, party sources said. — PTI

■ 1st incident in 30 years of Left-wing extremism in Bastar

Maoist shot in fratricidal killing

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, OCT. 2

A senior Maoist leader was shot dead in a fratricidal killing in Chhattisgarh's South Bastar district of Bijapur, intelligence wing of the Chhattisgarh police reported on Friday.

This was the first of its kind development in the three-decade-long history of Left wing extremism in Bastar division comprising districts of Kanker, Kondagaon, Bijapur, Sukma, Dantewada, Narayanpur, and Bastar, a senior

police officer posted in Bastar told this newspaper.

"DVC member of the Gangulor area committee of CPI (Maoist) Modiyam Vijja alias Badru was killed by some Naxal cadres in Chitawar jungle in Bijapur district on Thursday.

The killing followed a rift between the slain Maoist and Gangulor area committee secretary Dinesh Modiyam over the recent murders of civilians in Bijapur district by Naxals," the intelligence reports accessed by this newspaper read.

According to the

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reports, the Maoists later handed over the slain rebel's body to his family. His last rites were performed in his village of Mankeli in the district.

"This is a very important development in the background of the recent killings of civilians in the South Bastar region. We are compiling more

details on the incident." Bastar range inspector general of police P. Sunderraj told this newspaper on Friday.

Ten civilians were killed by Maoists in Bijapur district in the last one month after accusing them of spying for the police.

Vijja (39), a resident of Mankeli in Bijapur district, was a DVC member and the in-charge of Gangulor area committee of CPI (Maoist).

The Gangulor area committee is one of the most active formations of Maoists in South Bastar. He carried a reward of ₹8 lakh on his head.

BSF foils Maoist bid to create disturbance

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MALKANGIRI, OCT. 2

Jawans of Border Security Force (BSF) seized a huge quantity of gelatin explosives during anti-Maoist operations at Rajulkunda forests under Kalimela block in Malkangiri district on Thursday evening, the BSF officials said on Friday.

Acting on concrete information, jawans of the 76 Border Security Force (BSF) battalion launched a combing operation in the jungle and discovered around 21 kg gelatin explosives stuffed in sacks and dumped in different locations of the forest range.

On many occasions, the left-wing extremists have used these explosives for land mines to target police personnel and BSF jawans engaged in the combing operations.



Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra attends a prayer meet for the Hathras victim at Valmiki Basti in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

Rahul, Priyanka, 200 other Cong workers booked

Noida, Oct. 2: The police in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar said it has lodged an FIR against Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and around 200 other party workers under The Epidemic Diseases Act for not maintaining social distancing and not wearing face masks.

The FIR was lodged under IPC sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (unlawfully or negligently spreading infection of any disease dangerous to life), 270 (malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and under section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act, the police said. Some members have also been booked for indulging in a scuffle during which some women constables were hurt while the uniform of a lady sub-inspector got torn, the police said. — PTI

Every woman needs to question govt: Priyanka

Massive protest as hundreds gather at Jantar Mantar

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 2

Massive protest was held in Delhi over Hathras rape case. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi attended a prayer meeting at Valmiki mandir at New Delhi, while actress Swara Bhaskar and left leaders protested at Jantar mantar. Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal joined the protest too express solidarity with the victim.

Addressing the gathering at the prayer meeting was organised by Valmiki community at the Prachin Bhagwan Valmiki Mandir at Panchkuian road in central Delhi, Priyanka Gandhi said that every woman in this country needs to raise her voice and question the government to seek justice for the daughter of Hathras. Meanwhile, Bhim Army

Every woman in this country needs to raise her voice and question the government to seek justice for the daughter of Hathras

— Priyanka Gandhi, Cong leader

chief, Chandrashekhara Azad, Senior lawyer Prashant Bhushan, CPI (M) leaders Brinda Karat and Sitaram Yechury, and AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj were among those who gathered at the Jantar Mantar on Friday evening, demanding the justice for the Hathras victim.

People gathered at the site wearing masks and raising slogans demanding resignation of the Uttar

Pradesh chief minister and justice for the victim.

At protest, Mr Kejriwal said that they have assembled here in grief. "I pray to God that our daughter's soul gets peace. I request the UP government with my folded hands to hang the guilty as soon as possible. The accused should get such a punishment that no one will dare commit such a crime again," said Mr Kejriwal.

After sunset, the protesters lit up candles and stood holding them in the dark at Jantar Mantar to mark their protest. Following the protest, Delhi Police also beefed up security. Besides ground force, senior police officials and paramilitary personnel were deployed to manage the crowd. Police said that the protest site has been barricaded by the police to restrict the movement of protesters.

Protesting SP workers lathicharged

Lucknow, Oct. 2: Samajwadi Party workers were on Friday lathi charged by the police in Hazratganj area here while they were taking out a protest march against the Hathras gang-rape and farm laws.

The march which started from the party office was supposed to end at the Gandhi statue in the city where the MLAs and senior party leaders were scheduled to begin a 'maun vrat' (vow of silence). However, the protesters were stopped at Hazratganj crossing.

As the workers insisted on being allowed to move ahead, a heated argument ensued between the two sides following which police personnel resorted to lathi charge to disperse the crowd. "Today government suppressed the voice of truth in a violent way on the birth anniversaries of Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri. This is condemnable," the party's national president Akhlesh Yadav said. — PTI

Rahul accuses BJP govt in UP of cover up

New Delhi, Oct. 2: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused the UP government of taking to brutality to hide the truth of the Hathras incident and alleged that the family members of the victim were being beaten up, a behaviour which no Indian can support.

He allege that neither any political party nor the media was allowed to meet the victims family in Hathras and they were also not allowed to come out. He shared a video of a small child in the victim's village telling the media that the woman's family were being beaten up and threatened by the authorities, besides not being allowed to meet.

The child who claimed to be a relative of the victim alleged that the telephones of all family members had been taken away by police and their entire house and the neighbourhood was put under lockdown, with no one being allowed to enter or leave. — PTI

'Culprits should be killed in encounter'

Jhargram, Oct 2: BJP MP Locket Chatterjee on Thursday said that the culprits in the Hathras gang-rape incident should be killed in encounter in front of the public.

A 19-year-old Dalit woman was raped in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh by four men on September 14. After her condition deteriorated, she was referred to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital where she died on Tuesday.

The brutal incident has caused a nationwide outrage and led to criticism of the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh. "This is not a question of politics. The culprits should be brought before the public and killed in encounter,"

■ A 19-year-old Dalit woman was raped in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh by four men on September 14. After her condition deteriorated, she was referred to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital where she died on Tuesday

Chatterjee said here in Jhargram district. "The way she was raped and killed, no leniency should be shown to the offenders," she told reporters after leading a rally taken out in support of the newly passed farm laws. Mr Chatterjee, who left her acting career to join politics, is the Lok Sabha MP from Hooghly in West Bengal. — PTI

Fisherman sells prize catch at ₹1.43 lakh

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 2

A fisherman, hailing from Talchua village in Odisha's Kendrapara district, was all smiling on Friday as he netted a rare species of fish that fetched him a huge Rs 1.43 lakh.

The prize catch, a 22-kg fish locally known as Ghol or Telia, was sold to a Kolkata-based trader. According to sources, fisherman Gobinda Mandal caught the fish while fishing in the deep sea on Thursday. On Saturday, he brought the fish to Chandinipal fish market in the neighbouring Bhadrak district where he sold it to the Kolkata trader.

Better known in English as black-spotted croaker, Ghol is exotic and expensive variety of marine fish found mostly in Indian and Pacific Oceans along the coast of Pakistan, Bangladesh and India.

STATION HQ BARAMULLA EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME (ECHS), EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	
1. Applications are invited to engage the following staff on contractual basis at ECHS Polyclinic, Baramulla, for a period of 11 months:- a) Dental A/T/H - 01 b) Pharmacist - 01	
2. For QR, Terms & Conditions, Application form and Remuneration kindly visit our website: www.echs.gov.in	
3. For details please approach or contact ECHS Cell, Polyclinic Baramulla at Tele No.: 01952234220. Last date for receipt of applications will be 02 Nov. 2020.	
4. Interview date & time will be intimated later.	
5. Candidates will bring original certificates/ degree, photocopies of testimonials/ experiences as applicable and two passport size photographs at the time of the interview.	

Govt. of UT of Jammu and Kashmir Office of the Executive Engineer, Jai Shakti (PHE Q C & P) Division, Srinagar.	
Corrigendum 1st	
Sub.- Supply of ISI marked Centrifugally Cast (Spun) Ductile Pipes conforming to IS: 8329/2000, read with upto date amendments for assorted sizes ranging from NB100mm upto and including NB400mm (in class K7).	
Ref.-	This office E-NIT no. 09 issued under endorsement No.: JSD/QC/PD/1901-30 DT: 12-09-2020
Due to typographical error the technical specifications in the above, referred E -NIT have been erroneously enumerated partly as:- Supply of ISI marked Centrifugally Cast (Spun) Ductile Pipes conforming to IS: 8329/2000, read with upto date amendments for assorted sizes ranging from NB100mm upto and including NB400mm (in class K7).	
However, the same shall be read as	
ISI marked centrifugally cast (Spun) Ductile iron pressure pipes for water, Gas & Sewage with Socket & Spigot ends conforming to IS8329/2000 read with upto date amendments, in Standard lengths, 4.0meter, 5.0meter, 5.50 meter & 6.0 meter for classification K7, ranging in NB100mm upto and including NB400mm, suitable, for push on joint (Rubber gasket-D Jointing) with cement mortar lining inside the pipes, with outside Zinc coating with Bituminous finish coat conforming to IS 8329/2000. The pipe shall be supplied with EPDM rubber gaskets conforming to IS: 8382/1985.	
All other terms & Conditions Stipulated in the E-NIT shall remain the same.	
No.: JSD/QC/PD/ 2203-35 Dated: 29-09-2020 DIPK-6603/20 Dated: 02-10-2020	Sd/- Executive Engineer, Jai Shakti/QC&P PHE (K) HMT Srinagar.

Jammu & Kashmir Police Headquarters	
Phone/Fax No: 2443031/2443032 (Sgr) 0191-2459029/2459255(Jmu)	website: www.jkpolice.gov.in email: phqjk@jkpolice.gov.in
Clarification/Amendment/Extension Notice	
In response to queries received from different firms, clarifications/Amendment to e.no 36 of 2020 dated 29.08.2020 are hereby enclosed as Annexure A-1 for the information of intending bidders.	
Subsequently, the last date of submission of online bids & opening of Technical bids against NIT No. of 2020 dated 27.08.2020 floated by this Hqrs for the installation of CCTV Surveillance system in Police Stations and Police are re-scheduled as under:-	
1. Last date for receipt of tenders	= 10.10.2020 up to 1800 hours
2. Date of opening of technical bids	= 12.10.2020 at 11:00 hours
The other terms and conditions of the NIT shall remain the same.	
(Rayees Mohammad Bhat)-IPS AIG of Police (Provision/Tpt) For Director (General) of Police, J&K Srinagar.	

SHORT TAKES

Rajnath visits Atal tunnel in Rohtang

New Delhi: Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Friday visited the Atal tunnel in Rohtang, a day before its inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The 9.02-km-long tunnel that goes under the Rohtang pass in the eastern Pir Panjal range at an altitude of 3,000 metres on the Leh-Manali highway is being considered as strategically important. The historic decision to construct the tunnel was taken in 2000 when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the prime minister. Mr Singh visited the tunnel along with Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur and reviewed the preparations for Saturday's event where Modi will dedicate it to the nation, the defence minister's office said in a series of tweets. It said Mr Singh also interacted with personnel of the BRO, which implemented the project. — PTI

Cinemas in U'khand to open from Oct 15

Dehradun: Uttarakhand government has issued the guidelines for "Unlock 5" deciding to permit opening of cinema halls and theatres with up to 50 per cent of their seating capacity in areas outside the containment zones with effect from October 15. Entertainment parks and similar places will also be permitted to open from October 15 for which the standard operating procedures issued by Union health ministry shall be strictly adhered to, the guidelines issued by the state said. The current ceiling of 100 people gathering for social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious and political functions can be removed outside containment zones after October 15, it said. However, not more than 200 people will be allowed to gather in closed spaces with a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity. — PTI

Neta who threatened Didi tests Covid +ve

Kolkata: BJP leader Anupam Hazra, who had threatened to hug West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee if he got infected with Covid-19, has tested positive for the disease, health officials said. Hazra, who has recently been appointed as a national secretary of the saffron party, was admitted to a private hospital in Kolkata on Friday, they said. He had complained of uneasiness and his samples were tested for coronavirus, the report of which returned as positive on Thursday night, the officials said. After his controversial statement, the Trinamul Congress had lodged a police complaint against Hazra for maligning a public figure, who is a woman, thus violating the Constitution.

Agitation will go on: Sonia

■ **Continued from Page 1**
against the three black laws. Today our workers are agitating in favour of farmers and labourers in every assembly constituency. I want to say with confidence that this agitation of farmers and the Congress will be successful and the farmers will win," she said. Meanwhile, sources said that the Congress has prepared a draft model law that will be implemented by party-ruled states to bypass the Central agriculture laws. Sources said that the model law would soon be sent to Congress-ruled states to replicate it in their respective Assemblies. The move comes ahead of the tractor rallies to be taken out by the Congress in Punjab and Haryana from October 4, in which Rahul Gandhi will participate.

Protest in Delhi

■ **Continued from Page 1**
prayer meeting for the 19-year-old Dalit woman. On Friday, TMC's Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien, along with three other party leaders, tried to enter the village where the victim lived. But just as the UP police manhandled Mr Gandhi on Thursday, Mr O'Brien was too. In a video that's gone viral, a man in a white shirt and a helmet can be seen grabbing TMC MP Pratima Mandal by the shoulders to prevent her from walking to the village. When Mr O'Brien rushes to rescue her, the man in the helmet pushes him to the ground.

2 lynched over witchcraft suspicion

After killing duo, angry mob worships local deity local deity, tries to cremate bodies

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, OCT. 2

Two persons, including a woman, have been lynched, beheaded and set on fire by an angry mob over suspicion of practising witchcraft in central Assam's Karbi Anglong district. The mob had accused the duo of performing "black magic", causing the death of a woman in Rohimapur village in Dokmoka police station area, the police said. The police said that it has already arrested nine persons, but six other accused involved in the incident on Wednesday

night are still at large. The incident came to light on Thursday. Asserting that efforts are on to nab six others too, the police said that incident took place in a remote Rohimapur area under the Dokmoka police station of Karbi Anglong district. Informing that a woman from the village died a few days ago after falling sick and was taken to Guwahati for treatment. Narrating the incident to police, villagers said that on Wednesday, at a post-death ritual for her in the village, another woman — a 50-year-old widow Ramawati Halua — started

■ **THE POLICE** said that it has already arrested nine persons, but six other accused are still at large
■ **ANGRY MOB** beheaded the bodies near the burial site of Rashmi Gaur and set them on fire

to behave in an abnormal way to which the villagers alleged that she was practising witchcraft. Most of the villagers also held the woman responsible for recent deaths and spread of diseases. The police said that a mob then started beating her and attacked her with sharp weapons. When 28-

year-old educated young man of the village Bijoy Gaur intervened and accused them of being superstitious, he was attacked as well, the police said. The angry mob lynched both of them to death, offered rituals to the local deity and tried to cremate the bodies in a nearby hill. "The villagers lynched the duo identified as Ramawati Halua and Bijoy Gaur and took their bodies to a nearby hill. They beheaded the bodies near the burial site of Rashmi Gaur and set them on fire," Karbi Anglong's superintendent of police Debojit Deori said.



Family members mourn near the mortal remains of martyr Rifleman Shubham Sharma of 8 JAKRIF at R.S. Pura Sector in Jammu on Friday. Sharma lost his life in unprovoked firing by Pakistani forces along the LoC in Naugam sector. — PTI

Akhil Gogoi's KMSS floats political party

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, OCT. 2

National film award winner director Jahnur Barua here on Friday announced the formation of a new political party — Rajior Dal (People's Party) floated by the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) along with 70 indigenous organisations. Asserting that new political outfit would be a political alternative to fulfil the regional aspirations of the people, Barua said, "The new inclusive democratic political party with the slogan — 'Think Globally, Act Locally', would work for ushering in a new Assam with a new era of development taking everyone together." Asking all the regional forces to come on one platform, Barua hoped that

all ethnic communities would cooperate and work unitedly for the greater good of the state. He also appealed that Assam Jatiya Parishad, a political party floated by All Assam Students Union recently should join hand with Rajior Dal to provide a political alternative to the people of the state. "We have seen the unity of these organisations which needs to be galvanised into a force that can protect Assam-its identity and culture," said Barua. Barua along with prominent advocate and political leader Arup Borbora and Lachit Sena leader Sringkhal Chaliha also lauded jailed KMSS leader Akhil Gogoi who is the chief convenor of the new political outfit, for his struggle to fulfil the regional aspirations of the people.

■ RJD may get 134-136 seats, Cong may contest on 70 seats Bihar alliance close to sealing seat talks

NAYEAR AZAD
PATNA, OCT. 2

While there is confusion over seat-sharing formula among the NDA partners, the RJD-led grand alliance seems to have sealed the deal with its allies. RJD insiders, aware of the development, told this newspaper that "discussion over the issue has entered the final stages and a formal announcement is expected soon". Few party leaders, however, also blamed the Congress for the confusion in the grand alliance over the issue.

As per the formula being discussed, the Congress is likely to get 68 out of 243 seats. The left parties may get 29-30 seats and Mukesh Sahani's Vikashheel Insaan Party (VIP) is likely to contest on 10-12 seats. The RJD, which is the largest party in grand alliance, is likely to contest on 134-136 seats. The Congress had earlier demanded "sizeable seat share" and also issued an ultimatum to the RJD. On Friday, Bihar in charge of the Congress Shakti Singh Gohil hinted that the party may contest the polls on its

own if the seat-sharing is delayed by the RJD. "The party is prepared for any eventuality", Bihar Congress in-charge Shakti Singh Gohil told reporters on Friday. Earlier this week, the CPI-ML had declared that it would contest alone on 30 seats due to the stubborn attitude of RJD. CPI-ML state secretary Kunal said that "the party has prepared a list of 30 constituencies and may contest alone if we don't get seats of our choice". The grand alliance comprises Rashtriya Janata Dal, Congress, VIP and

three left parties (CPI-ML, CPI and CPM). Two of RJD's important allies Jitan Ram Manjhi and Upendra Kushwaha had earlier left the grand alliance due to their differences over leadership and seat-sharing issues. The Assembly elections in Bihar for 243 seats are to be held in three phases beginning October 28 and results will be declared on November 10. During 2015 Assembly elections, the JD(U) along with RJD and Congress had formed a grand alliance and defeated the BJP with a huge margin.

Kerala imposes Section 144 to curb coronavirus spread

India's Covid-19 death toll reaches one lakh mark

AGE CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCT. 2

The Kerala government has imposed Section 144 of CrPc, prohibiting the assembly of more than five people to control the surge in coronavirus cases in the state. The overall Covid-19 cases in India crossed 64 lakh and the death toll reached one lakh on Friday. In the last 24 hours, 81,484 fresh infections and 1,095 new fatalities were recorded. At the same time, 78,877 persons recovered from Covid-19, taking the national recovery rate to 83.70%. India's total recoveries so far stands at 53.52 lakh out of which the last 10 lakh recoveries were added in 12 days. There are 9.42 lakh active cases

■ **AT PRESENT**, 2.46 lakh persons are under observation, including 2.15 lakh under home/institutional quarantine.
■ **THE STATE** on Friday recorded the highest single day spike in Covid-19 cases with 9,258 cases

of coronavirus infection in the country and the Covid-19 case fatality rate was recorded at 1.56 per cent. The southern state on Friday recorded the highest single day spike in Covid-19 cases with 9,258 cases even as 4,092 persons recovered from the infection. The total number of Covid-19 cases in the state so far has gone up to 2,13,499. A late night order issued on Thursday by Kerala chief secretary Vishwas

Mehta said gatherings pose an impending danger of a super spread of the infection and the order shall come into force from 9 am on October 3 and will remain in effect till October 31. More stringent restrictions will be imposed in containment zones. State police chief Loknath Behara said more than 5 persons will not be allowed to gather in public places. However, there will be relaxation in big shops but people will have to maintain social distancing norms. The harsh measures are being taken in the wake of the state crossing 2 lakh Covid 19 cases and single day cases crossing 9,000 mark. Currently, at least 77,482 people are undergoing treatment for the infection.

Reliance's Covid-19 kit can give test result in 2 hrs

New Delhi, Oct. 2: Reliance Life Sciences has developed an RT-PCR kit that promises diagnosis of Covid-19 infection in about 2 hours, company sources said. At present, Covid-19 RT-PCR test, which is a real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) test for the qualitative detection of nucleic acid from Sars-CoV-2, takes up to 24 hours to give a diagnosis. The sources said computational biologists at Reliance Life Sciences, a subsidiary of billionaire Mukesh Ambani-run Reliance Industries Ltd, analysed more than 100 genomes of Sars-CoV-2 sequenced in India and designed unique RT-PCR primers for developing quantitative-Real Time PCR (RT-PCR) kit for COVID-19 detection. RT-PCR kit is so far considered as Gold standard. The kit, developed by scientists at Reliance Life Sciences, is named R-Green Kit (Sars CoV2-real-time PCR) and has been technically validated by ICMR for satisfactory performance, the sources said. ICMR's validation process does not approve/disapprove the kit design as well as it does not certify user-friendliness. The sources said the kit can detect the presence of E-gene, R-gene, RdRp gene of Sars CoV2 virus with Actin as an internal control. As per ICMR results, the kit shows 98.7 per cent sensitivity and 98.8 per cent specificity. — PTI

27% Mumbai health workers have Covid antibodies: Study

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 2

The first as well as the second round of sero-survey held in Mumbai have found that approximately 27 per cent health workers, who are more exposed to the virus than ordinary citizens, have developed antibodies against the infection. The BMC had conducted the second round of sero-survey along with other organisations in the second half of August, while the first one was done in June. Civic officials said the

sero-survey has important lessons for citizens, who are not following Covid-19 safety protocols of wearing face masks, maintaining social distance and hand hygiene. "TIFR (Tata Institute of Fundamental Research) (TIFR) has pointed out that health care workers have developed less antibodies though they are more exposed to the coronavirus. "It is because they took adequate precautions like wearing masks and PPE kits, maintaining social distance and sanitising themselves properly,"

Suresh Kakani, additional municipal commissioner of BMC said. The presence of Covid-19 antibodies in samples from slums in the city was found to have decreased by 12 per cent in the second sero survey. It indicates that the infection spread in slums in the city may have come down. The latest survey disclosed that "sero-prevalence" of Covid-19 infection in slums is 45 per cent, compared to 57 per cent in the first sero-survey in the city (in July), the release said.

German envoy gives Indian touch to iconic Winds of Change

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, OCT. 2

With the 30th anniversary of German re-unification to be celebrated on Saturday, German ambassador to India Walter J. Lindner has a surprise up his sleeve. A popular musician himself who plays the flute and piano along with several other musical instruments and has several CDs to his credit, the German envoy has personally overseen a unique Indian touch to an iconic Western number — *Wind of Change* — to mark the occasion with a music video featuring nine emi-

nent Indian musicians playing the sarod, sitar, flute and tabla along with talented vocalists. The ambassador too features in the video — to be released on Saturday — as he has strummed the guitar for the re-mixed track, billed as a "unique blend of East-West rock music". The original song was performed at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate by the famous German rock band "The Scorpions" and its lead singer Klaus Meine on October 3, 1990, and had been specially written then to mark the merger of East and West Germany following the fall of the infamous Berlin Wall. The



Walter J. Lindner

song quickly became a global rage and the "unofficial anthem of freedom, hope and change". As the German envoy put it, "It took altogether two months from the first moment of the idea to the realisation. First thing was to come up with the idea to do something innovative and new, to do some-

thing musical. I contacted the singer Klaus Meine and he immediately agreed (to give the copyright)." "I had to record the basic structure of my (version of the) song which I did in my studio. So I played all the instruments minus the drums to have a ground check of this. I contacted the list of (Indian) musi-

cians I played with, someone on Santoor, Tabla, the flute (bansuri) and the Sitar. Then I found a great singer with whom I had already played on stage and then the background singers. (In Covid times) they had to sing at home with their own equipment and then send me the files. Then I mixed it, mastered it, and voila I got the song," he added. Klaus Meine too will feature in the video and endorse the new version of his song. As Mr Lindner recounted, "When I showed him (Meine) the video, he was fascinated and said it was a wonderful version of his song." But apart from the musi-

cal tribute to the occasion, the nostalgia of that day three decades ago still remains strong. The German Ambassador said, "I grew up with the fact that there was another part of Germany which was separated from us. And I thought that really this was something that could never happen in my lifetime, that we could have a re-unified Germany. Very few of us believed it. Between the Soviet and the Western blocs was the Berlin Wall. None of us imagined that this wall one day would come down. It needed a peaceful revolution by the East Germans."

THE ASIAN AGE

3 OCTOBER 2020

Whither govt pledge of peace, women's safety?

On a day that governments and government servants are called upon to renew their commitment to peace and the nation's progress, rising caste crimes and back-to-back rapes — in Hathras, Bulandshahr, Azamgarh, Balarampur and now Bhadohi — have together come as a terrible reflection on governance, law and order, and society. Amid the resulting outrage and claims — of police destroying evidence in Hathras and Balarampur in order to hasten the closure of the particular cases — Smriti Irani's praise at the UN of Indian laws as "strong enablers" of women does not sound credible. Save for the Prime Minister — who issued a call in general terms for "strict action" in the case — there has not been a single statement from the home minister — who is set to resume political work in poll-bound West Bengal — or from any women leaders in the government.

When the erstwhile government, which returned to power in 2019, said Beti Bachao, it was perhaps not a slogan. It was a warning.

Following the controversial midnight cremation of the Hathras rape victim against the wishes of her family, the UP police is claiming that she had not been raped and that the matter is being "twisted" to "stir caste tension". Even while the specific nature of the offence remains moot following the stealthy cremation precluding a second autopsy, how does this glib desexualisation of the crime lessen its severity — the victim had been permanently disabled — or its essential egregiousness? Also pertinently, how does this — or theories of a dispute over cleaning a drain — show that it is not a caste crime, rather than prove it otherwise?

A relative has reported being told by police that there was no monetary relief to be given to the family after the death of its prospective earning member who contributed valuable labour. But should a caste atrocity be proved to have been committed on the girl, her kin are entitled to full compensation under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

This sly spin doctoring by police of the case thus only goes to lay bare their sexist mindset — the fact that they did not value her life and its promise — as well as their bad work ethic — of staying on the right side of the local caste dynamic and protecting their jobs instead of serving the citizen.

New NCRB crime data reports 59,853 crimes against women from UP in 2019, the highest among states. This includes not only rapes, but also dowry deaths, crimes against a minor, domestic abuse and so on. Rights denials, which lie at the core and crux of all these offences, are no doubt outside the ambit of this classification. However, rape also being a caste crime, data shows that nine states in India, including Uttar Pradesh, accounted for 84 per cent of all crimes against dalits the same year; yet the conviction rate of offences under the Atrocities Act was only 32 per cent, with the pendency rate an alarming 94 per cent. Hate crimes against dalits went up by seven per cent in 2019.

The ruling party at the Centre and the state has accused the Opposition of playing politics in Hathras. But what else is the Opposition supposed to do in the face of such blatant condoning of criminality as we witness in case after case? Nevertheless, as members of the victim's family continue to remain in effective house arrest, the borders of Hathras district have been sealed, Section 144 of the CrPC imposed for a month, and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi detained and roughed up by police on their way to the victim's home.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the case, the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad high court issued notices to the Uttar Pradesh government. This newspaper upholds the rights to fair trial of the accused and to justice for the victim.

Bring farmers on board

The farmers' agitation against the three laws that will shape agriculture in India in the future has shown no signs of abatement with the resumption of their rail roko programme in Punjab on Thursday. The government has also shown no inclination to budge from its stand — the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, and the essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, as evidenced from repeated assertions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's is the sole voice on the government's side calling for talks with farmers. Mr Singh, who was agriculture minister in the A.B. Vajpayee government, says the government is willing to open talks with farmers' groups to allay their fears.

This is a welcome development. The farmers have reasons to believe that the minimum support price for agricultural produce will become next to redundant in future and the government allow a free reign of market forces. Ultimately, it could lead to the complete withdrawal of the government from the sector. That will also mean the death of subsidies, which sustain farming all over the world.

Experience tells farmers that assurances hardly matter: the government had promised parity with international fuel price when the administrative price mechanism for petroleum products was dispensed with but that has never been implemented. The government has used the price advantage to fill its revenue gap instead of passing it on to the consumer. The farmers will not be able to go ahead with their work should the government support stop.

The government may be resolute on its path but respect for democratic norms demands that it honestly and transparently engage stakeholders. Mr Singh's sane voice must be heard louder, and acted on.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Devi Kar



Surprising outcomes as schooling goes 'virtual'

Right through the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been hearing people cribbing and moaning about the deteriorating education scene after the schools were forced to shut down in March. Online schooling was generally vilified, and it was felt that the already poor state of school education in India was now in shambles. Memes, cartoons and jokes abound about the ineffectiveness of distance teaching, but even teachers need humour to endure hard times. In urban schools where there was some access to technology, the teachers still struggled valiantly to keep the teaching-learning process alive and vibrant through virtual lessons.

The good news is that after functioning in this strange new world of distance learning for some months, we have discovered that certain positive things have emerged. We see around us extraordinary innovativeness and creativity on the part of people who are determined to continue learning and wish to live life fully despite the sudden and radical disruption of their regular schedules.

First, teachers as well as students

have successfully demonstrated that with the help of technology, it is possible to make learning effective as well as fun. They keep exploring the cyber-world to identify opportunities through which they can develop and showcase talent, to enhance learning, to participate virtually in team activities and to establish connections with people across the globe. Students have published e-newsletters and magazines, created films, videos and photo essays, hosted and participated in different kinds of festivals with mind-boggling events which tested their own talent and creativity and that of their peers.

Academically too, I feel that we cannot dismiss this period as totally futile. If we reflect for a while, we will be able to identify certain valuable gains during this period. We have observed that teachers and students have moved away from drab textbooks and learned to explore the World Wide Web for resources. They have also learnt to check for authenticity and be cautious about unvalidated information. These developments in themselves represent giant strides in the learning process. I have seen phenomenal learning dis-

played by teachers who realised that they had to master technology or else their students' learning would come to a grinding halt. It is true that though the importance of technology was being driven home, it was embraced incrementally in the last so many years. It is the pandemic which has catapulted the tardy educational world into the twenty-first century.

The other remarkable development is that collaborative work has increased in an exponential manner. It is ironic that schools, teachers and children have learnt to collaborate at a time when they are compulsorily distanced. Individuals are voluntarily reaching out to others in order to learn together, to solve problems collectively, to put up joint cultural programmes or just to have a virtual get-together. This phenomenon will have to be explained by psychologists.

In this context, the creative effort of Kolkata's Teachers' Centre should be mentioned. It put up a delightful play on the occasion of Teachers' Day with help from "Bichitra Pathshala", an organisation which brings the cinema into the classroom, and "Chitrabani", a

film study institute. The audience was filled with wonder when they saw how technology had been used to enhance the end product. Not a soul had to leave his or her home but if you watch the play you will marvel at the resourcefulness and teamwork that went into the making of something charmingly simple, yet clever. Most important, it gave immense pleasure to both the participants and viewers.

I read an article recently in the *World Economic Forum Journal*, which was titled "The Unexpected Benefits of Virtual Education". It points out that though "there is nothing ideal about teachers and students dealing unexpectedly with remote learning", "collaborating online might prepare high school students with the kind of organisational acumen, emotional intelligence and self-discipline needed for modern careers..." Increasingly, we see that people are having to work with colleagues who are located all over the world. So far as self-discipline is concerned, we have observed that a lot more independent learning is taking place. Although many students have enrolled in different tutorial centres

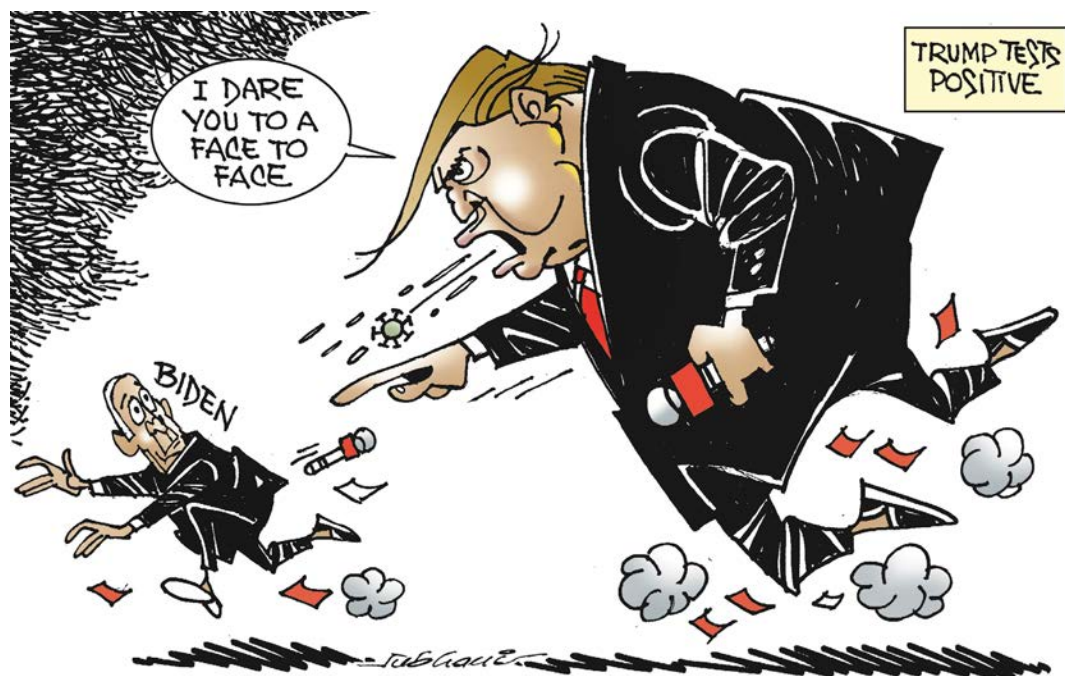
offering virtual coaching, many others are now learning on their own. Moreover, the number of students taking online art, cooking, music, dance, yoga and language lessons seems to have multiplied.

Perhaps the most wonderful as well as surprising thing that I have heard from my colleagues is that many timid and shy children have come out of their shells and are now expressing their feelings and thoughts for the first time. Probably it is because speaking up in a virtual classroom is less intimidating than in a real one, where many pairs of eyes are trained on you. There is also the nagging fear of derisive laughter after you have spoken. I wonder whether this newfound confidence will be sustained off-screen when the schools reopen.

Frankly speaking, though we teachers long to be able to return to the school campus and teach real children in real classrooms once again, we are not at all dismissive of what we are doing now.

The writer is a veteran school educator based in Kolkata

Subhani



Dalit lives: No more than a heap of ashes



Shobhaa De

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust... nothing changes in our brutal and brutalised India. For centuries, we have lived with the tyranny of caste and oppression. Today, India's dark and ghastly secret lies exposed in an even more graphic manner with the alleged rape, mutilation and death of a 19-year-old dalit girl in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh. To call UP anything else but a barbaric, no man's land, would be insulting women across the country. And this is the state ruled by a person who calls himself a yogi! What sort of a yogi looks the other way, encouraging his administration to do the same, while a defenceless pulped female victim is treated worse than a discarded rag and unceremoniously cremated by cops? Even stray puppies in distress receive more attention.

The accounts of what the poor girl endured at the hands of those four beasts are too horrific to recount. The visuals, too sadistic. But the pathos of her hasty cremation will — or should — haunt generations of Indians. She was denied basic human dignity in death. Her mother's heart-rending pleas to say her final goodbye to a beloved daughter, by putting *haldi* on her dead body, fell on deaf ears. A poor, disenfranchised dalit girl's corpse was dragged to a secluded spot and hastily cremated, surrounded by the very police force that not just failed to protect her, but thought nothing of the rape, and strenuously tried hard to ignore the national outcry of horrified citizens when they raised their voices in protest. "We are punished for being born dalits. Our

only sin is our birth as Dalits," a distraught relative of the victim was quoted as saying, as the administration wasted not a minute in sealing the Hathras border after this heinous act. An official asked: "How can we arrest anybody? Has rape even been proved?"

This isn't just Hathras' hour of shame. It's equally India's collective shame.

This is 2020. And we refuse to deal with our country's biggest scourge — bigger than the Covid-19 crisis by far — the scourge of caste. So-called educated, higher caste men from the region have traditionally strutted around terrorising those who they deem "inferior". Dalit men who go to the market to buy essentials are instructed by shopkeepers to stand at a distance, while their purchases are thrown to them. Even an accidental touch is considered worse than coming in direct contact with a Covid-19 positive patient. The whole idea of "purity" is so deeply embedded across India (not just in UP) that it should embarrass us deeply and lead to a questioning and outlawing of this nasty, discriminatory practice that has gone unchecked for centuries. Caste, and let's add colour. Both exert a diabolical control over the lives of India's most vulnerable segment — women.

Think about it — even Suhana Khan, daughter of superstar Shah Rukh Khan, has not been spared. Her post this week talked about being viciously targeted by troll armies and called a "Kaali Billi". In this context, I came across a news report on a short film that's attracting attention *The Discreet Charm of the Savarnas*, with a provocative

To call UP anything else but a barbaric, no man's land, would be insulting women across the country

premise: Three people with a deadline to complete a project go in search of a character to be cast as a dalit! Raising the key question: what does a dalit look like? One of those shortlisted for the role is outraged! He is a brahmin! And it was "below his dignity" to play a dalit. Writer-director Rajesh Rajamani says his main intention was to put the "ruling classes" under public glare, for "they are the ones who are perpetuating the caste system".

Many powerful movies have been made on this disturbing, volatile subject over the years. Many books have been written. And yet, when something as stomach-churning as the Hathras death takes place, India finds itself divided! Uttar Pradesh, that lawless, unwieldy and chaotic state, is after all, a microcosm of India. It's chief minister and his cronies have the support of the Prime Minister and his core team. Had there not been such a widespread condemnation, it would have been just another mutilation and death of an anonymous, inconsequential dalit girl who was of no further use to anybody.

So the sordid saga carries on. Protests and arrests. Token gestures and compensation. But the deep-rooted contempt for and revulsion towards India's most marginalised people does not shift an inch. From discriminating against dalit kids in primary schools, to denying dalits a chance at playing on a level playing field later in life, our so-called "upper" castes continue to perpetuate the prejudices that have kept millions of fellow citizens from daring to dream of a better tomorrow.

The callous adminis-

tration in Uttar Pradesh is counting on everybody forgetting what happened in Hathras, when a helpless woman was left to die, and then stealthily cremated in the dead of the night, while her mother wailed and beat her breasts to express unimaginable sorrow. The unfeeling cops formed a cordon around the pyre as if to protect — protect who? Themselves? From? Surely not the girl's impoverished father who is now being pressured by the district magistrate to "rethink" his statement, since the media will lose interest in a few days? The veiled threat is hard to ignore. Meanwhile, Prashant Kumar, UP's additional DGP (law and order), denies that any rape took place. So, Prashantji... did the 19-year-old's spinal cord break spontaneously? It is more than obvious that Yogi will "mediate" and then "mediate" swiftly, to create a fresh narrative and hastily bury this shameful chapter. Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi were prevented from meeting the victim's family — was anybody surprised?

Murderous, casteist mobs can cut off a woman's tongue, break her spinal cord, strangle her and burn the remains like so much discarded rubbish or *raddi*. The Allahabad high court has taken suo moto cognisance of the fatal assault on a dalit woman in Hathras. There are millions of other equally vulnerable dalit men and women out there. India will run out of prisons for those guilty of butchering co-citizens who do enjoy equal rights under the Constitution. Not that it matters. Which is why nobody bothers to follow up and take action against the culprits. These atrocities have been institutionalised and eerily accepted by the vast majority. To use Mahatma Gandhi's last and final sigh: "Hey, Ram!"

Readers can send feedback to www.shobhaade.blogspot.com

LETTERS

MATHURA NEXT

The announcement of a "Krishna Janmabhomi movement" by targeting the Shahi Idgah at Mathura is hardly surprising. Far from ensuring punishment to the goons for demolishing the Babri Masjid and rebuilding the mosque right at that very spot where it stood for centuries; the highest judiciary of the land awarded greater importance to the "belief of the Hindus"! Thankfully, the Mathura court recently dismissed a plea to remove the Idgah. What next! The Kashi Vishwanath and Gyanvapi Mosque prior to the 2024 general polls!

Kajal Chatterjee
Kolkata

TRUMP IN TROUBLE?

THERE IS NEVER a dull moment with Donald Trump. No surprise that debates are but bullfights for matador Trump. This businessman-president had set about delisting US Inc to make it a proprietorship. Trusting none, his inner cabinet was his family. He has sadly mixed up personal loyalty with that to the nation's constitution. Learning on the job, next only to learning from mistakes, is a way of accumulating experience but without hard homework and reflection an invitation to jeopardy. And now he and FLOTUS have contracted the coronavirus. We could well get to miss him should he not make it to the Oval Office this time around.

R. Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

ONUS ON CHINA

CHINESE AMBASSADOR to India Sun Weidong has said India and China are neighbours that cannot leave and living in harmony is their only choice. He said as long as the two sides adhere to this common goal, China-India relations will get back on track. The ambassador must know it is China which failed to reciprocate positively. It attacked India in 1962 and has since been in an adversarial relationship. He needs to emphasise on his country's leadership their need to harmonise relations.

M.C. Joshi
Lucknow

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

SHORT TAKES

UK, EU LEADERS TO DISCUSS BREXIT, FREE TRADE TALKS

London, Oct. 2: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Saturday will “take stock” of negotiations on a post-Brexit free trade deal and to “discuss next steps,” officials said.

The announcement by both sides came as they were winding up another weeklong session of detailed negotiations on a rudimentary free trade agreement that should come in force once a Brexit transition period ends Dec. 31.

Little progress has been made on such a deal since the UK left the bloc at the end of January. Both sides have acknowledged that time is running out if they are to achieve an agreement before the current Brexit transition period comes to an end at the end of the year. Johnson has said he is prepared to walk away from the negotiations if there is no agreement by the time of the next EU summit on Oct. 15.

CONDEMN WHITE SUPREMACISTS, SAYS TRUMP

Washington, Oct. 2: US President Donald Trump on Thursday condemned all kinds of white supremacists something which he was hesitant to do during the first presidential debate with his Democratic rival Joe Biden early this week.

“I’ve said it many times, and let me be clear again: I condemn the [Ku Klux Klan]. I condemn all white supremacists. I condemn the Proud Boys. I don’t know much about the Proud Boys, almost nothing. But I condemn that,” Trump said on Thursday night.

The Ku Klux Klan, commonly called the KKK or the Klan, is an infamous white supremacist hate group in America. Trump said he could say it a hundred times but it would not be enough for the “fake” media. The president has been facing a lot of criticism for not directly condemning white supremacists during the debate. Trump and Biden clashed over the issue of race in America in the first presidential debate where in the Republican leader hesitated to condemn white supremacists.

INDIAN-ORIGIN BROTHERS BUY UK MARKET CHAIN

London, Oct. 2: Indian-origin billionaire brothers Mohsin and Zuber Issa are set to acquire a majority stake in the leading UK supermarket chain Asda from its US owner Walmart after a \$8.8-billion deal was struck as part of a consortium involving private equity firm TDR Capital.

The Issa brothers, whose parents moved to the UK from Gujarat in the 1970s, own the Euro Garages chain of petrol stations as part of their EG Group business. The supermarket deal, valued at around 6.8-billion pounds (\$8.8-billion), follows an auction process for Asda over several months and returns the 71-year-old supermarket company back into British ownership after 21 years, a development welcomed by UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

“Great to see Asda returning to majority UK ownership for the first time in two decades today,” Sunak said on Twitter. “The new owners have already committed to investing over GBP 1 billion in the next three years and increasing the proportion of UK-based suppliers. I wish them the best of luck,” he said. Announcing the deal, Walmart said Asda would keep its headquarters in Leeds in northern England, with chief executive Roger Burnley continuing to be in charge.

Biden, wife Covid -ve, says mask important

Trump had mocked Democrat’s mask wearing habit in debate

Washington, Oct. 2: Joe Biden, 77, the Democrat opponent of US President Donald Trump in the November 3 elections, announced on Friday that he and his wife Jill had tested negative, and said that they will “continue to pray for the health and safety of the President and his family.”

During their first debate on Tuesday in Cleveland — where they stood in close proximity for 90 minutes — Trump mocked the Democrat for his rigorous adherence to mask wearing. A question mark hangs over his second televised debate, set for October 15, against Joe Biden, who has made criticism of Trump’s Coronavirus response his key issue.

Just hours before Trump’s announcement, the President had proclaimed the pandemic almost over, while Biden had accused Trump of trying to distract from a “failed” response to the disease, which has killed more people in the United States than any other country.

In his statement on Friday, Biden said “I hope this serves as a reminder: Wear a mask, keep social distance, and wash your hands.” With Trump isolating at the White House, his Democratic rival left after receiving the Covid all-clear on a campaign trip to swing state Michigan.

Trump met with dozens of people through the week and reportedly went to a fundraiser in New Jersey after it was known that his aide Hope Hicks had contracted the virus.

The White House said it was carrying out contact tracing, while Melania Trump’s spokeswoman said the couple’s 14-year-old son Barron had tested

Trump’s close aide Hicks Covid +ve

Washington, Oct. 2: One of President Donald Trump’s closest advisors, Hope Hicks, has tested positive for Covid-19, US media reported on Thursday. The White House would not officially confirm the reports from *The New York Times*, *Bloomberg* and other outlets that Hicks has the virus.

The spotlight will immediately turn to Trump himself, since Hicks was traveling with him on Air Force One just this Tuesday to fly to Cleveland for the first presidential debate with Democrat Joe Biden.

She was also with him on the Marine One helicopter on Wednesday when he flew back to the White House after a rally in Minnesota. Trump says the United States has put the worst of the Coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 200,000 Americans, behind and he rarely wears a

negative.

Republican Party chairwoman Ronna McDaniel, who was last with Trump on September 25, tested positive earlier this week, according to US media reports. Trump’s Supreme Court nominee, Judge Amy Coney Barrett, who was with him and many others on Saturday and has been on Capitol Hill meeting with lawmakers, also tested negative, the White House said.

House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, third in line for the presidency, said on *MSNBC* that she had tested negative.

● **HOPE HICKS** was also with him on the Marine One helicopter on Wednesday when he flew back to the White House after a rally in Minnesota.

mask, noting that he receives frequent testing.

However, his own health experts have often given less rosy assessments and he has been sharply criticized by some for holding large rallies where few supporters wear masks.

Asked about Hicks, White House spokesman Judd Deere said “the president takes the health and safety of himself and everyone who works in support of him and the American people very seriously.” Deere said the White House takes care to follow procedures “for limiting Covid-19 exposure to the greatest extent possible both on complex and when the president is traveling.” — *AFP*

Contracting Covid-19 is more than a PR disaster for a President who has staked everything on trying to persuade Americans that fears of the virus are overblown.

In what has become an overtly political gesture, Trump almost never wears a mask in public — an example followed by his supporters and many of his aides.

The President has been using large rallies to try to change the subject from his much criticised Covid-19 response, vowing in a speech just Thursday that “the end of the pandemic

POMPEO, PENCE TEST NEGATIVE FOR COVID-19

Washington, Oct. 2: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says he and his wife have tested negative for the Coronavirus after they were examined on their airplane 20 minutes prior to landing in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on Friday.

He said it was the fourth time in two weeks he has been tested. President Donald Trump announced on Twitter early Friday that he and first lady Melania Trump had tested positive for the Coronavirus.

Vice President Mike Pence and second lady Karen Pence tested negative for Covid-19 Friday morning, hours after President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump were diagnosed with the Coronavirus.

Spokesman Devin O’Malley says Pence “remains in good health and wishes the Trumps well in their recovery.” Pence is tested every day for the virus. — *AP*

Gandhi on Burj Khalifa on 151st birthday



UAE’s iconic skyscraper Burj Khalifa displayed the images of Mahatma Gandhi as a tribute to the great Indian peace icon on his 151st birth anniversary on Friday. — *TWITTER*

EU spares Belarus Prez, imposes curbs on 40 aides

Brussels, Oct. 2: The EU will hit Belarus officials with long-awaited sanctions over the country’s political crisis on Friday, drawing an angry response from Minsk and its ally Moscow.

After more than six weeks of diplomatic efforts, EU leaders finally persuaded Cyprus to drop its veto on sanctions at a summit in Brussels, opening the way for some 40 members of President Alexander Lukashenko’s regime to be listed.

The targets for the travel bans and asset freezes are officials the European Union blames for rigging the August 9 election that returned Lukashenko to power and for orchestrating a brutal crackdown by security forces on anti-regime protests that followed the vote.

Minsk swiftly

announced “counter sanctions” against the EU, though it was not clear what form these would take or what they would target.

“In connection with visa sanctions adopted by the EU against a number of Belarusian officials, the Belarusian side from today is introducing a list of reciprocal sanctions,” Belarus’s foreign ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said that by imposing sanctions the EU had “alienated” the country, which western commentators have dubbed “Europe’s last dictatorship” under Lukashenko’s strongman rule.

Minsk said it would not disclose which European officials were being targeted, but threatened “even more serious consequences” if the EU expands its restrictions. — *AFP*

MERKEL TO MEET BELARUS OPPN LEADER IN BERLIN

Berlin, Oct. 2: German Chancellor Angela Merkel will host Svetlana Tikhanovskaya for talks on Tuesday, a week after the Belarusian opposition leader held a similar meeting with France’s president.

Merkel’s meeting with Tikhanovskaya will take place on Tuesday afternoon, with “the situation in Belarus after the presidential election” as the main topic of discussion, said Merkel’s spokeswoman Ulrike Demmer.

Merkel has said that Germany, which holds the rotating presidency of the EU, does not recognise the result of the August 9 disputed vote. — *AFP*

20,000 Amazon workers test +ve

New York, Oct. 2: (AP) Amazon said on Thursday that nearly 20,000 of its front-line US workers have tested positive or been presumed positive for the virus that causes Covid-19.

But the online retail behemoth, revealing the data for the first time, said that the infection rate of its employees was well below that seen in the general US population. The disclosure comes after

months of pressure from Amazon workers and labor groups calling for the company to divulge the Covid-19 numbers.

Amazon said in a corporate blog that it provided the data as part of its effort to keep employees informed, and to share details and best practices with governments and other companies. “We hope other large companies will also release their

detailed learnings and case rates because doing so will help all of us,” Amazon said. “This is not an arena where companies should compete — this is an arena where companies should help one another.”

The Seattle-based company said that it examined data from March 1 to September 19 on 1.37 million workers at Amazon and Whole Foods Market across the US. It said it

compared the Covid-19 case rates to the general population, as reported by Johns Hopkins University for the same period.

Based on that analysis, if the rate among Amazon and Whole Foods employees were the same as that for the general population, it estimated it would have seen 33,952 cases among its workforce. That is 42% higher than Amazon’s actual rate. — *AP*

Macca to reopen after 7 months

Riyadh, Oct. 2: Saudi Arabia will reopen the Muslim holy places for the year-round umrah pilgrimage on Sunday, scaled back and with extensive health precautions, seven months after Coronavirus prompted its suspension.

The umrah, the pilgrimage that can be undertaken at any time, usually attracts millions of Muslims from across the globe each year.

It will be revived in three stages, with the initial phase seeing just 6,000 citizens and residents already within the kingdom allowed to take

part each day.

“In the first stage, the umrah will be performed meticulously and within a specified period of time,” Haj minister Mohammad Benteen told state television last week.

He said pilgrims will be divided into groups to ensure social distancing within the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Worshipers will on Sunday be able to perform the ritual of circling the sacred Kaaba — a cubic structure inside the Grand Mosque towards which Muslims around the world pray — along socially distanced paths. — *AFP*

Azerbaijani forces strike breakaway area on Day 6

Yerevan, Oct. 2: Azerbaijani forces on Friday struck Stepanakert, the main city in Azerbaijan’s breakaway Nagorno Karabakh region, wounding “many” people, an Armenian official said as fighting raged for a sixth day.

The Caucasus neighbors have been locked in a simmering conflict for decades over the region and new fighting that erupted on Sunday has been the heaviest in decades.

“There are many wounded among (Stepanakert’s) civilian population, civilian infrastructure is damaged,” defence ministry

spokesman Artsrun Hovhannisyan said on Facebook without providing further details. *AFP* journalists on the ground heard several explosions in the city as civil defence sirens sounded.

The separatist government in Stepanakert said Azerbaijani forces destroyed a bridge linking Armenia to Karabakh.

Both sides accused each other of initiating the recent hostilities and have rejected a possibility of peace talks.

In a joint appeal on Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin,

US President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron urged the two sides to return to negotiations aimed at resolving the long-standing dispute.

Armenia’s foreign ministry said on Friday that Yerevan “stands ready to engage” with France, Russia, and the United States — which co-chair the OSCE group of mediators to the conflict — “to re-establish a ceasefire regime.” Nearly 200 people have been confirmed killed since on Sunday, including more than 30 civilians. — *AFP*

Islam ‘in crisis’, says Macron

Les Mureaux, France, Oct. 2: President Emmanuel Macron unveiled a plan on Friday to defend France’s secular values against Islamist radicalism, describing Islam as a religion “in crisis” all over the world.

In a long-awaited address, Macron insisted “no concessions” would be made in a new drive to push religion out of education and the public sector in France.

“Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world today, we are not just seeing this in our country,” he said.

He announced that the government would present a bill in December to strengthen a 1905 law that officially separated church and state in France.

The measures, Macron said, were aimed at

addressing a problem of growing Islamic radicalisation in France and improving “our ability to live together”.

“Secularism is the cement of a united France,” he insisted, but added that there was no sense in stigmatising all Muslim believers.

The law permits people to belong to any faith of their choosing, Macron said, but outward displays of religious affiliation can under no circumstances be allowed in schools or the public service.

He announced that France would seek to “liberate” Islam in France from foreign influences by improving oversight of the financing of mosques.

There would also be closer scrutiny of schools and associations exclusively serving religious communities. — *AFP*

SRI LANKA ASKS OIL TANKER OWNERS TO COUGH UP \$2M FIRE-FIGHTING BILL

Colombo, Oct. 2: Sri Lanka will not allow a Panamanian-registered oil tanker stricken off its coast to leave its waters until the vessel’s owners pay a \$2 million fire-fighting bill, government officials have said.

The New Diamond, carrying 2,70,000 tonnes of crude, was en-route from Kuwait to India when an engine room explosion on September 3 killed a Filipino crewman and set

off a massive fire. Firefighters from Sri Lanka and India battled and put out the blaze on the vessel, which is now tied to a tug boat and guarded by a Sri Lankan navy ship some 140 kilometres (90 miles) east of the Indian Ocean island.

Official sources said the owners of the tanker had planned to begin towing the stricken vessel to the UAE. — *AFP*

POTTY | TRAINING New toilets to help astronauts in space to position better to relieve themselves

Nasa tests \$23m toilet for women in space

Cape Canaveral, Oct. 2: Nasa’s first new space potty in decades — a \$23 million titanium toilet better suited for women — is getting a not-so-dry run at the International Space Station before eventually flying to the moon.

It’s packed inside a cargo ship that should have blasted off late on Thursday from Wallops Island, Virginia. But the launch was aborted with just two minutes remaining in the countdown. Northrop Grumman said it would try again on Friday night if engineers can figure out what went

wrong. Barely 45 kg and just 71 cm tall, the new toilet is roughly half as big as the two Russian-built ones at the space station.

It’s more camper-size to fit into the Nasa Orion capsules that will carry astronauts to the moon in a few years.

Station residents will test it out for a few months. If the shakedown goes well, the toilet will be open for regular business.

With SpaceX now launching astronauts to the space station and Boeing less than a year from sending up its first crew, more toilets are

needed. The new one will be in its own stall alongside the old one on the U.S. side of the outpost.

The old toilets cater more toward men. To better accommodate women, Nasa tilted the seat on the new toilet and made it taller. The new shape should help astronauts position themselves better for No. 2, said Johnson Space Centre’s Melissa McKinley, the project manager. “Cleaning up a mess is a big deal. We don’t want any misses or escapes,” she said.

Let’s just say everything floats in weightlessness. As

for No. 1, the funnels also have been redesigned. Women can use the elongated and scooped-out funnels to urinate while sitting on the commode to poop at the same time, McKinley said. Until now, it’s been one or the other for female astronauts, she noted. Like earlier space commodes, air suction, rather than water and gravity, removes the waste.

Urine collected by the new toilet will be routed into NASA’s long-standing recycling system to produce water for drinking and cooking.

— *AP*



Last time Nasa ordered a new toilet was in the early 1990s to accommodate two-week space shuttle missions. — *AP*

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
aSensex	38,697.05	1.65
Nifty 50	11,416.95	1.51
S&P 500*	3,361.33	-0.58
Dollar (₹)	73.15	0.83
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.15	0.50
Euro (₹)	85.81	0.79
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,389▼37	0.07
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	39.60	-1.33
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.996	-0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.692	0.015

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Forex reserves drop by \$3.01 bn to \$542.02 bn

After touching a lifetime high in the previous week, the country's foreign exchange reserves declined by \$3.017 billion to \$542.021 bn in the week ended Sept. 25, RBI data showed. In the week ended Sept. 18, the reserves had increased by \$3.378 bn to a record \$545.038 bn. During the reporting week, foreign currency assets decreased by \$1.523 bn to \$499.941 bn. Gold reserves were down by \$1.441 bn to \$35.999 bn.

Mobile phones to become dearer over duty hike



Mobile phone prices would rise by 1.5 to 3 per cent as the government has imposed 10 per cent duty on the import of display assembly and touch panel displays from Oct. 1. The duty was proposed under a phased manufacturing programme (PMP) in 2016. Pankaj Mohindroo, national chairman, India Cellular and Electronics Association said, "In a rare miss, the industry could not ramp up production adequately."

Ease Your Life launches services in Delhi & NCR

Ease Your Life (EYL), a startup that provides a multi-service hyperlocal offerings—such as pick up & drop, household repairs, shopping & banking assistance—has expanded its services into Delhi, NCR and Gwalior. EYL effectively work as a personal assistant running errands for its customers. "The operation model is pretty simple- You have a task? Ease Your Life will do it for you," said Shashwat Bhatt, co-founder.

S-Presso's 75,000 units sold in first year: Maruti

Maruti Suzuki India said its entry-level small car S-Presso has crossed the 75,000 unit sales milestone in the first year of its launch. Launched in September last year, the car, which takes the shape on a sports utility vehicle, made its debut in the top-10 best selling cars in India within a month of hitting the market, Maruti said. The S-Presso is an indigenously conceived, designed and developed vehicle, Maruti said.

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Corporate insolvency resolution Bid winner can't back out: NCLAT

New Delhi, Oct. 2: The NCLAT has said once a resolution plan for a debt-ridden company is approved by the lenders, then the successful bidder cannot be permitted to withdraw its offer.

A three-member NCLAT bench said the sanctity of resolution process has to be maintained and such withdrawal by a successful bidder "frustrate" the entire exercise of Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).

Moreover, there is also no express provision in the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to allow any successful resolution applicant to "stage a U-turn."

"We are of the considered opinion that the sanctity of resolution process has to be maintained and the resolution applicant whose resolution plan has been approved by Committee of Creditors cannot be permitted to withdraw its Resolution Plan," said the bench headed by acting chairman Justice B. L. Bhat.

The appellate tribunal further said even under the IBC, there is no express provision for allowing any successful resolution applicant to "stage a U-turn" and withdraw its bids, after being selected by the CoC.

"Provision for submission of a Performance Bank Guarantee by a resolution applicant while submitting its resolution plan, as required under the amended provisions of IBCI (Insolvency Resolution Process of Corporate Persons)



Regulations, 2016 is a step in this direction but may not be deterrent enough to prevent a Successful Resolution Applicant from taking a U-turn," the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) said.

The NCLAT's observation came in the judgement, in which it dismissed a plea filed by a Delhi-based firm Kundan Care Products that has emerged as a successful bidder for Astonfield Solar (Gujarat) Pvt. Ltd.

Kundan Care Products contended that on account of delay in conclusion of CIRP, its offer has been rendered commercially unviable and it could not be prevented from withdrawing the same.

It had approached the Delhi bench of the NCLT, which had on July 3, 2020, declined to pass any order on the ground that it would not be appropriate for it to deal with an issue which is already sub-judice before the Supreme Court.

After this, the firm moved the NCLAT.

It argued that IBC does not contain any provisions to compel specific perform-

ance of a Resolution Plan by an unwilling Resolution Applicant and a plea for withdrawal of a plan will have to be accepted if the plan is found to be unviable, unfit for implementation or or is based on incorrect assumptions.

The committee of creditors (CoC) had submitted that IBC does not prescribe any provision for withdrawal of a resolution plan and the NCLT is not bestowed with any power to allow withdrawal of the resolution plan.

It further submitted that once a resolution plan has been approved, it becomes a binding contract between the parties and the successful resolution applicant, and cannot be permitted to withdraw the same that will have the effect of sending the Corporate Debtor into liquidation.

Consenting to it, the NCLAT said earlier in a similar matter of Educump Solutions, it has already held that once a resolution applicant has accepted the conditions of resolution plan, it was not open to it to make a U-turn and wriggle out of the liabilities. —PTI

Tesla plans India entry next year



Elon Musk

Bengaluru, Oct. 2: Tesla Inc chief executive Elon Musk indicated on Friday that the US electric carmaker will make a foray into India in 2021.

"Next year for sure," Musk said on Twitter in reply to a post with a photograph of a T-shirt with the message: "India wants Tesla".

"Thanks for waiting," Musk said.

Tesla's entry could come at a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is increasingly becoming focussed on promoting the use and manufacture of electric vehicles.

India's auto sector, already reeling from a slowdown in demand last year, has been further hit by the novel coronavirus pandemic and carmakers are seeking government support to push sales.

Musk commented last year about coming to India, in response to someone on Twitter who asked "What about India sir?".

"Would love to be there this year. If not, definitely next!" he said in March 2019.

—Reuters

AP, UP can borrow ₹7,100 cr more as reward for reforms

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 2

Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have been granted permission to make additional borrowing to the tune of Rs 7,106 crore for successfully implementing some of the reforms prescribed by the Centre during the stimulus package.

While Andhra Pradesh has become the first state to implement 'ease of doing business' reforms after the public distribution system (PDS) reforms, Uttar Pradesh became the sixth state to implement the One Nation One Ration Card scheme.

By undertaking ease of doing business reforms, Andhra Pradesh has become eligible to raise an additional amount of Rs 2,525 crore through open market borrowings. The reforms prescribed by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade include assessment of



'district level business reform action plan', elimination of renewal of certificates/approvals/licences and computerised central random inspection system.

Earlier, Andhra Pradesh was allowed to borrow another Rs 2,525 crore, or 0.25 per cent of the gross state domestic product (GSDP), for successfully implementing One Nation One Ration Card along with Telangana, Goa, Karnataka, and Tripura. All the five states were granted permission to raise additional financial resources of Rs 9,913

crore then.

On Friday, Uttar Pradesh too joined the list of states that have implemented the One Nation One Ration Card scheme. This has made the state eligible to raise Rs 4,851 crore through open market borrowings. Under the reform, states have to ensure availability of ration to beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act and other welfare schemes, especially to the migrant workers and their families at any fair price shop in the country.

As part of the stimulus package, the Centre had allowed states an additional borrowing limit of up to 2 per cent of GSDP for 2020-21. This made Rs 4,27,302 crore available to the states to borrow. However, one per cent of this is subject to implementation of One Nation One Ration Card system, ease of doing business, urban local body/ utility reforms and power sector reforms.

Reliance's RT-PCR kit gives Covid results in 2 hours

New Delhi, Oct. 2: Reliance Life Sciences has developed an RT-PCR kit that promises diagnosis of Covid-19 infection in about two hours, company sources said.

At present, Covid-19 RT-PCR test—a real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) test for detecting nucleic acid from Sars-CoV-2—takes up to 24 hours to give a diagnosis.

The sources said computerised analysis of the results takes about 15 minutes. The kit, developed by scientists at Reliance Life Sciences, is named R-

tational biologists at Reliance Life Sciences, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd, analysed more than 100 genomes of Sars-CoV-2 sequenced in India and designed unique RT-PCR primers for developing quantitative real-time PCR (RT-PCR) kit for Covid-19 detection.

RT-PCR kit is so far considered the gold standard.

The kit, developed by scientists at Reliance Life Sciences, is named R-

Green Kit and has been technically validated by ICMR for satisfactory performance, the sources said.

ICMR's validation process does not approve/disapprove the kit design as well as it does not certify user-friendliness.

The sources said the kit can detect the presence of E-gene, R-gene, RdRp gene of Sars COV2 virus with Actin as an internal control.

—PTI

Exports up 5% in Sept., down 21% in H1

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 2

Merchandise exports in September recorded a positive growth for the first time since the lockdown began. Imports continued to decline and the country narrowed its trade deficit during the month.

Merchandise exports in September grew 5.27 per cent to \$27.40 billion against \$26.02 billion in the same month last year. However, exports during April-September 2020-21 at \$125.06 billion, posted a negative growth of 21.43 per cent over the same period last year.

Non-petroleum exports

registered a positive growth of 5.44 per cent at \$23.81 billion and non-gems and jewellery exports were up 11.12 per cent. The key categories that supported the growth were drugs and pharmaceuticals, other cereals, iron ore, rice and oil meals. Ready-made garments, spices, plastic & linoleum and engineering goods also saw growth.

"While the reversal in trend for merchandise exports turning into positive territory in September is a matter of relief, the challenges in the external trade would continue given the present state of global health emergency and its economic impact on the

major economies," said Mahesh Desai, chairman, Engineering Export Promotion Council.

In the case of imports, September continued the declining trend as in the previous months of the fiscal. At \$30.31 billion, imports were 19.60 per cent lower than \$37.69 billion in September 2019. Merchandise imports during April-September 2020-21 were down 40.06 per cent at \$148.69 billion.

In September the trade deficit narrowed to \$2.91 billion against \$6.77 billion in August. The deficit was \$4.83 billion in July, after a rare surplus of \$790 million posted in June.

ECB pushes for digital euro

DAVID MCHUGH FRANKFURT, OCT. 2

With consumers increasingly using cashless ways to buy things, the European Central Bank on Friday took a step closer to issuing a digital version of the euro currency shared by 19 countries, saying it had to be ready to launch digital money if a changing world requires it.

The central bank issued a comprehensive report outlining the reasons why it might need to take the



step. The ECB also said it would hold public consultations on the idea with citizens, academics and bankers. It said no decision has been made, and that any digital euro would complement cash,

not replace it. The consultations will start Oct. 12.

"The euro belongs to Europeans and our mission is to be its guardian," said Christine Lagarde, ECB president. "Europeans are increasingly turning to digital in the ways they spend, save and invest. Our role is to secure trust in money. This means making sure the euro is fit for the digital age. We should be prepared to issue a digital euro, should the need arise." —AP

UNLIMITED | ENERGY

Solar segment provides the largest number of jobs in India

India third largest provider of RE jobs

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 2

After China and Brazil, India is the third largest job provider in the renewable energy sector. India's renewable energy sector provides 8.24 lakh jobs, finds a study by International Renewable Energy Agency (Irena).

Solar photovoltaic segment provides the largest number of both direct and indirect jobs in India. On-grid solar employment is estimated to give 109,000 jobs, with another 95,000 in off-grid, taking the total to 204,000 jobs.



In the case of hydropower, the country accounts for 19 per cent of the 1.93 million people employed worldwide. India employs around 367,000 people in the hydropower segment.

India is the fourth largest market in wind energy in terms of capacity. Around 63,000 jobs have been created by the wind energy sector. However, the slowing pace of new

installations has resulted in high competition and over-supply of equipment. The number of wind turbine makers has come down significantly in recent times and this has led to job losses.

Solar heating and cooling solutions have offered employment to over 23,000 people. Though India is not a big player in liquid bio-fuels globally, that segment too provides 35,000 jobs. Solid biomass and biogas too have contributed to the employment generated in the renewable space. According to Irena,

decentralised renewable energy (DRE) solution companies across the different segments directly employ 95,000 workers in India and that number is expected to double by 2022-23. DRE solutions have the potential to create up to five times more jobs in local communities than direct formal employment.

The report says globally jobs in the sector reached 11.5 million last year, led by solar PV with around 3.8 million jobs. Renewable energy employment has been growing worldwide since 2012.

Rs 35 lakh onwards.

Customers can also avail of exclusive offers and value-added benefits during the exhibition, it said.

"We at HDFC have seen demand coming back. In July 2020, HDFC achieved 81 per cent of July 2019 disbursements, better than what we had expected given the lockdown and other restrictions and the subsequent months have been even better," HDFC managing director Renu Sud Karnad said. —PTI



SHORT TAKES

Walsh to coach Windies women

Kingston: Fast bowling great Courtney Walsh has been appointed as the new head coach of the West Indies women's cricket team. The West Indies cricket legend will lead the preparation and development of the women's team at least till the end of 2022, including competing in the next ODI World Cup and T20 World Cup.

"It's an exciting challenge and I've always wanted to give back in any way I can and help with the development of the game in the West Indies," Walsh said. Walsh has served as an assistant coach with the Bangladesh men's team, and subsequently worked on a short term contract with the West Indies women's side, including at the T20 World Cup held in Australia earlier this year. — *PTI*

Lewa gets UEFA's best player award

Geneva: Robert Lewandowski was named UEFA men's player of the year on Thursday following a superb season in which he won the treble with Bayern Munich. Lewandowski was at the Champions League group-stage draw in Geneva to receive the award, just weeks after Bayern won the 2019/20 edition of the competition. The Poland striker, who scored 55 goals in 47 games as Bayern also won the Bundesliga and German Cup, saw off Bayern team-mate Manuel Neuer and Manchester City's Kevin de Bruyne to win the award. "It's an amazing feeling, because you work so hard, so this trophy is something special," said Lewandowski. Lewandowski also picked up the award for best forward in last season's Champions League after amassing 15 goals in 10 games. — *AFP*

Fati scores as Barca beat Celta

Madrid: Teenager Ansu Fati scored again to help give Barcelona a second straight win to start the Spanish league season with a 3-0 victory at Celta Vigo. Barcelona won comfortably despite playing more than half the game with 10 men after defender Clément Lenglet was sent off before the break on Thursday. Anshu Fati curled the opening goal, by L. Olaza and S. Roberto came all goals blazing to post the other two. Fati also scored twice to lead Barcelona to an opening win against Villarreal on Sunday. The 17-year-old forward found the net against Celta with a neat touch with the outside of his foot from inside the area after a pass by Philippe Coutinho in the 11th minute. — *AFP*

AC Milan beat Rio in penalty thriller

Paris: AC Milan avoided being eliminated in a preliminary round in Europe for the first time on Thursday by equalising with a penalty in the last seconds of extra time and then winning a 24-kick shootout 9-8. The seven-times European champions trailed going into added time in extra time but Toni Borevkovic handled in the penalty area, earning his second yellow card and Hakan Calhanoglu converted from the spot to give Milan a 2-2 draw and set up an agonising shootout. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Rajasthan Royals from 3.30 pm; Delhi Capitals vs Kolkata Knight Riders from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

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

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Chelsea vs Crystal Palace from 5 pm; Everton vs Brighton from 7.30 pm; Leeds United vs Manchester City from 10 pm; Newcastle vs Burnley from 12.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 2, HD

Italian League: Sassuolo vs Crotone from 6.30 pm; Genoa vs Torino from 9.30 pm; Udinese vs Roma from 12.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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Sun keeps rising

Hyderabad ride on Garg half-ton, beat Chennai

Dubai, Oct. 2: There was no end to Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Chennai Super Kings' woes as former India captain yet again struggled to take his side past the finish line, falling short by seven runs against Sunrisers Hyderabad in an IPL match here on Friday.

CSK controlled the first innings for a large part before youngsters Priyam Garg (51 not out) and Abhishek Sharma (31) lifted SRH to a competitive 164 for 5 after electing to bat.

Their top guns not contributing much, former India U-19 World Cup skipper Garg scored his maiden IPL fifty and with Abhishek raised a 77-run stand for the fifth wicket. SRH collected 53 runs in the last four overs to make it a contest.

Playing a record 194th IPL game, the stage was set for Dhoni to silence his critics but all he could manage was 47 runs off 36 balls as CSK fell short.

Coming to bat at number five, Dhoni had enough balls at his disposal, a manageable target and trusted aide in Ravindra Jadeja (50) for company but again his attack came too late.

It was Jadeja who took CSK closer to the target before getting out while Dhoni struggled in their 72-run stand for the fifth wicket.

Except for a few hits, Dhoni struggled to time the ball. He also lost steam towards the end, having batted in hot conditions for over an hour. — *PTI*



Priyam Garg of Sunrisers Hyderabad plays a shot during the Indian Premier League match against Chennai Super Kings at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Friday. — *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Sunrisers Hyderabad: D. Warner c du Plessis b Chawla 28, J. Bairstow b D. Chahar 0, M. Pandey c Curran b Thakur 29, K. Williamson run out (Rayudu / Dhoni) 9, P. Garg (not out) 51, A. Sharma c Dhoni b D. Chahar 31, A. Samad (not out) 8. **Extras:** (W-6, NB-2) 8; **Total:** (for 5 wickets, in 20 overs) 164.

FoW: 1-1, 2-47, 3-69, 4-69, 5-146.

Bowling: D. Chahar 4-0-31-2, Curran 3-0-37-0, Thakur 4-0-32-1, Bravo 4-0-28-0, Chawla 3-0-20-1, Jadeja 2-0-16-0.

Chennai Super Kings: Faf du Plessis run out

(Gard / Bairstow) 22, Shane Watson b Bhuvneshwar Kumar 1, Ambati Rayudu b T. Natarajan 8, Kedar Jadhav c Warner b Abdul Samad 3, Mahendra Singh Dhoni not out 47, Ravindra Jadeja c Abdul Samad b T. Natarajan 50, Sam Curran not out 15. **Extras:** (LB-3, W-8) 11. **Total:** (for 5 wickets, in 20 overs) 157.

FoW: 1-4, 2-26, 3-36, 4-42, 5-114. **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 3.1-0-20-1, Khaleel Ahmed 3.5-0-34-0, T. Natarajan 4-0-43-2, Abhishek Sharma 1-0-4-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-12-0, Abdul Samad 4-0-41-1.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	4	2	2	0	4	+1.094
Delhi Capitals	3	2	1	0	4	+0.483
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	2	1	0	4	+0.117
Sunrisers Hyderabad	4	2	2	0	4	-0.084
Rajasthan Royals	3	2	1	0	4	-0.219
Royal Challengers Bangalore	3	2	1	0	4	-1.450
Kings XI Punjab	4	1	3	0	2	+0.521
Chennai Super Kings	4	1	3	0	2	-0.719

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

DHONI IS IPL'S MOST CAPPED PLAYER NOW

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 2: Former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Friday became the most-capped player in the history of IPL with his 194 appearance in the popular tournament, surpassing Chennai Super Kings teammate Suresh Raina.

Dhoni, who has played every edition of the League since its inception, is into his 11th season with CSK, a side he has always captained apart from playing two seasons for Rising Pune Supergiants. He is the second most successful skipper in IPL history after Rohit Sharma, having led CSK to three titles (2010, 2011 and 2018) with a total of eight final appearances. — *PTI*

Playing off-spinner in last over was a treat: Hardik

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 2: Mumbai Indians all-rounder Hardik Pandya says the very sight of off-spinner Krishnappa Gowtham being handed the ball in the 20th over of his team's IPL clash against Kings XI Punjab had him and his big-hitting partner Kieron Pollard excited before they hit him for 25 runs.

Pollard (47 not out) hit three sixes while Hardik (30 not out) got one maximum in that over which took MI to 191 for 4 after being invited to bat. The duo stitched 67 runs from just 23 balls. MI won the match by 48 runs.

Interviewed by his elder brother Krunal Pandya for MI's *Youtube* channel, Hardik talked about how he felt when he saw



Hardik Pandya

Gowtham being handed the last over.

"It was very intense, it was more like mouth watering that an off-spinner bowling the 20th over.

Me and Pollard, whoever misses has to stand at the non-striker's end and just watch, and that was me

today. I missed two balls but Pollard made up most of it," he said.

Hardik said he has always enjoyed batting with Pollard.

"The number of times Pollard and I have done this is fantastic and I've always enjoyed it. When we went, it was a clear message for me that I should go hard and look to get some big runs at the end and get to a total that KXIP find difficult.

"We didn't aim for 191, but we were lucky enough that Pollard had done it again. It is the belief we all in MI have, everyone in MI set-up has done some wonder. This is something happening often, again and again. That is fascinating," Hardik further added. — *PTI*

'SKY IS THE LIMIT IN LAST FOUR OVERS'

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 2: "We know sky is the limit in the last four overs," said Mumbai Indians all-rounder Kieron Pollard after adding 67 runs in 23 balls with Hardik Pandya in their IPL game against Kings XI Punjab here.

Pollard, who was adjudged the Man of the Match, said: "It's about what's there in front of you. Look at the bowlers and see how many you want to get, 15 off the over and then you try to go hard."

"Today Hardik had to come and swing and he showed his prowess. We know sky is the limit in the last four overs," he added.

Mumbai Indians had scored 25 runs in the final over. — *PTI*

RR & RCB meet in royal rumble

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 2: The dew factor will go out of the window but the searing heat will be an issue when Royal Challengers Bangalore take on a better prepared Rajasthan Royals in the first of the 10 IPL double-headers here on Saturday.

Having played their first two games at Sharjah, the smallest of the three venues, Royals got their strategy wrong in the game against Kolkata Knight Riders in Dubai.

With the batsmen unable to hit through the line as consistently as they could do in Sharjah, Royals failed to chase 175 against KKR on Wednesday.

Since they have a settled overseas players' combination, one possible change in the eleven could be replacing pacer Ankit Rajpoot with Varun Aaron, who is yet to get a game.

The team has benched young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal after Jos Buttler's arrival but calls have been growing for his inclusion.

Both Royals and the RCB go into Saturday's afternoon match with two wins in three games. RCB have made a promising start but need to improve their fielding and death bowling. Navdeep Saini bowled a tidy Super Over against Mumbai Indians to get his team over the line after RCB leaked as many as 79

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 20
- Rajasthan won: 10
- Bangalore won: 8

MEETING IN 2019

- Rajasthan Royals beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by 7 wickets at Jaipur
- No result at Bangalore

FOR THE RECORD

- In the Royal Challengers' Bangalore's last 10 wins, Abraham de Villiers has eight half-centuries. He was unbeaten on five occasions.

- Jos Buttler's strike rate of 157 in the IPL is the highest among all openers who have scored at least 500 runs since 2018.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

runs in the last four overs for the game to be tied.

The Bangalore franchise made three changes in the previous clash and are likely to give those players — Isuru Udana, Adam Zampa and Gurkeerat Mann — another go. Ab de Villiers has shown ominous touch and it must be heartening for the team management to see Shivam Dube providing the big hits towards the end against Mumbai Indians.

Skipper Kohli is yet to set the tournament on fire and Saturday could be his day. — *PTI*

Spirited KKR take on dented Delhi

Sharjah, Oct. 2: Andre Russell's brute power will meet its match in Rishabh Pant's fearless approach when Kolkata Knight Riders face Delhi Capitals with an aim to light up the Sharjah skyline in what promises to be another six-hitting IPL contest here on Saturday.

Russell gave a glimpse of what is in store with three sixes on a big Dubai ground against Rajasthan Royals while Pant will be itching to throw caution to the winds and play his natural game of destructive edge of the seat hitting.

In fact, Pant needs it more than Russell as three of his peers, KL Rahul, Ishan Kishan and Sanju Samson have all got runs under their belt, something that the beefy man from Roorkee so desperately needs.

If there is Shubman Gill, Andre Russell and Eoin Morgan in one side, there is Pant, Marcus Stoinis and Shreyas Iyer on the other end.

KKR have been slowly getting into the groove with some comprehensive performances while Capitals, after two fine victories, hit a roadblock against SRH in their last outing.

For the Knights, their young pace attack of Kamlesh Nagarkoti and Shivam Mavi will have their task cut out on a batting paradise.

KKR is unlikely to tinker with their winning combination even though Sunil Narine as an opener hasn't worked well for them in the three games with only 24 runs scored by the Trinidad all-rounder. — *PTI*

NUMBERS GAME — KKR vs DC

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 23
- Kolkata won: 13
- Delhi won: 9
- Tie: 1

MEETING IN 2019

- Delhi Capitals beat Kolkata Knight Riders in Super over after match ended in a tie at Delhi.
- Delhi Capitals beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 7 wickets at Kolkata.

FOR THE RECORD

- Sunil Narine who took 124 wickets at an average of 23.69 in 112 innings of 113 matches is one wicket away to become the eighth bowler to complete 125 wickets in IPL.

- Amit Mishra who took 99 wickets at an average of 24.08 in 94 innings of as many matches, needs just one wicket to become the first bowler from Delhi Capitals to complete a century of wickets in IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

Gunners shoot down Liverpool



Arsenal goalkeeper Bernd Leno makes a save during the English League Cup fourth round match against Liverpool at Anfield on Thursday. Lacazette, Cedric, Maitland-Niles, N. Pepe and Joe Willock scored for Arsenal in the penalty shootout while Leno, who also kept a clean sheet through 90 minutes as the game ended 0-0, blocked penalties from Divock Origi and Harry Wilson to fashion a 5-4 victory for his team. — *AP*

Thiem, Svitolina cruise into French Open pre-quarters

Paris, Oct. 2: US Open winner Dominic Thiem swept into the last 16 at Roland Garros on Friday along with women's third seed Elina Svitolina while Rafael Nadal anticipated a stiffer challenge after serene progress in his first two matches at the tournament.

Former champion Simona Halep faces a fascinating rematch with Amanda Anisimova, the American teenager who knocked her out of last year's competition. Thiem broke down early resistance from Norway's Casper Ruud to secure an impressive 6-4, 6-3, 6-1 victory and set up a possible showdown with 2015 French Open winner Stan Wawrinka.

"I'm very happy. It was a

great match and I didn't do any mistakes," said Thiem, the runner-up to Nadal the past two years.

Wawrinka, the 16th seed, goes up against the lone Frenchman remaining in the draw, Hugo Gaston, the world number 239.

Two-time quarterfinalist Svitolina ensured she will stick around for the second week in Paris with a 6-4, 7-5 win over Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova, the 27th seed.

Ukrainian Svitolina is full of confidence after capturing her 15th career WTA at Strasbourg last weekend.

Polish teenager Iga Swiatek dismissed former Wimbledon finalist Eugenie Bouchard 6-3, 6-2 to seal a return to the last 16, matching her best result at a Grand Slam.

Later on Wednesday, 12-time champion Nadal meets 74th-ranked Italian Stefano Travaglia, who is through to the last 32 of a Grand Slam for the first time.

NOVAK DUMPS BERANKIS

World number one Novak Djokovic took another confident stride closer to an 18th Grand Slam title with his 70th win at Roland Garros on Thursday.

Djokovic, the 2016 champion, needed just 83 minutes to complete a 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 demolition of Lithuania's Ricardas Berankis in the second round.

The top seed went level with Roger Federer for victories at the tournament, although still 25 behind Rafael Nadal's all-time best. — *AFP*