

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
ANANTAPUR | THURSDAY | 1 OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 31.0°C
Min: 14°C
RH: 83%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 31/14 9C

COVID-19 C

CASES (+86,419)
DEATHS (+1,166)

63,05,643 98,616

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,103) (+11)
TS: 1,91,386 1,127
(+6,133) (+48)
AP: 6,93,484 5,828

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,40,56,467

DEATHS 10,15,999

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Adhika Ashwayuja Shuddha Pournami till 2.35 am (Friday)
Star: Uttarabhadra till 5.56 am (Friday)
Varjyam: 1.55 pm to 3.42 pm
Durmuhurtam: 10.07 am to 10.54 am; 2.51 pm to 3.39 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Safar ul Muzaffar 13, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.31 am
Zohar: 12.26 pm
Asar: 4.28 pm
Maghrib: 6.05 pm
Isha: 7.21 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.08 AM
SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM
MOONSET 12.42 PM
MOONRISE 12.56 AM

COUNTER POINT

Pst! Don't overreact... our sons are also facing rape charges!

IN BRIEF

Corporate look for state hosps: CM

Vijayawada: Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will formally launch the works for construction of a medical college in Paderu and multi-speciality hospitals in ITDA regions on October 2. Jagan directed officials to develop government hospitals on par with corporate hospitals and offer best services. He conducted a review meeting on Nadu-Nedu in government hospitals at the CM Camp office. He said the government hospitals in AP will now be developed in all aspects under Nadu-Nedu offering full fledged services with a corporate look.

■ Full report on Page 3

I-T returns date extended to Nov

New Delhi: The Income-Tax department on Wednesday extended the deadline for filing income tax returns for 2018-19 by two months till November 30. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) in an order said in view of the genuine difficulties being faced by the taxpayers due to the outbreak of pandemic, the date for furnishing the belated and revised return for Assessment Year 2019-20 is being further extended to November 30, 2020, from September 30, 2020. This is the fourth extension.



NATION | 5

Police summon Anurag Kashyap in rape case

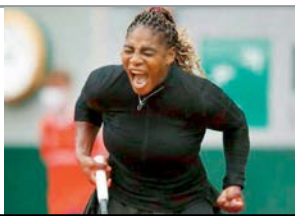


WORLD | 7

Pompeo urges Vatican to condemn China

SPORTS | 8

Injured Serena pulls out of French Open



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Advani, Joshi, Uma acquitted

Special CBI court says Babri mosque demolition not pre-meditated; leaders ‘tried to control’ ‘anti-nationals’

SANJAY KAW | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

Nearly 28 years after the Babri Masjid was razed by a mob in Ayodhya, a special CBI court on Wednesday acquitted all 32 accused, including BJP veteran leaders L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharati, citing lack of evidence. Special judge Surendra Kumar Yadav said the destruction of the 16th century structure, which had triggered some of the deadliest riots since Partition, leaving about 2,000 dead, was not pre-planned and the accused had tried to stop “anti-social” elements.

The judgment comes 11 years after the government-appointed Justice Liberhan Commission had said in its 2009 report that the demolition of the Babri masjid on December 6, 1992, was “neither spontaneous nor unplanned”. Mr Advani (92), Mr Joshi (86), Ms Bharati (61), Mr Singh (88), Nritiya Gopal Das and Satish Pradhan were six of the 32 accused who were not present in the courtroom.

Among those present were Sadhvi Rithambhara, Lallu Singh, Pawan Pandey, Vinay Katiyar and Champat Rai, the gen-



A file photo of a group of kar sevaks climbing atop one of the domes of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya ahead of the structure was demolished on December 6, 1992.

INSIDE

- **JILANI: VERDICT WILL BE CHALLENGED**
- **SHIV SENA: CASE HAD LOST RELEVANCE**

eral secretary of the trust in charge of constructing the Ram temple on the land where the masjid once stood. They faced charges of criminal conspiracy, rioting, promoting enmity between different groups, and unlawful assembly.

The CBI had produced 351 witnesses and 600 documents as evidence during the course of the trial and the court had framed charges against 48 accused.

Sixteen of the accused died during the course of the trial which began over

a decade ago.

On whether the CBI will appeal against the verdict in the high court, prosecution counsel Lalit Singh told mediapersons that a copy of the judgment would be sent to CBI headquarters in Delhi and it would take a decision after perusal of the verdict.

In his 2,300-page verdict, special judge S.K. Yadav said the Central investigating agency could not produce any conclusive evidence against any accused in the case.

Order vindicates my belief: Advani

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

BJP veterans L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, two of the 32 accused in the Babri masjid demolition case, welcomed the special court’s verdict, claiming that it has been proved that no conspiracy was hatched to demolish the structure on December 6, 1992.

“I wholeheartedly welcome the significant judgement delivered today by the Special Court in the Babri Masjid demolition case. The judgement vindicates my personal and the Bharatiya Janata Party’s belief and commitment towards the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement... Along with millions of my countrymen, I now look forward to the completion of the beautiful Ram Mandir at Ayodhya. May Lord Ram keep us blessed always,” said he said.

He also greeted media persons who were waiting outside his residence and chanted ‘Jai Shri Ram’



L.K. Advani

while his staff offered sweets to the media persons.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, whose guru and predecessor late Mahant Avidyanath was one of the accused in the case, tweeted “Satyamev Jayate (truth alone triumphs)” and that the court’s verdict has proved that the then Congress government played politics against saints, BJP and VHP leaders and social workers to frame cases against them.

I WAS ON MOSQUE DOME, SAYS KAR SEVAK FROM AP

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

A BJP leader from Bhimavaram who took part in Kar Seva said, “I was on one of the domes of the mosque along with fellow kar sevaks and it collapsed suddenly. I fell on the ground but suffered no major injuries. The verdict is good as our leaders never plotted to demolish the mosque and it happened unexpectedly.”

■ Full report on Page 3

MUSLIM BODIES SLAM SPECIAL COURT VERDICT

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

The Indian Union Muslim League AP, Muslim Samkshema Samiti and several other bodies slammed the special court verdict.

■ Full report on Page 3

Verdict violates law: Congress

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

Expressing its displeasure over the Special CBI court’s verdict in the Babri Masjid demolition case, the Congress on Wednesday said that the judgment runs counter to the Supreme Court’s November 19 judgement.

The opposition party urged the Centre and the

Uttar Pradesh government to file an appeal in the case and follow the letter of the law and the Constitution without any partiality and pre-meditated prejudice.

Speaking to reporters in Delhi on Wednesday, Congress’s chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said the five-judge bench of the Supreme Court in its judgement on November

9 last year held that the demolition of the Babri Masjid was “clear illegality and egregious violation” of the rule of law.

He said, “The then BJP government of Uttar Pradesh was a co-conspirator in the designed attack on India’s Constitutional ethos. So much so that the Supreme Court was misled by filing a wrong affidavit.”

8 arrested for Nandi attack

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, SEPT. 30

The Chittoor district police nabbed a gang of eight inter-state gang members for destroying an old Nandi idol in Abhaya Anjaneya Swamy temple in Agaramangalam village of Gangadhara Nellore mandal on Wednesday. The gangsters were arrested in three days after a case was registered.

Police claimed the gangsters were prevented from destroying old Hindu idols in their treasure hunts at renowned temples across the state.

On September 27, a villager lodged a complaint that the ‘Nandi’ idol was desecrated by some unknown persons.

Local police immediately registered an FIR and launched an investigation and three special teams led by DSP K. Eswara Reddy were formed to nab the culprits.

■ Page 4: Five out of eight accused from Karnataka: Cops

Film theatres from Oct. 15

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

The Union ministry of home affairs on Wednesday announced a fifth stage of the unlockdown with a set of guidelines to allow the re-opening of swimming pools, film theatres and entertainment parks from October 15 outside containment zones.

Swimming pools to be used for training of sportspersons will be permitted to be opened from October 15 with standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be issued by the union ministry of youth affairs and sports. Cinemas, theatres and multiplexes will be permitted to be opened from October 15 with seating capacity restricted to 50 per cent with SOPs to be issued by the union ministry of information and broadcasting. Entertainment parks and similar places will be permitted to be opened from October 15 with SOPs issued by the health ministry.

■ Page 4: Decision on schools left to states, UTs

Rain drive



Motorists have a tough time negotiating through the downpour near Maddilapalem in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. — P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

No kids, elderly at TB pushkarams

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL, SEPT. 30

The Kurnool district administration is organising Tungabhadra pushkaralu from November 12 to December 1 ignoring the Covid outbreak and lack of proof for herd immunity. The festival held for the

Tungabhadra river and observed for a period of 12 days, is celebrated when Jupiter enters the Makara Rasi (Capricorn). Makara is the zodiac sign associated with the Tungabhadra river. District Collector G. Veera Pandian, gave a powerpoint presentation online to ministers Buggana

Rajendranath Reddy and Gummanur Jayaram regarding the preparations for the festival. District in-charge minister Anil Kumar Yadav was present along with the ministers from Kurnool district at Amaravati on Wednesday. The collector further said that in view of the pandem-

ic, steps would be taken to restrict pilgrims from ghats. Chronic patients, old people and children are not to be allowed into ghats, he said.

Pilgrims from Raichur and Bellary would not be allowed to have a holy dip in bathing ghats in Kurnool.

3 held for stealing from temples

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, SEPT. 30

Kondapi police on Wednesday arrested three thieves, who committed theft in Saibaba temple at Nethivaripalem Village of Kondapi mandal in Prakasam district.

The accused were identified as L. Venkateswarlu (30), L. Adinarayana (20) and L. Bramaiah, all hailing from Ongole.

According to SP Siddarth Kaushal, the district police wing has kept strict surveillance on movements of old temple

thieves and taken stringent legal action against them if they commit any crimes, as part of the “Sadbhavana”, initiative.

The police were conducting counselling to old accused, who committed thefts in temples and places of worship and they were brought under the strict police surveillance. In this regard, the Kondapi police under the supervision of Ongole DSP K.V.V.N.V. Prasad on Wednesday caught three thieves, involved in theft reported at Kondapi and Tangutur police stations,

and recovered ₹7,000 cash stolen from temple Hundis. The accused, who are addicted to bad vices from their childhood, commit theft in temples and places of worship whenever they need money. They have committed a theft at Sai baba temple in Nethivaripalem village of Kondapi Mandal on September 22 and later at a fancy shop in Tangutur village on September 25.

While trying to trace out the accused, the police found ₹7,000 in cash when checking vehicles at Atleru Chapta.

VERDICT TO ENSURE TEMPLE MOVEMENT LEAVES BEHIND A 'PROUD LEGACY' FOR BJP

Verdict absolves the BJP of any responsibility from the most controversial aspect of the Ram Temple movement



Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh welcomes the special CBI court's decision to acquit all the accused in the demolition of the controversial structure. After this decision, all sections of the society should come together in unity and harmony and work successfully to face the challenges before the country

Suresh 'Bhaiyyaji' Joshi, RSS general secretary



The (demolition) case in the special court lost its relevance after the Supreme Court's verdict on Ram temple and *bhoomipujan* of the temple performed by prime minister (in August). This verdict was expected. I, on behalf of Shiv Sena and party president Uddhav Thackeray, welcome this decision of the court

Sanjay Raut, Shiv Sena MP



@sanjukta | Breaking news. #BabriMasjid self exploded on a cold December day.

@frillfaze | Pragya Thakur: I had demolished the structure. UP courts: No you hadn't.

@imMAK02 | According to Indian system, Delhi riots were pre planned by Anti CAA protesters. But demolition of Babri was NOT pre planned, although L K Advani took out this bloody Rath Yatra across the Nation.

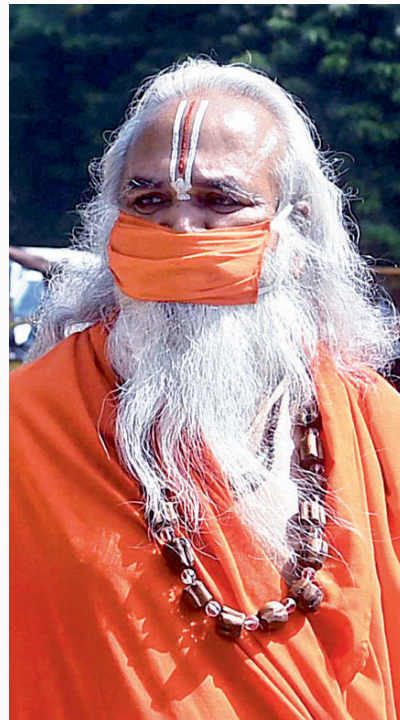
@vaish_murc | It was built against the will of the immortal gods, and so it did not last for long" - Homer, The Iliad. #BabriVerdict

@ARanganathan72 | There are only two kinds of people in a democratic nation. One, who respect the judiciary; and the other, who think they are the judiciary.

Former CBI director P.C. Sharma on Wednesday said the acquittal of all the 32 accused in the Babri Masjid demolition case was a vindication of his decision of dropping criminal conspiracy charge against the then deputy prime minister L.K. Advani.



MAJOR RELIEF: Senior BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi, BJP leader Vinay Katiyar, Sadhvi Ritambhara and Ram Vilash Vadanti, accused in Babri mosque demolition case, after the verdict was delivered in Lucknow on Wednesday.



New Delhi, Sept. 30: The acquittal of senior BJP leaders and Hindutva activists in the Babri mosque demolition case on Wednesday has come as a big boost to the saffron party, whose leaders have always insisted that the razing of the disputed structure in Ayodhya was a spontaneous act and not part of any conspiracy.

With the party set to intensify its campaign for the Bihar Assembly polls besides by-elections to one Lok Sabha and 56 Assembly seats, the court verdict has again brought the emotive issue, which has animated political

discourse for long, to the centre stage and given the BJP a handy plank.

The special CBI court's order effectively absolves the BJP of any responsibility from the most controversial aspect of the Ram Jannabhoomi movement and what the Supreme Court had described as an "egregious violation of the rule of law" in its last year verdict that handed over the disputed site in Ayodhya to pro-temple parties in that dispute.

All the 32 accused, including BJP veterans L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Kalyan Singh besides

Uma Bharti and Vinay Katiyar, were acquitted by the court in Lucknow almost 28 years after the FIR was filed following the mosque's demolition on December 6, 1992 by 'kar sevaks'.

The court said there was no conclusive proof against the accused, which also included Sadhvi Ritambhara, Champat Rai and Mahant Nitya Gopal Das, who were all part of the movement. The verdict will ensure that the BJP while owning up the movement's success in ensuring the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, can legitimately disasso-

ciate itself with the demolition. It has also snatched a potent weapon from opposition parties, most of whom have targeted the BJP for the mosque's fall while either refraining from criticising or even welcoming the temple's construction.

It was the Ram Jannabhoomi movement and Advani's 'Rath Yatra' in 1990 to mobilise the masses in favour of building a temple at the disputed site, where believers hold that Lord Ram was born, that brought the issue to the center stage of national politics and helped the BJP emerge as an alternative to the

Congress. As part of the movement, Hindutva organisations had brought a large number of 'kar sevaks' at the site when the mosque was taken down by the mob.

A BJP leader said the judgment has ensured that the Ram Jannabhoomi movement leaves behind a "proud legacy" for the party without having any dimension to it about which it might have felt defensive.

Though the CBI has the option to appeal in a higher court against the verdict, it remains far from clear if the central agency will do so.

Top BJP leaders hailed the special CBI court order acquitting all the accused and described it as a victory of truth and justice.

The acquittal of all the accused in the case "is a vindication of truth and justice", said the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), which spearheaded the Ram Jannabhoomi movement. VHP international working president Alok Kumar said it took 28 years for courts to deliver justice.

The RSS welcomed the verdict and called for harmony in society to face challenges before the country. — PTI

Jilani: Verdict will be challenged

Lucknow, Sept. 30: Senior lawyer and member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) Zafaryab Jilani said the verdict would be challenged in the high court.

There were hundreds of statements by the witnesses and in criminal cases these are very important, Jilani said, adding that among those who gave their statements were IPS officers and journalists who had said that the accused persons were sitting on the dais and inflammatory speeches were being given.

The special CBI court has given its verdict

ignoring the evidence and so Muslims will challenge it in the high court, he said. He also indicated that the board might also be a party. Jilani claimed that when the structure fell down, there was celebration and sweets were distributed but the court was of the view that there was no conspiracy.

There were clear evidences under 153-A (promoting enmity, hatred between different communities), 153-B (assertion prejudicial to national integration) against Advani and others and yet they were acquitted, he claimed.

When pointed out that it

was the CBI which was fighting the case, Jilani said the victims and the witnesses also have the right to appeal but the agency too needs to do so.

"We are victims, several of our people were witnesses in the case. I too was among them," he said. He said that from the Muslims' side both the victims and the witnesses would file appeal.

For the victims, Haji Mehboob and Hafiz Akhlaq would file. Others who would also be filing appeals would be decided later, he said.

"If there is an agreement on this point, then Muslim personal law

board would also be a party," he said. When asked if a meeting of the board would be convened on this issue, he said that there is no need for it.

CBI yet to decide The CBI will decide on filing an appeal against the verdict in the Babri Masjid demolition case after consulting the legal department, its counsel said. "After a copy of verdict is received, it would be sent to the CBI headquarters where it would be studied by the legal department and a decision on filing an appeal would be taken as per its suggestion," CBI counsel Lalit Singh said.



Members of Muslim Mahila Foundation celebrate after the verdict in Varanasi on Wednesday. — PTI

Video cassettes not sent to forensic labs: Court

Lucknow, Sept. 30: Video cassettes or footages, allegedly pertaining to the demolition of disputed Ram Jannabhoomi-Babri Masjid structure at Ayodhya, were neither sealed nor sent to forensic laboratories by the CBI to ascertain their veracity, a Special CBI court at Lucknow said on Wednesday.

Special CBI Judge S.K. Yadav, who acquitted all the 32 accused in the case, including BJP veterans L.K. Advani and M.M. Joshi, analyzed the video, audio evidence and the news reports of several newspapers to examine the charge of criminal conspiracy invoked by the CBI against the high-profile accused in the 28-year-old politically-sensitive case.

The judge lent credence to the testimonies of various wit-

nesses and said that journalists from all over the world wanted to get associated with the coverage of the December 6, 1992 incident. It noted that every news which is there in electronic and print media is not "necessarily correct" and said that whatever "video cassettes or footages" the CBI received during the investigation of the case were neither found in a sealed state by the probe agency nor sealed by the investigators.

Several video cassettes, audio evidence and news reports were used as evidence in the case to buttress the arguments that there was a deep-rooted conspiracy on the part of several leaders to bring the structures down.

However, the court recorded the finding that none of the video cassettes or footages were sent to forensic laboratories to ascertain whether they were tampered or not. — PTI

Verdict should bring an end to issue: Joshi

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

Acquitted in the almost three decades old Babri Masjid demolition case by a special CBI court, BJP veteran leader Murli Manohar Joshi said it has been proved that no conspiracy was hatched to demolish the structure on December 6, 1992.

"I will say only one thing *Jai Jai Shri Ram, Sab ko sanmatti de bhagwan* (May Lord, bestow wisdom on all)," he said, expressing happiness over the judgement.

He thanked the lawyers who appeared for

him in the matter. Joshi was the BJP chief during the period when *kar-sevaks* gathered in Ayodhya as part of the campaign for building a Ram temple, and the mosque was brought down.

He said, "I feel this controversy should come to end with the verdict. The entire country should be ready for the construction of a grand Ram temple."

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, SEPT. 30

Ruling parties in Maharashtra on Wednesday reacted cautiously to the court verdict on Babri mosque demolition acquitting all accused persons. The principal ruling party Shiv Sena hailed the verdict, but also said that the trial had already "lost its relevance".

Shiv Sena chief

spokesperson Sanjay Raut said that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and the whole party welcome the verdict.

"The (demolition) case in the special court lost its relevance after the Supreme Court's verdict on Ram temple and bhoomi puja of the temple performed by the Prime Minister (in August)," Mr Raut said.

HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

The verdict by a special court in the Babri Masjid demolition case comes 28 years after kar sevaks razed the 16th century mosque and almost a year after the Supreme Court settled the land case in favour of a Ram temple at the disputed Ayodhya site.

- **1528:** Babri Masjid built by Mir Baqi, commander of Mughal emperor Babur.
- **1885:** Mahant Raghubir Das files plea in Faizabad district court seeking permission to build a canopy outside the disputed structure. Court rejects the plea.
- **1949:** Idols of Ram Lalla placed under central dome outside the disputed structure.
- **1950:** Gopal Simla Visharad files suit in Faizabad district court for right to worship the idols of Ram Lalla. Paramahansa Ramachandra Das files suit for continuation of worship and keeping the idols.
- **1959:** Nirmohi Akhara files suit seeking possession of the site.
- **1961:** UP Sunni Central Waqf Board files suit for possession of the site.
- **FEB 1986:** Local court orders the government to open the site to Hindu worshippers.
- **AUG 1989:** Allahabad HC orders status quo in respect of the disputed structure.

DEC 6, 1992: BABRI MASJID DEMOLISHED

- **DEC 1992:** Two FIRs filed in the case. One against unknown kar sevaks for demolition of the mosque. The other names BJP leaders L.K. Advani, M.M. Joshi and others for allegedly giving communal speeches before the demolition.
- **OCT 1993:** CBI files composite charge sheet accusing Advani and others of conspiracy.
- **MAY 2001:** Special CBI court drops proceedings against Advani, Joshi, Uma Bharti, Bal Thackeray and others.
- **NOV 2004:** CBI challenges before the Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court the dropping of proceedings against BJP leaders on technical grounds. Court issues notices.
- **MAY 2010:** High court dismisses plea. Says no merit in CBI's revision petition.
- **SEP 2010:** In a 2:1 majority, HC rules three-way division of disputed area between Sunni Waqf Board, Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla.
- **MAY 2011:** SC stays HC verdict on Ayodhya land dispute.
- **FEB 2011:** CBI moves Supreme Court against high court order in the mosque demolition case.
- **MAR 2017:** SC indicates it may consider reviving conspiracy charge against the BJP leaders in Babri Masjid demolition case. SC suggests fresh attempts to resolve Ayodhya dispute.
- **APR:** SC favours time-bound completion of trial in the case and reserves order on CBI's plea.
- **SC RESTORES CRIMINAL** conspiracy charge against leaders including Advani, Joshi and Uma Bharti and clubs the trials in the matters pending against VIPs and kar sevaks.
- **NOV 2019:** SC grants entire disputed land in Ayodhya to deity Ram Lalla, directs govt to allot an alternative five-acre plot to Muslims to build mosque.
- **AUG 2020:** PM Narendra Modi performs *bhoomi puja* in Ayodhya, launches construction of Ram temple.
- **SUPREME COURT EXTENDS** by a month the deadline for completion of trial in the Babri Masjid demolition case.

SEP 30: Special Judge S.K. Yadav delivers judgment in the mosque demolition case, all accused acquitted.

SHORT TAKES

FORMER INTEL
CHIEF PETITION
DISMISSEDDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

Andhra Pradesh High Court dismissed the petition filed by former intelligence chief A.B. Venkateswara Rao seeking restraint order from arrest as he was facing charges of irregularities in procurement of security equipment to the state police. The single judge bench comprising justice M. Satyanarayana Murthy heard the case on Tuesday. However, the court directed the state government to follow the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court in 2014 in dealing with the case.

MEMBER OF
GALIKONDA
DALAM HELDK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 30

The Visakhapatnam rural police on Wednesday arrested a Maoist Gemmeli Kamesh, who carried a reward of ₹4 lakh on his head, in GK Veedhi in the agency on Wednesday. The police seized explosive devices and a weapon.

Gemmeli Kamesh alias Hari alias Malathi, 31, Area Committee Member of Galikonda Dalam of banned CPI (Maoist) Party, is a resident of Kunkumapudi village, GK Veedhi Mandal in Vizag Agency. He was involved in over 100 offences under Vizag and East Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh and parts of Odisha.

Giving details of the case, Deputy Inspector General (Visakha Range), L.K.V. Ranga Rao said that Gemmeli Kamesh has been involved in 21 offences in Vizag district, including five murders, seven exchanges of fires with police personnel.

The police also recovered .303 rifle, loaded magazine, 20 live rounds of the rifle, 50kgs (25 packets each – 2 kgs) pf Gelatin, three carriage mines (7kg, 7kg and 6kg), 150 grams Cordex, 200 m electrical wire, Sony radio, one Communication Man Pack, one camera flash, one battery charger and few other gadgets.

NO SALARY FOR
SIMHACHALAM
STAFF MEMBERSDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 30

It is very unfortunate that the Srivarahalakshmi Nrusimha Swamy Devasthanam is not paying the salaries and pensions to the employees and pensioners, lamented former MLA and BJP leader P.Vishnu Kumar Raju.

Addressing a media conference on Wednesday, the former MLA said that even the central government has sanctioned ₹53 crore funds to the temple under the Prasadam scheme, the devasthanam has failed to pay the salaries and pensions and till now paying half salaries and pensions only. However, the minister for endowments and other officials are getting their salaries regularly on the third of every month, Mr Raju pointed out.

FARMERS
DEMAND
PENDING BILLSDC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, SEPT. 30

Andhra Pradesh Farmers' Association district secretary Gali Chandra demanded payment of arrears of Bengal gram, red gram and turmeric through Markfed. He said it was unfair not to pay even six months after the purchase. He along with farmers on Wednesday appealed to Markfed manager Nagaraj to do the needful.

He alleged that Markfed officers collected money from farmers even though still they had not paid the full amount of their crops to farmers he said. He warned that if the government does not come forward to pay the amounts to the farmers, they will intensify their stir against them. Kasinayana mandal farmers Venkata subba Reddy, Chinna Balu Reddy, Gurusu Reddy, Jayaram Reddy and others present in the event.

● Gali Chandra warned that if the government does not come forward to pay the amounts to the farmers, they will intensify their stir against them

I was on dome: Kar Sevak

BJP leaders welcomed special CBI court verdict acquitting all 32

Appeal on verdict sought

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |
DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

Members of the Sangh Parivar from Andhra Pradesh stated that justice prevailed when welcoming the special CBI court verdict acquitting all 32 accused in Babri Masjid demolition case.

Former AP BJP president Kanna Lakshminarayana said, “We welcome the verdict as the hard work of our senior party leaders for ‘Dharma’ has been realised with their acquittal.”

“It is a victory for justice. Our senior party leaders created a momentum to fight for Ram Mandir peacefully. They were also worried when the situation got out of control and even tried to stop the demolition but in vain. They are an inspiration for us to achieve what we want in democratic manner. Though the verdict has come a bit late, it upheld justice,” said BJP MLC P.V.N. Madhav.

BJP leader S. Vishnu Vardhan Reddy said, “We had expected such a verdict. The previous Congress regime implicated our senior party leaders in several cases out of political vendetta. Our party leaders had called for construction of Ram Mandir at the birth place of Lord Ram in Ayodhya and never called for demolition of the mosque. Though justice was delayed, we have got the right verdict and the legal system in the country has proved to be strong and impartial.”

Kar sevaks from the BJP, VHP and RSS who visited Ayodhya in 1992 based on a call given by the BJP are delighted at the verdict. They said that their leadership called to carry a fistful of soil and a bottle of water from Sarayu river to Ayodhya for construction of Ram temple and added that they were never asked to carry any tools demolish the mosque.

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

The Indian union muslim league (IUML), AP Muslim Samkshema Samithi (MSS) and several other organisations termed the special court verdict on Babri mosque demolition acquitting all 32 accused, including BJP leaders L.K. Advani, Murali Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharati and others as outrageous.

They lambasted the poor performance of CBI and stated that the country's top investigation agency totally failed in the Babri mosque demolition case.

IUMLAP president, Basheer Ahmad, said that CBI totally failed to prove the guilt of the leaders who openly provoked kar sevaks to demolish the Babri

masjid. He said that the investigative agency showed clear bias against minorities by acquitting the accused. He said that the kar sevaks already well-prepared to demolish ancient Babri mosque on the call of BJP, VHP and other saffron organisations which came to Ayodhya with hammers, rods, daggers and other equipment to demolish the mosque.

The attack is not just on the mosque but it on the rights of people and further the verdict shows the emptiness of our laws which acquits political leaders despite having concrete evidence, said Mr Ahmad, demanding an appeal against the verdict in the higher court and the submission of all the evidence without fail to restrain such crimes in the future.

MSS president, Mukhtar Ali, expressed shock at the acquittal of the 32 accused who openly joined the protest and led the demolition of the Babri mosque. Despite continuous investigation for 28 years, the CBI totally failed to prove the guilt of the accused and this would damage the reputation of CBI in the investigation of cases to punish guilty persons. He said that the CBI has clearly turned into a pocket organisation of the ruling BJP and the investigation agency has lost the public's trust with this verdict.

CPI state secretary, K. Ramakrishna, said that the verdict disappointed as after 28 years, the CBI ignored the obvious guilt of saffron leaders who openly demolished the Babri mosque.

GVL rules out
demolition plotDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

Welcoming the CBI special court verdict on Babri masjid demolition, BJP senior leader and MP G.V.L. Narasimha Rao ruled out any plot to demolish the mosque and claimed that it happened unexpectedly.

Speaking to media persons in New Delhi on Wednesday, the BJP MP slammed the Congress for conspiring to gain political mileage on the issue. He criticised the

Left parties for supporting the then Congress government.

He advised the Congress to shun vote bank politics. The BJP leader blamed the Congress leader Kapil Sibal for arguing in Supreme Court in 2013 to defer hearing on Babri masjid issue. He said the verdict puts an end to conspiracy to stop construction of Ram mandir. He wished that Telugu Desam and YSR Congress would welcome the verdict.

who took part in the Kar Seva at Ayodhya said, “We expected a similar judgement as we did no wrong at that time. It is very impartial. It should

have been delivered early so that some of the party senior leaders could have been in a better position now. The verdict proved that the legal system in

PEETHAM SEER
WELCOMES
BABRI VERDICTK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 30

Sarada Peetham seer Swaroopanaandendra Maha Swamy welcomed the decision of the CBI special court which acquitted all the 32 persons who were accused of demolishing historic Babri Masjid.

The decree, which came after waiting for 28 years, has protected the Sanaathana Dharma, Swamy said adding that it has put an end to the Babri Masjid dispute for good. He congratulated the Modi government.

Meanwhile, the members of Andhra Vanavasa Kalyanasramam called on Swamy and explained to him the services they have been providing to the Adivasi students.

They told him that the Adivasis were beginning to learn tenets of Hinduism and students were keenly listening to the discourses being given by the Veda pundits.

the country is strong. We brought a brick from the demolished mosque as a memory of our visit to Ayodhya.”

A BJP leader from Bhimavaram who also took part in Kar Seva said, “I was on one of the domes of the mosque along with fellow kar sevaks and it collapsed suddenly. I fell on the ground but suffered no major injuries. The verdict is good as our leaders never plotted to demolish the mosque and it happened unexpectedly.”

However, the kar sevaks who visited Ayodhya from AP in 1990 had a bitter experience as they faced a tough time with the police using lathis and tear gas to prevent them from reaching Ayodhya.

15 lakh houses to be
constructed for poorDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

As many as 15 lakh houses would be constructed in the first phase of Pedalandariki Illu programme of the state government. Principal Secretary to government housing department Ajay Jain has instructed the officials to take necessary steps to implement the scheme. The one-day online training programme for housing department officials was held at the housing corporation office at Tadepalli on Wednesday. Mr Ajay Jain stressed on the need for completing beneficiary lists, survey codes, mapping

, geo-tagging be December 31. The construction work to start by Sankranti festival, he said. The Chief Minister aims to provide houses to 30 lakh beneficiaries under the prestigious programme, Mr Ajay Jain said.

He said that 15 lakh houses construction is target under first phase and housing department ready to start construction works as soon as the Government started to distribute the Pattas to the beneficiaries. He stated that the Jaganna colonies will be established with all basic amenities like roads, water and electricity.

TD leader attacked
judge's brother: HMDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

Home minister Mekathoti Sucharita has stated that as per evidence it was Telugu Desam leaders who attacked Ramachandra, brother of suspended judge Ramakrishna.

Providing details at a press conference in Guntur on Wednesday, the minister said after thorough investigation, police have identified that accused Pratap Reddy, who had attacked Ramachandra, is a TD leader. She advised opposition parties not to criticise the government without verifying facts.

Ms Sucharita alleged that opposition parties are conspiring to create differences between YSRC and SC community, which is supporting the government. She lamented that former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and his son Nara Lokesh are tweeting falsehoods to sling mud on the YSRC government.

The minister said police had arrested MLA Kinjarapu Atchannaidu for his involvement in the ESI

scam and former minister Kollu Ravindra in a murder case. But the opposition parties are circulating false rumours that the government is targeting backward communities.

She explained that attack on Ramachandra took place when he objected to giving way to a car in which Pratap Reddy was travelling at Narayanapalli in Chittoor district. Following this, Pratap Reddy and Ramachandra had come to blows with each other.

While the incident had taken place at 4 pm, Naidu wrote a letter on the same at 7 pm. This showed that there is a political conspiracy behind the incident, she maintained.

Ms Sucharita recalled that the former CM had not taken any action against former MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar, who had attacked tahsildar Vanajakshi. She asserted that police department has been responding promptly whenever there are attacks on Dalits. The department will book cases under SC/ST sections to punish those who attack Dalits, she added.

TD demands probe
into procurementAVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEP. 30

TD politburo member Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy appealed to the district Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu to probe irregularities taken place in the process of paddy procurement carried out in the Nellore district.

The TD senior leader on Wednesday wrote a letter to the district collector. In the letter, he alleged that the ruling party leaders in some areas have been fleecing the farmers while procuring the paddy.

“Some YSR Congress leaders have been procuring one putty of paddy for ₹8,000 – ₹9,000. They are also taking 1,100 kg to 1,150 kg of paddy from farmers for one putty. Some millers and ruling party leaders have made hand-in-glove deals and select farmers who didn't sell their crop to the government after enrolling in the e-crop booking. Before procuring the crop, they are collecting passbook, documents related to the farmlands from farmers,” he

● The TD senior leader on Wednesday wrote a letter to the district collector. In the letter, he alleged that the ruling party leaders in some areas have been fleecing the farmers while procuring the paddy. The ruling party leaders, after procuring the paddy, have been sending the same to various mills in the name of farmers and selling one putty of paddy for a whooping ₹15,600 to the millers.

He appealed to the district collector to verify the names of farmers in all paddy purchasing centres and also stocks being purchased from them. The former minister also suspected that there might be a misuse of MSP up to 30-40 per cent during the procurement in the district.

Give corporate look to state
hosps, Jagan directs officialsDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will formally launch the works of Medical College in Paderu and Multi-speciality hospitals in ITDA regions on October 2.

Mr Jagan directed the officials to develop government hospitals on par with Corporate hospitals and further to offer best services. Mr Jagan conducted a review meeting on Nadu-Nedu in government hospitals in CM Camp office at Tadepalli on Wednesday. He said that the government hospitals were neglected for the past seven decades in the State and now these hospitals are going to be developed in all aspects under Nadu-Nedu offering full-fledged services with Corporate look.

Mr Jagan told the officials to equip all the hospitals with the latest technology and best infrastructure without com-

promising on quality. There should not be dearth of funds for the prestigious projects, especially in revamping the government hospitals, said the Chief Minister, and asserted that public should feel the corporate ambience within the government hospitals.

As the revamping of government hospitals in the State was being taken up after a long gap of about seven decades the Chief Minister told the officials to make every hospital the best. He directed the officials to complete the establishment of all hospitals in the next three years. All the hospitals must be equipped with centralised air conditioners, lifts, fire control equipment, and the entire required medical and non-medical infrastructure. If necessary solar energy would be supplied to the hospitals which would be cost effective. The officials said that

the proposed medical colleges at Paderu, Piduguralla, Machilipatnam, Pulivendula, Bapatla, Vizianagaram, Eluru, Anakapalle, Markapuram, Madanapalle and Nandyal are under the process of judicial preview for confirming the tender process. Similarly, for the multispeciality hospitals in Seethampeta, Parvathipuram, Rampachodavaram, Buttaiahgudem, and Dornala, the project estimates were ready and soon the works will be initiated.

Health minister Alla Krishna Srinivas (Nani), Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, Special Chief Secretary for Medical Health Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy, APMSIDC Managing Director V. Vijayarajarama and other officials attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, addressing media after the review meeting health minister Alla Nani slammed Opposition leader N.

Chandrababu Naidu for his slanderous campaign with his friendly media at a time when the spread of coronavirus is on the decline due to the best efforts of the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and his constant monitoring of the situation and facilities available to the patients and being a role model in the number of tests per million.

Mr Nani alleged that the initiatives of the CM were lauded by the PM, and the State stood on top in terms of number of tests conducted per million, TD leaders and a section of media have been trying to give a different picture to confuse the people. Chandrababu's contribution to pacify the affected people is zero and he never moved out or met people, he has been talking irresponsibly through Zoom that too at a time when normalcy is slowly returning.

YSRC govt pushing state into debt-trap, says Yanamala

TD TRYING TO DEFAME YSRC GOVT WITH BASELESS CHARGES: BOTSA

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

Leader of opposition in AP Legislative Council, Yana-mala Ramakrishnudu, on Wednesday slammed the YSRC Congress Government for “pushing” the State into a deep debt-trap from which the State would not be able to recover for generations to come.

He expressed concern that in just five months, the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy regime had made heavy loans and would continue to borrow for the next few months.

Mr Ramakrishnudu demanded that the Chief Minister explain why three-fourths of beneficiaries among poor families were not receiving Cash Transfer benefits. He

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

Minister for municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana alleged that Telugu Desam was trying to defame YSRC Congress government with baseless allegations and claimed that YSRC is fulfilling all its election promises. He claimed that the TD government never offered a borewell free of cost but YSRC is offering them and electric motors for free.

alleged that the government was betraying the people by giving them with one hand and taking that away with both hands.

Describing YSR Jala Kala as a boon to farmers of arid and dry lands, Mr Satyanarayana said that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been implementing poll promises while TD is confined to only criticising without realising what it has done during its term.

Speaking to the media here on Tuesday, the minister, “The Chief Minister has been fulfilling every promise made during elections. He had promised to

stand by farmers during his padayatra and YSR Jala Kala is part of it. He has also promised to provide a separate Corporation for every BC community and giving political prominence to BCs. After a careful study, from among 138 castes, 56 are to have separate corporations with individual fund allocations. He has taken a decision to implement a 50 per cent quota for women and more posts for women.”

within 17 months of the Jagan Mohan Reddy rule. He said that it was so precarious that even to meet day to day expenditure the State Government has to

Mr Satyanarayana claimed that TD never bothered about BCs while in power and has been using BCs as a vote-bank. He criticised N. Chandrababu Naidu for misusing and pocketing Aadarana scheme funds.

Mr Satyanarayana said that Naidu had credited P a s u p u - K u m k u m a amounts to women only for the sake of elections.

He claimed that Jagan Mohan Reddy has implemented many schemes.

take loans which exposes the present financial situation.

Mr Ramakrishnudu deplored that the YSRC rule brought four and half

times more loans when compared to the previous TD government and explained that while the TD made loans of just ₹26,000 crore per year, the present regime brought ₹1.13 lakh crore loans in one year.

Mr Ramakrishnudu explained that going by this, the total debt could reach ₹9.10 lakh crore in its five-year tenure.

He said that Jagan Mohan Reddy would go down as the only Chief Minister who pushed the State into a ₹10 lakh crore debt.

He stated that even agencies like State Bank of India have warned the Government that the ratio of GSDP output and fiscal deficit may reach an alarming nine to 10 per cent.

OTHER STORIES

Youth dies as lorry rams into bike

Tirupati: In a tragic incident, a youngster was killed and his friend sustained severe injury when a lorry hit their motorcycle from behind and ran over them near Thummalagunta on Naidupeta-Puthalapattu highway, on the outskirts of Tirupati on Wednesday. According to police, the deceased was identified as Sai Krishna, 24, and the injured was identified as Venkatesh, 24, both hailing from Chandragiri constituency. They both were going to their native village from Tirupati on a motorcycle when a speeding lorry rammed into the bike from behind, killing Sai Krishna on the spot. The seriously injured pillion rider Venkatesh has been shifted to the government hospital in Tirupati and his condition is said to be critical. Police registered a case and investigation is on. The lorry driver was taken into custody.

TTD EO SINGHAL TRANSFERRED TO HEALTH DEPT.

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 30

The state government on Wednesday transferred the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) executive officer (EO) Anil Kumar Singhal. He has been posted as principal secretary, health, medical and family welfare. Additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy has been given full additional charge until further orders.

The order has an element of surprise in it as special CS K.S. Jawahar Reddy who was tipped to be the next EO has been retained in the health department. This will leave the health department with two heads as was in the combined Andhra Pradesh. Singhal will be allotted some subjects in the department.

Mr Singhal was first deputed to TTD that comes for a two-year term in May, 2017. His deputation was extended in 2019 for another one-year and he got the second extension in July this year, to continue in the TTD till further orders.

Anil Kumar, who is the 25th TTD EO, was brought to the TTD as the EO by then chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

WATER-SHARING: RAO TO TAKE CENTRE TO TASK

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 30

Chief Minister, K Chandrashekhara Rao, is firm on taking the centre to task on the issue of water-sharing with Andhra Pradesh.

Convening a high-level meeting with water resources department officials on Thursday at Pragathi Bhavan to discuss on the strategy to be adopted at the apex council meeting to be held on October 6, Rao instructed officials to come with complete data and information on the Telangana state water resources department and issues to be placed before the central government.

The apex council meeting to be chaired by the union minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, will be attended by Rao and his counterpart, AP Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

“We have to give a befitting reply to the AP state’s arguments at the apex council meeting. Give absolute clarity on issues so that the AP government will not raise the issues again in the future,” said Rao, also deciding to take the opportunity to expose the six-year delay caused by the centre and its inactive role on the matter and also oppose and reject the attempts made to undermine Telangana’s rights.

MURDER BID FOILED, CONTRACT KILLING GANG HELD

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL SEPT. 30

In a major breakthrough, the Kurnool taluka police foiled a bid to murder by a ‘contract killing’ gang on Wednesday and arrested six persons in this connection. The accused have been produced before the media at Kurnool taluka police station.

DSP B. Venkata Ramanaih said that the accused includes Boya Vikram, Boya Lakshmana, Boya Krishna, Ediga Venkatesh Gowd, Boya Naidu, Dhommari Madhu, all were residents of Rudravaram village in Kurnool mandal. They were allegedly planning to kill one Kuruva Venkatesh at Vengannaburi near Kurnool city outskirts.

AP to touch 7 lakh cases, EG tops with 97,174 cases

Minister Vellampalli Srinivas is infected with Covid-19

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

Andhra Pradesh is soon to touch the seven lakh mark of total Covid-19 cases as it reached 6,93,484 on Wednesday.

The state health authorities in their daily Covid-19 bulletin reported that out of 71,806 samples tested, 6,133 individuals are Covid-19 positive and 48 deaths have been reported taking the death toll to 5,828 in the last 24 hours in the state.

Out of a total 58,06,558 samples tested for Covid-19 so far in the state, 6,29,211 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 58,445 patients are still active with the virus and undergoing medical treatment at various hospitals in the state.

Among daily, new, confirmed coronavirus infections, East Godavari continues to lead with 983, followed by 925 in Chittoor, 580 in Anantapur, 498 in Guntur, 464 in West Godavari, 446 in Krishna, 415 in Nellore, 387 in Kadapa, 362 in Srikakulam, 324 in Prakasam, 298 in Vizianagaram, 235 in Visakhapatnam and 216 in Kurnool.

East Godavari topped the state with the highest number of cumulative Covid-19 positive cases at 97,174, followed by 66,707 in West Godavari, 61,858 in Chittoor, 57,375 in Anantapur, 56,158 in Kurnool, 54,690 in Guntur, 52,335 in Nellore, 50,028 in Visakhapatnam, 48,249 in Prakasam, 43,818 in Kadapa, 39,618 in Srikakulam, 35,151 in Vizianagaram, 27,428 in Krishna and 2,461 were people from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery among infected patients has been good in East Godavari at 86,884, followed by 59,898 in West Godavari, 55,317 in Chittoor, 54,950 in Anantapur, 53,980 in Kurnool, 49,595 in Nellore, 48,422 in

BOARD MEMBER'S SON INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL LIQUOR TRANSPORTATION

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 30

The presence of liquor bottles in the car belonging to a trust board member of Kanaka Durga temple went viral on Wednesday.

On a tip off, the Special Enforcement Bureau sleuths seized huge quantities of liquor bottles kept in a car parked at an apartment in Sitarampuram at Jaggaipet town of Krishna district on Wednesday.

Police said the car belonging to trust board member J. Venkata Naga Varalakshmi was seized as the vehicle was dumped with non-duty liquor bottles smuggled from the Telangana state. He said that during enquiry the police found that the car driver, R. Siva, brought 250 liquor bottles from TS.



Medical staff collects the swab from a child for Covid-19 testing at Sanjeevini Bus which was set up at Government ENT Hospital in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday.

DECISION ON SCHOOLS LEFT TO STATES, UNION TERRITORIES

From page 1

Business-to-business exhibitions will be permitted to be opened from October 15 with SOPs to be issued by the department of commerce.

Social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious, political functions and other congregations may be permitted beyond the limit of 100 persons from Oct. 15 by state and union territory governments subject to the following conditions: allowing a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity with a ceiling of 200 persons in closed spaces, wearing of face masks, maintaining social distancing, provision for thermal screening and hand wash or sanitiser.

However, in open spaces, state and union territory governments will issue SOPs to regulate gatherings of people, strictly enforcing all Covid-19 norms.

State and UT governments may take a decision to re-open schools and coaching institutions after October 15 in a graded manner. Online/dis-

ance learning shall continue to be the preferred mode of teaching. Students may attend schools/institutions only with the written consent of parents and attendance must not be enforced and must depend entirely on parental consent. States and UTs are to prepare their own SOPs regarding health and safety precautions for the re-opening of schools and institutions. The department of higher education may take a decision on the timing of the opening of colleges in consultation with MHA, based on an assessment of the situation.

However, higher educational institutions only for research scholars and postgraduate students in science and technology streams, requiring laboratory/experimental works will be remitted to open from October 15. State universities and private universities may open only for research scholars and postgraduate students in science and technology streams. The lockdown will remain in force in containment zones till October 31.

Guntur, 45,840 in Visakhapatnam, 40,095 in Kadapa, 39,557 in Prakasam, 35,639 in Srikakulam, 31,845 in

Vizianagaram, 24,249 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Among daily deaths, Chittoor recorded eight, followed by six in Prakasam, five each in East Godavari, Krishna and Visakhapatnam, four each in Anantapur, Guntur and West Godavari, three in Kadapa, two in Kurnool and one each in Nellore and Vizianagaram.

The state health authorities have discharged 7,075 Covid-19 infected patients after their recovery from various hospitals in the state in the last 24 hours.

AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 1,08,737 people per one million population and has recorded a positive rate at 11.94. Maharashtra has tested 53,627 samples with a positive rate at 20.40 and Telangana has tested 74,825 samples with positive rate at 6.44.

Meanwhile, AP endowments minister, Vellampalli Srinivas, and commissioner, P. Arjuna Rao, have been infected with Covid-19. Srinivas said that he was admitted to a hospital after testing positive and is undergoing treatment and so is Rao.

The khadi design council of India (KDCI) is to distribute designer Covid-19 masks free of cost to the inmates of old age homes, orphanages and rescue homes across the country on the eve of Gandhi Jayanthi on Thursday.

The council's joint secretary, Aishwarya Ganguri, stated that the KDCI along with the J. D. Institute of Fashion Technology, would distribute over 200 masks to the inmates of Prema Samajam, which accommodates senior citizens and orphans.

She said that the washable three-layered designer mask would cost between ₹200-300 each, depending upon quality, once they put them on sale.

Five out of eight accused from Karnataka: Cops

From page 1

Disclosing the case details here on Wednesday, Chittoor district SP Mr S. Senthil Kumar said that the accused were identified as Kuruvu Somasekhara (24), of Kurnool district, R. Saravanan (30) and P. Peddababu (35) from Chittoor district and M.S. Manikanta (30), J.L. Naveen (35), S. Kiran Kumar (39), M. Vikas (34), Ashok Kumar (57), all hailing from various parts of Karnataka.

“We investigated the case from two angles as there was a similar attempt to lift the Nandi idol from the same temple last year. But they had left the idol as they were unable to carry it out. The role of anti-social elements who may try to disturb communal harmony was also suspected. But police investigation ruled

● THE gang had planned to carry out similar acts in temples located in Kanipakam, SR Puram, Tirupati, Kurnool, Mahanandi, Patthikonda and Mantralayam

out those possibilities and were led to the Karnataka-based gang,” the SP said.

“During the early hours on Wednesday, we got credible information that certain gangsters behind this incident were hiding in the Kanipakam mandal. One of our teams rushed to the location and successfully nabbed them. During the arrest, our teams also recovered certain photographs that revealed that the accused had planned to vandalise temples across the state,” the SP added.

Adding further, the SP said, “Five out of the eight accused belong to Karnataka, which makes this an inter-state gang. Keeping this in mind, we have investigated further into the modus operandi of the gang and found that they first obtain information about prominent temples and then befriend locals to make them part of their treasure hunt. They even conduct a reconnaissance before finalising the plan and executing the same.”

The gang had planned to carry out similar acts in temples located in Chittoor district's Kanipakam, SR Puram, Tirupati, Kurnool, Mahanandi, Patthikonda and Mantralayam and a few temples spread across Anantapur and Guntur districts as well. The police also seized two cars, 16 mobile phones and other equipment used for breaking the idol.



Due to continuous rains three local stream flow into Ethipotala Waterfalls on Wednesday in Guntur district. But it could not attract tourists due to lockdown norms and Covid-19 fear. on Wednesday in Guntur district.

— TEJO ROY ELETI

Rains damage roads and bridges in Kurnool district

D SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL SEPT. 30

Most of the roads in Kurnool district have become unusable as the recent rains have washed off the top layer. The roads are full of pot holes.

The National Highway between Kurnool-Guntur, the only major link to state's capital is a nightmare for vehicle users, said Jamaluddin, a driver.

The 67-kms stretch of road between Atmakur in Kurnool and Dornala in Prakasam district on the Srisailem ghat road is a challenge to motorists. As the slush is deep and sticky on the either sides

of the road, if a vehicle swerves off to give way to an oncoming vehicle, its tyres run deep into the mud making it difficult for the vehicle to move forward, said the driver.

The Roads and Buildings authorities estimated the loss to road assets due to rains at ₹350 crore in Adoni, Nandyal, and Kurnool divisions.

Last year when the situation was the same, the Panchayat Raj Department sent proposals for ₹35 crore worth repair works but only a paltry sum ₹1.46 crore was sanctioned by both state and Central governments, said an engineer. Still, the works pertaining to last

year's damage were continuing, he said.

During the current year, about 702 kms of road length including both state roads and district roads were damaged. In addition to this, some roads were washed away due to heavy flood particularly in the Nandyal division on the Kundu river stretch.

It is estimated that State roads need ₹142 crore and district main roads require ₹204 crore to make them back to work. In respect of last year's proposals sent by the roads and buildings department, out of ₹80.50 crore proposals, the state government has released just ₹11 crore.

COMBAT ILLNESS BY YOGA, SAYS DR VANAJA

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 30

Dr Vanaja, cardiologist, SVIMS, said that the fear factor will immensely affect the health of Covid-19 patients and that there is a need to overcome it and combat the illness by following traditional practices of Yoga, Pranayama and healthy food habits.

Speaking at the one day on-line interactive awareness programme on Covid-19 held at TTD's Sri Venkateswara employees training academy (SVETA) building here on Wednesday, Dr Vanaja said, “Be it corona or any other disease, the patient should not lose courage and should combat the illness by following Yoga, Pranayama and healthy food habits. All these should be observed by every person to lead a healthy living.”

“Performing yoga could achieve greater success in fighting the virus, as it boosts the immune system. It is important to note that hormonal balance is key to improving immunity and practicing yoga is best suited during the pandemic because it manages physical and mental issues,” she observed. She also extended some important information through powerpoint presentations and later clarified the doubts raised by employees through online call on Covid-19 and heart related issues.

MINISTER SETS STONE FOR DEVELOPMENT WORKS IN RAILWAY KODUR

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, SEPT. 30

Roads and buildings minister Shankar Narayana said development was possible under the government led by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan here else in the country.

On Wednesday, he inaugurated and set the foundation stone of several development projects at Railway Kodur mandal headquarter in Kadapa district.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that in the past there was a brokerage system for welfare schemes for the poor and to eradicate this, the village ward secretariat system was intro-

duced and welfare schemes would be provided to the poor through volunteers.

A 400-metre high bridge has been constructed over the Gunjana river at Chivvel road at a cost of ₹690 lakh at the Railway Kodur mandal centre, he said.

Rajampet MP P.V. Mithun Reddy said the state government has introduced and implemented several welfare development programs in the state like no other.

Railwaykoduru MLA and government whip Koramutla Srinivasu said that no such development had ever taken place during the previous government's rule.

IN | RUINS

The awe-inspiring structures bear testimony to the golden era of kings and dynasties

Gooty fort, an architectural marvel, crying for attention

HOSKOTE NAGABHUSHANAM | DC
ANANTAPUR, SEPT. 30

Incredible structures and landmarks of Gooty fort that has history dating back to Vikramaditya VI and up to Marathas, is in a state of neglect because government indifference. A ropeway proposed five years ago remains a non-starter while structures are ruins.

Anantapur district is home to the Gooty fort that mesmerizes with its splendour. There are many stunning and awe-inspiring structures that even in ruins bear testimony to the golden era of kings and dynasties. These abandoned historical ruins have mysterious stories behind them. While some of these towns were known as ‘ghost towns’

some others were destroyed by war.

The Gooty Fort, also known as Ravadurg, is atop a hill in Gooty town, a name derived from the original Gowthampuri. Eight inscriptions have been found on the rocks close to the Narasimha temple located within the fort premises. Although badly damaged, they appear to be from the reign of Chalukya king Vikramaditya VI (c. 1076-1126 CE). The earliest of the existing fortifications and other structures can be dated to the later Chalukya period.

The fort came under the control of the Vijayanagara Empire. During the reign of Venkata II (c. 1584-1614), the Vijayanagara lost the fort to Qutb Shahi dynasty. The Mughals appear to have controlled the fort after con-

quering Qutb Shahi capital Golconda. Around 1746 CE, Maratha general Murari Rao captured the fort, and made it his permanent residence eight years later. He repaired the fort, and commissioned the stucco ornamentation of small gateways.

In 1775, Mysore ruler Hyder Ali attacked and besieged the fort. After two months, Murari Rao was forced to surrender, as he ran out of water supplies. The fort later came under the control of the East India Company. Its administrator Thomas Munro, first collector of Anantapur and also governor has been buried at the cemetery located at the foothill.

Architecture: The fort is located on a group of hills that rises up to 680 m above



Gooty Fort

the sea level. The hills are connected by lower spurs. The citadel is located on the westernmost hill. The summit of the citadel has two buildings, apparently a

granary and a gunpowder magazine.

The ruined Narasimha temple is located near the summit. On a 300 m high cliff, there is a small pavil-

ion called “Murari Rao's seat”, which provides a panoramic view of the town below. It is said that the Maratha general Murari Rao used to play chess here. The lower fortifications comprise a series of ramparts, which are connected by gateways and flanked by bastions. The fort is further known for its ingenious water management by using almost 108 wells dug within the ramparts of fort walls for survival during times of war. It is stated that one of the wells was also connected with a spring at the feet of the hill but the source was not found even after various surveys.

“This fort is almost abandoned barring the occasional weekend visitors. Still there is a big well popularly known as “Kodiguddu bavi”

which is oval-shaped. There are many ruined buildings within the fort, including granaries, storerooms, and magazines. Some of these were used as prisons by the East India Company administrator Thomas Munro,” Dr. M. Suresh Babu, state president of Praja Science Vedika observed.

Dr. M. Virupakshi Reddy, president, Gooty Kota Parirakshana Samiti lamented that the structures are in deplorable state.

The past glory of Gooty fort can be restored if the government releases funds required for its development as proposed four years ago, including a ropeway to reach the hill top.

Thomas Munro's memorial is also not maintained properly as the grave was shifted to Chennai by the British.

SHORT TAKES

INDIA, CHINA
MUST REMAIN
RATIONAL: ENVOYSRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

Holding out the olive branch to India in his latest remarks on Sino-Indian ties, Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong has said that China is committed to seeking a solution through “dialogue and negotiation, and restoring peace and tranquillity in the border areas at an early date”, adding that the “current situation in the border areas serves no one’s interests”. Pointing out that the two nations are “neighbours that cannot be moved away” and that therefore “living in harmony is the only correct choice”, he added that “as long as the two sides adhere to this common goal and move in the right direction, China-India relations will eventually disperse the clouds and get back on the right track”.

The Chinese envoy also said the two neighbours “need to remain rational and calm, and resist the talk of ‘confrontation’ and ‘decoupling’, so that we will not lose our way due to any individual incident or issue”, a veiled reference to the bloody clash at the Galwan valley in June this year between troops of both sides.

POLICE SUMMON
ANURAG KASHYAP
IN RAPE CASESAURABH JOSHI | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 30

The Mumbai police on Wednesday issued summons to film-maker Anurag Kashyap in connection with a rape case filed against him by actor Payal Ghosh. The Versova police said that they have asked Kashyap to join the probe on Thursday and will record his statement in connection with the allegations in the case.

After filing the police complaint against Kashyap on September 22, Ghosh has been raising questions over the police’s inaction against the film-maker. She had even met Union minister Ramdas Athawale seeking his support to get the Union government intervene in the case.

The summons came after Athawale and Ghosh met state governor Bhagatsinh Koshyari on Tuesday seeking action in the case filed against Kashyap. The governor reportedly assured them that he would speak with the state home minister on the issue. Ghosh and Athawale also met senior Mumbai police officials seeking action in the case.

The police filed case against Kashyap on September 22 soon after the actor approached the police along with her lawyer Nitin Satpute. Kashyap has been summoned to record his statement and verify facts before initiating further action against him, a police official said. Ghosh went to the police station on multiple occasions and also claimed that despite being a complainant, she was summoned several times.

CORONA TOLL
NEARS 98K
NATIONWIDE

New Delhi, Sept. 30: India’s Covid-19 caseload raced past 62 lakh on Wednesday with 80,472 infections being reported in a day, while the number of recoveries surged to 51,87,825 pushing the recovery rate to 83.33 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The total number of coronavirus cases mounted to 62,25,763, while the death toll climbed to 97,497 with 1,179 people succumbing to the disease in a day, the data updated at 8 am showed.

There are 9,40,441 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 15.11 per cent of the total caseload.

The Covid-19 case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection stands at 1.57 per cent, the data stated.

India’s Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, on August 23 it crossed 30 lakh, and 40 lakh on September 5.

The tally went past 50 lakh on September 16 and crossed 60 lakh on September 28.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), cumulatively 7,41,96,729 samples have been tested for detection of coronavirus infection up to September 29 with 10,86,688 samples being tested on Tuesday.

Hathras teen cremated in dead of night

Oppn leaders lash out at UP govt over cremation of 19-year-old Dalit woman against family’s wish

Hathras/Lucknow, Sept 30: The 19-year-old Dalit woman, whose death in a Delhi hospital two weeks after she was brutally gangraped led to nationwide outrage, was cremated in the dead of the night early Wednesday with family members alleging they were forced by police to hurriedly conduct the last rites.

The cremation was done around 2.30-3 in the morning,” her father said, a day after his daughter, who suffered critical injuries when she was allegedly gangraped and tortured by four upper caste men, gave up the battle for life.

As political leaders and activists voiced their protest on social media and other platforms over the manner in which the funeral was conducted near the woman’s home in Hathras, a local police officer said it was carried out as per the wishes of the family.

In the moments preceding the cremation of his sister, the teen’s brother said from his home, “Police have forcibly taken the body and my father along with them for cremation. When my father reached Hathras (from New Delhi), he was immediately taken (to the crematorium) by the police.”

Recalling the horrors of the Nirbhaya case, the Dalit teen was allegedly sexually assaulted by four men on September 14 and referred on Monday to the Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi with spinal injuries, paralysis and cuts in her tongue. She died around 3 am on Tuesday.

The men alleged to be involved in the crime are under arrest and will now face charges under Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code, according to Hathras Superintendent of Police Vikrant Vir.

The family left Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi on Tuesday night amid heavy police deployment and reached their village in Hathras, about 180 km from the national capital, after the body of the young woman, claimed a family member.

Another relative said 30 to 40 people accompanied the woman’s father to the crematorium.

Senior police and administration officials were also present at the crematorium in the middle of



Police personnel cremate the body of a 19-year-old rape victim, in the wee hours on Wednesday in Hathras district.

— PTI

the night, an official said. Purported visuals from the site showed flames from what appeared to be a pyre lighting up the sky and heavy police presence with some personnel in anti-riot gear keeping the media at bay. Anguished cries from family members broke the silence of the night.

“We are unable to understand, what they want... what kind of politics is this. They are giving random statements like the woman has not been raped! We don’t know what they want,” said a relative who was at home with the grieving family. “They are doing all this to hush up the case.”

While scores of Left and Congress leaders were detained when they staged protests against the Yogi Adityanath government near the UP Bhawan in Delhi, opposition leaders questioned the circumstances and the timing of the funeral.

“I was on the phone with the Hathras victim’s

father when he was informed that his daughter had passed away. I heard him cry out in despair,” said Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

Tagging Adityanath in a tweet, she added, “RESIGN. Instead of protecting the victim and her family, your government became complicit in depriving her of every single human right, even in death. You have no moral right to continue as chief minister.”

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati said her party strongly condemns the wrong attitude of the police.

“The cremation of Hathras gangrape victim by the Uttar Pradesh Police without handing over the body to the family or without their consent and in their absence in the dead of night is raising doubts and resentment, she said, asking for the Supreme Court to take cognisance of the case. Samajwadi Party chief

Akhilesh Yadav alleged that the cremation was done in the middle of the night to erase evidence.

“In the rape-murder of Hathras daughter, conducting her last rites by police in the middle of the night without the consent of the family is against rituals. It is the most condemnable act The BJP government has committed a sin and crime by doing so,” he said on Twitter.

In a press statement, the Politburo of the CPI(M) said the “barbaric case based rape” is “reflective of the utter lawlessness” in the northern state.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the young woman was first raped by some beasts and then the entire system.

Maha-rashtra NCP chief Jayant Patil termed the “behaviour” of the UP Police “inhuman and unfortunate”. Women’s rights activists added their voice to the chorus of condemnation and said the teen was robbed of dignity even in death. —PTI

Bhim Army chief
‘detained’ by cops

Noida/Aligarh, Sept. 30: Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhkar Azad and its Delhi unit head, Himanshu Balmiki, have been detained by the Uttar Pradesh police while they were on their way to Hathras, accompanying the family of a 19-year-old Dalit gangrape victim, Azad’s associates alleged on Wednesday.

Senior Aligarh police officials denied knowledge about the matter.

According to functionaries of the Azad Samaj Party, which was launched by the Bhim Army chief in March, Azad and Balmiki went missing after 10 pm on Tuesday while they were on their way to Hathras, accompanying the family of the gangrape victim. The Azad Samaj Party and

affiliates of the pro-Dalit Bhim Army, among others, had joined the protests outside the Safdarjung hospital on Tuesday to demand justice for the gangrape victim and her family.

“There is no clue about the location of Azad and Balmiki after they reached the Jewar toll plaza to get on the lane to Tappal, Aligarh,” Azad Samaj Party’s core committee member Ravindra Bhati said. He alleged that Azad and Balmiki were detained during the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday.

Around 12.30pm on Wednesday, Azad Samaj Party and Bhim Army activists reached the Tappal police station in Aligarh and staged a demonstration. —PTI

Maharashtra govt stays its own
order to implement farm lawsBHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 30

The contentious Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce Ordinance will not be implemented in Maharashtra, at least for the time being.

The Maharashtra Government, facing flak from all quarters, on Wednesday stayed its own order of implementing the three farm laws.

Marketing Minister Balasaheb Shamra Patil of the NCP said, “The ordinance needs to be studied in detail due to its impact on the farmers and Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) in the state. We have sought legal opinion on it. Till then, the ordi-

● **ACCORDING TO SOURCES,** the decision was taken due to the aggressive stand of Congress leaders, who threatened to boycott the cabinet meeting.

nances are being stayed.” Even before the new farm Bills were passed by the Parliament, Maharashtra govern-

ment’s Directorate of Marketing on August 10 had issued an order to implement Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Ordinance 2020, The Farmers (Empowerment & Protection) Assurance and Farm Service Ordinance 2020, and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance 2020. The order said that the ordinances were to be “strictly implemented”,

thus making Maharashtra the first state to implement them before they became a law last week.

After the farm Bills were passed in the Parliament, Maharashtra’s ruling parties started questioning them and indicated that the new laws will not be implemented in the state.

However, after the government’s August 10 order came to light, it left the Uddhav Thackeray-led government red-faced.

The NCP MLC Shashikant Shinde had challenged the Directorate of Marketing, Pune’s order saying it was issued without taking any of the

stakeholders into confidence. He argued that the ordinance will badly affect various sectors including farmers, traders, agents, labourers and others, rendering some of them jobless.

The hearing was held on Wednesday morning, in which Mr Patil stayed the August 10 notification and postponed the matter for further hearing on October 27.

According to sources, the decision was taken due to the aggressive stand of Congress leaders, who threatened to boycott the cabinet meeting if the ordinance was not stayed. The Congress has also decided to launch an all-India agitation against the new farm laws.

Over 8.5 L workers
returned to OdishaAKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 30

After the Covid-19 pandemic set in, about 8,53,777 guest workers have returned to Odisha till date, this was informed by state labour minister Susanta Singh in the ongoing monsoon session of Odisha Assembly.

Replying to a written question from Congress lawmaker Santosh Singh Saluja, the minister stated that maximum Odia guest workers have returned from states like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala on 277 special trains.

“The state government

has paid ₹9 crore to the East Coast Railway (ECoR) towards the transport cost of the workers,” he said.

The minister, however, said that the state government did not have any concrete details about the number of daily wage-earners among the returnees. “We are trying to trace the number of daily wage-earners block wise,” he added.

Singh also informed that two guest workers have lost their lives on their way to the state during the lockdown. “The concerned department is collecting the fact about the ex gratia amount paid to them,” he added.

India test fires new version of
BrahMos supersonic cruise missileAKSYHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 30

India on Wednesday successfully test-fired an extended range version of surface-to-surface supersonic cruise missile BrahMos off Odisha coast.

The missile was tested from Chandipur Integrated Test Range (ITR) at 10.30am in Balasore district, nearly 250 km from here.

The missile is capable of hitting targets at more than 400-km range. Source said that the airframe and booster of the missile have been developed

indigenously.

The test was conducted with an indigenous booster and airframe under PJ-10 project of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture between DRDO and Federal State Unitary Enterprise NPO Mashinostroyeniya of Russia.

The missile can be launched from submarines, ships, aircrafts, as well as from land platforms. BrahMos is regarded as the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world. It is operational with Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to postpone the Civil Services (Prelims) Examination, 2020, of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) slated on Sunday (October 4) as it turned down a batch of petitions seeking deferment citing Covid-19 pandemic.

A bench comprising Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and Justice Sanjiv Khanna declined the petitions seeking postponement as UPSC told the court that it has already spent ₹50 crore for conduct of the exam and any disruption at this stage will upset the entire exam cycle not only once but

with a cascading effect on the future exams as well.

Refusing to stall the exam, the court asked the UPSC to issue directions to the states to ensure that the candidates with admit cards are admitted in local hotels near the sub-centres.

The court also asked the UPSC to consider a concession of giving one more chance to appear for civil services examination to the candidates who are making a last attempt for the civil services entrance examination.

Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju while assuring the court to give concession in age to only those who are on their last attempt, said that it cannot be made available to others.

ISRO TO LAUNCH ITS VENUS MISSION
IN 2025, FRANCE TO TAKE PART

New Delhi, Sept. 30: ISRO is scheduled to launch its Venus mission in 2025 and France will participate in it, French space agency CNES said on Wednesday.

The VIRAL (Venus Infrared Atmospheric Gases Linker) instrument co-developed with the Russian federal space agency Roscosmos and the LATMOS atmospheres, environments and space observations laboratory attached to the French national scientific

research centre CNRS has been selected by the ISRO after a request for proposals, it said in a statement.

ISRO chairman K. Sivan and CNES president Jean-Yves Le Gall held talks and reviewed the areas driving cooperation between France and India in space.

“In the domain of space exploration, France will be taking part in ISRO’s mission to Venus, scheduled to launch in 2025,” CNES said in a statement. —PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

1 OCTOBER 2020

In Hathras, don't lose sight of justice goal

Amid the Coronavirus pandemic, rapes have continued to take place in Uttar Pradesh. Throughout the lockdown, imposed in March, rape cases have mounted. In most, the accused was not arrested, even after being identified, as in Hapur, where the six-year-old sufferer had to undergo surgery to repair her wounds but still managed to spot the culprit.

The three features that distinguished the Hathras gangrape from countless other crimes involving gendered violence against women were (a) its particularly gruesome nature, (b) the fact that it was a caste crime, and (c) the fact that the victim also belonged to a rural background and a low income family. It was the perfect opportunity for a progressive media to create opinion and influence change.

In this case, too, the dalit teenager had named her four rapists from the hospital bed in the national capital where she was brought and admitted by activists of Bhim Army. But the big media continued its prurient speculations on the drug habits of Rhea Chakraborty. It was only her death followed by a hasty midnight cremation that her immediate relatives were reportedly barred from attending that brought the case under spotlight.

The UP police had quickly disposed of the body, pre-empting a second autopsy. It was in keeping with a trend seen whenever a lower caste woman is the victim. In India, that is sadly most often the case. The perpetrators have the social and financial support that the victim and her family hasn't. So it raised suspicions of shielding the accused.

Now the Aligarh IG has come out with a statement saying that rape had not taken place at all; the medical examination report did not confirm it. Earlier, the police had tied the crime to an old family quarrel. These are attempts to dilute the gravity of the offence. The fact remains that had she survived the girl would have been disabled for life. Desexualising rape does not lessen its immorality.

Was the victim targeted because she was bright and she stood out, as most liberal, young women do and are made to suffer for, and more so in rural India, where the churning is at its strongest? It belies the comfortable and contradictory middle class notions of the heartlands being a regressive idyll, but is a distinct possibility.

Following the media furore, the Uttar Pradesh government has constituted a three-member Special Investigation Team to probe the case. It inspires little confidence, given the record of impunity of the government and the state police force.

Which brings us to another controversy, freshly brewing. Some people have named the victim on the social media without the express sanction in writing through a recognised organisation of the next of kin of the victim, as required by Section 228A(c) of the Indian Penal Code, the law governing the disclosure of identity of rape sufferers. It is the duty of citizens and the media to educate the people about this law and proactively seek consent because there should be no stigma or shame attached to victims of sexual assault. Removal of the stigma will, in fact, deter conspiracies to commit the crime. However, in bypassing the law just for the sake of virtue-signalling, if of a less obvious kind and especially in case of poor or dalit victims, as in the Jisha case of 2016, publishers are not only committing a crime in the eyes of the law but also stand to trivialise the cause.

First among equals

The current stand-off in Tamil Nadu's ruling party, the AIADMK, over the chief ministerial candidate for the 2021 Assembly elections smacks of nothing but gross political imprudence on the part of the entire set of dramatis personae. Though deputy chief minister, O Panneerselvam, who wants his dispute with Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami sorted out now itself has a point to make as elections are just about eight months away, the whole exercise seems to be a farce, only providing a comic interlude to the people caught in the vagaries of the lockdown.

In fact, the acrimony with which Mr Panneerselvam and his bete noire fought it out at the executive meeting on Monday led to a dark party secret tumbling out, raising a stink. Their differences apart, they agreed that both were chosen for the prized chief minister's job at different points of time by V.K. Sasikala, the confidante of late chief minister J. Jayalalithaa. So, was Ms Sasikala, who never ever stood for an election or held any official or party position when Jayalalitha was alive, functioning as a de facto chief minister?

Besides confirming that through their exchanges, the quarrelling chief ministerial aspirants also came across as immature politicians more obsessed over the post they coveted and least concerned about the interests of the party or the people or the state. Also cheering them was the bunch of party leaders, who were split down the middle. While Mr Palaniswami says that it's not wise to rock the boat when the sailing has been smooth in the past four years, Mr Panneerselvam is just seeking his pound of flesh.

Well, one of them will blink and the first among equals will be known on Wednesday, October 7. But for the AIADMK, particularly the winner of the ongoing tussle, it could be a pyrrhic victory. For at the end of it all, it will be the people who will be picking the party that would rule them.

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ADITYA SINHA
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256

Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patnamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-255284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalpally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Adv: Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552

Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255

Kochi: No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Emakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408

Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thycud (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014

Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax: 0495 4019 018

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Subhani



How to deal with Covid: Some S-E Asian lessons

Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

The Covid-19 pandemic has dealt a body blow to societies and economies across the world. India's Covid-19 death tally has crossed 96,000; stories of doom, gloom and heart-breaks abound. There is a flicker of hope with the number of daily cases coming down a little. However, we are certainly not out of the woods. No one knows what the future holds.

Can the coronavirus pandemic be a teachable moment? Can we step back from our immediate contexts and preoccupations and learn from other countries in the neighbourhood which were better prepared and better-equipped to deal with the new virus?

Here are a few things I picked up while looking at country responses around the world. We all know how well and swiftly countries like New Zealand, Iceland or Germany responded. The political leadership in these countries deserve all the praise they are getting. But these nations also have the advantage of affluence and relatively small populations.

Another region that seems to have done fairly well in these trying times is Southeast Asia. There is a good reason why — most countries in this region learnt from past epidemics — the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003 and to a lesser extent the H1N1 avian flu in 2009-10.

A recent essay — “An Asian Pandemic Success Story: What SARS Taught Governments About Fighting Infectious Disease”, by Swee Kheng Khor and David Heymann in *Foreign Affairs* — points out that as the world struggles with the coronavirus pandemic, Southeast Asian countries lead the way in both control and recovery.

Many countries in this region have consistently reported lower death rates from Covid-19 than coun-

tries in Europe and North America.

“At the root of the efficacy of this response lie the hard-won lessons of the region's experience with SARS,” write Khor and Heymann.

Some people who are aware of the different responses to the pandemic point out the cultural differences between Southeast Asia and South Asia and India's humongous heterogeneity. Arguably, these are factors. But there is no getting away from the fact that doing relatively well in the time of a pandemic has a lot to do with being better prepared. And being better prepared is a function of learning the hard lessons from one's past.

“Asian governments spent the 17 ‘peacetime’ years between SARS and Covid-19 addressing the very problems that now plague other countries. They built public health infrastructure and did the hard political work of clarifying the roles and power structures that would take hold during a crisis,” point out Khor and Heymann.

What does this mean on the ground? As the writers point out, it means building systems and institutions that can marshal the full power of government to confront the next epidemic. It means designing and building new infrastructure for disease surveillance, case reporting and contact tracing, and developing decentralised networks of laboratories. And it means prioritising human resources — investing in the personnel that would be needed to run these new systems.

Take two examples, Thailand and Vietnam. Thailand, which has about 69 million people, has around 3,500 confirmed Covid-19 cases and 59 deaths. Vietnam, with a population of almost 100 million, has just over 1,000 confirmed cases and 35 deaths.

Vietnam, once one of the poorest countries in the world, has increased its

per capita spending on public health by an average of nine per cent every year between 2000 and 2016. In 2009, it set up a central database for reporting disease cases in real time. This required public health physicians, information technology specialists and a vast network of field-based epidemiologists.

The Mekong countries never thought they were immune from a problem in China. And they have vivid memories of the 2003 SARS epidemic. They took the Covid-19 threat seriously from early on and responded with a SARS strategy, not a seasonal flu strategy, points out an essay by Dominic Meagher in *The Interpreter*, published by The Lowy Institute, a Sydney-based independent think tank.

Thailand has a well-developed public health infrastructure and began screening all airport arrivals for fever on January 3, two days before China confirmed to the World Health Organisation that it had identified a “pneumonia of unknown cause”.

From the start, the Thai government strongly encouraged people to avoid crowds and confined spaces, and to always wear cloth masks when they left home. Masks are a familiar accessory in the region, often worn to reduce pollution inhalation, and people remember SARS and other coronavirus epidemics. So, the public was quick to respond, says Meagher.

Countries like Thailand and Vietnam went early and hard, prioritising health over other concerns. South Korea, which had one of the largest initial outbreaks outside China, is another success story. It has managed to slow down the spread of new coronavirus cases without lockdowns. This

country, of around 51 million, tests more than 20,000 people every day at designated testing sites and uses widespread contact tracing and isolation to break virus transmission.

The essay in *Foreign Affairs* makes a fundamental point which goes to the heart of the political economy of what we now see as resilience. The countries that suffered through SARS learned that to fight a pandemic requires not only top-down systems but also attention to the broader health of the populace. “Partly for this reason, and partly for political purposes, many of the SARS-affected countries — including Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand — have worked since the early 2000s to finance universal health coverage or to enhance existing coverage. Thailand has extended health insurance coverage to documented and undocumented migrants,” it notes.

Universal health coverage is a key part of this resilience story. It has helped countries fight epidemics by bringing the population to a healthier baseline, reducing barriers to treatment. It is not just about spending money. An extremely important takeaway is the need to build trust in government services. Today, 95 per cent of Thais and 94 per cent of Vietnamese are likely to wear a mask.

This doesn't happen overnight or by magic. It needs social cohesion and solidarity. Government directives are harder to implement in hyper-polarised societies where trust has broken down.

There is a fundamental lesson for India here — bottom-up approaches that guarantee high quality universal healthcare and where empowered and equipped frontline professional healthcare workers take the decisions on how to confront Covid-19 are the ones that work. That is also the way to foster trust in the government healthcare system. It is still not too late to follow that path.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com

Bottom-up approaches that guarantee high quality universal healthcare and where frontline healthcare workers take the decisions on how to confront Covid-19 are the ones that work

LETTERS

SUPER OVER

The super over rule introduced some time back in deciding tied results after requisite limited over stipulation appears to be ill thought (*Super Over not such a super idea, DC, Sept. 30*). If the tied teams reached such a stage, each team should be awarded additional points. There is a system of counting the points each team has obtained.

Super over idea seems to have been introduced to appease one of the winning teams. When no team won after 20 or 50 overs, how can they be decided in just six balls?

N. Sita

Visakhapatnam

GANTA'S ENTRY

Political opportunism on one side and political compulsions on the other seem to be going hand-in-glove these days in AP. The Chief Minister advocates strict compliance of the provisions of Anti-Defection Law and is on record stating that any sitting MLA or MP from other parties wishing to join the YSRC should first resign and then seek membership. But Jagan also proved that he is not above politics of opportunism and/or compulsions.

Already a handful of TD MLAs are hobnobbing with the YSRC are severing their links with the parent party. Now if Ganta Srinivasa Rao too joins the race, then it is the climax of sorts and one has nothing more to prove his political credentials in the State.

Govardhana Myneedu

Vijayawada

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Scope for fortifying Indo-Soviet ties

KIEV, September 30

A Soviet Government statement today summing up the results of President V.V. Giri's visit noted the existence of favourable prospects for the strengthening and broadening of close Indo-Soviet relations.

Such a development, the statement said, corresponded not merely to national interests, but would contribute to consolidation of peace in Asia and in the rest of the world. The statement released after President Giri's ten-day visit surveyed topics of bilateral and international interests covered in Mr Giri's talks with Soviet leaders and said they had reaffirmed the relevance of principles on of the two countries.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



2 yrs after retiring, culture secy back in the same post

While senior bureaucrats often get re-employed with the government after they retire, it is certainly rare for a retired babu to be reappointed as secretary to the government to the same post he retired from two years earlier. But the Modi sarkar has many firsts (and in this instance, seconds) to its credit.

So, there were some puzzled faces when former bureaucrat Raghendra Singh was recently appointed as culture secretary, replacing Anand Kumar, who was shifted as secretary of the National Commission for Backward Classes as part of a high-level reshuffle. Mr Singh, who belongs to the 1983-batch of the West Bengal cadre, is CEO of the Development of Museums and Cultural Spaces under the ministry of culture and will continue to hold that post as well. Mr Singh has been appointed

on a contract basis for one year. Interestingly, Mr Singh was the culture secretary from December 2017 till August 2018. So, the new culture secretary is the old culture secretary!

Before Mr Singh's (re)appointment, there was Parameswaran Iyer, who returned as secretary, drinking water and sanitation, in 2016 on contract although he had resigned from the IAS in 2010 to join the UN and then the World Bank. Interestingly, he did not complete his term but resigned last month for “personal reasons”.

A DIVIDED FORCE

If Delhi Police was feeling cornered and unloved after several retired top cops criticised its investigation of the riots in northeast Delhi in February this year, it has now found support in 26 retired IPS officers who have come out in defence of their Delhi brethren.

Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava was left scrambling for allies when the widely respected retired IPS officer Julio Ribeiro, a former Mumbai police commissioner and former DGP of Gujarat and Punjab, and former envoy to Romania, questioned the Delhi Police's handling of the probe into the riot cases. He accused the Delhi cops of taking action against “peaceful protestors” while ignoring the actual perpetrators of the riots and also noted that Mr Shrivastava was not addressing the issues that he had raised in his letter to the Delhi Police Commissioner.

Mr Ribeiro's broadside found resonance in many minds who see the police investigation as vilification of peaceful protesters and a politically motivated campaign. But it has also brought the venerated top cop in the line of fire of those who see this as an attempt to “demor-

alise the Indian Police Service”. However, Mr Ribeiro's detractors come across as attempting a rear-guard action that will do little to change the public perception about Delhi Police. And by pitting cop against cop, the force in khaki is split right down the middle.

IRS OFFICERS FEAR LOSS OF STATURE

Last month, the Modi sarkar announced reforms in the taxation system with the aim of making the system seamless, painless and faceless. The faceless assessment scheme will eliminate human interface between the taxpayer and the tax officials and has been largely welcomed by all. But not every IT babu is happy with the development.

According to sources, the IRS association of the Northeast region views the decision as one that will reduce the stature of the service.

The association members have reportedly proposed a complete makeover of the IRS including cadre restructuring, a new transfer and deputation policy, and creation of cadre posts in other ministries and departments. Apparently, the resentment among the IRS officers is due to their belief that faceless taxation will reduce the service to “cyber policing”.

Under faceless assessment, AI and data analytics-based systems will be used to identify taxpayers and send notices in a transparent manner.

This will inevitably require a change in how IT officials will function. The NE IRS officers are perhaps jittery about this change from the “normal”.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

IN BRIEF

'I am a woman' singer Reddy dies

Los Angeles: Helen Reddy, who shot to stardom in the 1970s with her feminist anthem "I Am Woman" and recorded a string of other hits, has died. She was 78. Reddy's children Traci and Jordan announced that the actress-singer died Tuesday in Los Angeles. "She was a wonderful Mother, Grandmother and a truly formidable woman," they said in a statement. "Our hearts are broken. But we take comfort in the knowledge that her voice will live on forever." The Australian-born singer enjoyed a prolific career, appearing in "Airport 1975" as a singing nun and scoring several hits, including "I Don't Know How To Love Him" from "Jesus Christ Superstar," "Ain't No Way To Treat a Lady," "Delta Dawn," "Angie Baby" and "You and Me Against the World".

7 parties to form Belgian govt

Brussels: Almost 500 days after Belgian parliamentary elections, seven parties from both sides of the linguistic aisle agreed early Wednesday on forming a fully functioning majority government that will centre on dealing with the pandemic and its economic impact.

A final negotiating session that lasted almost 24 hours found agreement on a common budget and had only one issue left to decide: Who would succeed Sophie Wilmes as prime minister. The seven parties consist of Liberals, Socialists and Greens, divided into separate linguistic entities, and the Dutch-speaking Christian Democrats. "The big political hurdles are behind us and I am happy we were able to forge a program with seven partners," said Christian Democrat negotiator Servais Verherstraeten.

Led by Dutch-speaking Liberal Alexander De Croo and francophone Socialist Paul Magnette, the parties found money to fund new initiatives.

Justice Ginsburg laid to rest

Arlington (US): Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was buried Tuesday in a private ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, laid to rest beside her husband and near some of her former colleagues on the court. Washington last week honoured the 87-year-old Ginsburg, who died Sept. 18, with two days where the public could view her casket at the top of the Supreme Court's steps and pay their respects. On Friday, the women's rights trailblazer and second woman to join the high court lay in state at the US Capitol, the first woman to do so. Already the capital is looking ahead to confirmation hearings expected to begin Oct. 12 for Amy Coney Barrett, whom President Donald Trump announced Saturday as his nominee for Ginsburg's seat. Barrett was meeting with senators on Tuesday. Arlington is best known as the resting place of approximately 400,000 service members, veterans and family members.

ISS AIR LEAK FORCES CREW WAKEUP

Cape Canaveral, Sept. 30: A small air leak at the International Space Station finally has been traced to the Russian side, following a middle-of-the-night search by astronauts.

Nasa said Tuesday that the two Russians and one American on board were awakened late Monday to hurriedly seal hatches between compartments and search for the ongoing leak, which appeared to be getting worse. It was the third time in just over a month that the crew had to isolate themselves on the Russian side, in an attempt to find the growing leak. It turns out instead of the leak getting bigger this time, a temporary temperature change caused the erroneous cabin air pressure reading, according to Nasa. The leak was first spotted a year ago.

Nasa officials stress that the leak remains small and poses no danger. The astronauts will now use leak detectors to try to pinpoint the leak in Russia's main living and working compartment, called Zvezda, Russian for Star. Space station deputy programme manager Kenny Todd said the good news is that "instead of a bunch of haystacks, we're down to maybe one haystack". But he added: "It's still a needle we're looking for." Nasa is sending up extra air supply tanks on its next space station delivery, scheduled for a Thursday departure from Virginia.

Don won't condemn white supremacists

Washington, Sept. 30: US President Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Joe Biden clashed over the issue of race in America in the first presidential debate wherein the Republican leader hesitated to condemn white supremacists. During the debate in Cleveland, Ohio on Tuesday, moderator Chris Wallace asked Trump, "Are you willing, tonight, to condemn white supremacists and militia groups and to say that they need to stand down?" "I would say almost everything I see is from the left wing, not the right wing," Trump replied.

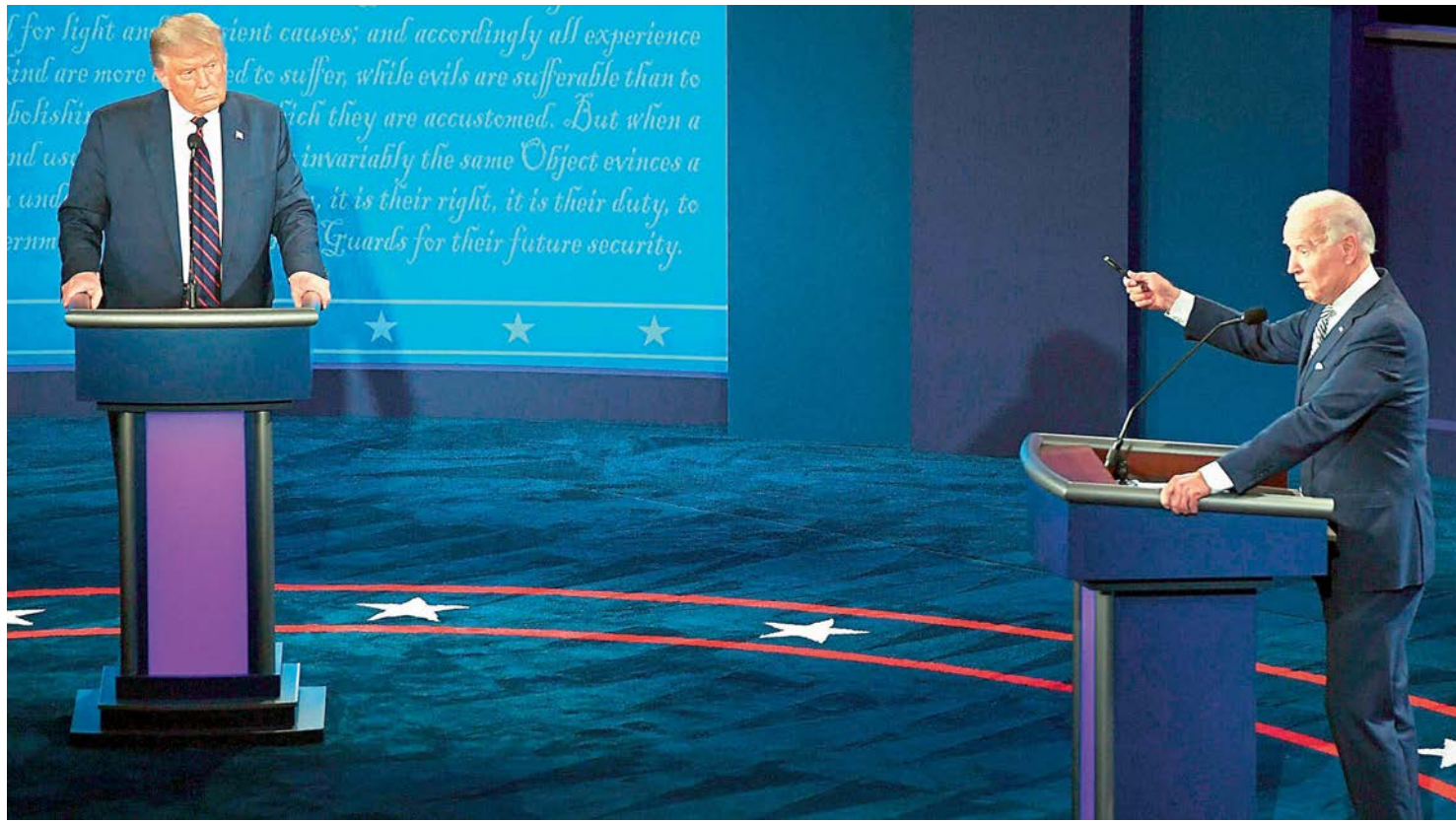
"I'm willing to do anything. I want to see peace." When pressed further, he said, "Give me a name", to which Biden chimed in, "Proud Boys", referring to a far-right outfit that has been designated as a hate group by the nonprofit legal advocacy organisation, Southern Poverty Law Centre. "Proud Boys — Stand back, stand by," Trump responded and then moved attention to the left-wing anti-fascist movement known as Antifa. "Somebody has got to do something about Antifa and the left because this isn't a right-wing problem, this is a left-wing problem," he said.

Biden alleged that Trump has used everything as a "dog whistle" to try to generate racist hatred and division. "This is a president who has used everything as a dog whistle to try to generate racist hatred, racist division. This is a man who in fact — you talk about helping African Americans, one in one thousand African Americans has been killed because of the coronavirus. And if he doesn't do something quickly, by the end of the year one in 500 will have been killed, one in 500 African Americans," he said.

"This man is the saviour of African Americans? This man care at all? This man's done virtually nothing...You have to look at what he did. And what he did has been disastrous for the African-American community," Biden charged. Defending his record as president, Trump attacked Biden for his role in crafting the 1994 crime bill.

"I'm letting people out of jail now," Trump said to Biden. "You've treated the black community as bad as anyone in the country. You called them superpredators and you've called them worse than that." "I never said that," Biden responded. Biden and Trump were responding to questions on why voters should trust them rather than their opponents to deal with the race issues facing the US.

"It's about equity and equality. It's about decency. It's



US President Donald Trump and Democratic Presidential candidate and former US Vice-President Joe Biden take part in the first presidential debate at Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, on Tuesday.

— AFP

Trump won't say when he'll make taxes public

Washington, Sept. 30: President Donald Trump won't say when he will finally make his personal taxes public as he has long promised. During the first presidential debate Tuesday, Trump was asked specifically about a report in *The New York Times* that revealed he paid only \$750 in personal income taxes each of those years.

All presidents except Trump have publicly released their taxes since the presidency of Richard Nixon. Trump has said since 2016 that he would eventually release them. But when asked by moderator Chris Wallace when,

he said only: "You'll get to see it." Democratic nominee Joe Biden quickly used that as a point of attack, saying Trump "does take advantage of the tax code" and "pays less tax than a schoolteacher." Trump shrugged off the attack, saying that all business leaders do the same "unless they are stupid."

Trump has asserted that he paid millions of dollars in income taxes and dubbed a recent media report that he paid just \$750 in income tax in the year he was elected US president as "wrong". "And let me just tell you, there was a story in one of

the papers," Trump said. Biden interrupted, asking Trump to show his tax papers. "I paid \$38 million one year. I paid \$27 million one year. You'll see it as soon as it's finished. You'll see it," Trump said, with Biden insisting on him showing his tax papers.

"You know if you wanted to, go to the Board of Elections. There's a 118 page or so report that says everything I have, every bank I have I'm totally underleveraged because the assets are extremely good and we have built a great company..." he said.

— Agencies

DON DENIGRATES OFFICE OF US PREZ: HARRIS

Washington, Sept. 30: US Senator Kamala Harris has criticised President Donald Trump's conduct during the first night of the presidential debates as one that "denigrates the office", as she extended support to the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, saying Joe Biden understands who are important — the American families. "I think the American people deserve to have an ability to compare and contrast the candidates," Harris said.

— PTI

A hot mess of a debate: Goodwin

Washington, Sep 30: A hot mess does not make for a great debate. Or an interesting one or even an entertaining one, said political columnist Michael Goodwin who added that America was mistreated Tuesday. A highly anticipated showdown in a closely fought presidential election in a deeply divided country had the potential to be a clarifying moment.

Instead, it was a sweaty, formless flop. Worse, it was annoying. Neither the candidates nor moderator

Chris Wallace acquitted themselves well.

Joe Biden was sharp and coherent enough, though he relied heavily on notes in front of him. He didn't exactly raise the bar of decorum with his name-calling, alternately labeling President Trump a clown, a liar and a racist. Ho hum.

Yet the bulk of the blame falls on Trump, who came with a clear plan and executed it flawlessly. Unfortunately, it was a very bad plan.

— Agencies

Indian-American supporters in US Prez election divided

Washington, Sept. 30: Indian-American supporters of President Donald Trump said the Republican leader "sealed the deal" at the first presidential election debate while the community members supporting his Democratic challenger Joe Biden asserted that the former vice president made a "successful case" to occupy the White House for the next four years.

Indian Americans, who account for one per cent of the country's population,

but are increasingly getting active in domestic politics, organised watch parties, mostly virtual, to watch the first of the three presidential debates between Trump and Biden. President Trump and Biden began the first presidential debate in Cleveland, Ohio on Tuesday with heated exchanges over health care, the Coronavirus and the future of the Supreme Court.

"President Trump seals the deal for his re-election, crushing Biden at the

debate. Game over," said Al Mason, co-chair of the Trump Victory Indian American Finance Committee. Indian American attorney from California Harmet K. Dhillon slammed debate moderator Chris Wallace, a popular Fox news anchor, for allegedly taking sides. "Chris Wallace is a disgrace. Republicans need to stop allowing the slanted media to have any role in debates in future years," tweeted Dhillon, co-chair of Sikhs for Trump.

— PTI

Over 50 women in DRC allege abuse by WHO workers

Kinshasa, Sept. 30: More than 50 women have accused aid workers from the World Health Organisation and leading NGOs of sexual exploitation and abuse during efforts to fight Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In interviews, 51 women — many of whose accounts were backed up by aid agency drivers and local NGO workers — recounted multiple incidents of abuse, mainly by men who said they were international workers, during the 2018 to 2020 Ebola crisis, according to an investigation by the New Humanitarian and the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The majority of the women said numerous men had either propositioned them, forced them to have sex in exchange for a job or terminated contracts when they refused. The number and similarity of many of the accounts from women in the eastern city of Beni suggests the practice was widespread, with three organisations vowing to investigate the accusations uncovered. UN secretary-general António Guterres called for the allegations to be "investigated fully".

Some women said they were plied with drinks, others said they were

ambushed in offices and hospitals, and some said they were locked in rooms by men who promised jobs or threatened to fire them if they did not comply. "So many women were affected by this," said one 44-year-old, who told reporters that to get a job she had sex with a man who said he was a WHO worker.

She and the other women spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. Some identifying details have been removed to protect their identities. "I can't think of someone who worked in the response who didn't have to offer something," she added.

Some women were cooks, cleaners and community outreach workers hired on short-term contracts, earning \$50 to \$100 (£40 to £80) a month — more than twice the normal wage. One woman was an Ebola survivor seeking psychological help. At least two women said they became pregnant.

Many women said they had not until now reported the incidents for fear of reprisals or losing their jobs. Most also said they were ashamed.

Some women said abuse occurred as recently as March. The WHO said it was investigating the allegations.

— Agencies

UNDECIDED VOTERS DESCRIBE TRUMP AS A 'CRACKHEAD', 'ARROGANT'

Washington, Sept. 30: The first presidential debate left undecided American voters in agreement about at least one thing: President Trump's negativity. Republican consultant and pollster Frank Luntz asked his focus group to use one word to describe the president and basically "every single word was negative," observed *Politico's* Tim Alberta.

One respondent from Wisconsin called Trump

obnoxious and un-presidential, while a Pennsylvania voter said he behaved like a "crackhead." Others described the president as being "un-American" and "arrogant."

In all, from 17 voters in swing states, 15 used negative words and just two used positive words or phrases to describe the president (that is, if you consider "an ass but a confident ass" to be a compliment).

— Agencies

Pakistan government to push for Nawaz's deportation from the UK

Islamabad, Sept. 30: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has asked relevant authorities to take steps to bring back PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif from London and to ensure that he faces the corruption cases pending against him in the courts, according to a media report on Wednesday. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Khan asked the authorities to pursue the matter vigorously, the paper said. According to the Cabinet member, the government had earlier sent a request to the British government for the Pakistan Muslim

League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader's repatriation.

However, it would again send a fresh application now. Besides a normal application, a formal request for his extradition would also be made.

"Although we have no extradition treaty with the United Kingdom, wanted people can be repatriated under special arrangements as we had also handed over some people to the UK," the member said. On Wednesday, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) said that it needs to be determined if 70-year-old Sharif was evading court proceedings on purpose.

— PTI

PAK OPPOSITION PARTIES TO LAUNCH FIRST ANTI-GOVT RALLY ON OCT 11

Islamabad, Sept. 30: The newly-launched alliance of the major Opposition parties in Pakistan on Tuesday announced that it will hold its first public rally against the Imran Khan-led government on October 11, according to media reports.

The country's main Opposition parties last week launched the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), an alliance to hold a countrywide protest movement to oust the ruling government.

"On October 11, PDM will hold (its) first public rally and then the movement will spread all over Pakistan and rid Pakistan of this unconstitutional system," former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi was quoted as saying by the *Geo TV*.

According to a report in the *Dawn*, Abbasi said the anti-government movement will be launched across the country after the "historic" rally in Quetta.

— PTI

Armenia, Azerbaijan fight for 4th day, UN council calls for halt to hostilities

Yerevan (Armenia), Sept. 30: Heavy fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijan forces over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh continued for a fourth straight day on Wednesday, in the biggest escalation of a decades-old conflict in years that has killed dozens and left scores of others wounded. The UN Security Council called on Armenia and Azerbaijan Tuesday to immediately halt fighting

over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and urgently resume talks without preconditions.

The UN's most powerful body strongly condemned the use of force and backed Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' earlier call to immediately stop fighting, deescalate tensions and return to meaningful negotiations without delay. The two neighbors have been locked in conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region of

Azerbaijan that has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a war there ended in 1994.

International efforts to settle the conflict have stalled, and clashes have been frequent. The council expressed full support for "the central role" of the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has been trying to mediate peace talks, and urged the sides "to work closely with

them for an urgent resumption of dialogue without preconditions."

Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry said Armenian forces started shelling the town of Tartar on Wednesday morning, damaging "civilian infrastructure" and wounding people, while Armenian military officials reported that Azerbaijani forces were bombing positions of the Nagorno-Karabakh army in the north of the war-torn region.

— AP



Mike Pompeo

POMPEO ASKS VATICAN TO FLAY CHINA HR ABUSES

Rome, Sept. 30: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged the Vatican on Wednesday to join the United States in denouncing violations of religious freedom in China, saying the Catholic Church should be at the forefront in the fight to insist on basic human rights there.

Pompeo made the appeal at a conference on religious freedom organised by the US Embassy to the Holy See, with top Vatican officials in the audience. It took place at the same time the Vatican is entering into delicate negotiations with Beijing on extending their controversial agreement on nominating bishops for China. Pompeo has strongly criticised the accord, penning an essay earlier this month suggesting that the Vatican had compromised its moral authority by signing it. His article greatly irritated the Vatican, which saw it as interference in the church's internal affairs.

— AP

SHORT TAKES

Mustafizur rues missing IPL

Dhaka: Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman rues missing out on playing in the IPL and the perks that come with it after the postponement of his national team's tour of Sri Lanka amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

On Monday, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Nazmul Hasan had asked Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) to reschedule the three-match Test series next month, as the board wasn't willing to comply with the 14-day quarantine rule proposed by the host nation in view of the pandemic.

"It would have been great to play the Test series. Sri Lanka's proposal to have us quarantined for 14 days didn't seem possible for us," Mustafizur was quoted saying by *Cricbuzz*. The pacer was not given the NOC to take part in the IPL due to national commitments after Mumbai Indians and Kolkata Knight Riders contemplated signing him. — *PTI*

Bairstow loses grip on Test deal

London: England wicketkeeper-batsman Jonny Bairstow lost his Test central contract on Thursday but Ollie Pope, Zak Crawley and Dom Sibley have been rewarded for impressive performances by being added to the red-ball retainer list. The move by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) was not unexpected as Bairstow, 31, has played just one of the past 12 Test matches since the 2019 Ashes. The World Cup winner has been handed a specialist limited-overs deal, with Pope, Crawley and Sibley all promoted after scoring their maiden Test centuries over the past year. Mark Wood, thought to be a key part of England's plans to retain the Ashes, has also been named in the white-ball only list. There are a dozen names in each group, with just five — Joe Root, Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Jofra Archer and Chris Woakes — appearing in both. — *AFP*

Easy openers for Srikanth, Saina

Odense: Olympic hopefuls Kidambi Srikanth and Saina Nehwal were on Wednesday handed decent draws at the Denmark Open Super 750 tournament which will mark the restart of the adjusted international calendar after a coronavirus-forced hiatus of seven months. Former world number one Saina and Srikanth will resume their hunt for valuable ranking points to inch closer to their Tokyo Olympics dreams when the \$750,000 tournament, the only event to take place since the All England Championship, begins on October 13.

Srikanth, a Rio Olympics quarterfinalist, will open against England's Toby Pentty and may face fellow Indian Subhankar Dey in the second round. For world number 20 Saina, France's Yaelle Hoyaoux awaits her in the women's singles opener and she is likely to meet local favourite Mia Blüchfeldt, seventh seed, next. — *PTI*

Spurs beat Blues with last penalty

London: Tottenham staged a second-half comeback before eliminating Chelsea on penalties to reach the quarterfinals of the League Cup. The first nine penalties were all successfully converted before Chelsea's Mason Mount missed the target to ensure Tottenham advanced 5-4 in the shootout after the game ended 1-1. Timo Werner scored his first goal for Chelsea in the 19th minute as Sergio Reguilin gave the ball away on his Tottenham debut at left back. Reguilin made amends in the second half when he chipped the ball over for Erik Lamela, who got ahead of Emerson Palmieri to net the equaliser in the 83rd minute. — *AP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Kings XI Punjab vs Mumbai Indians from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

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

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KNIGHTS' DAY

Kolkata clip Rajasthan wings with clinical performance

Dubai, Sept. 30: Kolkata Knight Riders beat Rajasthan Royals by 37 runs in their IPL match here on Wednesday.

Batting first, the Knights made 174 for 6 and then restricted the Royals to 137 for 9, Tom Curran being the top scorer with an unbeaten 54.

Earlier, Jofra Archer (2/18) hit the deck hard and clocked the fastest delivery of the tournament (152.1 kph) in a fiery spell, taking two key wickets of KKR — in-form opener Shubman Gill (47 from 34 balls) and skipper Dinesh Karthik (1) — after the Royals opted to field.

With Archer triggering a mid-innings collapse, the big-hitting Andre Russell (24 from 14) too was dismissed cheaply and it was left to England World Cup-winning skipper Eoin Morgan (23-ball 34 not out) to stay till the end.

Archer bowled the first over of the match and there was full pace in display in the range of 145-150kph mark and it needed Gill's brilliance to see him off with just one run from it.

With Gill looking well set for a second successive fifty, Archer was reintroduced in the 12th over and he dismissed the set opener straightway with a leading edge.

In his next over, Archer dismissed Karthik with a beauty, full of pace that went straight with a bit of inswing and the KKR skipper was forced to play, edging straight to Jos Buttler.

— *PTI*



Kamlesh Nagarkoti (centre) of the Kolkata Knight Riders celebrates taking the wicket of Riyan Parag of Rajasthan Royals in their IPL match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Wednesday. — *BCCI*

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	3	2	1	0	4	+0.483
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	2	1	0	4	+0.017
Rajasthan Royals	3	2	1	0	4	-0.219
Royal Challengers Bangalore	3	2	1	0	4	-1.450
Kings XI Punjab	3	1	2	0	2	+1.498
Mumbai Indians	3	1	2	0	2	+0.654
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	0	2	-0.228
Chennai Super Kings	3	1	2	0	2	-0.840

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

SCORECARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubman Gill c & b Archer 47, S. Narine b Unadkat 15, N. Rana c Riyan Parag b Rahul Tewatia 22, Andre Russell c Unadkat b Rajpoot 24, Dinesh Karthik c Buttler b Archer 13, Eoin Morgan (not out) 34, Pat Cummins c Samson b Tom Curran 12, Kamlesh Nagarkoti (not out) 8. **Extras:** (LB-3, W-8) 11. **Total:** (for 6 wickets, in 20 overs) 174. **FoW:** 1-36, 2-82, 3-89, 4-106, 5-115, 6-149. **Bowling:** Jofra Archer 4-0-18-2, Ankit Rajpoot 4-0-39-1, Jaydev Unadkat 2-0-14-1, Tom Curran 4-0-37-1, Gopal 4-0-43-0, Riyan Parag 1-0-14-0, Rahul Tewatia 1-0-6-1. **Rajasthan Royals:** Jos Buttler c Varun b Shivam Mavi 21, Steve Smith c Karthik b Cummins 3, Sanju Samson c Narine b Shivam Mavi 8, Robin Uthappa c Shivam Mavi b Nagarkoti 2, Riyan Parag c Shubman Gill b Nagarkoti 1, Rahul Tewatia b Varun 14, Tom Curran (not out) 54, Shreyas Gopal c Karthik b Narine 5, Jofra Archer c Nagarkoti b Varun 6, Jaydev Unadkat c Nagarkoti b Kuldeep Yadav 9, Ankit Rajpoot (not out) 7. **Extras:** (LB-6, W-1) 7; **Total:** (for 9 wickets, in 20 overs) 137. **FoW:** 1-15, 2-30, 3-39, 4-41, 5-42, 6-66, 7-81, 8-88, 9-106. **Bowling:** Sunil Narine 4-0-40-1, Pat Cummins 3-0-13-1, Shivam Mavi 4-0-20-2, Kamlesh Nagarkoti 2-0-13-2, C. Varun 4-0-25-2, Kuldeep Yadav 3-0-20-1.

DELHI CAPITALS CAPTAIN FINED FOR SLOW RATE

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 30: Delhi Capitals skipper Shreyas Iyer has been slapped with a fine of ₹12 lakh after his team maintained a slow over-rate against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their IPL match here.

"Delhi Capitals Captain Shreyas Iyer has been fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during their Indian Premier League match match against Sunrisers Hyderabad on 29 September 2020. As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences, Mr. Iyer was fined ₹12 lakh," an IPL release stated.

Last week, RCB captain Virat Kohli was found guilty of his team maintaining a slow-over rate against Kings XI Punjab and was also fined ₹12 lakh. — *PTI*

Rashid pays tribute to late mom after top class show

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 30: Sunrisers Hyderabad's strike bowler Rashid Khan struggled to hold back tears, dedicating his Man of the Match performance against Delhi Capitals in the IPL to his mother and biggest fan who died earlier this year.

Rashid's triple strike made all the difference, allowing Sunrisers to defend 162 for their first win of the IPL season, on Tuesday.

"It has been a tough one and a half year for me, first my dad expired and then my mom (in June this year). And it took a bit of time for me to come back.

"My mom was my biggest fan, especially in the IPL and when I was the MoM, she would always talk to me through the night," recalled an emotional Rashid at the post-match presentation. Rashid said he did not



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— **RASHID KHAN**
Sunrisers Hyderabad player

feel the pressure going into the field and reaped the benefits of bowling quicker than usual on a slow surface.

"I bowled quicker today, when I started and bowled my first ball, I realised it. You need two three balls to know what the right pace is. In these conditions you need to bowl back of a length to the

batsmen. Warner always backs me and tells me that you know what's best for the team. Only when things aren't going my way I go and ask the captain what to do," Rashid added.

Delhi Capitals skipper Shreyas Iyer said his team did not read the conditions well in their first game here. — *PTI*

HYDERABAD OUTPLAYED US: COACH RICKY

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 30: Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting had no qualms in admitting that they were "outplayed" in all departments in the IPL game against Sunrisers Hyderabad and refused to blame the pitch, saying it played better when his team batted.

"This was Delhi Capitals' first loss of the season. Chasing 163 for win and to maintain a clean slate, DC were restricted to 147 for seven at the Shaikh Zayed Stadium on Tuesday night. Asked if the conditions made the difference in the game, Ponting insisted that SRH executed their plans better than his team.

"I don't think the conditions were that different. The grounds are bigger, there are bigger square boundaries here. (But) At the end of the day, we were just outplayed by SRH," Ponting said. — *PTI*

Wounded KXIP face gutted MI

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 30: Coming off heartbreaking losses, the Indian Premier League game between Mumbai Indians and Kings XI Punjab will be a test of character for both sides as they look to regain momentum here on Thursday.

KXIP were at the receiving end of the highest successful run-chase in the tournament history as Rajasthan Royals overhauled a target of 224 with three balls to spare on Sunday.

While Kieron Pollard and Ishan Kishan led a remarkable fight-back, chasing 202, before Mumbai went down to Royal Challengers Bangalore in a Super Over.

KXIP have failed to tighten the screws when it mattered most. In their two losses, they were in a good position but could not grab the moments.

Their bowling looked out of sorts against Rajasthan as they failed to defend a big total with Rahul Tewatia hitting pacer Sheldan Cottrell for five sixes in an over to win the match for his team. Mumbai Indians are blessed with a splendid batting firepower with the likes of Rohit,

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 24
- Mumbai won: 13
- Punjab won: 11

MEETING IN 2019

- Kings XI Punjab beat Mumbai Indians by 8 wickets at Mohali
- Mumbai Indians beat Kings XI Punjab by 3 wickets at Mumbai

FOR THE RECORD

- Rohit Sharma who scored 4998 runs at an average of 31.63 and a strike rate of 130.97 in 186 innings of 191 matches, needs just two runs to become the third batsman to score 5000 or more runs in IPL.
- Lokesh Rahul with 222 runs at an average of 111.00 and a strike rate of 156.33 in three innings is the highest run-getter in this IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan at the top-order, followed by the big-hitting Pollard and Hardik Pandya. A major cause of concern for them will be pace ace Jasprit Bumrah's inconsistency. So far he has picked up only three wickets for his team. — *PTI*

A diamond in the rough, Natarajan

Chennai, Sept. 30: Breaking through the shackles of poverty by bowling pinpoint yorkers at will, Thangarasu Natarajan has done almost everything he could for his family, except for convincing his mother to give up selling chicken on the roadside.

That she wouldn't as she feels it had helped the family survive the tough times, said Jayaprakash, Natarajan's mentor.

The birth of Natarajan as a death bowling specialist had taken place a few years before the ongoing IPL, where he is rattling the best of batsmen with his yorkers, ball after ball.

In the intervening period, he has managed to build his parents a house, give his sisters education, open an academy in his Chinnappampatti village in Tamil Nadu's Salem district and convince a teammate to not give up the game.

All this while perfecting the art of bowling yorkers and carrying much of Tamil Nadu's pace bowling hopes on his shoulders.

"I am not surprised as he has worked very hard. He has gone through a lot. He has overcome injury prob-



Thangarasu Natarajan

lems, worked his way back into the state team and is now doing well when given an opportunity by SRH," Jayaprakash said.

First picked by Kings XI Punjab for ₹3 crore in 2017, Natarajan took three years to come of his age at the big stage, having proved expensive in the six games that he had played in the past. He was picked by Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2018 but played his first game for them only this season. In SRH's win over Delhi Capitals on Tuesday, Natarajan played his part by hurling a series of yorkers in the innings 14th and 18th over.

His spell of 4-0-21-1 included the prize wicket of Marcus Stoinis. — *PTI*

BOLSTERING THE MIDDLE ORDER IS WARNER TRICK

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 30: Bolstered by the inclusion of Kane Williamson, Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper David Warner is focussed on adding depth and power to his team's fragile middle-order as it moves forward in the Indian Premier League.

Opener Jonny Bairstow's sublime fifty was complemented by Williamson's 26-ball 41 and a stellar bowling effort from Rashid Khan as SRH outplayed Delhi Capitals by 15 runs in the IPL match here on Tuesday.

"We were on track to get 170-180, there is talk of our middle order not being that good, but we put our game together against Delhi and we backed ourselves, we played fluently and we got ourselves a good total," Warner said.

"It was a big call but, at the end of the day, if we get our top four batting right and back our bowlers, we will come good. For us, it is important to establish in the middle," he added. — *PTI*

Djokovic, Nadal on a roll in Paris

Paris, Sept. 30: Defending champion Rafael Nadal took another step closer to a 13th Roland Garros title on Wednesday with a 6-1, 6-0, 6-3 win over Mackenzie McDonald of the United States.

Second seed Nadal claimed his 95th career win at the tournament and next faces either Kei Nishikori of Japan or Italy's Stefano Travaglia for a place in the last 16.

Meanwhile, Novak Djokovic's bid to become the first man in half a century to win all four Grand Slam titles twice got off to a convincing start. Djokovic eased to a 6-0, 6-

2, 6-3 victory, reaching the second round in Paris for a record-equaling 16th time.

It was also his 32nd win in 33 matches in 2020, his only loss coming when he was defaulted from the US Open.

Tuesday's demolition was the not the first time Ymer, the World No. 80 had faced Djokovic who is chasing a second French Open title and 18th career major.

In the immediate aftermath of his US Open retreat, he went to Rome where he captured a record 36th Masters title. Djokovic will meet Lithuania's Ricardas Berankis for a place in the last 32. — *AFP*



Novak Djokovic serves against Mikael Ymer of Sweden in the first round match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris on Tuesday. Djokovic won in straight sets 6-0, 6-2, 6-3. — *AP*