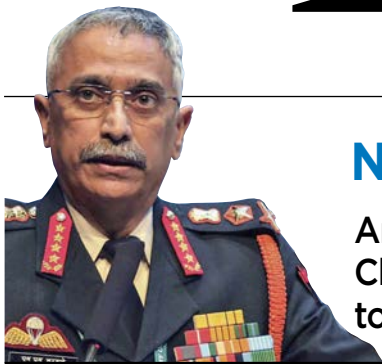


THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER 2020



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Amidst strain in ties, Army Chief Gen. M.M. Naravane to visit Nepal in November



NATION | 3

Maharashtra minister suspects sabotage behind Mumbai power outage



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Television & digital rights of Rajamouli's RRR sold for a whopping ₹200cr

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An artist decorates an idol of Goddess Durga ahead of the Durga Puja festival at Kumartuli in Kolkata on Wednesday.

— PTI

40% households see decline in income: Report

Chennai: Close to half of Indian consumers have seen their household incomes declining since the Covid-19 outbreak, finds a report by Experian. The Global Insights Report of Experian finds that the household incomes of 43 per cent Indian consumers have declined during the pandemic. Consumers have taken significantly stronger actions in almost every possible way to deal with their current financial circumstances. With the increased adoption of digital mode, around 50 per cent of consumers expect an increase in online spending.

Full report on Page 7

Monitor Hathras CBI probe: UP govt to SC

New Delhi: Ahead of Supreme Court hearing on Thursday on the gangrape and murder of a teenage dalit girl in a village of Hathras, the Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday has urged the top court to monitor the CBI probe into the incident. In an affidavit filed on Wednesday, the Uttar Pradesh government has urged the top court to seek a fortnightly report from the Central investigating agency.

Full report on Page 2



What negligence... We will make life jacket compulsory for all citizens!
Subhani, who began CounterPoint on December 11, 1992 and took only one break from work in his entire career, is on personal leave of bereavement. We present some of his best cartoons of rib-tickling wisdom published on Page 1 and on the Edit Page till he returns.

WEATHER

Max: 34°C
Min: 22°C
RH: 51%
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Adhika Ashwayuja
Bahula Trayodasi till 8.31 am
Star: Uttaraphalguni till 5.54 pm
Varjyam: 1.16 am to 2.40 am
Durmuhurtam: 10.05 am to 10.52 am; 2.45 pm to 3.31 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.51 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.22 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 4.24 AM
MOONSET TODAY 5.10 PM

Abdullahs, Mufti join ranks to fight 'onslaught' on J&K

Several like-minded parties to sign 'Gupkar Declaration'

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, OCT. 14

Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream political icons and former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti said on Wednesday that they have resolved to put up a joint front along with other like-minded political parties and leaders against the Centre's "onslaught" on the erstwhile state's unique identity, the political and economic interests of its people and to seek restoration of the special status it enjoyed prior to August 5, 2019.

The Abdullahs on Wednesday called on People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief at her official residence here to briefly discuss with her the contours of a broader alliance, the foundation of which would be the "Gupkar Declaration".

"Gupkar Declaration" is a pledge of Kashmir's mainstream parties which they took at a meeting held at senior Abdullah's residence along Srinagar's Gupkar



Former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti interacts with party leaders at her residence in Srinagar on Wednesday.

— PTI

Road on August 4, 2019, a day before the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories (UTs). It had warned the Centre that abrogation and even modification of Articles 35A and 370 of the Constitution and delimitation or trifurcation of the state would be seen as "aggression" against its people and fought back tooth and nail. The meeting had also unanimously declared that all the parties would be united in

their resolve to protect and defend the identity, autonomy and special status of Jammu and Kashmir against all "attacks and onslaughts".

Last month, the leaders of National Conference (NC), PDP, Peoples Conference, Awami National Conference, CPI(M) and the Congress issued a joint statement here saying that they are "wholly bound" by the "Gupkar Declaration" and "will unwaveringly

■ Turn to Page 4

No ministers present ■ Govt accused of double standards

Farmers boycott meet on new laws

New Delhi/Chandigarh, Oct. 14: Farmers' organisations from Punjab on Wednesday boycotted a meeting called by the Union agriculture ministry to resolve their concerns over new farm laws and accused the government of playing double standards with no minister present to hear them out. Representatives from 29 farmers' organisations, including Joginder Singh-led Bharati Kissan Union, were miffed at the absence of agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar and minister of state for agriculture in the meeting.

The meeting was convened at the Krishi Bhavan amid police security to avoid any protest. After the meeting, agitated farmers' representa-



Farmers block railway tracks Bathinda on Wednesday during their agitation over new farm laws.

— PTI

tives tore up copies of new farm laws outside Krishi Bhavan. More than 30 representatives, who had come in a bus, were mostly senior citizens.

"Neither Union agriculture minister nor junior ministers were present to hear our concerns. We asked why the minister is

not meeting us, why the government is playing double standards by calling us here and ministers holding virtual meetings in Punjab. There was no proper response," Darshan Pal, member of the coordination committee of 29 farmers' organisations, said.

— PTI

Leader files nomination from Raghapur, promises 10L jobs

Tejashwi: CM never talks about Bihar's 46% unemployment rate

NAYEAR AZAD
with agency inputs
PATNA, OCT. 14

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav filed his nomination papers from the Raghapur constituency in Vaishali district on Wednesday, and promised that he will fulfil all electoral promises, including providing 10 lakh jobs to youth, if voted to power.

Mr Yadav, who is seeking re-election from Raghapur, also challenged chief minister Nitish Kumar to contest against him in his home turf, Nalanda.

"I challenge CM Kumar to contest from Nalanda from any seat he wishes and I will fight against him. He laughs at my poll promises of providing 10 lakh jobs. But I want to tell him that I am a thet

Punjab to bring legislation against gov't's farm laws

Chandigarh: The Punjab government has decided to convene a special session of the state Assembly on October 19 to bring in a legislation to counter the Centre's farm laws.

A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the state Cabinet chaired by CM Amarinder Singh. The meeting was held through a video conferencing, according to a government statement.

The CM had earlier announced that his government will fight the "anti-federal and vicious" farm laws.

■ More on Page 4

Guwahati, Oct. 14: Around 10,000 names will be deleted from the final NRC in Assam as many "ineligible persons" and their descendants were included in the list, according to a directive issued by its state coordinator Hitesh Dev Sarma and officials in the know of the decision.

Mr Sarma wrote to all the deputy commissioners and district registrar of citizen registration (DRCR) on Tuesday, directing them to issue speaking orders for the deletion of such names.

"As per the reports received from your end through Webform, some names of ineligible persons belonging to the categories of DF (declared foreigners)/DV ('D' voters)/PFT (pending in Foreigners Tribunals) along with their descendants have found entry to the NRC," he said.

Mr Sarma directed the district officials to issue orders for deletion of such names from the NRC as per Clause 4(6) of the Schedule under the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003 after "specifically ascertaining the identity of the person".

Explaining the rule and some other relevant clauses, Mr Sarma pointed

out that the authorities concerned can verify and include or exclude any name at any time before the publication of the final NRC.

Though the final National Register of Citizens for Assam was made public in August last year, it is yet to be notified by the Registrar General of India, leaving the historic and controversial document without any official validity.

"You are, therefore, requested to submit the list of such persons who are not eligible for having their names in the NRC along with speaking order justifying reasons for each cases for necessary action for deletion of such names," Mr Sarma said in the letter.

A software application for submission of the reviewed results of such persons along with mechanism for uploading of the scanned freshly written speaking orders will be rolled out shortly, he added.

— PTI

paign trail in the battleground state of Florida where the highlight of his rally was when he broke into a dance to *The Village People's* YMCA. With the song blaring over loudspeakers, the President did what has become his trademark dance, pumping his fists as the crowd cheered. His moves sent Twitter into a tizzy, with many slamming his gesture in the face of virus related death in the US, while others mocked the 74-year-old President's "dad moves".

But Mr Trump, holding his second rally since contracting coronavirus, told a crowd of supporters packed onto an airport tarmac in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, that he felt like "Superman" after the treatment.

"All I know is I took something, whatever the hell it was, I felt good very quickly. I don't know what it was, antibodies, antibiotics. I don't know. I took it, I said I felt like superman," Mr Trump said.

— Agencies

■ More on Page 6

Common man's Diwali is in your hands: SC tells Centre

Govt slammed for delay in waiving interest on interest

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

The Supreme Court on Wednesday hit out at the Centre for taking inordinate time in implementing its decision to waive the interest on interest on loans upto ₹2 crore for six months of the Covid moratorium period, from March 1 to August 31, describing it as "unfair" and saying, the "common man's Diwali in government's hands".

The court told the government to inform it of the steps taken by it and the banks to implement the decision to waive the compound interest on loans upto ₹2 crore for eight categories of borrowers, including individuals and small industries.

"You have taken a decision, please implement it," the court told the government.

The Centre had on October 2 informed the top court of its decision to waive interest on interest (or compound interest) on loans upto ₹2 crore and had said that it will finalise the modalities by November 15.

Making it clear that it will brook no further delay, Justice Ashok Bhushan, heading a three-judge bench also comprising Justice R. Subhash Reddy and Justice M.R. Shah, fixed next date of hearing on November 2.

"We are listing the matter after (Dussehra) vacation on November 2. By then you tell us the modalities of the implementation (of the decision), orders and circulars," Justice Bhushan said.

"Our only query is that when you have taken a decision, it should not require

■ Turn to Page 4

IN BRIEF

3 arrested in ₹2 cr loan forgery case

New Delhi: Three people, including a woman, have been arrested for allegedly obtaining a loan of over ₹2 crore by using forged property documents, police said on Wednesday. Two of the accused have been identified as Rohit Bhutan and Subhash Bhutan, they said. According to police, Rohit and the other accused, residents of Preet Vihar in east Delhi, availed a loan of ₹2,55,60,613 from the complainant company. "The loan was availed by the accused against creation of equitable mortgage of a property at Preet Vihar with averment being the absolute owner of the property and it is free from all the encumbrances," a senior police officer said. "After the verification, the company disbursed the loan of ₹2,55,60,613 to accused persons. Soon after the disbursement of the loan, the accused started defaulting in the repayment of the loan," joint commissioner of police (EOW) O.P. Mishra said. On default, the company conducted the physical inspection of the property and found that the property was already mortgaged to another organisation and a loan of ₹55 lakh was taken by the accused, he said.

3 women held for cheating in exam

New Delhi: Police have arrested three women who had "passed" an online test conducted by the Delhi Subordinate Service Selection Board in 2018 for the post of primary teacher allegedly by hiring a proxy candidate, officials said Wednesday. However, the shrewd impersonator who took the test for these women is yet to be found. The women, arrested by the crime branch on Monday, shared a photograph of the girl who has dodged the exam organisers multiple times and evaded the Delhi police for almost two years. The three women told police that they met the girl separately near their coaching centres in Punjabi Bagh in 2018. She offered to arrange a proxy candidate for the test if they paid her ₹5 lakh for each appearance, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Bhisham Singh said. Each of the three women paid ₹2 lakh as advance and post-selection they were to pay the remaining amount, Singh said. The exams for the post of assistant teacher (primary) were held on several dates between October and November 2018 in which altogether 71,912 candidates appeared, police said. — PTI

Mridula Halan dies of cardiac arrest

New Delhi: Veteran writer Mridula Halan passed away here after a massive heart attack on Tuesday. She was 81. Mridula was an accomplished Hindi writer. Her husband Dr Y.C. Halan was the former editor of Financial Express and her daughter Monika Halan is a financial writer and a senior editor with Mint. One of the oldest members of Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC), Mridula Halan, wrote several books of fiction which were well regarded. The IWPC and its members expressed deepest condolences on Mridula's death.

Woman found dead with injury on neck

New Delhi: The body of a 40-year-old woman with injury marks on the neck was found behind bushes in Dwarka Sector-23 in southwest Delhi, police said Wednesday. The deceased, Sharmila, was married and lived with her family in Revla Khanpur, they said. Her body was found behind the bushes on Tuesday. "She has injury marks on her neck. It appears that she was attacked with a sharp object. It could be a knife or a blade," a senior police officer said. "We have registered a case of murder and efforts are being made to nab the accused," deputy commissioner of police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said. The body will be handed over to the family after a post-mortem examination, he said. — PTI

High-resolution air quality early warning system pressed into service**Pollution level dips slightly**

New Delhi, Oct. 14: The national capital's air quality was recorded in the "poor" category on Wednesday, even as pollution levels dipped slightly, according to government agencies.

According to the ministry of earth sciences' air quality early warning system for Delhi, air quality is likely to improve to the moderate category by Thursday.

The city recorded a 24-hour air quality index (AQI) of 276. It was 300 on Tuesday.

The AQI had hit "very poor" levels on Tuesday morning and stood at 306, which was the worst since February. Thereafter, the pollution levels dipped slightly due to an improvement in the ventilation index.

Ventilation index is the speed at which pollutants can get dispersed. A ventilation index lower than 6,000 metre square per sec-

ond, with average wind speed less than 10 kilometers per hour, is unfavourable for dispersion of pollutants. An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor' and 401 and 500 'severe'. Low temperatures and stagnant winds allow accumulation of pollutants near the ground, affecting air quality.

According to a senior scientist at the India Meteorological Department, the surface

wind direction will be easterly and the maximum wind speed was 10 kilometers per hour on Wednesday, which is not favourable for transport of smoke from farm fires in Haryana and Punjab.

"The ventilation index is likely to be 6,000 sqm/sec on Wednesday and Thursday," he said. The India Meteorological Department has operationalised an advanced high-resolution air quality early warning system for the national capital as well as a separate one for the country, the ministry of earth sciences said on Wednesday.

A very high-resolution city scale model ENFUSER (environmental information fusion service) for Delhi has been operationalised to identify the air pollution hotspots and pollution up to the street level, the MoES said.

Pollution can be captured better with this model, VK.

pollution can be captured better with this model, VK.

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pollution can be captured better with this model, VK.

Woman dead, father injured as water tanker hits scooter

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

An 18-year-old woman died while her father sustained injuries when their two-wheeler was hit by a water tanker in south Delhi's Ambedkar Nagar area, police said on Wednesday.

The deceased girl had recently passed out of class XII and her father Abdul Sattar (52), is a carpenter by profession. The are residents of Gandhi Park, Hauz Rani in Central Delhi, they said.

The accident took place on Tuesday at around 5 pm when Abdul Sattar and his daughter were on their way from Chirag Delhi to Khanpur on a scooter, a senior police officer said.

He said the police were informed by Max hospital about the admission of an 18-year-old due to an accident at the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor. The woman died during treatment, the officer added.

The driver of the water tanker, Kapil (40), a resident of Paraspur village in Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh, has been arrested and the vehicle seized, the police said.

The accused driver has not been found under the influence of alcohol, they said.

Based on the statement of the woman's father, a case was registered under sections 279 (rash driving or riding on a public way), 304 A (causing death by negligence) and 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Indian Penal Code at the Ambedkar Nagar police station, deputy commissioner of police (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said.

Soni, head of the environment monitoring research centre of the IMD noted. Delhi has about 40 air quality monitoring systems.

"We monitor traffic congestion at a 5-metre resolution, and land use and land cover at 30-metre resolution. This will better forecasting," Soni added.

The air quality forecast model System for Integrated Modelling of Atmospheric Composition (SILAM) for the country has been further improved by implementing global emission inventories CAMS-GLOB v2.1 supplemented with EDGAR v4.3.2 for coarse and mineral-fine anthropogenic particulate matter at 10 kilometres resolution. "This will reduce the uncertainty in the forecast. Major uncertainty comes from sources of emission...we don't know the actual sources, another uncertainty comes from meteorology," Soni said.

— PTI

Ban on electricity generators except emergency services**Anti-pollution measures come into force from today**

New Delhi, Oct. 14: The AAP Government has banned use of electricity generators, except those needed for essential or emergency services, in the national capital as anti-pollution measures under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) come into force from Thursday in the Delhi-NCR region.

GRAP, which comes into effect in Delhi and its vicinity towns according to the severity of air-pollution, was first notified by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2017 for implementation through the Supreme Court-mandated Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority.

The essential services include health care facilities, elevators, railway services, Delhi Metro, airports and interstate bus terminals and the data cen-

Solar power generation has gone up from 7 MW to 177 MW in 4 yrs: Kejriwal

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Wednesday solar power generation in Delhi has increased from 7 MW to 177 MW in four years and emphasised on its adoption in a mission mode.

"In the last four years, solar power generation in Delhi has increased from about 7 MW to 177 MW, but this is not enough because Delhi has a vast scope for it. The need is to adopt solar power as a mission," he said at the

inauguration of a 218 KW solar plant at Lady Irwin College in Mandi House area. Kejriwal said the solar

energy growth in Delhi has been slow because people do not know much about it, but the Delhi government has come out with two policies for its promotion in residential areas and for farming.

"Solar power can help farmers increase their per acre income 3-4 times," he said.

supply to the consumers. It also issued an order implementing EPCAs directions to enforce GRAP from Thursday.

— PTI



People walk on a renovated pathway at Chandni Chowk, which is under a beautification drive, in New Delhi on Wednesday.

— PTI

Cops focus on security, adherence to Covid-19 norms in crowded markets

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

With festive season ahead and to ensure people while visiting market follow COVID-19 norms, the Delhi Police this year had planned to focus on security in the city's high-footfall markets. Police said they are also holding meetings with market associations and urging them to ensure social distancing.

Khan Market, Karol Bagh, Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazaar, Connaught Place, Janpath, Lajpat Nagar market and Sarojini Nagar are among the markets in the national capital that draw high footfall.

According to R.P. Meena, deputy commissioner of police (DCP), Southeast district meetings were held with market welfare associations, and an awareness campaign related to Covid-19 was being run and this time, besides anti-terror announce-

ments, a new audio clip related to the Covid-19 will be played through loudspeakers.

"In the audio, the general public will be advised to maintain social distancing while shopping and wear masks properly. Police had a meeting with market welfare association of Lajpat Nagar market. They have deployed their volunteers, who are ensuring the coronavirus norms are followed. We are also running an awareness campaign for the Covid-19 related norms," said the DCP.

"Police is taking several steps such as making announcements for wearing masks, follow social distancing, and washing hands regularly. These are being done through police vehicles and public address systems that are in place at crowded places such as markets," said Dr Eish Singhal, the Delhi Police spokesperson. "Police teams present at

3,324 cases, 44 deaths in 24 hrs

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

The national capital's coronavirus infection tally rose to 3.17 lakh with authorities reporting 3,324 new cases on Wednesday, while 44 fatalities took the number of deaths to 5,898. This is the second consecutive day that the city reported more than 3,000 cases. A total of 3,036 cases were recorded on Tuesday.

The city reported 44 deaths due to Covid-19 on Wednesday, according to a health department bulletin. The fatality count was 45 on Tuesday, 40 on Monday, 29 on Sunday and 48 on Saturday.

such places also apprise people about the three precautionary measures to

fight coronavirus (Covid-19). For violators, we are issuing challans. For the needy, we are distributing masks," said Dr Singhal.

Meanwhile, on Monday, Anto Alphonse, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), North district, visited the Chandni Chowk market and reviewed security arrangements there.

"Police officers also met with representatives of the different market associations. The officials discussed about the necessary measures to be taken for the security of traders as well as of visitors to the market. The police urged the shopkeepers' association members to install maximum number of cameras in the market and ensure deployment of guards. All shopkeepers were advised to keep sanitisation arrangements and try to ensure social distancing," said a police official.

Same sex marriage: HC seeks Centre's response

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought the Centre's response on separate pleas by two same sex couples, one seeking to get married under the Special Marriage Act (SMA) and the other seeking registration of their wedding in the US under the Foreign Marriage Act (FMA). A bench of justices RS Endlaw and Asha Menon issued notice to the Centre and the Delhi government seeking their stand on the plea by two women seeking to get married under the SMA and challenging provisions of the statute to the extent it does not provide for same sex marriages.

The court also issued notice to the Centre and the Consulate General of India in New York on the other plea by two men who got married in the US but

were denied registration of their marriage under the FMA. The bench listed both matters for hearing on January 8, 2021. During the hearing, the bench said it has no doubts regarding maintainability of the petitions, but added that the concept of marriage emanates from the customary laws which do not recognise same sex marriages. It also said that marriage is not defined under the SMA and FMA and everyone interprets what a marriage is according to the customary laws.

It said once same sex marriages are recognised under the customary laws, it would be followed by the other statutes like SMA and FMA and added that if the petitioners wished to make any changes in their pleas to challenge definition of marriage, now was the time instead of having to do it at a much later stage in the proceedings.

UP govt urges SC to monitor CBI probe into Hathras gangrape case

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

Ahead of Supreme Court hearing on Thursday on the gang rape and murder of a teenage Dalit girl in a village of Hathras, the Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday has urged the top court to monitor CBI probe into the incident.

In an affidavit filed today, the State government has urged the top court to seek a fortnightly report from the central investigating agency.

In an affidavit filed in pursuance to the top court's order to provide security to the victim's family and witnesses, the state government has said the family has been given a 3-layered security and assured the court that it is committed to give full security to the family and the witnesses

► The CBI has said that adequate protection has been provided to the family living in Chandpa village and they include the victim's parents, two brothers, a sister-in-law and her grandmother

as adequate forces have been deployed for the purpose.

It has sought the court's direction to the CBI to submit fortnightly status reports on the investigation to the state government for the Director General of State Police to file them to the court.

In the last hearing on October 6, the Uttar Pradesh government had expressed willingness to hand over the investigation to the CBI on the ground that it would at least stop the fake narratives being spread about the case with political

motives.

The CBI has since taken over and started the probe. In the new affidavit filed today, the state government wants the court to keep the petition in the case pending, allowing the CBI to probe in a time-bound manner.

It said 15 armed constabulary personnel have been posted near and outside the victim's house besides civil police component comprising guard, gunners and shadowers and eight CCTV cameras installed in the outer surrounding besides flood lights to keep watch on the area.

It has said that adequate protection has been provided to the family living in Chandpa village and they include the victim's parents, two brothers, a sister-in-law and her grandmother.

NDMC launches 2 YouTube channels for schoolchildren

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

In view of the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, to provide digital audio-visual learning platform to its teachers and students, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has launched two educational YouTube Channels — "Atal Adarsh Shiksha" and "Navyug Pragati".

After launching the educational YouTube channels, NDMC chairman Dharmendra said that today the entire world is going through a very difficult time due to the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic.

Education institutions have also been hit hard as the schools have been shut down since March, 2020.

"In this 'New Normal' which we may call this period, our schools have

risen to the occasion and switched to online teaching. Unprecedented times require unprecedented measures, so despite all odds, our educators have been working hard to find innovative solutions to make learning better and accessible to all," he added.

According to Mr Dharmendra, the Education Department of NDMC has come up with the idea of starting its own dedicated YouTube channel: For "Navyug School the YouTube Channel will be called — "Navyug Pragati" and for Atal Adarsh Vidyalaya it will be "Atal Adarsh Shiksha" to provide learning platform to our teachers and students.

These videos are based on school syllabus and have been made by NDMC teachers who teach in schools, he added.

SHORT TAKES

CORONAVIRUS
RECOVERIES
CROSS 63L-MARKAGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

India's overall cases of Coronavirus reached 72.39 lakh on Wednesday after 63,509 new infections were detected in a day. The Covid-19 death toll reached 1,10,586 with the virus claiming 730 lives in the last 24 hours. India is just behind the US in terms of the highest number of cases in the world. The US has close to 81 lakh total cases till now. The number of people who have recovered from Covid-19 has crossed 63 lakh taking the recovery rate to 87.05 per cent while for the sixth consecutive day now the active cases have remained below 9 lakh. There are 8.27 lakh active cases of Covid-19 infection in the country which comprises 11.42 per cent of the total caseload. The case fatality rate was recorded at 1.53 per cent. Union health ministry officials said India is registering new recoveries more than the new cases consistently in the recent days, as a result, the active cases are steadily declining and comprise only 11.42% of the total positive cases of the country. "74,632 Covid cases have recovered and discharged in the last 24 hours whereas the new confirmed cases stand at 63,509. Higher number of recoveries has aided the national Recovery Rate to further improve to 87.05%," officials said.

SHIVRAJ FLAYS
KAMAL NATH FOR
'NAME-CALLING'RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, OCT. 14

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday took a dig at his predecessor and Congress veteran Kamal Nath for 'calling him names', even as Chouhan launched no-holds-barred attack against him while campaigning for his party for the November 3 by-elections in 28 Assembly constituencies in the state. Chouhan has accused Nath of getting personal while criticising him at his election meetings. "I am a 5-time-MP, 5-time-MLA and 4-time-Chief Minister. Is it appropriate to call me names? Nath calls me an accomplished actor in real life," Mr Chouhan said. Mr Nath had earlier poked fun at Chouhan for kneeling down before people in his election meetings, saying that the Chief Minister was a very good actor in real life and can even beat the likes of Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan in acting. He had earlier also taken a jibe at Chouhan for going on a spree of laying foundation stones for various projects ahead of the November 3 Assembly by-elections, saying "the Chief Minister carries a coconut with him wherever he goes and cracks it whenever he gets the opportunity".



Shivraj

15-YR-OLD DALIT
GANGRAPE VICTIM
ENDS LIFE IN U.P.

Chitrakoot: A dalit teenage girl, who was allegedly raped by three men, has ended her life by hanging in this district of Uttar Pradesh, officials said. Chitrakoot Superintendent of Police (SP) Ankit Mittal said the 15-year-old girl hanged herself in her house in the Manikpur area on Tuesday. After the girl's death, her family members alleged that she was raped by three men in a forest area on October 8, the officer said. On the basis of a complaint from the victim's family members, a former village head's son Kishan Upadhyay and two others — Ashish and Satish — were arrested under the relevant Sections of the IPC, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, Mittal said. The family members alleged that the girl ended her life as her complaint was not registered, a charge denied by the police, who said that the victim's kin had not given any application to lodge an FIR. — PTI

India blasts Pak for its
'bigoted J&K agenda'

Both nations didn't name each other at C'wealth meet

SRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

Soon after Pakistan attacked India at a Commonwealth meeting on the Kashmir issue, India hit back with full force on Wednesday, saying it is a "globally acknowledged promoter of state-sponsored terrorism" that masquerades as a victim of the menace. Both countries didn't name each other in their respective statements though it was clear who they were referring to. Pakistan raised the issue of India's alleged sponsorship of terror activities aimed against Islamabad, and described Jammu and Kashmir as a "disputed territory".

MEA's secretary (West) Vikas Swarup said it was unfortunate that the Commonwealth meeting was "misused by one of our South Asian member states to pursue its own bigoted, ill-conceived, narrow and unilateral agenda on a multilateral platform".

Recalling Pakistan's role

► **PAKISTAN HAD** accused India at the meeting of trying to create a demographic change in Kashmir which is referred to as a 'disputed territory' and also targeting religious minorities

in the genocide of 1971 in erstwhile East Pakistan that led to the creation of Bangladesh, Mr Swarup reminded the 20th Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting that Pakistan had "brought genocide to South Asia 49 years back when it killed its own people".

Earlier, Pakistan had accused India at the meeting of trying to create a demographic change in Kashmir which is referred to as a "disputed territory" and also targeting religious minorities after which the MEA hit back, asking Pakistan to vacate its illegal occupation of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

MEA's secretary (West) Swarup said, "... It was unfortunate that today's Commonwealth Meeting

was misused by one of our south Asian member state to pursue its own bigoted, ill-conceived, narrow and unilateral agenda on a multilateral platform. When we heard them rant about a south Asian state, we were left wondering why it was describing itself? And not surprisingly it came from a globally acknowledged promoter of state-sponsored terrorism masquerading as an alleged victim of the same."

"We heard it from a country that brought genocide to South Asia 49 years back when it killed its own people. This is also the same country that has the dubious distinction of becoming synonymous with the phrase "epicentre of terrorism" and hosting the largest number of terrorists proscribed by the United Nations. The only dispute left in what it alleged today as a 'disputed territory' is its own illegal occupation of certain parts, which sooner or later, it would have to vacate," Mr Swarup added.

MUMBAI METRO
SERVICES TO
RESUME MONDAYSONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, OCT. 14

The Maharashtra government on Wednesday allowed the operation of Metro services to resume in Mumbai from October 15. However, the Mumbai Metro One said that it will start operations from October 19 and the services will be operated from 8.30am to 8.30pm.

"We are restarting Metro operations from October 19 in graded manner with all Covid related precautions to ensure safe travel for our commuters. We urge Mumbaiers to support by fulfilling all guidelines and precautions," Mumbai Metro One spokesperson said.

In a statement, MMR said that the entry points at every station will be limited in order to ensure effective crowd management, screening and further movement into station areas.

Payal
GhoshRicha
Chadda

mitted a statement of undertaking. On the last hearing, Justice Menon had given them time till Wednesday to file their consent terms.

Ms Ghosh, in the undertaking, said she was withdrawing the statement she made against Chadda and tendered an apology. Mr Satpute told the court, "The parties have agreed they would not file any cases against each other with regard to this matter and there would not be any demand for monetary compensation."

Ms Chadda's advocate Saveena Bedi Sachar also seconded that both the actors have decided to end the dispute amicably.

Defamation suit: Payal
apologises to RichaAGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 14

Actor Payal Ghosh on Wednesday gave an undertaking to the Bombay high court agreeing to withdraw all her defamatory statements, posts against fellow actor Richa Chadda and also has tendered unconditional apology for her defamatory statements.

Justice A.K. Menon disposed of the defamation suit filed by Ms Chadda against Ghosh after both submitted their consent terms. Ms Chadda had last week filed the defamation suit against Ghosh for making a false, baseless, indecent and derogatory statement against her and sought monetary compensation as damages.

Appearing for Ms Ghosh, advocate Nitin Satpute told the High court that both the parties have settled the matter amicably and sub-

Centre govt
clears new
₹5,718 crore
edu schemeAGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday cleared a ₹5,718-crore project titled "Strengthening Teaching Learning and Results for States (STARS)" with financial support of World Bank worth ₹3,700 crore, for supporting states in developing and improving education outcomes.

According to official sources, the project covers six states namely Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala and Odisha.

The project envisions improving the overall monitoring and measurement activities in the Indian school education system through interventions in selected states. The project shifts focus from the provision of inputs and maintaining of outputs to actual outcomes by linking the receipt and disbursement of funds to these outcomes.

The identified states will be supported for various interventions for improving the quality of education.

Besides this project, it is also envisaged to implement a similar ADB funded project in five states namely Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Assam. All states will partner with one other state for sharing their experiences and best practices.

POWER OUTAGE BJP leader also demands probe into incident
Maha minister hints at sabotageBHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, OCT. 14

Giving a fresh twist to the power outage issue in Mumbai and surrounding cities, Maharashtra energy minister Nitin Raut has expressed the possibility of a sabotage behind the incident. All angles of foul play will be looked at for the blackout, he said on Wednesday.

"Possibility of a sabotage cannot be ruled out in respect of power trip that resulted in blackout on October 12 at Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane," Mr Raut tweeted. A high-level inquiry will be held and strong action will be taken against the guilty officials, he added.

Life in Mumbai, the financial capital of the



Nitin Raut

► **A HIGH-LEVEL** inquiry will be held and strong action will be taken against the guilty officials, he added. Life in Mumbai was crippled on Monday morning due to a major grid failure, which resulted in a massive power outage. The three-hour-long blackout left Mumbai city and the suburbs in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) without electricity, causing huge inconvenience to people. Power outage was reported from nearby cities like Thane, Palghar, Navi Mumbai, Panvel, Dombivli and Kalyan as well.

country, was heavily crippled on Monday morning due to a major grid failure, which resulted in a massive power outage. The three-hour-long blackout left Mumbai city and the suburbs in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) without electricity, causing huge inconvenience to people. Power outage was reported from nearby cities like Thane, Palghar, Navi Mumbai, Panvel, Dombivli and Kalyan as well.

"The power breakdown

in Mumbai was not a small issue. Our team was working on the 400 KV Kalva-Padga line and the load was shifted from circuit 1 to 2. But, due to the technical problem, the Kharghar unit stopped. There was islanding in Mumbai which shouldn't have happened. This is the reason that possibility of sabotage is suspected," Mr Raut said.

According to the minister, a similar incident of grid failure had taken place in 2011. An inquiry

committee was set up and it had recommended guidelines to prevent such incidents in the future. An action taken report has been sought to find out about the implementation of those guidelines, he added.

A technical team from the Centre is in Mumbai to study the reasons behind the power failure and it will submit its report in a week, said Mr Raut.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Ashish Shelar has demanded a probe by investigation agencies on the issue. "If the energy minister is suspecting sabotage behind the power outage, has he informed the investigation agencies about it? There should be a probe by these agencies in this case," he said.

Digital India



Students, who do not have access to mobile phones or laptops, attend their school classes at a mobile phone library in Mumbai on Wednesday. Called Online Education Mobile Library, the library is equipped with 10 smart-phones and wifi connectivity. After months of exasperation over a deepened digital divide in accessing online education, a teachers' union decided to set up three mobile phone libraries for Class 1-10 students. — PTI

■ At event to honour Indian doc, Sun prods Delhi for talks

India, China common interests
outweigh differences: EnvoyUS seeks open Indo-Pacific,
greater Quad cooperationSRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

Invoking the legacy of Indian doctor Dwarkanath Kotnis, who had treated the sick and wounded in China from 1938 to 1942, Chinese ambassador Sun Weidong called for a "new chapter" in the bilateral ties, saying that the two countries "need to enhance mutual trust and strengthen cooperation more than ever to write a new chapter in China-India friendship". He also said the "common interests of the two countries far outweigh the frictions and differences".

Expressing confidence that the "friendship between Chinese and Indian people will be ever-green like a pine tree", the Chinese envoy said both nations "have the wisdom and ability to overcome difficulties and bring bilateral relations back on track to forge ahead".

He was speaking at an event on Tuesday to mark the 110th birth anniversary of Dr Kotnis, who treated the sick and wounded during the Japanese occupation of parts of China. "Over 70 years ago, China and India helped and supported each other in the

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

Ahead of the Indo-US 2+2 Dialogue at the foreign and defence ministerial level, US deputy secretary of state Stephen E. Biegun "underscored the importance of the US-India partnership, particularly in advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific".

Biegun "emphasised the work of the Quad toward a region protected and made prosperous in equal measure by strong and peaceful nations in the Indo-Pacific, a veiled reference to the Chinese military threat in the region. Mr Biegun was on a three-day visit to Indian that

ended on Wednesday. He also underscored enhanced cooperation among the Quad to create resilient supply chains, promote transparency and increase maritime security, topics most recently discussed in the October 6 meeting of foreign ministers attended by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the state department said in a readout of his trip.

Mr Biegun had also held an important meeting with foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla earlier on Tuesday in New Delhi in which they had "reviewed the entire gamut of engagements under the India-US Comprehensive Global

Strategic Partnership, including political, security and defence, economic, commercial, technology and people-to-people contacts". They had also "exchanged views on a number of regional and global issues of mutual interest".

While in New Delhi, Mr Biegun also met Bhutanese ambassador to India Maj. Gen. Vetsop Namgyel to "reaffirm the United States' close relationship with the people of Bhutan". It may be recalled that China has a territorial dispute with Bhutan too which is a decades-old close friend of India. The US official will now visit Bangladesh.

struggle for national liberation and independence and forged a deep friendship... We need to enhance mutual trust and strengthen cooperation more than ever to write a new chapter in China-India friendship," he said.

"Recently, the bilateral relations have encountered

some difficulties and challenges. As two major neighbouring countries, it is normal to have differences. We need to put differences in an appropriate place in bilateral relations, properly manage and resolve them through dialogue and consultation and not allow differences to become dis-

putes. ... The common interests of the two countries far outweigh the frictions and differences. I believe that with the joint efforts of both sides, we have the wisdom and ability to overcome difficulties and bring bilateral relations back on track to forge ahead," Mr Sun added.

NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P.) Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
E-Tender are invited from firms/ contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & http://etender.up.nic.in . Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.	
(A) 1.	36/GM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2020-21, Name of Work:- D/o & M/o Village (Drain, Culvert and Saump Development works for Village- Gulawali), Noida Cost - Rs. 20.56 Lacs
2.	23/E-Tender/GM/SM(WC-3)/2020-21, Name of Work:- M/o Road (Repairing of footover bridge at MP-3 road between Sector-34 & 51), Noida Cost - Rs. 10.51 Lacs
3.	29/GM/SM(WC-6)/2020-21, Name of Work:- D/o Sector-120 (Rising and Maintenance of Drain wall towards road along 24m wide road), Noida Cost - Rs. 20.40 Lacs
Which can be uploaded by date 29.10.2020 upto 5.00PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 30.10.2020 at 11.00AM.	
General Manager NOIDA	
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA	

Jewellery store in Gujarat puts
up apology over withdrawn ad

Gandhidham, Oct. 14: A Tanishq jewellery showroom in Gandhidham town of Gujarat's Kutch district has put up a note on its door, apologising to Hindus in the district over the brand's controversial TV ad which has been withdrawn.

The handwritten note in Gujarati also condemned the TV commercial.

"We apologise to Hindu community of Kutch on the shameful advertisement of Tanishq," the note read. It was pasted

► **THE HANDWRITTEN** NOTE in Gujarati also condemned the TV commercial. Photos of the apology note have gone viral on social media.

on the showroom's door on October 12, and has since been removed, police said.

Photos of the apology note have gone viral on social media.

The showroom manager and local police rubbished media reports that the showroom was attacked by some people

angry with the Tanishq advertisement.

"No such attack has taken place," said superintendent of police, Kutch-East, Mayur Patel. The TV commercial featured a Muslim family preparing for an upcoming baby shower for their Hindu daughter-in-law.

Tanishq jewellery brand is a division of Titan company, promoted by the Tata Group in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation. — PTI



SHORT TAKES

CABINET CLEARS ₹520CR SPECIAL PACKAGE FOR J&K

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday hailed the Union cabinet's decision to approve a special package of ₹520 crore for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh under the National Rural Livelihood Mission, saying it will further 'ease of living' for the people there. Mr Modi also said the STARS project, which was also approved by the cabinet, strengthens the efforts to transform the education sector. The Cabinet has approved a special package of ₹520 crore for the two UTs for a period of five years till financial year 2023-24 and decided to ensure funding of DAY-NRLM in J&K and Ladakh on a demand-driven basis without linking allocation with poverty ratio during this extended period, the rural development ministry said in a statement. "The cabinet decision will further 'ease of living' for the people of Jammu and Kashmir as well as Ladakh," the PM tweeted. The cabinet also approved the STARS project under the new National Education Policy to support states in strengthening the school education system.

LEFT-CONG TALKS ON SEAT-SHARING FOR BENGAL SOON

Kolkata: Talks between the Left and the Congress over sharing of seats for the 2021 West Bengal assembly elections will begin next week, their leaders said on Wednesday. The Left and the Congress have hit the roads together over the last one year on several issues, opposing the TMC government in the state and the BJP-led government at the Centre. "Now, this is the time to take forward this alliance to its logical conclusion, and that is sharing of seats for the elections. The preliminary talks will begin next week," state Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said. "The TMC and the BJP are trying to polarise the state on communal lines, and it is the duty of the Left and the Congress to provide a third alternative," he said. The two sides want to begin the talks as early October for the elections likely to be held in April-May next year to avoid last-minute hiccups, he said. The Left-Congress tie-up bagged 76 seats in the 294-member Assembly in 2016.

Abdullahs, Mufti...

■ **Continued from Page 1** adhere to it." Earlier, the NC's political affairs committee had authorised its president Farooq Abdullah "to widen the acceptance of the 'Gupkar Declaration' among all the sections in Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh". The signatories of the declaration are scheduled to meet at Farooq Abdullah's residence on Thursday afternoon to discuss the future strategy. Ms Mufti, who could not attend the last meeting, will participate in the deliberations. Omar Abdullah tweeted, "My father & I called on @MehboobaMufti Sahiba this afternoon to enquire about her well-being after her release from detention. She has kindly accepted Farooq Sb's invitation to join a meeting of the Gupkar Declaration signatories tomorrow afternoon". Ms Mufti retweeted Mr Abdullah's tweet with her comment, "It was nice of you & Farooq sahab to come home. It gave me courage listening to him. I'm sure together we all can change things for the better".

Diwali of borrowers...

■ **Continued from Page 1** one month to be implemented. It will not be fair for the government to take that long," Justice Bhushan told solicitor general Tushar Mehta, adding that the benefits of its decision must "percolate" to people. "They want some concrete results... Their Diwali is now in your hands. Common man's Diwali is in government's hands". The court's strong stand on implementation of the government's decision to waive compound interest came in the course of the hearing of a batch of petitions by individual borrowers and by different sectors of industry, including power sector and real estate, seeking waiver of interest on interest during the moratorium period, restructuring of loans and the extension of moratorium period which ended on August 31.

Punjab nod to 33% quota for women in state civil services

Farmers' representatives tear copies of new farm laws

Chandigarh, Oct. 14: In a step towards further empowerment of women, the Amarinder Singh government on Wednesday approved 33 per cent reservation for women in direct recruitment for the Punjab civil services, boards and corporations.

The state Cabinet, at a meeting presided by chief minister Amarinder Singh, approved the "Punjab Civil Services (Reservation of Posts for Women) Rules, 2020" to provide such reservation for women for direct recruitment to posts in government, as well as in recruitment to Boards and Corporations in Group A, B, C and D posts, an official spokesperson said. The Cabinet also gave its nod to a bill to replace the "Punjab State Vigilance Commission Ordinance, 2020". It will be introduced in the next Assembly session. "The establishment of the multi-member Commission, aimed at bringing in more transparency and check corruption among public servants, was approved by the Cabinet last month through the ordinance. "It is in line with the

State to bring legislation against Centre's farm laws

Chandigarh, Oct. 14: The Punjab government has decided to convene a special session of the state assembly on October 19 to bring in a legislation to counter the Centre's farm laws. A decision to this effect was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by chief minister Amarinder Singh. The chief minister had earlier announced that his government will fight the anti-federal and

vicious farm laws tooth and nail through legislative, legal and other routes. A few days ago, the CM had said he would call a special session of the assembly to bring in necessary amendments to state laws to negate the dangerous impact of the central legislations, which are designed to ruin the farmers as well as the state's agriculture and economy. — PTI

With the Cabinet decision, the Punjab governor has been authorised to convene the 13th (special) session of 15th Punjab Vidhan Sabha, as per clause (1) of Article 174 of the Constitution of India, the statement said. In the last Assembly session on August 28, a resolution was passed to reject three contentious farm ordinances, which later took the shape of the laws. — PTI



ARMY CHIEF TO VISIT NEPAL NEXT MONTH

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

At a time when relations with Nepal have deteriorated in recent months, Indian Army chief General M.M. Naravane will visit the country in November, said sources on Wednesday. This will be the first high profile visit by an Indian official to Nepal since the diplomatic relations have soured. According to sources the visit comes at the invitation of Nepal's government. "The visit was planned earlier but was postponed due to lockdown in both countries owing to Covid-19 pandemic," said a senior official. The dates of the visit are being finalised and is likely to be in the first week of November. During the visit, Gen Naravane will also be conferred the honorary rank of "General of the Nepali Army" by President Vidya Devi Bhandari.

Veterans condemn false posts on 'Muslim Regiment'

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

Armed forces veterans from Army, Navy and Air Force have written an open letter to the President of India demanding action against those posting fake social media posts that Indian Army had a 'Muslim regiment', which had refused to fight against Pakistan during the 1965 war and was then "disbanded". The letter said that these 'Muslim Regiment' posts are blatantly false because the Indian Army did not have a Muslim Regiment in 1965 or since. "The 'Muslim Regiment' posts are an attack on India's Armed Forces," said the letter signed by 120 veterans including former chief of the Indian navy Admiral (ret'd) Laxminarayan Ramdas. The veterans said that this falsehood is being spread by forces inimical to the country and its Armed Forces and will adversely affect morale and national security.

The letter said that Indian soldiers fight shoulder-to-shoulder as a team at every level of all military functioning and operations regardless of the religion, language, and caste. The letter said that Muslims fighting as part of multi-class regiments proved their absolute commitment to the cause of the nation. "For example, Quartermaster Havildar Abdul Hamid was posthumously awarded Param Vir Chakra, for his courage and valiance in the Battle of Asal Uttar during the 1965 India-Pakistan War. Also, in the 1965 war, Major (later Lt Gen) Mohammad Zaki and Major Abdul Rafey Khan were both awarded Vir Chakra, the latter posthumously, when he fought against the Pakistani division commanded by his own uncle, Maj Gen Sahibzada Yaqub Khan. Such are the legends of Muslim warriors," said the letter.

● **THE LETTER** said that such social media posts questions the loyalty of all serving and retired Muslim soldiers. Further, it helps the enemy by striking at the morale of India's soldiers to degrade their operational capability. ● **THE LETTER** signed by 120 veterans including former chief of the Indian navy Admiral (ret'd) Laxminarayan Ramdas.

It pointed out that even earlier, at partition in 1947, when his Baluch Regiment went to Pakistan, Brigadier Mohammad Usman chose to remain in the Indian Army. "He was approached personally by Jinnah to move to Pakistan, but he refused. He fought the Pakistani invasion in Kashmir, was the senior-most officer killed in action in July 1948, and was posthumously awarded Mahavir Chakra for his gallantry," it said. "He lies buried in the Jamia Millia Islamia campus in Delhi and remains an inspiration to students who throng the annual memorial service that India's Parachute Regiment conducts to honour the gallant paratrooper." The letter said that such social media posts questions the loyalty of all serving and retired Muslim soldiers. Further, it helps the enemy by striking at the morale of India's soldiers to degrade their operational capability, it said. The letter demanded an investigation on the antecedents of individuals who have made 'Muslim Regiment' posts. "Identify and charge individuals who have made 'Muslim Regiment' posts for anti-national activities. Issue warning to the social media providers (Facebook and Twitter) who have enabled 'Muslim Regiment' posts," it added.



RJD leader and candidate from Raghapur constituency Tejashwi Yadav with his elder brother Tej Pratap flashes the victory sign after filing nomination papers for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections in Hajipur district on Wednesday. — PTI

Tejashwi files papers, promises 10L jobs if voted back to power

NAYEAR AZAD
PATNA, OCT. 14

Ahead of RJD releasing manifesto for the upcoming Bihar assembly elections, the NDA has alleged that all promises being made by the opposition are a bundle of lies and "jungle raj will return" in the state if RJD-led grand alliance forms a government in Bihar.

The statement came after RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav filed his nomination from Raghapur assembly seat on Wednesday and hinted that he would be releasing his party's manifesto later this week. The RJD has been holding Nitish Kumar-led NDA government responsible for unemployment, law and order scenario and failure in controlling flood and Covid crisis in Bihar. "He (Nitish Kumar) never talks about the unemployment rate in Bihar which is 46.6 per cent. He should also say what their double engine government did during the last 15 years. They keep raising baseless issues to divert attention from the real agenda", Tejashwi Yadav said. After Tejashwi Yadav filed his nomination from Raghapur, he said that people of the state are not happy with the policies of the state government and would give a resounding victory to the grand alliance during the assembly elections. "People of the state have made up their mind to

Sharad Yadav's daughter Subhashini joins Congress

New Delhi, Oct 14: Ahead of the Bihar assembly elections, Loktantrik Janata Dal chief Sharad Yadav's daughter Subhashini Yadav joined the Congress on Wednesday in the presence of local leaders. Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader and former MP Kali Pandey also joined the Congress.

Both are likely to contest the upcoming assembly elections in Bihar and are seeking tickets from the Congress party. Subhashini Yadav, a social worker, said she is taking the responsibility of carrying on the fight of the 'Mahagathbandhan' in Bihar, as her father Sharad Yadav has always supported it. "I thank Sonia Gandhi,



Subhashini Yadav

Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for giving me this opportunity. Sharad Yadav is not actively taking part in the Bihar elections, as he is not well. He has always supported the 'Mahagathbandhan'. It is my responsibility to take this fight forward and to take Bihar to greater heights," she said. Kali Pandey, who

switched over from the LJP, said it was a homecoming for him as he had earlier extended support to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1984 when he was a member of the Lok Sabha. "I feel honoured to have joined the Congress," he said. In 1980, Pandey won the Bihar Vidhan Sabha election as an independent candidate and then won the 1984 Parliamentary elections from Gopalganj in the state. "This is my old home and I am happy to be back to my old home," he said. Bihar Congress chief Madan Mohan Jha and AICC Secretary for Congress in Bihar Devendra Yadav welcomed the leaders into the party fold. — PTI

base could cause trouble for the RJD as Satish Yadav who is considered equally strong has been fielded by the BJP this year. In 2010, Satish Yadav had shot to fame by defeating former Bihar CM Rabri Devi from the seat by a margin of 13,000 votes. The assembly elections in Bihar for 243 seats are to be held in three phases beginning October 28 and results will be declared on November 10.

Winter clothing, arms and ammo reach forces

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

The Union home ministry has completed the winter deployment for security forces along the entire India-China border stretching right from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. Sources said adequate supplies of arms, ammunition, food, winter clothing and other essential items have already reached forward locations along the sensitive border to deal with any potential threat from China during the coming winter months.

In view of the ongoing tension with Chinese PLA in the Ladakh sector, the Home ministry had decided to ensure that all forward locations along the 3,500 km Indo-China border are provided all possible facilities to ensure proper surveillance and patrolling duties during the harsh winter season. "Some of our forward locations operate in very difficult environment as winter is very harsh due to which some troops had to be withdrawn back. But this winter all locations will have proper surveillance and patrolling due to deployment of troops. For this we have ensured that all state-of-the-art facilities are provided to troops like winter clothing, tents, heaters, food, arms and ammunition in adequate quantity which will last them till at least April next year," a senior security official said. Top security sources also claimed that this was probably the first time that all supplies in terms

of "winter deployment" has been completed well in time and onset of the winter season. Though this exercise is conducted every year however, sources added, that this time the "scale and magnitude of the deployment" was much more as compared to any previous occasion in recent times. The entire massive mobilisation of ensuring that all supplies in terms to men and material reach every important location along the Indo-China border was carried out in close co-ordination with both Air Force and Army by the Home Ministry. In view of the ongoing tension in the Ladakh sector, which has been continuing since May, it was decided by the security establishment in the Capital during the summer months itself to start preparing for the "winter deployment". "This advance planning has helped us to ensure that our borders remain well-protected even during the coming winter season. Our forces are fully prepared and well equipped to deal with any misadventure from China firmly," the official added.

THE ASIAN AGE

15 OCTOBER 2020

Koshyari's conduct is beyond the pale

Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari's letter to chief minister Uddhav Thackeray earlier this week asking him to order the reopening of temples, closed on account of the Covid threat, in the upcoming festival season is a singularly unfortunate development. The governor was expected to be more mindful of his constitutional role.

At the very least, he was expected to eschew political partisanship. It hasn't gone unnoticed that Mr Koshyari's letter coincides with the state BJP's agitation for the opening of temples, oblivious to the critical situation Maharashtra faces on the fight against the new coronavirus. Maharashtra is the country's worst hit state on account of the virus in spite of the state government's spirited effort to combat the deadly foe.

It was expected that the governor would urge the government to adopt a calibrated and cautious approach in the face of representations from sections of society to let temples be open to devotees when important religious festivals, where participation is typically at a mass level, are held. But he has done the opposite. He has chosen to be sarcastic in his letter and ask whether the CM has turned "secular", forsaking "Hindutva" that he and his party Shiv Sena proclaim.

In fact, Mr Koshyari has no business subscribing to or supporting a political or ideological creed in official communications. In our Constitution, the role assigned to the governor is to ensure that a state is being governed according to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, in the absence of which the elected government can be dismissed and Central rule imposed for a limited period.

In the present case it is the governor — the gatekeeper of the Constitution in a state — who appears to be in violation. Replying to his letter, the CM was right to remind Raj Bhavan that the occupant of the gubernatorial office has taken his oath on the Constitution, of which "secularism" is an intrinsic part. The tone of Mr Koshyari's letter appears to strongly hint that he himself has no truck with "secularism". Holding such views in an official document, which the letter doubtless is, the incumbent has cast himself beyond the pale of constitutional propriety and offers himself as a poor role model.

In offering constitutional values, the governor offends the people of the state and deserves to be withdrawn. It's a pity he has elected to emulate the poor example set by his counterpart in West Bengal. Looking at the broader picture, it appears that some governors in states run by non-BJP parties — Kerala and West Bengal come to mind, besides Maharashtra — have adopted the policy of needling their state governments. Such an outlook is unlikely to yield a harmonious relationship between the state and the Centre. NCP patriarch Sharad Pawar, one of India's most accomplished politicians, has complained to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the unbecoming nature of the governor's letter to the CM. A thoughtful reply is in order.

An unfortunate climbdown

Titam stumbled, when its very prominent jewellery brand was arm-twisted into pulling an ad that depicted a happy Hindu-Muslim married home. Like all media, visuals in an advertisement play a huge role in shaping our society. This made this ad — which subtly encouraged viewers to exercise progressive values — both attractive and important. However, it received backlash from those who subscribe to a certain ideological view. Quite unaccountably to freethinkers and progress-loving people, the Hindutva brigade raised the bogey of "love jihad" and opposed this ad.

Their stance militates against who we are as a nation and who we aspire to be. It must be remembered that a composite social culture as well as secularism are important Indian values. The Indian nationalism today is not the nationalism of a particular religious, caste or linguistic community but a nationalism of all the people of India. No one community is privileged by our Constitution, and this is vouched for by the existence of the Special Marriage Act, 1954. It provides for a special form of marriage for the people of India, irrespective of faith. Not only inter-faith couples, anyone who wishes to opt for such a marriage can get married under this law.

Hence, much as BJP minister Himanta Biswa Sarma would like to carry out a crackdown against "love jihad" in Assam, after the Assembly election there in 2021, inter-faith marriages are constitutionally endorsed. It is unlawful to bully, harangue or heckle anyone on this account, and forcing a written apology from the owner of a Tanishq store in Gandhidham amounts to that.

"Cancel culture" is the favourite catch-all used by the Indian right wing today to cry foul against what it sees as liberal and leftist injustices and hypocrisies. This particular type of Hindutva "cancel culture", however, badly hurts the image of the country and its soft power around the world.

The government should make every effort to find out who the trolls are and bring them to book. Sometimes they can defeat even stout-hearted people. Still, we have the wonderful examples of Parle and Bajaj Group who have come out openly and said they will not be cowed by similar threats. These are good examples to follow.

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Shruti Lakhtakia



A new mantra? Seek, and you shall find; ask, it will be given

A lot has been written about the Narendra Modi government's move to do away with Question Hour during the recently concluded Monsoon Session of Parliament. The value of Question Hour, as an institution that offers the opportunity to question the government, to demand accountability, and to undertake scrutiny, is immense. A total of over 20,000 questions have been asked and answered by governments in the 14th, 15th and 16th Lok Sabhas, averaging more than 13,000 questions a year. Scandals have been uncovered, and several valuable resources about the functioning of the government have been made available that would have otherwise been difficult to obtain and access. Question Hour is definitely an invaluable institution, central to democratic functioning, and must be reinstated at the earliest. But is that enough?

"The answers you get depend on the questions you ask", said American physicist and philosopher Thomas Kuhn. The scope of our questions determines the potential impact of the answers, and this is as true in politics as in research. A preliminary

analysis reveals that a large share of the questions during Parliament's Question Hour seek data that should have been systematically, regularly and easily available in the first place. This is hugely inefficient and wasteful of the limited time available for questioning, and duplicates the efforts of ministries and departments to make data available.

Two main types of questions can be taken up during Question Hour — each day, about 20 "starred" questions are randomly selected to be answered orally, and nearly 230 "unstarred" questions receive written replies. The Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha lay out 23 conditions that must be satisfied for a question to be admissible in the House. Very broad questions "raising larger issues of policy" are not allowed, neither are narrow questions pertaining to the "minor details of administration and day-to-day working of the government". Questions related to data and information are generally addressed in unstarred questions.

Yet, despite this, several starred questions raised during the Question

Hour are to do with data that should otherwise be provided in the normal course of events. Analysing the text of all the starred questions asked in the month of February 2020 during the third session of the current Lok Sabha, revealed that nearly 25 per cent of the 140 questions asked during this time pertained to data requests.

For example, on just one day of House business, February 11, 2020, MPs asked for information on the statewide production and consumption of fish, the number of incidents of illegal child trafficking, the total state-wise and year-wise funds released for various schemes and programmes of the ministry of panchayati raj over the past two years, and the number of rural families who shifted from Below the Poverty Line (BPL) to Above the Poverty Line (APL), and vice-versa, state and district-wise.

These are pertinent questions, central to designing and implementing relevant policies. However, it is worth considering whether such questions need to be raised in Parliament for their answers to be made available. Is that time not better spent discussing the government's

plans to implement those relevant policies or its performance on their execution and implementation? To use its time better, the government should conduct a detailed analysis looking at the kinds of data that are often requested in starred and unstarred questions, and should make arrangements to release this information in a systematic, structured, and regular manner as a part of its open data initiative, so that minimal time and effort is put into seeking this information. This will not only benefit the MPs and other policymakers, but also those working in industry, research, academia, the media and the non-profit sector.

It is possible that the facts are being sought not as inputs in data-driven policymaking, but instead for the purpose of signalling that the MPs are concerned about their constituencies in specific states, or to initiate debate and demand accountability. However, given that followups to starred questions are limited, generating such debate is quite unlikely. It is also possible that the data in question is already available, but the MPs do not have the time or resources

required to obtain and compile this information. In that case, it is even more important to give systematic support for policy analysis to MPs.

Ultimately, the output of Parliament will depend upon the quality of the discussion that is undertaken within its chambers. The spirit of Question Hour, as envisioned by the Lok Sabha itself, is to be a mechanism for the government's accountability. It is an opportunity to understand and discuss how the government is working on the ground, and to scrutinise the functioning and performance of elected representatives by other elected representatives. We can make better use of this opportunity by focusing on these activities, rather than seeking statistics that should be available and accessible in the first place. When, eventually, Question Hour returns to Parliament, this is the higher standard that we should hold it accountable to.

The writer is a graduate of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and a PhD student at Oxford University

Subhani

Flashback



'Auction theory' Nobel: But do people benefit?



Mohan Guruswamy

Of all Nobel Prize disciplines, it is probably Economics after Medicine that touches the everyday life of mankind. The medical advances that won Nobels were truly pathbreaking and contributed to the saving and betterment of millions of lives. In 1900, the world's life expectancy was 30 years. A hundred years later, in 2000, it had risen to 68. In 2020 it is 72. That we live longer and healthier lives now is primarily owed to the advances in Medicine. This contribution is reflected in the roster of Nobel Prize winners. The very first prize in 1901 went to Adolf von Behring for his work relating to serum therapy for diphtheria — then a major universal killer. The following year it was awarded to Ronald Ross in uncovering the mysteries of malaria while working in a small dispensary in Secunderabad. The world population in 1900 was 1.6 billion and an estimated 5.5 million died that year of malaria. The world population in 2020 is inching towards eight billion and last year it is estimated that 440,000 people died due to malaria. It gives you an idea about how much we owe to the work of Sir Ronald Ross. Similarly, there were the discoveries of Penicillin, Streptomycin and Insulin that altered longevity and the quality of life. The discoveries of blood groups, immunological responses, DNA, cholesterol and fatty acid metabolism were rewarded. The only great discovery that eluded Nobel recognition was that of the polio vaccine by Jonas Salk.

But the Nobel Prizes for Economics can claim no such roster. All the great thinkers and pathbreakers like Adam Smith,

John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo, Alfred Marshall and others belonged to an earlier age. Even the greats like Lord Keynes and Joseph Schumpeter whose philosophies still drive modern economics preceded the age of Nobel economics. A few like Paul Samuelson, Simon Kuznets, Kenneth Arrow, Wassily Leontief and Fredrich Hayek straddled the earlier era. But then it's a relatively recent prize, having been instituted only in 1968 by the Swedish central bank. But with the great seminal works and discoveries already been done, the new pathways to greatness is increasingly due to more esoteric work and research. For instance, in 2017, Rosbash, Young and Hall got the medicine Nobel for "the molecular mechanisms controlling the circadian rhythm" and Ratcliffe, Semenza and Kaelin won it for "how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability". Likewise, we see a similar tendency in economics on the small, rather than the seminal, and the esoteric rather than the extensive development of knowledge. The pursuit of truths takes us from the main veins into the capillaries of knowledge.

The 2020 Economics prize was awarded to Paul R. Milgrom and Robert B. Wilson of Stanford University "for improvements to auction theory and inventions of new auction formats". It is as if a medical researcher was getting a Nobel for work, say, in an aspect of Otolaryngology such as the act of swallowing. It is important, but how widespread are problems related to swallowing? Auction theory is like that. It is an applied branch of economics which deals with how people act in them. We in

India know something about auctions, mainly due to the exertions of Vinod Rai, the RSS, India Against Corruption, Subramanian Swamy, S. Gurumurthy and that great preceptor, Baba Ramdev. They didn't know or care to know that "auction theory" is not just about how much the State got, but also about how much did the people get! In 2010, according to Vinod Rai's asinine projections, the difference between the money collected and that mandated to be collected was estimated at ₹1.76 lakh crores, or \$25 billion, based on 2010 3G and broadband spectrum auction prices. The number crunchers in the CBI did even better. In the chargesheet it filed on April 2, 2011 the loss was pegged at ₹3.1 lakh crores, or \$43 billion. It caused a political upheaval. Inspired by such visions, the Narendra Modi government expected India's largest spectrum sale in 2016 to fetch it ₹5.63 lakh crores. Instead it got only ₹65,790 crores.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences release states that this year's laureates, Paul Milgrom and Robert Wilson, have studied how auctions work and have used their insights to design new auction formats for goods and services that are difficult to sell in a traditional way, such as radio frequencies. Robert Wilson developed the theory for auctions of objects with a common value — a value which is uncertain beforehand but, in the end, is the same for everyone. Examples include the future value of radio frequencies or the volume of minerals in a particular area. Wilson also showed why rational bidders tend

With the great seminal works and discoveries already been done, the new pathways to greatness is increasingly due to more esoteric work and research

to place bids below their own best estimate of the common value — they are worried about the winner's curse: that is, about paying too much and losing out. Paul Milgrom formulated a more general theory of auctions that not only allows common values, but also private values that vary from bidder to bidder. He analysed the bidding strategies in several well-known auction formats, demonstrating that a format will give the seller higher expected revenue when bidders learn more about each other's estimated values during bidding. Both seem to suggest that open bidding with all bids in the open may fetch the best prices. But is then a State concerned only with the highest prices or must it also be concerned with the overall benefits? For instance, lower spectrum prices would mean cheaper call and Internet usage time leading to greater usage and greater economic benefits.

The winners last year, Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, won it ironically enough for their study in eastern Odisha of a scheme to replace open-fire cooking used by the world's poorest people with more efficient, less polluting stoves. The duo studied the reasons for its flop. The planners had flopped in their conceptions. I don't think Narendra Modi's genius factored the more mundane considerations when his government launched its colossal public toilets scheme, which we now know is also a spectacular flop. Open defecation is once again rampant. It's little wonder that Mr Modi has given the duo a big avoid. But he has also by and large given Vinod Rai the avoid, probably now realising how farcical his determination of auction value for 2G spectrum was?

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS

POLITICAL JIBE

Maharashtra governor B.S. Koshyari's communication to CM Uddhav Thackeray stating that the state government has allowed opening of bars, restaurants and beaches but not temples and requesting him to reopen places of worship was a valid argument but his taunt, reminding him of his Hindutva credentials and asking him whether he had suddenly turned "secular", was unwarranted. Governors are appointed on the recommendation of the Centre. But after taking charge, they are supposed to be neutral and apolitical in the conduct of their duties.

M.C. Joshi Lucknow

ADDRESS THIS

MANY INDIANS, especially employees working in government or private sectors, are interstate migrants. Some have the privilege of having several home addresses due to frequent transfers, and a sense of belongingness to their city of work. Often, they vote in state elections there. In today's "One India" era, the permanent address generally asked for in every application/form has no meaning and should be dispensed with.

Neha Jamal Chandigarh

REBOUND HOPE

THE INDIAN ECONOMY could start recovering from this horrible crisis. There has also been some efforts recently on the structural side to improve medium-term growth prospects. We think that this will advance the structural reform agenda in an important way, remove supply side constraints in the agricultural sector and in the labour market. It will also allow for a better matching of workers with firms, provide firms with a little more flexibility in terms of hiring options but at the same time also provide more social security and safety net options for workers. The economy is expected to bounce back to 8.8 per cent next fiscal year, in an upward revision of the June numbers. A renaissance is on the cards.

M. Jayanthi Mumbai

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



IN BRIEF

Holocaust aid for survivors

Berlin: Germany has agreed to provide more than a half billion euros to aid Holocaust survivors struggling under the burdens of the Coronavirus pandemic, the organisation that negotiates compensation with the German government said Wednesday. The payments will be going to approximately 240,000 survivors around the world, primarily in Israel, North America, the former Soviet Union and Western Europe, over the next two years, according to the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, also referred to as the Claims Conference. With the end of World War II now 75 years in the past, Holocaust survivors are all elderly, and because many were deprived of proper nutrition when they were young today they suffer from numerous medical issues.

Lebanon, Israel begin border talks

Naqoura (Lebanon): Lebanon and Israel began indirect talks Wednesday over their disputed maritime border, with American officials mediating the talks that both sides insist are purely technical and not a sign of any normalisation of ties. The US has been mediating the issue for about a decade, but only earlier this month was a breakthrough reached on an agreement for a framework for US-mediated talks. The development comes against the backdrop of Lebanon's spiralling economic crisis and following a wave of US sanctions that recently included two influential former Cabinet ministers allied with the militant Hezbollah group. Israel, the United States, as well as some other Western and Arab countries consider the Iran-allied Hezbollah a terrorist organisation.

Copters collide, 9 Afghan troops die

Lashkar Gah (Afghanistan): Two Afghan army helicopters collided while transporting wounded soldiers in the southern Helmand province, killing nine Afghan service members, the country's Defence Ministry and local officials said Wednesday. The two Soviet-era Mi-17 helicopters crashed due to technical problems while taking off in Nawa district, the Afghan Defence Ministry statement said. The nine dead were all Afghan crew and soldiers who had been on board the aircraft. Omer Zwak, a spokesman for Helmand's provincial governor, said the helicopters were carrying wounded soldiers when they crashed late Tuesday. He said that over the past week, Taliban fighters have launched coordinated attacks in different parts of Helmand province, which have intensified in recent days. Three local officials in Helmand province said the helicopters were deploying Afghan commandos to repel a Taliban attack in Nawa district.

CANNIBALISM: LIFE TERM FOR GUILTY MAN

Jeffersonville (US), Oct. 14: A southern Indiana man convicted of killing his ex-girlfriend and eating parts of her body was sentenced Tuesday to life in prison without parole.

Joseph Oberhansley was found guilty September 18 of murder and burglary in the death of Tammy Jo Blanton.

Clark Circuit Judge Vicki Carmichael sentenced Oberhansley based on a jury recommendation. The body of Blanton, 46, was found at her home the morning of September 11, 2014, badly mutilated with more than 25 sharp force injuries and multiple blunt force injuries, authorities have said.

Oberhansley testified that "two Black guys" had been at the victim's home when he arrived around 4 a.m. that day and said they were responsible for Blanton's death and knocking him out. He awoke when police knocked on the door looking for the victim.

Oberhansley also was sentenced to six years to be served concurrently on the burglary charge, the News and Tribune reported. Prosecutors dropped an attempt to seek the death penalty last year.

Jurors were drawn from Allen County in northeastern Indiana because of the intense media coverage the case has received in the southern part of the state.

Sea of protesters in Bangkok

Pro-democracy protesters take part in an anti-government rally in Bangkok on Wednesday.

— AFP

Feel like 'Superman': Trump**President boasts about new immunity after experimental treatment**

Washington, Oct. 14: US President Donald Trump has said that he felt like a "Superman" after his experimental Covid-19 treatment and boasted about his new immunity to the disease which has claimed the lives of 216,000 Americans. Trump, who tested positive for Covid-19 on October 1 and was admitted to a military hospital for three nights and four days, declared himself cured after he was treated with an experimental antibody drug cocktail.

White House doctors have now cleared him for holding election rallies. Holding his second rally since contracting coronavirus, Trump told a crowd of his supporters packed onto an airport tarmac in Johnstown, Pennsylvania that he felt like "Superman" after the treatment. Trump was briefly forced to pause his re-election campaign after he tested positive for Covid-19 and he returned to the campaign trail from the battleground State of Florida on Monday.

Addressing his supporters in Pennsylvania, another battleground state, Trump, 74, thanked the doctors that treated him. "All I know is I took something, whatever the hell it was, I felt good very quickly. I don't know what it

OVER 4 MN TESTS CONDUCTED IN CHINA'S QINGDAO

Beijing, Oct. 14: Over 4 million Coronavirus tests have been conducted in China's Qingdao city where a local virus cluster was detected over the weekend, officials said. The Coronavirus has killed 4,634 people with 85,611 confirmed infections, including 241 active cases, in China.

No additional Covid-19 cases have been reported in Qingdao as of Tuesday, following an outbreak of new cases that appeared over the weekend, officials said, adding that over 4.2 million people in the city have been tested out of its 9 million population.

— PTI

was, antibodies, antibodies. I don't know. I took it, I said I felt like Superman," Trump said. "Then I said, let me at 'em. Nah, and I could've been here four or five days ago. It's great, we have great doctors. I want to thank the doctors at Walter Reed and Johns Hopkins, and — great doctors," he said.

Trump said, that "one

Don playing with people's lives: Joe

Washington, Oct. 14: Donald Trump's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic has been "erratic" just like his presidency, his Democratic challenger Joe Biden has said, terming the US president's leadership as "chaotic and divisive" that has cost Americans far too much.

The former vice president said Trump was playing games with people's lives and "the only senior Donald Trump seems to care about" is himself.

"His handling of this Coronavirus pandemic has been erratic just like his presidency. And it has prevented Florida seniors and people all across the

country from getting the relief that they need," Biden said at a campaign event in Florida on Tuesday.

Florida is a battleground State which was won by Trump in the 2016 elections. According to Real Clear Politics, which tracks major opinion polls, Biden is leading the state by 3.7 percentage points. However, Trump has been attracting thousands of people to his election rallies in Florida, despite coronavirus social distancing measures in place. Biden claimed that Trump just hasn't been willing to do the work.

— PTI

great job."

Boasting about his new immunity to the disease, Trump said, "And now I'm immune they tell me. I'm immune. I could come down and start kissing everybody. I'll kiss every guy — man and woman. Look at that guy how handsome he is. I'll kiss him. Not with a lot of enjoyment." — PTI

WB APPROVES \$12B TO FINANCE VIRUS VACCINES

Washington, Oct. 14: The World Bank has approved \$12 billion in financing to help developing countries buy and distribute Coronavirus vaccines, tests, and treatments, aiming to support the vaccination of up to 1 billion people. The \$12 billion "envelop" is part of a wider World Bank Group package of up to \$160 billion to help developing countries fight the Covid-19 pandemic, the bank said in a statement late Tuesday. The World Bank said its Covid-19 emergency response programmes are already reaching 111 countries.

Citizens in developing countries also need access to safe and effective Covid-19 vaccines, it said. "We are extending and expanding our fast-track approach to address the Covid emergency so that developing countries have fair and equal access to vaccines," said bank's president, David Malpass. "Access to safe and effective vaccines and strengthened delivery systems is key to alter the course of the pandemic," he said. — AP

Pompeo defends Hong Kongers

Hong Kong, Oct. 14: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo defended the 12 Hong Kong residents who were detained by China while allegedly trying to flee to Taiwan by boat in August, saying that they had "committed no crime." "They simply believe that they are worthy of freedom and the unalienable rights due to every person," Pompeo said in virtual remarks delivered at the John S. McCain Freedom Award Ceremony on Wednesday.

"They aren't alone in that belief. America stands with them." The 12, some of whom are linked

CHINA WANTS UNIPOLAR WORLD WITH ALL NATIONS TRIBUTARIES: U.S. OFFICIAL

Washington, Oct. 14: China ultimately wants to have a unipolar world wherein every country is some sort of a tributary to it, a top American National Security Advisor has said, asserting that nations across the globe are starting to realise what Washington is up against

with Beijing. US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said the world was slowly entering into a multipolar situation. "They want to have a P-2 instead of P-5. I don't think we're going to have a bipolar situation in the world right now," O'Brien said. — PTI

to anti-government protests and were facing charges in Hong Kong prior to their arrest, are

being held in the southern city of Shenzhen where they await prosecution. Two of them are suspect-

ed of organising an illegal border crossing, while the other 10 are suspected of entering mainland waters illegally. The group was believed to have been headed for self-governed Taiwan when they were arrested, following China's imposition of a sweeping national security law targeting political expression in semi-autonomous Hong Kong.

Taiwan is a popular choice among Hong Kong residents looking to leave the city. Relatives say that they are being held incommunicado and have not been granted access to lawyers. — AP

China, far left desperate for Biden win: Don

Washington, Oct. 14: China and the far left are "desperate" for Joe Biden's win as the Democratic presidential candidate will "surrender" jobs to China, President Donald Trump said as he returned to the battleground State of Pennsylvania after being treated for Covid-19. In his first political rally in Pennsylvania, which sends 20 electoral college votes, after he was tested positive for Covid-19, Trump on Tuesday hit hard at his political opponent, alleging that the former vice president is known for "surrender".

"Biden will eliminate tariffs on China. He's already said he's going to take the tariffs off China. There goes your steel industry. There goes your aluminum industry. There goes everything. Allowing them to plunder without consequence," he said, addressing thousands of his supporters in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. "The one constant in Biden's platform is surrender. He surrenders. He surrenders, whether it's China, whether it's Cuba. How about Cuba? How about the deal they made with Cuba? How bad was that one? I ended it," he said. "That's why both China and the far left are desperate for a Biden win because he will surrender our jobs to China. China will own the US if that sleepy guy gets the position, okay," Trump said.

Trump said that over the next four years, he will make America into the manufacturing superpower of the world. "And

BIDEN IS WORST CANDIDATE IN U.S. POLITICS

Washington, Oct. 14: US President Donald Trump has described his presidential challenger Joe Biden as "the single worst candidate in the history of America", referring to a few recent gaffes of the Democratic leader who is challenging him.

Republican incumbent Trump, 74, and challenger Biden, 77, are locked in a close contest for the November 3 elections. "I'm running against the single worst candidate in the history of American presidential politics and you know what that does? That puts more pressure on me. Can you imagine if you lose to a guy like this?" Trump told his supporters in the battleground state of Pennsylvania on Tuesday.

— PTI

We'll end our reliance on China once and for all. That's already happening. We'll hire more police, increased penalties for assault on law enforcement, and we will ban deadly sanctuary cities that people don't want," he said. "Unlike 'sleepy' Joe Biden, I will never abandon our nation, and I would never abandon its values. My goal is not to make friends in the DC swamp. My goal is to fight for you and fight for your family," he said. — PTI

Pak re-elected to UN rights body

Islamabad / United Nations, Oct. 14: Pakistan along with China, Russia and Cuba won seats on the UN Human Rights Council despite strong opposition from activist groups over their abysmal human rights records. In a secret-ballot voting in the 193-member UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Pakistan secured 169 votes, Uzbekistan received 164, Nepal 150 and China 139. Saudi Arabia lost the race with just 90 votes.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo slammed the UN body for electing China, Russia and Cuba to the agency tasked with defending human rights. "The election of China, Russia, and Cuba to the UN Human Rights Council validates the US decision to withdraw from the Council in 2018 and use other venues to protect and promote universal human rights." At #UNGA this year, we did just that," Pompeo tweeted.

"US commitment to human rights is far more than just words. We have identified and punished human rights abusers in Xinjiang, Myanmar, Iran, and elsewhere, and call for all nations to take this moment to recommit to the #UDHR," he said in another tweet.

Last week, a coalition of human rights groups from Europe, the US and Canada called on UN member states to oppose the election of China, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Cuba and Uzbekistan, saying their human

rights records make them unqualified. "The bad news: Governments just elected China to the UN Human Rights Council despite its severe repression in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong. The good news: the number of governments voting for it declined from 180 last time to 139 now. The fear is melting." Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth tweeted after the vote. Pakistan is currently serving on the HRC since January 1, 2018. — PTI

rights records make them unqualified. "The bad news: Governments just elected China to the UN Human Rights Council despite its severe repression in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong. The good news: the number of governments voting for it declined from 180 last time to 139 now. The fear is melting." Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth tweeted after the vote. Pakistan is currently serving on the HRC since January 1, 2018. — PTI

ORBITING | OUTPOST Astronauts trying a two-orbit, three-hr approach to Int'l Space Station**Russian-US crew launches to the space station**

Moscow, Oct. 14: A trio of space travelers has launched successfully to the International Space Station, for the first time using a fast-track manoeuvre to reach the orbiting outpost in just three hours. NASA's Kate Rubins along with Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov of the Russian space agency Roscosmos lifted off as scheduled Wednesday morning from the Russia-leased Baikonur space launch facility in Kaza-

khstan for a six-month stint on the station. For the first time, they are trying a two-orbit, three-hour approach to the orbiting space outpost. Previously it took twice as long for the crews to reach the station. They will join the station's Nasa commander, Chris Cassidy, and Roscosmos cosmonauts Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner, who have been aboard the complex since April and are scheduled to return to Earth in a week.

Speaking during pre-launch news conference at Baikonur, Rubins emphasised that the crew spent weeks in quarantine at the Star City training facility outside Moscow and then on Baikonur to avoid any threat from the Coronavirus. "We spent two weeks at Star City and then 17 days at Baikonur in a very strict quarantine," Rubins said. "During all communications with crew members, we were wearing masks. We made PCR tests

twice and we also made three times antigen fast tests." She said she was looking forward to scientific experiments planned for the mission.

"We're planning to try some really interesting things like bio-printing tissues and growing cells in space and, of course, continuing our work on sequencing DNA," Rubins said. Ryzhikov, who will be the station's skipper, said the crew will try to pinpoint the exact location of a leak

at a station's Russian section that has slowly leaked oxygen. The small leak hasn't posed any immediate danger to the crew.

"We will take with us additional equipment which will allow us to detect the place of this leak more precisely," he told reporters. "We will also take with us additional improved hermetic material which will allow to fix the leak."

In November, Rubins, Ryzhikov and Kud-Sverchkov are set to greet Nasa's

SpaceX first operational Crew Dragon mission, bringing NASA astronauts Mike Hopkins, Victor Glover and Shannon Walker, and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Soichi Noguchi to the space station aboard the Crew Dragon vehicle. It follows a successful Demo-2 mission earlier this year. The Crew Dragon mission was pushed back from Oct. 31 into November, and no new date has been set yet. — AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,794.74	0.42
Nifty 50	11,971.05	0.31
S&P 500*	3,488.24	-0.67
Dollar (₹)	73.30	0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.55	1.10
Euro (₹)	86.08	0.43
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,367*631	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.02	0.57
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.900	-0.004
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.717	-0.010

India's public debt ratio to rise to 90%: IMF

India's public debt ratio, which remained stable at around 70 per cent of the GDP since 1991, is projected to jump by 17 percentage points to nearly 90 per cent due to higher public spending due to Covid-19, IMF said. "In our projections, the increase in public spending, in response to Covid-19, and the fall in tax revenues and economic activity, will make public debt jump... to almost 90 per cent of GDP, Vitor Gaspar, a director of IMF, said.

WPI inflation hits to 7-month high of 1.32% in Sept.



Spiralling prices of food items, especially vegetables, pushed up the wholesale inflation to a seven-month high of 1.32 per cent in Sept. and cements the likelihood that the Reserve Bank will continue with status quo on interest rates. The Wholesale Price Index-based inflation was at 0.16 per cent in Aug. The WPI-based inflation seems moving in sync with CPI -based retail inflation, which rose to 7.34 per cent in Sept.

FlexPay offers credit on UPI for salaried class

Hyderabad-based NBFC Vivifi India Finance Pvt Ltd has launched FlexPay, which offers credit on UPI. Anil Pinapala, founder and CEO of Vivifi, said FlexPay facilitates instant fund transfer between two bank accounts on a mobile platform. The 'Scan Now & Pay Later' feature of FlexPay enables the salaried class and the self-employed to use a line of credit when they do not have money available in their bank accounts.

India to have 60,000 start-ups, 100 unicorns

India is expected to have 60,000 start-ups and 100 companies with valuation of over \$1 billion by 2025, a TIE Delhi-NCR report, in association with Zinnov, said. It business recovery of start-ups is back on track after the lockdown. However, 12-15 per cent of start-ups are facing risk of survival and a similar percentage of start-ups have closed their business. There are around 38,000 active start-ups today.

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Firm raises annual revenue forecast Infosys profit jumps 26.6%

VIBHUTI SHARMA BENGALURU, OCT. 14

Infosys Ltd on Wednesday raised its annual revenue growth forecast, after the Indian software services firm posted a better-than-expected quarterly profit, buoyed by growth in client demand for its digital services during the pandemic. The company revised its annual revenue forecast to between 2 per cent and 3 per cent in constant currency terms, from an earlier expectation of revenue being flat to up 2 per cent. Bengaluru-based Infosys, which provides services such as cloud, data and analytics to companies across the world, said it will also roll out salary increases and promotions across all levels effective January 1. "Infosys results today ... signifies how important it has become for enterprises to invest in IT to weather any disruptive situation—be it pandemic or an economic recession," Forrester analyst Ashutosh Sharma said. Infosys reported quarterly operating margin of 25.4 per cent, up from 21.7 per cent last year, following rivals Tata Consultancy Services that posted a 2.2 per cent rise in operating margin to 26.2 per cent while Wipro saw its margin rise to 19.2 per cent for the period. Consolidated net profit for Infosys in the September quarter climbed 26.6 per cent to Rs 4,845 crore (\$661.35 million). Analysts



TO ROLL OUT SALARY HIKES FROM JAN. New Delhi, Oct. 14: India's second-largest IT services firm Infosys on Wednesday said it will roll out salary hikes and promotions across all levels from January 1. Infosys is also giving 100 per cent variable pay, along with a special incentive for the second quarter. The firm has 2,40,208 employees as of the September quarter. "Recognising the continuing stellar commitment from our employees during these times, we are paying out variable pay for the quarter at 100 per cent. We will pay a one-time special incentive in Q3 for our junior employees," Infosys CEO and MD Salil Parekh said during a virtual briefing. The salary hike process will restart now and will be effective on January 1, 2021, he added. "We restarted promotions in the last quarter at our junior levels, and this will now be expanded to all our levels," Parekh said. Infosys had earlier said it was suspending promotions and pay hikes amid the epidemic-led slowdown in business. Infosys COO Pravin Rao said the quantum of salary hikes will be identical to those seen in previous years. —PTI

on average had expected a profit of Rs 4,519 crore, according to Refinitiv data. The company's upbeat profit this quarter comes in contrast to peers TCS and Wipro, which saw their profit drop 7.1 per cent and 3.4 per cent, respectively. Revenue for Infosys climbed to Rs 24,570 crore from Rs 22,629 crore in the quarter. This compares with analysts' estimate of Rs 24,191 crore. During the quarter, Infosys had a gross addition of 96 clients. —Reuters

Labour codes could come in force from April '21: Secy

New Delhi, Oct. 14: All four labour codes are likely to be implemented in one go from April 1, the beginning of the next fiscal year, labour secretary Apurva Chandra said on Wednesday. Parliament in its just concluded session passed three labour code bills: the Industrial Relations (IR) Code; the Social Security Code; and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (OSH). The Wage Code Bill, 2019 was passed by Parliament last year. Last month, labour minister Santosh Gangwar had said that efforts would be made to implement the all four labour codes by December this year. Talking to reporters, Chandra said, "We have started work on firming up draft rules of the recently passed three labour codes in Parliament. We are trying to notify draft rules by middle of November to seek feedback. We will give 45 days time for feedback." He further said that the four codes are likely to be implemented from April 1, with notification of firmed-up rules. Initially, draft rules under a law is notified with a stipulated time period (45 days) to receive feedback. Thereafter, these rules are finalised and implemented for bringing the law into force. —PTI

RBI lists eligible cases for loan restructuring

FC BANKING BUREAU MUMBAI, OCT. 14

- Loans that are not standard as of March 1 are excluded
- Farm credit for allied activities, viz., dairy, fishery, poultry and bee-keeping, are excluded
- Loan against property included if it's not personal loan

The central bank has clarified that loan accounts which have remained standard without any defaults as of March 1, 2020, will be eligible for restructuring under the resolution framework for Covid-19 related stress. The scheme was announced by the RBI on August 6. "Borrowers should be classified as standard, but not in default for more than 30 days with any lending institution as on March 1, 2020. The actual debt that may be considered for resolution will be outstanding as on the date of invocation," said the Reserve Bank in a clarifications issued late Tuesday. The RBI said that all the farm credit exposures of all lending institutions, including NBFCs, except for loans to allied activities, viz., dairy, fishery, animal husbandry, poultry, bee-keeping and sericulture are excluded from the scope of the 'resolution framework.'

However, loans given to farmer households would be eligible for resolution under the scheme if they do not meet any other conditions for exclusions specified by the central bank. Loans against property will also be eligible for recast if they don't fall under the personal loan category. All microfi-

nance institution/self-help group loans meeting the basic eligibility criteria, unless covered by the specific exclusions, are eligible resolution but personal loans from these categories will not be recast. Similarly investment exposures that are credit substitutes like corporate bonds and commercial papers are also eligible for resolution, the RBI said. Similarly, restructuring of under-implementation project loans involving deferment of date of commencement of operations (DCCO) are excluded from the scope of resolution framework and that such accounts will continue to be governed by the Feb. 7, 2020, and the other relevant instructions. Also, in case of multiple lenders to a single borrower whose resolution is undertaken, all lending institutions will have to enter into an intercreditor agreement.

GST: Tamil Nadu gets nod to raise ₹9,600 cr

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 14

Tamil Nadu has joined the list of states that have accepted Option-1 suggested by the Centre to raise funds to meet the revenue shortfall arising from GST implementation. The Ministry of Finance on Wednesday granted permission to Tamil Nadu to raise an additional amount of Rs 9,627 crore through open market borrowings. On Tuesday, Centre had granted permission to had

issued permission to 20 states to raise Rs 68,825 crore through open market borrowings. With Tamil Nadu also joining the list, permission has been granted 21 states to mobilise Rs 78,542 crore so far. Apart from TN, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura,

Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Union territories Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir have also settled for Option-1. Punjab, West Bengal, Kerala, Chhattisgarh and Telangana are some of the states opposing the Centre's options. The borrowing permission issued to the 21 states is over and above the borrowing permission of around Rs 1.10 lakh crore to meet the revenue shortfall arising out of GST implementation.

Honda Amaze Spl edition for ₹7 L



MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 14

Japanese car giant Honda has launched the special edition of its family sedan Honda Amaze to lure customers in this festive season priced between Rs 7 lakh and Rs 9.10 lakh at Delhi showroom. The Honda Amaze competes with other compact sedans like the Maruti Suzuki Dzire, Hyundai Aura, Ford Aspire and Tata Tigor in the market. The Honda Amaze special edition, costs Rs 12,000 more than the equivalent S trim. For this price you get features such as a 7-inch touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, unique seat covers, a sliding centre front armrest, body graphics on the doors and a special edition badge over the regular S variant.

Isuzu drives in BS6 D-Max



MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 14

Isuzu Motors, the Japanese automaker, on Wednesday introduced the BSVI-compliant D-Max range of models priced between Rs 7.84 lakh and Rs 10.07 lakh at Mumbai showroom. While the D-Max Regular Cab range starts from Rs 7.84 lakh, the D-Max S-Cab trims are priced at Rs 9.82 lakh and Rs 10.07 lakh. A new variant D-Max Super Strong priced at Rs 8.39 lakh has also been introduced with a 1,710 kg payload.

US watchdog probes Page Inds.

SACHIN RAVIKUMAR & CHANDINI MONNAPPA BENGALURU, OCT. 14

A top apparel industry watchdog has launched an investigation into underwear maker Jockey International's Indian partner Page Industries Ltd following allegations of human rights abuses at one of its factories, the watchdog told Reuters. The investigation by US-

based Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (Wrap) comes after Norway's \$1 trillion sovereign wealth fund dropped Page from its investment portfolio due to concerns of human rights violations at "Unit-III" - one of Page's Jockey manufacturing sites in Bengaluru. Page has denied wrongdoing and called allegations of verbal abuse and workplace intimidation

here against employees as "outrageous". It did not answer questions about the Wrap probe, but said it has evidence which "flatly disproves" the allegations. In an email, Wrap spokesman Seth Lennon said such violations could normally result in a factory losing its certification. Wrap said it makes certification decisions on a facility-by-facility basis. —Reuters

E-COMM VOLUMES GROW 31% IN SEPT. QUARTER

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 14

Increased usage of digital platforms due to the pandemic has helped e-commerce industry witness an order volume growth of 31 per cent for the September 2020 quarter as compared to the same period last year. However, the growth in gross merchandise value was a tad below at 24 per cent as the average order volume declined 5 per cent in the September quarter year-on-year, according to Unicommerce, e-commerce-focused SaaS platform.



While people are ordering more online, they are ordering lesser value products. Further, the category mix also has changed, and the higher share of personal care and health & pharma categories is driving the overall order value down. Tier-III and beyond cities have showed a

growth of over 90 per cent, almost double the growth recorded in the Unicommerce' annual report released in August. Unicommerce expects this growth to taper down in the coming months when the workforce, which had gone to their hometowns, start returning to metro and tier I cities. "The pandemic has changed the dynamics of the retail ecosystem substantially. E-commerce is no longer the supporting vertical and has now taken a front seat," said Kapil Makhija, CEO Unicommerce.

KILLER | APP The iPhone 12 and iPhone 12 Pro will come out on Oct. 23 iPhone 12 models win praise for lower prices

MARK GURMAN & JERAN WIT-TENSTEIN OCT. 14

Apple Inc. unveiled its latest range of iPhones, a product line that Wall Street expects will kick off a new cycle of sales growth for the world's largest technology company. At a virtual event on Tuesday, the company showed off the iPhone 12 in black, red, blue, green and white with a 6.1-inch screen. It starts at \$799. A smaller version, the iPhone 12 mini, costs \$699. The phones use aluminum sides. There's also an iPhone 12 Pro, starting at \$999 and a iPhone 12 Pro Max that costs at least \$1,099, both with stainless steel edges. The Max has a 6.7-inch (17 cm) screen, Apple's largest ever, while the regular Pro has a 6.1-inch display. They come in blue, gold,



graphite or silver. Some analysts praised Apple's pricing strategy, especially the \$699 mini handset which may entice users with older, smaller iPhones to upgrade. "The pricing dynamics are the killer app for the phone launch," Harsh Kumar of Piper Sandler & Co. wrote in a research note. "Pricing was lower than our expectation, which is important in the current global pandemic."

Cheaper devices may help increase Apple's installed base of devices, driving further growth of more profitable services, he added. The front of the phones looks similar to last year's iPhone 11, but the edges are now flat instead of curved. They all support 5G, a new wireless standard that can transmit data as much as 10 times faster than the current 4G LTE technology. The Cupertino, California-based technology giant has generated relatively little sales growth from its marquee product in recent years as consumers hold onto their phones for longer. Quarterly revenue from this segment peaked in the first quarter of Apple's 2018 fiscal year. This year's crop of new iPhones marks the first major redesign in three years, which could prompt more upgrades and a new spurt of

growth. Investors and analysts are also bullish on sales in China, where 5G networks are more built-out than in the US. "With our estimation that 350 million of 950 million iPhones worldwide are currently in the window of an upgrade opportunity, we believe this will translate into an unprecedented upgrade cycle for Apple," Dan Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, said. The handsets have a faster A14 processor and updated cameras and use sharper OLED screens, an improvement from last year's cheaper LCD screens, Apple said. The company showcased major improvements to the iPhone 12 Pro Max cameras, including with video recording and zooming in during picture taking. The iPhone 12 and iPhone 12 Pro came out on Oct. 23, while the iPhone 12 mini and iPhone 12 Pro Max arrive Nov. 13. —Bloomberg

STATES TOLD TO CUT REALTY STAMP DUTY

New Delhi, Oct. 14: Housing and urban affairs secretary Durga Shanker Mishra on Wednesday asked states to reduce stamp duty on registration of properties, as it will help reduce the overall real estate cost and boost housing sales. Addressing a Credai webinar, Mishra said the government has taken various measures in the past six years for revival of this sector such as enactment of realty law Rera. "Measures taken during the past six years and also during the lockdown have started showing results," Mishra said. The secretary noted that the property registrations in Mumbai have improved and are back to pre-Covid-19 level. He said Maharashtra has taken a good decision to reduce the stamp duty. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Joshna enters quarters in Egypt

Cairo: India's leading squash player Joshna Chinappa, playing her first tournament in six months, has reached the quarterfinals of the CIB Egyptian Open here.

The world number 11 was pushed to the limit by 38th ranked Farida Mohamed who staged a valiant comeback after losing the first two games to level the match.

In the decider, the Indian managed to see off the Egyptian for a 11-7, 11-6, 7-11, 10-12, 11-9 win in the third round.

Joshna meets world number two Nour El Sherbini in the quarterfinals.

India's highest-ranked male player, Saurav Ghosal, lost his third round match against Egypt's Mezan Hashem 8-11, 9-11, 8-11.

It was the first event too for Ghosal since March when the COVID-19 outbreak led to a nationwide lockdown. — PTI

NZ cricket great Reid dies at 92

Auckland: New Zealand's oldest surviving Test cricketer and former captain John Reid has died here at the age of 92, the country's cricket board said on Wednesday.

Reid, regarded as one of the world's best all-rounders during his heyday in the fifties and early sixties, captained New Zealand in 34 Tests including, most notably, the country's first three victories.

"He was, and will remain, a household name in this country, having helped pave the way for everything that has come in his wake," New Zealand Cricket chief executive David White said in a statement offering his tributes.

The NZC release, however, did not specify the cause of Reid's death. Born in Auckland, and educated in Wellington, Reid played 246 first-class games and scored 16128 runs at 41.35, including 39 centuries, while taking 466 wickets at 22.60. — PTI

Another 1st round exit for Murray

Cologne, Germany: Andy Murray suffered another first-round elimination, this time at the Cologne Indoors at the hands of out-of-form veteran Fernando Verdasco.

Verdasco exploited Murray's fragile serve to win 6-4, 6-4 in a match which finished after midnight German time.

Verdasco, at 36 one of the few players older than the 33-year-old Murray in the tournament, broke Murray's serve four times once to love and three times to 15. Murray lost in the second round of the U.S. Open and in the first round of the French Open. He used wild cards for both of those Grand Slam tournaments and again in Cologne for his first loss on an indoor hard court since the 2015 tour finals.

Verdasco will take on top-seeded Alexander Zverev in the second round after the German player had a bye in the first round. — AP

Golfer Johnson tests Covid +ve

North Las Vegas: Dustin Johnson became the most prominent player to test positive for the coronavirus since golf resumed in June, forcing him to withdraw from the CJ Cup at Shadow Creek.

The PGA Tour said in a statement that Johnson notified officials he was experiencing Covid-19 symptoms and was given another test that came back positive. Johnson is the No. 1 player in the world and the reigning PGA Tour player of the year after winning the FedEx Cup for the first time. He has not played since he tied for sixth at the U.S. Open last month. — AP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Kings XI Punjab from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

BADMINTON

Denmark Open: Matches from 5.30 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

TENNIS

St Petersburg Open: Matches from 3.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

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DELHI DELIGHT

Capitals beat Royals by 13 runs to regain top spot

Dubai, Oct. 14: Delhi Capitals beat Rajasthan Royals by 13 runs in an Indian Premier League game on Wednesday.

Batting first, Shikhar Dhawan (57 off 33 balls) and skipper Shreyas Iyer (53 off 43 balls) scored half-centuries but Delhi lost momentum towards the end to be restricted to 161 for seven.

Jofra Archer (3/19) and Jaydev Unadkat (2/19) were impressive with ball for Rajasthan.

In reply, Rajasthan Royals scored 148 for 8 in 20 overs with debutant Tushar Deshpande taking 2 for 37. Ben Stokes top scored with 41 off 35 balls for the Royals.

Earlier, Dhawan and Iyer hit stroke-filled half-centuries but Delhi Capitals lost momentum towards the end to be restricted to 161 for seven.

Earlier, DC had a disastrous start to their innings after opting to bat as they lost Prithvi Shaw off the first ball of the match with a gem of a delivery from Archer that jagged back in after pitching and crashed into the middle stump after getting an inside edge.

To make matters worse for DC, Ajinkya Rahane was holed out to Robin Uthappa off Archer at mid-on an over later.

But then skipper Iyer (53 off 43) joined hands with Dhawan (57 off 33) and the duo initially played cautiously before opening up

● **Shikhar Dhawan (57 off 33 balls) and skipper Shreyas Iyer (53 off 43 balls) scored half-centuries to take Delhi to 161/7. In reply, the Royals could manage just 148 for 8.**

to take DC forward.

They shared 85 runs for the third wicket off 55 balls to keep DC's momentum going after the early jolts.

Dhawan looked in great nick from the onset, often finding the boundary with his trademark pulls and shots square off the off side.

In the process he scored his 39th fifty in the IPL off just 30 balls but soon after reaching the feat he departed while trying to force the pacer, caught at short third man by Kartik Tyagi off leg-spinner Shreyas Gopal.

His runs came off 33 balls which had six boundaries and two hits over the fence.

After Dhawan's dismissal, Iyer took the onus on himself and upped the ante with some lusty hits and in the process got to his fifty off 40 balls in the 15th over bowled by Jaydev Unadkat, that yielded 17 runs, including two sixes.

But soon after, Iyer departed, caught by Archer at long-off off Kartik Tyagi as he went for another big hit. — PTI



Ravichandran Ashwin (left) of Delhi Capitals celebrates the wicket of Rajasthan Royals captain Steve Smith in an Indian Premier League match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Wednesday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Delhi Capitals: P. Shaw b Archer 0, S. Dhawan c Tyagi b Gopal 57, A. Rahane c Uthappa b Archer 2, S. Iyer c Archer b Tyagi 53, M. Stoinis c Tewatia b Archer 18, A. Carey c Archer b Unadkat 14, A. Patel c Tyagi b Unadkat 7, R. Ashwin (not out) 0. **Extras:** (lb-2, w-6, nb-2) 10. **Total (for 7 wkts, in 20 overs) 161.**
ForW: 1-0, 2-10, 3-95, 4-132, 5-153, 6-157, 7-161
Bowling: Archer 4-0-19-3, Unadkat 3-0-32-2, Tyagi 4-0-30-1, Stokes 2-0-24-0, Gopal 4-0-31-1, Tewatia 3-0-23-0.
Rajasthan Royals: B. Stokes c sub (Lalit Yadav) b Deshpande 41, J. Buttler b Nortje 22, S. Smith c & b Ashwin 1, S. Samson b Patel 25, R. Uthappa b Nortje 32, R. Parag run out (Patel) 1, R. Tewatia (not out) 14, J. Archer c Rahane b Rabada 1, S. Gopal c sub (Lalit Yadav) b Deshpande. **Extras:** (b-1, nb-1, w-3) 5. **Total (for 8 wkts, in 20 overs) 148.**
ForW: 1-37, 2-40, 3-86, 4-97, 5-110, 6-135, 7-138, 8-148.
Bowling: K. Rabada 4-0-28-1, T. Deshpande 4-0-37-2, A. Nortje 4-0-33-2, R. Ashwin 4-0-17-1, A. Patel 4-0-32-1.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	0	12	+0.990
Mumbai Indians	7	5	2	0	10	+1.327
Royal Challengers Bangalore	7	5	2	0	10	-0.116
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	4	3	0	8	-0.577
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	3	5	0	6	+0.009
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.390
Rajasthan Royals	8	3	5	0	6	-0.844
Kings XI Punjab	7	1	6	0	2	-0.381

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

IT WAS CLOSE TO PERFECT GAME FOR US: DHONI

Dubai, Oct. 14: Relieved and ecstatic in equal measure, Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni lauded his team's "close to perfect" show in the triumph over Sunrisers Hyderabad on Tuesday that infused fresh life into its faltering IPL campaign.

"Ultimately what really matters is you getting two points. Today I felt we did a very good job even in batting," said Dhoni after the match.

Before Tuesday's game, Dhoni had likened his side to a sinking ship with too many holes to plug, listing batting as the main worry.

"There was some purpose with the bat and the batsmen assessed the situation very well.

"The fast bowlers did the job, the spinners came into play and it was one game that was as close to being perfect." — PTI

Gayle set for IPL 2020 debut

Sharjah, Oct. 14: Kings XI Punjab will be hoping that Chris Gayle fires on his much-awaited return and they, for once, put up a complete performance in their must-win game against a high-flying Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Thursday.

The inability to produce an all-round show and close out games they should have won has led to KXIP losing six out of their seven matches.

But KXIP can take confidence from the fact their only win in the tournament has come against RCB, who look a much more potent squad since their last meeting on September 24.

Though the Sharjah wicket has been slowing gradually, the smaller ground dimensions are ideal for someone like Gayle to go on a six-hitting spree.

However, it certainly won't be easy for the 41-



NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD OVERALL: ● Matches: 25. ● Punjab: 13. ● Bangalore: 12	FOR THE RECORD ● Lokesh Rahul's unbeaten 132 in the first meeting against Royal Challengers Bangalore in Dubai was the highest ever individual score in the IPL. ● Virat Kohli, who hits 494 fours in 176 innings of 184 matches, needs six fours to become only the second batsman to hit 500 or more fours in the IPL. — S. PERVEZ KAISER
MEETING IN 2019 ● Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Kings XI Punjab by 8 wickets in Mohali ● Bangalore beat Punjab by 17 runs in Bangalore	MEETING IN 2020 ● KXIP beat RCB by 97 runs in Dubai.



Brazil's Neymar (left) celebrates with teammate Roberto Firmino after scoring a goal against Peru during a qualifying match for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 at the National Stadium in Lima, Peru, on Tuesday. — AP

Qatar 2022. Carrillo opened the scoring on six minutes with a dipping volley from 20 yards after latching onto

Marquinhos's weak clearance. **FARCICAL EQUALISER** Lionel Scaloni's

Argentina earned a second narrow victory in a row following Thursday's 1-0 win over Ecuador. Marcelo Moreno

year-old to get going from ball one, having not played earlier in the competition.

He would have played the last two games but could not due to food poisoning. Having recovered fully, it will be interesting to see who he replaces in the side.

Benching a yet to fire Glenn Maxwell is one option or the team can bring Gayle at the expense of an overseas bowler and replace him with the available Indian talent.

KXIP are languishing at the bottom of the table despite having the top-two leading run-getters of the tournament in skipper K.L. Rahul (387 at strike rate of 134.84) and his opening partner Mayank Agarwal (337 at 48.14).

They run into a RCB squad which has grown in confidence by leaps and bounds since their last meeting. — PTI

DENMARK OPEN | BADMINTON

Srikanth sails into Round 2

Odense (Denmark), Oct. 14: Indian ace Kidambi Srikanth on Wednesday outclassed England's Toby Pentty in straight games to enter the Denmark Open second round here and likened his return to international badminton after a coronavirus-forced hiatus to "an adventure".

The former world number one, who had claimed four Super Series titles in 2017, beat Toby 21-12, 21-18 in 37 minutes, as the sport finally got going after a seven-month-long break.

"I started off well, but he was good in the second game. I'm playing after a long time. It's like an adventure. This situation is something new. I've never been away for this long, and I'm happy with the way it went," he told Badminton World Federation.

The fifth seed will face either fellow Indian Subhankar Dey or Canada's Jason Anthony Ho-Shue in the next round.

"The last time I played was at the All England where I lost in the first round, so I've not had much of match practice. But I think I'm slowly getting back.

"It will definitely take some time, as there are no tournaments after this one. There will be a pause in the

● **The former world number one, who had claimed four Super Series titles in 2017, beat Toby 21-12, 21-18 in 37 minutes.**

season, so it might take time to get used to the match feeling."

Srikanth spent the early part of the lockdown at his home town, where he was unable to train at his normal level. It was an opportunity for him to reflect on life outside badminton.

"I was trying to enjoy whatever came my way. You couldn't go out, do anything, so you had to stay at home. People started to like what they have. That's something very important.

"After the All England I went back to my home town (Guntur), and was there for four months. I returned to Hyderabad in the first week of August, so I trained for that month thinking of the Thomas Cup," he said.

"I wasn't able to train at top intensity at all. At my place, there aren't many facilities, so I couldn't train at the highest level. But when I came back to Hyderabad I had to take time to get back to my past intensity." — PTI



JAPAN SWIM CHAMP SETO SUSPENDED FOR AFFAIR

Tokyo, Oct. 14: Japan's top Olympic swimmer Daiya Seto has been barred from competitions and official training until the end of the year as punishment for an affair exposed by a tabloid.

The star athlete was caught on camera in September by a gossip magazine, which chronicled the married 26-year-old's movements as he picked up his girlfriend, took her to a "love hotel", then went to pick up his daughter from nursery.

Seto apologised for his "irresponsible behaviour" in a statement on Tuesday, saying he accepted the sanctions from the Japan Swimming Federation, which include events at home and abroad.

It means that Seto — the

reigning world champion in the 200m and 400m individual medley — will miss a national competition in December.

But he will still be allowed to take part in the Games next summer and can also practise in private, the swimming federation said.

Seto will also have to complete the Japan Olympic Committee's "integrity education" programme among other courses, according to his management. "I intend to sincerely give my full attention to swimming... So that I may regain the trust of my family, whom I hurt deeply with my irresponsible behaviour, and regain the acceptance of my family as well as all of you as a swimmer," Seto said. — AFP

Pressure on Loew as Germany hold Swiss

Cologne (Germany), Oct. 14: Joachim Loew's 14-year reign as Germany head coach is under pressure after his side's run of poor results continued on Tuesday as they had to come from two goals down to limp to a 3-3 draw against Switzerland in the Nations League.

Germany have drawn four of their last five games — surrendering the lead on three occasions — to leave them second in their Nations League group behind Spain.

They squeezed past Ukraine 2-1 with a full strength side in Kiev on Saturday and after a 3-3 friendly home draw against Turkey last Wednesday, Loew's side were once again guilty of poor defending.

The 60-year-old has a German FA contract until

the 2022 World Cup. However, his popularity with German fans has plummeted, from the heights of winning the 2014 World Cup title, since Germany's debacle at Russia 2018 finals when they failed to get out of their group.

SPAIN GO DOWN IN UKRAINE

Substitute Viktor Tsygankov's strike gave Ukraine a surprise 1-0 win over goal-shy Spain in their Nations League clash in Kiev on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old Dynamo Kiev player had not long been thrown into the fray by coach Andriy Shevchenko when he latched onto Andriy Yarmolenko's superb through ball and fired past an exposed David de Gea in the 76th minute. — AFP