

THE ASIAN AGE

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Actress Malika Arora spotted at Bandra in Mumbai on Thursday. — PTI

Cinemas, theatres, pools won't open in Delhi till Oct. 31

New Delhi: Cinemas, theatres, and swimming pools in the city are unlikely to open soon with the Delhi government deciding to maintain status quo on prohibited and permitted activities till October 31 in the national capital. The order stated that all social, academic, entertainment, cultural, religious, political functions as well as other gatherings and large congregations will continue to be prohibited across the city.

Full report on Page 2

India's Covid tally crosses 63L mark

New Delhi: India's overall cases of novel coronavirus reached 63.12 lakh on Thursday after 86,821 new infections were detected in the last 24 hours. The total deaths due to the virus reached 98,678 with 1,181 fresh fatalities. So far, 52.73 lakh persons have recovered.

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Bastar: Maoists kill 2 politicians

Bhopal: Suspected Maoists killed a BJP leader and a Janata Congress Chhattisgarh worker in two separate incidents in south Bastar district. Around a dozen armed Maoists barged into the house of BJP leader Dhaniram and attacked him with sharp weapon.

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COUNTERPOINT



Sorry, the middle seat must be kept empty though she is your wife!

WEATHER



Max: 36.7°C
Min: 21.9°C
RH: 63%
Rain: NIL

Forecast: Mainly clear sky

ASTROGUIDE

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

SUNSET TODAY 6.07 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.15 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.10 PM
MOONSET TODAY 6.23 AM

■ Cong leader roughed up by cops after Gandhis' convoy stopped in Gr Noida

Rahul, Priyanka detained in UP; Hathras rape slugfest heats up

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY
NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

The political slugfest over the gangrape of a dalit girl in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras peaked on Thursday when Congress leaders Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi were stopped and detained on their way to meet the family of the young woman who had been cremated in the middle of the night without the family's permission earlier this week.

The Gandhis, who were travelling in a cavalcade of cars, were stopped on the Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida. When they decided to walk to Hathras they were detained and taken away in a police jeep and briefly kept in a guesthouse, from where they were released after some time.

Before being taken away, Mr Gandhi, who when informed that he cannot go to Hathras as prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC had been imposed there, asked how could there be a problem with him travelling alone on foot there.

"Can you tell me under which law you can stop me from marching towards Hathras. I want to go alone to Hathras, and on what basis can you arrest me?" he asked the police personnel present.

He was then informed by the police that he had violated Section 188 IPC, of disobeying orders promulgated by the government during the pandemic. "In today's India, only Modi can walk or travel by air. No one else can," Mr Gandhi said.

A scuffle soon followed, and the former Congress president appeared to fall down. Photographs of the incident were shared widely by the party and went viral on the social media.

Bhushan files fresh plea in SC, seeks review of order to pay ₹1

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

Activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan on Thursday filed a petition seeking reconsideration of the top court's August 14 and August 31, 2020, judgments holding him guilty of contempt of court and imposing a token fine of Re 1 for his two tweets in June, including one on Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde relating to lockdown of the top court in the wake of the Covid pandemic.

Seeking an open court hearing of his review petition and a reference to the larger question of the constitutional importance pertaining to contempt of court, Mr Bhushan in his review petition has said that the possibility of being barred from practising in the top court was not raised during the hearing, but while imposing the token fine of ₹1, the court had held that he will be barred for a specific period of time.

"At no point was the petitioner put to notice that the court was contemplating such a drastic action against him," says the petition filed by lawyer Kamini Jaiswal.

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Congress leader Rahul Gandhi slumps after police personnel allegedly manhandled him while he was on his way to Hathras along with party workers on Thursday to meet the family members of a 19-year-old dalit woman who was allegedly gangraped two weeks ago. — PTI

Can you tell me under which law you can stop me marching to Hathras on foot alone? ... In today's India, only Modi can walk or travel by air. No one else can...

— Rahul Gandhi

The sticks of an egotistical government cannot stop us

— Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

Using the hashtag "JusticeForIndiasDaughters", the party tweeted: "Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and senior Congress leaders have been arrested by the UP police".

They also alleged that the police used lathis on the Congress workers and many of them were



Medics wearing PPE suits stage a silent demonstration demanding justice for the Hathras victim at AIIMS in Patna on Thursday. — PTI

injured. Earlier, in a tweet in Hindi, Mr Gandhi said: "In times of sorrow, loved ones are not left alone. It is Jungle Raj in UP that meeting a family in mourning also scares the government. Do not be so afraid chief minister".

AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra,

the party in-charge for Uttar Pradesh, said they were repeatedly stopped from going to Hathras.

"When we all started our march on foot with Rahulji, we were repeatedly stopped and lathis were

■ Turn to Page 4

■ Victim's family alleges admin, police pressure; demands CBI probe: Page 4

Time to settle Kashi, Mathura: Katiyar

New Delhi, Oct. 1: BJP leader Vinay Katiyar, a firebrand Hindutva activist and one of the 32 accused acquitted in the Babri mosque demolition case, said on Thursday Kashi and Mathura issues should also be settled in favour of Hindus after a Supreme Court verdict has paved the way for building a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

He, however, made it clear that a final decision on these contentious matters will be taken by saints. Several Hindutva organisations have long

demanding that Hindus should be handed over the religious sites in Kashi and Mathura where mosques stand alongside.

Senior RSS functionaries had, however, said after the last year's Ayodhya verdict that the immediate agenda of the organisation do not include issues relating to Mathura, where Lord Krishna is believed to have been born, and Kashi, home to the famous Kashi Vishwanath temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Katiyar, a former MP of several terms and former

UP unit president of the BJP, told PTI that the special CBI court's verdict on Wednesday has taken a huge weight off his shoulder, as people kept saying that he and other BJP leaders were behind the demolition of Babri mosque in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992.

He, though, added that had the "structure" not been brought down, then how the temple would be built.

"How the temple would be built if the structure was not brought down. However, it should not

have been razed at that time (Dec 6, 1992)... How it was brought down is a different subject but had the structure remained, then the temple would not be built," he said.

Katiyar (65) insisted that his immediate thought, when the demolition took place, was that Ayodhya is "burning", and it should not have happened.

After all, the Supreme Court verdict (in November 2019) made everything clear and paved the way for the Ram temple's construction, he said.

— PTI

HC summons top UP babus over Hathras

Lucknow, Oct. 1: Upset with the alleged gangrape and murder of a 19-year-old dalit woman in Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh and her forcible cremation subsequently, a Lucknow bench of the Allahabad high court summoned top government officials to the court.

A bench of Justices Rajan Roy and Jaspreet Singh issued summons to the Uttar Pradesh additional chief secretary, director general of police and additional DGP, asking them to be present before the court on October 12 explain the case. The bench also ordered the Hathras district magistrate and senior superintendent of police to appear before it.

— PTI

3 soldiers die as Pak fires in 2 LoC sectors

Befitting response given by India: Army

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, OCT. 1

Three Indian soldiers were killed and five others wounded in Pakistani firing in two different sectors of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara and Poonch districts in the last 24 hours, the Army authorities said here Thursday evening.

They said the Pakistani troops resorted to an "unprovoked violation" of the November 2003 ceasefire understanding along the LoC's Nougam sector in Kupwara on Thursday. "Pakistan initiated an unprovoked ceasefire violation on the LoC in Nougam sector, Kupwara, this morning by firing mortars and other weapons, resulting in fatal injuries to two of our soldiers, whereas four others wounded were immediately evacuated to a military hospital," defence spokesman Col. Rajesh Kalia said. He added Indian troops were giving "befitting response" to the Pakistani firing and shelling.

Earlier on Wednesday

■ **THE ARMY** said the Pakistani troops resorted to an 'unprovoked violation' of the November 2003 ceasefire understanding along the LoC's Nougam sector in Kupwara on Thursday

night, Lance Naik Karnail Singh was killed and another Indian soldier Rifleman Virender Singh injured in Pakistan firing along the LoC's Mankote sector in Poonch, the Army said.

It added that the duo was after sustaining grievous injuries in Pakistani firing airlifted to 150 GH Hospital in neighbouring Rajouri district. "Unfortunately, Karnail Singh died before being admitted and his body was brought back to battalion headquarters of 10 JAK Rifles.

Virender Singh has sustained injuries in his right eye and is receiving treatment in the hospital," a defence spokesman said in Poonch. He also said that the Indian troops gave a "befitting

■ Turn to Page 4

200 special trains for festival season to start on Oct. 15

New Delhi, Oct. 1: The Indian Railways plans to run 200 special trains between October 15 and November 30 to cater to passengers travelling during the festive season, Railway Board chairman-CEO V.K. Yadav said on Thursday.

The Railways have suspended all regular passenger trains indefinitely. The regular trains have been suspended since March 22.

It started operations of 15 pairs of premium Rajdhani special trains that link New Delhi with different parts of the country on May 12, and 100 pairs of long-distance trains on June 1. It also started 80 more trains on September 12.

"We have asked zonal GMs to speak with local administrations to review the Covid-19 status, then we will decide how many trains can be run. Our estimate is around 200 trains, but it could be more," Mr Yadav said.

— PTI

Full refund for air tickets booked amid lockdown

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

The Supreme Court said that airlines will have to give full refund of the air tickets that were booked for domestic and international travel during the lockdown period for travel within that period — March 25 to May 24 — within three weeks of the cancellation of such tickets.

The refund will be either in cash or through a credit shell with a little enhanced value of the fare paid by the passenger. The person holding the credit shell will have the liberty to choose the route s/he wants to take while availing the credit shell.

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Indian flag seen in Hong Kong protest



A protester displays the tricolour to show support for the Indian Army, now locked in a standoff with the Chinese PLA, on China's National Day at Hong Kong's popular shopping district of Causeway Bay on Thursday. There was a heavy police presence despite very few protesters. — AP

IN BRIEF

Massive anti-air pollution campaign in city from Oct. 5

New Delhi: Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai on Thursday said the city government will launch a mega anti-air pollution campaign on October 5, and that a centre is being set up in Najafgarh to produce a chemical to deal with stubble burning. Rai said he has also appealed to the Centre and neighbouring states to use the chemical developed by scientists at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) here to manage stubble. "Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal will launch a mega anti-air pollution campaign after a meeting with officials from departments of environment, transport, development, PWD, Delhi Development Authority, Delhi Jal Board, traffic police and municipal corporations," he said. There are 11 plants around Delhi - in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab - which were supposed to retrofit their units with technology called flue-gas desulphurisation to reduce emissions by December 2019. Rai said there are more than 1,640 such brick kilns in Uttar Pradesh, 161 in Haryana and 164 Rajasthan. "All these contribute to Delhi's air pollution massively," he said.

Fall in immunity, virulence of virus, finds sero survey

3,037 cases, 41 deaths in 24 hrs; City's Covid tally crosses 2.82 lakh mark

New Delhi, Oct. 1: The latest survey on prevalence of antibodies to Covid-19 among people in Delhi has shown a fall compared to the last exercise, with experts saying possible reasons could be immunity lasting for lesser time in people and "change in virulence" of the virus. Virulence refers to the severity or harmfulness of a disease.

With 3,037 new cases, city's Covid 19 tally crossed the 2.82 lakh mark, while 41 fresh fatalities took the death toll to 5,401 on Thursday. On Wednesday, the national capital recorded 41 Covid-19 fatalities. On Tuesday, 48 deaths were reported, the highest number of fatalities recorded in a day since July 16, when the city saw 58 fatalities. On September 26, Delhi recorded 46 deaths, 42 the next day and 37 on September 28. The death toll from Covid-19 in Delhi stood at 5,361 on Wednesday. The findings of the survey conducted in the first

► The survey showed that there was a significant decrease in seroprevalence in Northeast, North, and Central districts of Delhi, while there was a slight increase in South, East, West, and Northwest districts.

► The seroprevalence was found more in women during all the rounds of the survey and it was the least in the 18-49 year age group, as compared to the age groups of less than 18 years and more than 50 years, the report said.

week of September, with a representative sample of 17,409 people across various categories, was submitted to the Delhi high court on Wednesday. It found that seroprevalence of antibodies to Covid-19 reduced to 25 per cent in September from nearly 29 per cent found in the August exercise in the national capital.

Dr B.L. Sherwal, the medical director of Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital, a dedicated Covid-19 facility, said the fall in figures indicates that "immunity to the virus attack is not lasting beyond two months or so."

"It also means that we are far away from the desired herd immunity level. The decline in figures means the antibodies developed in response to the infection, symptomatic or asymptomatic, are vanishing far earlier than expected. So, people need to be more careful now," he told a news agency.

Dr Sherwal conjectured that this trend, if persists, means that when the vaccine comes for Covid-19, a patient would need to be given "power doses too" besides the "first dose." The survey also showed that there was a significant decrease in seroprevalence in Northeast, North, and Central districts of Delhi, while there was a slight increase in South, East, West, and Northwest districts.

The seroprevalence was found more in women during all the rounds of the survey and it was the least in the 18-49 year age group, as compared to the age groups of less than 18 years and more than 50 years, the report said.

The survey also found that nearly one-third of the participants with a past history of Covid-19 infection "did not have detectable IgG antibodies."

Medical director of LNJP Hospital, another dedicated Covid-19 facility run by the Delhi government, concurred with Dr Sherwal that the duration for which antibodies last "seems to be reducing."

"The fall in seroprevalence level, if extrapolated, means people had antibodies earlier but it has disappeared now. — PTI

■ AAP govt decides to maintain status quo Cinemas, swimming pools may not open till Oct. 31

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

Cinemas, theatres and swimming pools in the city are unlikely to open soon with the Delhi government deciding to maintain status quo on prohibited and permitted activities till October 31 in the national capital.

According to an order issued by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority, these establishments will remain closed till further orders.

In his order issued on Wednesday night, chief secretary Vijay Dev said that two weekly markets in each civic body zone will be allowed to open every day. Bars in hotels, restaurants and clubs have been permitted to remain open.

The order stated that all social, academic, entertainment, cultural, religious, political functions as well as other gatherings and large congregations will continue to be prohibited across the city. "The situation of Covid-19 in Delhi has been reviewed and it has been

► **UNION HOME** ministry on Wednesday issued new guidelines for permitting more activities in areas outside the containment zones that included opening up of cinemas, theatres and multiplexes with up to 50 per cent of their seating capacity from October 15

decided that status quo in respect of prohibited and permitted activities (including activities on trial basis) may be maintained in NCT of Delhi till October 31 or further orders, whichever is earlier," it said. However, maximum 50 people will be allowed in marriage related gatherings and maximum 20 people are allowed in funeral and last rites related gatherings, it stated.

On Wednesday, the Union home ministry issued new guidelines for permitting more activities in areas outside the containment zones that included opening up of cinemas, theatres and

multiplexes with up to 50 per cent of their seating capacity from October 15.

States and Union territories have been given the flexibility to decide on reopening schools and coaching institutions after October 15 in a graded manner, and permitting social, religious and political gatherings beyond the limit of 100 people, subject to certain conditions.

The DDMA, headed by Lt Governor Anil Bajjal, has directed all district magistrates and deputy commissioners of police and other concerned authorities to ensure strict compliance of its order.

In its September 13 order, the state disaster management authority had allowed opening of one weekly market per day per zone in civic bodies on trial basis, till September 30. It had also permitted opening of Yoga institutes and gyms in Delhi (except in containment zones), through the same order. Opening of bars had also been allowed on trial basis from September 9-30.

■ New office-bearers announced**City BJP gets a new team: Lone Muslim woman dropped**

SHASHI BHUSHAN NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

Four months after his appointment, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Thursday finally announced his team of office-bearers.

Heavyweights Kuljeet Chahal and Rajiv Babbar retained their position of Delhi BJP general secretary and vice president respectively for another term. Lone Muslim office-bearer Shazia Ilmi failed to get reappointment. She had worked as vice president of Delhi BJP.

While two general secretaries Ravinder Gupta and Rajesh Bhatia are replaced with former East Delhi mayor Harsh Malhotra and Dinesh Pratap Singh (former president of P o r v a n c h a l Morcha).

Mr Gupta despite all his efforts failed to appoint one of his favorites as general secretary and few others at key positions. The list has the stamp of state general secretary (organization)

Siddharthan. "Mr Gupta failed to get important positions for people close to him. While Mr Siddharthan got his favourites reappointed or key position in the new organisational structure," said party leader.

Former state unit secretary Virender Sachdeva has been appointed as new vice president of Delhi BJP. Media head Ashok Goel has been promoted as new vice president of BJP city unit. Party leaders claim that proximity to national general secretary and one of central observers for organisational appointment, Arun Singh worked in favour of Mr Goel's promotion.

Apart from Mr Sachdeva and Mr Goel, other vice presidents are Sunil Yadav, who contested chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in February polls, former MLA from RK Puram Barkha Singh, Rajan Tiwari, former student leader Jaiveer Rana, Karam Singh Karma.

SC rejects plea for probe into handling of Covid by govt

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

The Supreme Court on Thursday rejected a PIL by some former bureaucrats seeking inquiry into the mismanagement in the handling of the Covid pandemic including delayed response, defiance of government's own order on social distancing during Namaste Trump event at Ahmedabad in March this year and declaration of lockdown without any planning and preparation.

Dismissing the PIL, Justice L. Nageswara Rao heading a bench also comprising Justice Ajay Rastogi said, "Latitude has to be given to the government (in the handling of the Covid). This is a matter for public debate and not for the court to intervene."

Bhushan told the court that there was no "planning and preparation" before the announcement of "unilateral lockdown" resulting in two-crore salaried people losing their jobs, migrant


workers walking back their home, leading to the spread of coronavirus, GDP shrinking by 24% impacting all sectors of economy particularly those in small and medium segment.

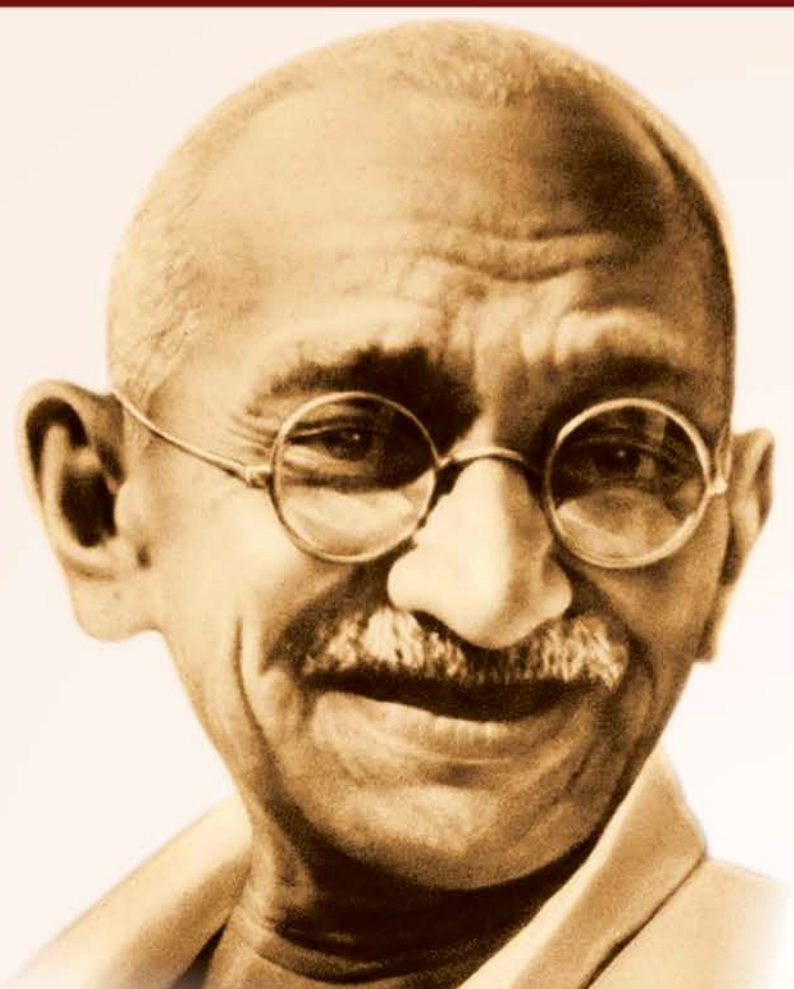
Bhushan said that purpose of inquiry is not apportioning blame on any one but to ascertain what went wrong.

However, Justice Nageswara Rao told Bhushan: "There will always be a difference of opinion on the matters of public health. You and me may differ. No body knew the shape Covid will take six months ago."

Having told Bhushan that court did not agree with him, Justice Nageswara Rao said, "Sorry, we are not inclined to intervene. Dismissed."

Bhushan had appeared for some retired bureaucrats led by K P Fabian, for probe into the gross mismanagement in containing and preventing the spread of Covid pandemic by the Central government.





“ एक राष्ट्र की संस्कृति, उसमें रहने वाले लोगों के दिलों में और आत्मा में रहती है। ”






- महात्मा गांधी

गांधी जयंती

2 अक्टूबर, 2020

के अवसर पर कोटि-कोटि नमन

- योगी आदित्यनाथ, मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

कोरोना से बचाव के उपाय

2 गज

सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का पालन करें

फेस कवर/ मास्क अवश्य लगाएं

हाथों को साफ रखने हेतु साबुन/ सैनेटाइजर का प्रयोग करें

छींकते और खांसेते समय अपना मुंह व नाक रुमाल से ढकें

आरोग्य सेतु एवं आयुष कवच एप का प्रयोग करें

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

सबका साथ-सबका विकास-सबका विश्वास

SHORT TAKES

Meghalaya CM picks 2 new faces for Cabinet

Shillong: NPP legislator Dasakhiat Lamare and HSPDP's Renikton Tongkhar were sworn-in as new ministers in the Meghalaya government on Thursday, dropping two senior politicians from the cabinet, with chief ministers Conrad Sangma announcing that there will be a reshuffle in portfolios. Lamare and Tongkhar were administered the oath of office by governor Satya Pal Malik at a function attended by the chief minister, his deputy Prestone Tynsong, their cabinet colleagues and officials. Fisheries and PWD (Building) minister Comingone Ymbon, a three-time MLA, was replaced by Lamare, the nephew of transport minister Sniawbhalang Dhar. PHE minister Samlin Malngiang of the HSPDP was replaced by his party colleague Tongkhar. — PTI

Assam BJP leader held in exam scam

Guwahati: Diban Deka, BJP leader and one of the prime accused in Assam police recruitment scam who surrendered to the police at Barpeta, has been taken into custody and expelled from the party on Thursday. Deka was taken into custody soon after his surrender at Pathacharkuchi in Barpeta district late on Wednesday night, police said. He had been absconding since the scam came to light. He was brought here for interrogation, the officer said. Deka was produced at the court of Kamrup chief judicial magistrate and remanded to the custody of Guwahati City Police crime branch for five days. A BJP spokesman said the state unit of the party expelled Deka with immediate effect after his arrest. Deka had identified himself on Facebook as the national executive member of BJP's Kisan Morcha and had contested Assam assembly poll as a BJP candidate in 2011 and was also expecting to contest the 2021 polls. — PTI

'Pak exploiting death of displaced Hindus'

New Delhi: Eleven members of a family of Pakistani Hindus, who had died in Jodhpur, Rajasthan in August this year, had died after consuming a toxic substance and their death is being "exploited" by Pakistan, which "staged" a protest near the Indian High Commission in Islamabad over the issue, the MEA said on Thursday, adding that it was the responsibility of Pakistan to ensure the safety of the Indian High Commission. The MEA said an interim response on the deaths of the 11 persons had been shared with Pakistani authorities last month. Meanwhile, in response to another question at briefing, the MEA also reiterated India's position that it wants normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan in an atmosphere free from terror and that the onus is on Pakistan to create such an environment.

3 soldiers die as Pak fires in 2 LoC sectors

■ **Continued from Page 1** reply" to the Pakistani firing. On Monday, an Indian soldier was injured in a similar clash in the LoC's Machil sector in Kupwara, the Army said, adding that his condition was stable. In Islamabad, Pakistan military spokesman Maj. Gen. Babar Iftikhar said the Indian Army had "resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation using automatics and heavy mortars" in the Jandrot sector along the LoC "deliberately targeting the civilian population" on Wednesday. He added that a 65-year-old woman was injured in Indian shelling in Kathar village. He further said that earlier on Tuesday, a 15-year-old boy was killed and four other civilians, including a woman, were injured in the Indian firing and shelling in the LoC's Baroh and Tandar sectors. Defence spokesman Col. Kalia, in a WhatsApp message late Thursday night, said: "Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violations along the LoC's Keran and Machhal sectors today by firing artillery guns, mortars and other weapons. A befitting response is being given."

■ 'Saffron party got farm Bills passed while riding roughshod over Opp. & its allies' BJP alliance politics 'falling apart': Sibal

New Delhi, Oct. 1: Taking a dig at the BJP over its oldest ally Shiromani Akali Dal breaking ties with it on the farm bills issue, senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal on Thursday said the saffron party's alliance politics was "falling apart" over legislations and the ruling NDA has turned into a "non-democratic alliance".

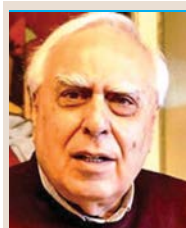
Mr Sibal, who was among the 23 leaders who wrote to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi calling for organisational reforms, also slammed Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman for recently alluding to the letter writers and their alleged undermining of the party, saying, "The Congress still has space for

people to express concerns, while the BJP has no such space".

Mr Sibal alleged that the BJP got the farm bills passed while riding "roughshod over the Opposition and (its own) allies".

"Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), probably the oldest alliance partner of the BJP, has broken away sensing the disquiet in the farming community and now Dushyant Chautala is feeling the heat of continuing with the BJP-led government in Haryana," the former Union minister said.

The BJP's "politics of alliance is falling apart" over the farm bills issue and the NDA has become a



When they realise that they have gained a foothold, they are brazen enough to tell their alliance partners that 'we don't need you now'. That is why the Shiv Sena broke away and that is why the SAD broke away.

— Kapil Sibal, Congress leader

"non-democratic alliance", Sibal told PTI in an interview.

"Farmers are out on streets not only because of what the Congress is saying but because they feel strongly about the possibility of losing out on getting the MSP (minimum support price)," he said.

Sibal said the BJP always tries to gain a foothold in

states where its presence is limited and afterward "dumps" its allies.

"When they realise that they have gained a foothold, they are brazen enough to tell their alliance partners that 'we don't need you now'. That is why the Shiv Sena broke away and that is why the SAD broke away," Mr Sibal said. "Sukhbir Singh Badal

said there is no consultation (in the NDA). So there is no NDA, there is only the BJP sitting over the NDA and lording over it," he alleged, also pointing to the seat-sharing issues NDA is facing in Bihar.

The BJP is in alliance with the JD(U) in Bihar as a matter of "compulsion" and my prediction is that in future they will "dump" the JD(U), Mr Sibal said.

Asked about Sitharaman's remarks in a recent newspaper interview alluding to the 23 letter writers and implying an alleged undermining of Rajya Sabha Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad by the Congress, Sibal said, "She understands undermining of roles bet-

ter than we do because the PM has undermined everyone in the Cabinet".

"While a party like the Congress still has space for some people to express their concerns, the BJP has no such space," he asserted.

Mr Sibal said the three farm bills were like the government's decisions of demonetisation and "faulty" implementation of GST and would harm farmers' interests.

"Our worry, as well as the reaction of farmers both in Haryana and Punjab, is that they will not get the MSP because private players, through contract farming, will ensure that the farmers are deprived of the MSP," he said. — PTI



Rajnath Singh

Rajnath: MSP will be hiked, no threat to farmers' land

New Delhi, Oct. 1: Seeking to allay concerns of farmers over a new set of legislations amid continuing protests by some parties, senior Union minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday assured the farm community that the MSP (minimum support price) will not only stay, but it will also be continuously increased too in coming years.

He also assured that no one can claim ownership of farmers' land in lieu of contract farming and said there are enough measures in the legislations to safeguard the interests of farmers.

Opposition parties have alleged that farmers would be left at the mercy of corporates under the new laws, which have come into effect after the passage of three key bills in the recent monsoon session of Parliament.

Hitting out at Congress and other opposition parties, Singh said they are trying to create misunderstandings about the farm bills passed by Parliament.

He also attacked Congress for the burning of a tractor by protesters from their youth wing.

"A tractor was burnt. What is its logic? As weapons are sacred and respectable for soldiers, similarly tractors are to farmers. And I know this being a farmer, in any eventuality farmer will never burn his tractor. This was done by a political party for its political interest," he said. The Congress' youth wing activists on Monday had set a tractor ablaze near India Gate in the national capital, a few hundred metres from the Rashtrapati Bhavan and Parliament, to protest the contentious farm laws. — PTI



First run of Kolkata Heritage River Cruise of West Bengal Transport Corporation river after its launch in Kolkata on Thursday. — PTI

'Wife-beater' MP DGP says action against him not fair

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, OCT. 1

Director-general of police (DGP) rank officer of Madhya Pradesh Purushottam Sharma, who has been placed under suspension after a video catching him assaulting his wife surfaced four days ago, has called upon the state branch of the IPS Officers' Association to "take pains" to take up his matter with the state government.

In his letter, the top cop of the state lamented that action was taken against him in the case despite the fact that no complaint was filed against him in this regard.

He pleaded his innocence on the issue saying that he only acted in self-defence.

Videos showing some IAS and IPS officers taking bribes and in compromising positions with women had gone viral earlier, he said, and added that no action has been taken against any of them so far.

A video showing the IPS officer of 1986 batch thrashing his wife in his house has gone viral leading the state government to suspend him on charges of indulging in domestic violence.

PM Modi to open Atal Tunnel at Rohtang Saturday

New Delhi, Oct. 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the strategically important all-weather Atal Tunnel, which reduces the distance between Manali and Leh by 46 km and the travel time by four to five hours, at Rohtang on Saturday.

After the inauguration function, Modi will also attend public functions at Sissu in Lahaul Spiti and at Solang Valley, the Prime Minister's Office said on Thursday.

Atal Tunnel is the longest highway tunnel in the world, and the 9.02 km long tunnel connects Manali to Lahaul-Spiti valley throughout the year, the PMO said, noting that the valley was earlier cut off for about six months every year due to heavy snowfall. The tunnel is built with ultra-modern specifications in the Pir Panjal range of Himalayas at an altitude of 3000 metres (10,000 feet) from the Mean Sea Level (MSL).

The south portal (SP) of Atal Tunnel is located at a distance of 25 km from Manali at an altitude of 3,060 metres, while the north portal (NP) of the tunnel is located near village Teling, Sissu, in Lahaul Valley at an altitude of 3,071 metres. It is a horse shoe shaped, single-tube double lane tunnel with a roadway of 8



metres and has an overhead clearance of 5.525 metres, the PMO said.

Atal Tunnel has been designed for traffic density of 3000 cars per day and 1,500 trucks per day with max speed of 80 kmph.

The Atal Bihari Vajpayee government had taken the decision to construct the strategic tunnel below the Rohtang Pass on June 3, 2000, and the foundation stone for the access road to the south portal of the tunnel was laid on May 26, 2002. The Modi government decided to name the Rohtang Tunnel as Atal Tunnel in December 2019 to honour the former prime minister who had passed away the previous year. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) worked relentlessly to overcome major geological, terrain and weather challenges that included the most difficult stretch of the 587-metre Seri Nalah Fault Zone. The breakthrough from both ends was achieved on October 15, 2017, the statement said. — PTI

CBI ignored Pak intel report in Babri Masjid case: Court

'People from across border might have damaged site'

Lucknow, Oct. 1: A special court here has said the CBI did not probe into an "important" secret information that people from Pakistan intelligence agency may have also entered and damaged the disputed Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid in Ayodhya to foment communal disturbances in the country.

Special Judge S.K. Yadav referred to inconsistencies in testimonies of several prosecution witnesses while holding that the charge of criminal conspiracy to demolish the structure and other charges were not proved against 32 high-profile accused in the case.

In the 2,300 page-long verdict written in Hindi, the judge said the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) case became weaker or "forceless" in view of the fact that it did not probe and ruled out the Pakistan angle to the demolition to make the criminal conspiracy charge stand the judicial scrutiny.

The special CBI judge observed this on Wednesday in the judgement while acquitting the accused, including veteran BJP leaders L.K. Advani and M. M. Joshi, of conspiring to raze the structure among other charges.

The court said the CBI's allegations against the accused persons "become forceless also because it did not investigate a report sent by Local Intelligence Unit (LIU) on December 5, 1992, that on December 6, 1992, some persons from Pakistani intelligence agencies may cause damage to the disputed structure".

It noted that there were local intelligence reports that on December 2, 1992, some 'majaar' (shrine) were broken and set on fire

CBI court verdict 'travesty of justice': Veerappa Moily

New Delhi, Oct. 1: Former law minister M. Veerappa Moily on Thursday said acquittal of all the accused in the Babri Masjid demolition case by a special CBI court was a "travesty of justice", and claimed that the verdict reflects "insensitivity" on the part of the judiciary.

The senior Congress leader also said the judgement is not consistent with the observation made by the Supreme Court (SC) in 2019 that the demolition of the mosque was an "egre-



gious violation". All the 32 accused, including BJP veterans L.K. Advani and M.M. Joshi, in the demolition case were acquitted on Wednesday by the special CBI court in Lucknow which said there was no proof against them.

Another senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram also criticized the verdict, saying "the trial court's verdict defies logic & common sense, besides denying the conclusions of the Supreme Court!". — PTI

by persons from the Muslim community with an aim to vitiate the communal atmosphere so that 'kar seva' (voluntary service) may be interrupted.

It cited an LIU report, which was signed by inspector-general (security), Uttar Pradesh, that said "persons related to Pakistani intelligence agencies have merged with the masses in Ayodhya and they may create unrest in the state and the country by damaging the disputed structure with explosives and other means". — PTI

What is its logic? As weapons are sacred and respectable for soldiers, similarly tractors are to farmers. And I know this being a farmer, in any eventuality farmer will never burn his tractor. This was done by a political party for its political interest," he said. The Congress' youth wing activists on Monday had set a tractor ablaze near India Gate in the national capital, a few hundred metres from the Rashtrapati Bhavan and Parliament, to protest the contentious farm laws. — PTI

■ 'Will he still hold an event after US Prez questions India's Covid no'

Cong's 'Namaste Trump' dig at PM

New Delhi, Oct. 1: The Congress on Thursday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi if he would still hold a 'Namaste Trump' event in honour of US President Donald Trump after he questioned India's Covid numbers and accused it of concealing figures during the presidential debate.

Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel questioned the government if it would answer the allegations made by President Trump. "The president of the United States has made a serious charge that India is concealing Covid-19 deaths. We wish to remind him that Gujarat is still paying a price for hosting him in the midst of a pan-

Modi appeals to Sarpanchs to make JJM people's movement

New Delhi, Oct. 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has written to all sarpanches and gram pradhans of the country for more effective implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), saying its goal can be fully realised with the help of village community leaders, according to an official statement Thursday.

The PM also appealed to people and gram panchay-

ats to make Jal Jeevan Mission a people's movement. The JJM aims to provide drinking water to all rural households by 2024.

"The goal of the Mission — Har Ghar Jal can — be fully realised with the help of all Sarpanch/Pradhan/village community leaders as they play a pivotal role in its implementation, the Jal Shakti ministry said in a statement. — PTI

demic. We hope our government answers to his allegations," he said on Twitter.

Taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over Trump's remarks, Congress leader P

Chidambaram asked whether the PM will hold another 'Namaste Trump' rally to honour his "dear friend".

During the first presidential debate ahead of the US polls, Trump raised questions over the credibility of India's Coronavirus tally, claiming that it was among the countries that do not accurately disclose the number of deaths due to the pandemic.

Reacting to the remarks, Chidambaram said, "Mr Donald Trump clubs India with China and Russia and accused the three countries of hiding the number of Covid deaths. He also accused the three countries for causing the most air pollution." — PTI

Odisha youth holds mother to ransom

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 1

Tensions prevailed for an hour on Thursday in Odisha's capital city Bhubaneswar after a youth held his mother to ransom in front of the State Assembly near Lower PMG Square, seeking actions against some "corrupt" ministers.

The youth identified as Jitendra Pal of Daspalla area in Nayagarh district appeared in front of the Assembly with her mother in the afternoon. All of a sudden, he brought out a knife hidden in his bag and grabbed his mother Jharana Pal's neck declaring he would kill her if actions were not taken against "corrupt" ministers.

He threatened to slit his mother Jharana's throat if any police personnel approached him to rescue his mother.

Vehicular movement on the busy stretch was also disrupted for a while due to the nuisance.

Sources said Jitendra was accompanying his mother to a private hospital here in the city. As they were walking along the Sachivalaya Marg, he swooped on his mother and held the knife against her throat, threatening to kill her if his demands for actions against the minister were not met.

The youth was carrying some leaflets and was uttering names of some ministers and political leaders alleging corruption and harassment to the public.



SAD leaders Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Bunti Rumana and SGPC president Gobind Singh Longowal and others during a Kisan Rally against recent farm law in Patiala on Thursday. — PTI

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

The Supreme Court, on Thursday, said that the courts can interfere with the investigations in criminal cases only in "exceptional cases" and not otherwise as it asked the Andhra Pradesh high court to take up for hearing next week the matter involving alleged questionable land transactions involving certain officials and to decide the issue.

Keeping the petition by Andhra Pradesh government against the high court's interim order staying investigation against Anne Sudheer Babu — the ex-tehsildar of Thullur Mandal — and others pending, a bench comprising Justice L. Nageswara Rao and Justice Ajay Rastogi

■ **IN MARCH** this year, the Andhra Pradesh high court had stayed the investigation in an FIR against Anne Sudheer Babu and others for their alleged involvement in questionable land transactions. Keeping the matter pending, the court ordered further hearing next week

said that the top court has repeatedly said that the courts should refrain from interfering with the investigations in criminal cases except in exceptional circumstances.

In March this year, the Andhra Pradesh high court had stayed the investigation in an FIR against Anne Sudheer Babu and others for their alleged involvement in

questionable land transactions.

Anne Sudheer Babu and others had approached the high court for the quashing of the FIR and the stay of investigation.

However, when Justice Nageswara Rao said in his order that they have repeatedly refrained the courts from staying investigation in criminal cases except in exceptional circumstances, senior counsel Sidharth Luthra, appearing for the respondents, urged the court not to say this in the order as it would be read differently. Justice Nageswara Rao said that they would delete the sentence from their order.

Keeping the matter pending, the court ordered further hearing next week.



SHORT TAKES

News channel owner held for 'extortion'

New Delhi: The owner of a digital news channel has been arrested for allegedly blackmailing and extorting money from an advocate in south Delhi's Greater Kailash area, police said on Thursday. The accused has been identified as Afsar Ali (37), a resident of Noida Sector-78, they said. Police said the advocate, a resident of Greater Kailash, lodged a complaint where he alleged that some people, on behalf of the channel, conducted a sting operation on him. They threatened to telecast the recording if he failed to pay Rs 5 crore to them. The advocate also told the police that these people also visited his office and tried to get details about his family members, a senior police officer said. A case was registered at Greater Kailash police station and investigation was taken up, the officer said. — PTI

Devyani made India's next Cambodia envoy

New Delhi: Indian foreign service officer Devyani Uttam Khobragade has been appointed as India's next ambassador to Cambodia, the ministry of external affairs said on Thursday. Ms Khobragade, a 1999-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, is currently serving as a joint secretary in the ministry at its headquarters in Delhi. "She is expected to take up the assignment shortly," the MEA said in a release. In her nearly 21-year career, Ms Khobragade has served in Indian missions in Berlin, Islamabad, Rome and New York. She had hit the headlines in 2013 as action against her by the authorities in New York on charges of underpaying her Indian maid had snowballed into a major row between the two countries. She then was serving as India's deputy consul general in New York. — PTI

Cong to field 7 sitting MLAs in Bihar polls

New Delhi: The Congress screening committee for Bihar held its first meeting on Thursday and decided to field seven sitting MLAs in the upcoming Assembly polls, sources said. The Congress on Wednesday had held internal discussions over the distribution of party tickets and sharing of seats other parties. Among those who participated in the meeting included the chairman of the screening committee Avinash Pandey, AICC in-charge for Bihar Shakti Singh Gohil, Bihar Congress chief Madan Mohan Jha and CLP leader in Bihar Sadanand Singh. The party had called its Bihar unit chief and the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) to Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

Rahul, Priyanka detained in UP; Hathras rape...

■ **Continued from Page 1**
rained on us in a barbaric manner. Many workers were injured. But our intention is clear. The sticks of an egotistical government cannot stop us. I wish these lathis were used by this police while standing in defence of Hathras' dalit daughter," she tweeted.
She alleged that an "arrogant power" is demonstrating its power "over the dead bodies of innocent girls" and it is indulging in injustice, instead of preventing it. "Our struggle for women will continue for a safe society and state, where they can live freely and progress," Ms Vadra tweeted.
AICC general secretary Randeep Surjewala, the party's communications department chief, put out a video along with a tweet showing Rahul Gandhi allegedly being roughed up. "Lala Lajpat Rai had said that every blow of a stick on my body would prove to be the last nail in the coffin of the British Raj. The sticks on Rahulji and Priyankaji's convoy will also prove to be the last nail in the coffin of the Yogi government," Mr Surjewala said.
Former finance minister and senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram said: "The UP police is a law into itself. None of the laws of the country seem to apply to it."
"What is wrong if the leaders of a political party protest against a gruesome crime and wish to visit the victim's family," he tweeted.

■ **Family says legs and back of victim were broken by rapists**

Another dalit gangrape victim dies in UP, 2 held

Balrampur (UP), Oct. 1: A 22-year-old Dalit woman died after allegedly being raped by two men in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur district, succumbing to critical injuries on the same day as the teen from Hathras in the state who breathed her last in a Delhi hospital two weeks after she was gangraped.

Both the women died on Tuesday and were cremated on Wednesday.

The two men accused of assaulting the woman from Balrampur have been arrested, police said amid outrage over the death of the 19-year-old dalit woman from Hathras.

The Balrampur victim's mother told reporters on Wednesday night that the rapists broke her daughter's legs and back, a charge denied by the police.

"My daughter had gone to take admission in a college on Tuesday. On her way back, three-four persons abducted her; took her to their room, gave her an injection and raped her. They later sent her back on an e-rickshaw, which dumped her outside our house. They broke her legs and back. She could not stand or talk," the woman said.

Quoting the victim's family members, Balrampur Superintendent of Police (SP) Dev Ranjan Verma said the woman worked in a private firm and returned home on Tuesday in a serious condition.

She looked dazed and had a cannula, medically known as Vigo and used for administering an injection or other fluids in the body, inserted in her hands.

She was rushed to a nearby hospital but died on the way, the SP said.

When the matter was reported to the police by the hospital, her parents alleged she was gangraped, he added.

Acting on the family's complaint, police identified the accused as Shahid and Sahil and arrested them.

About the mother's allegation that the woman's legs and back were broken, Verma said, "It was not confirmed in the post-

Hathras case: Victim's family calls for investigation by CBI

Hathras (UP), Oct. 1: The family of the 19-year-old Dalit woman who succumbed to her injuries at a Delhi hospital after she was allegedly gangraped in Hathras on Thursday alleged they were being pressured by the district administration against repeatedly changing their statement.

The father of the woman, whose death has triggered a massive outrage in the country and sharp criticism for the UP government, said he was being pressured by government officials and demanded a CBI probe into the matter.

The father, around 50, claimed that he was pressured into going to a police

station where the district magistrate and police officials made three members of his family sign some document.

But we are not satisfied with this. My daughter's case should be probed by the CBI and monitored by a Supreme Court judge. We are under pressure from officials and confined to our home while the media has also been disallowed from meeting us, he said in a purported video shared by Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Twitter.

The development came as a video surfaced purportedly showing Hathras District Magistrate Praveen Kumar Laxkar

meeting the family at their home, where he allegedly asked the woman's father to reconsider if he wants to stick with the statement or change it.

Aap apni vishwasniyata khatam mat kariye. Media wale main aapko bata doon aaj abhi aadhe chale gaye, kal subah tak aadhe aur nikal jaenge aur 2-4 din bachenge ... Hum hi bas khade hain aapke saath mein, thik hai. Ab aapki ichha hai, aapko baar-baar bayaan badalna hai, nahi badalna hai...

A woman member of the family claimed they were being pressured by the district magistrate and feared these people won't let us live here. — PTI

UP like incidents won't be tolerated in Maha: Uddhav

Thane: Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday said that Hathras-like incidents will not be tolerated in the state and those indulging in crime against women would be dealt with severely.

His statement comes amid a nationwide outrage over the death of a 19-year-old dalit woman from Uttar Pradesh's Hathras on Tuesday, days after she was raped by four men on September 14.

Thackeray was speaking while virtually inaugurating the newly-formed Mira-Bhayandar Vasai-Virar police commissionerate.

"When incidents like the one happened in UP occur, we usually discuss it for a while and then forget. But in Maharashtra, such incidents will not be allowed to happen," he said. — PTI

mortem. We contradict this news."

She was cremated on Wednesday after the post-mortem in the presence of her family members, the police said.

The district magistrate and the SP, along with the mahant of the Devipatan temple, Mithilesh Nath Yogi, visited her home on Thursday morning, met the family members and



Hathras girl not raped as per forensic report: Police

Lucknow: A senior Uttar Pradesh police officer said on Thursday that the forensic report has revealed that the 19-year-old Hathras woman who succumbed to her injuries at a Delhi hospital was not raped.

Citing a forensic science laboratory (FSL) report, ADG (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said the cause of her death is an injury on the neck and trauma resulting due to it.

"The report of the FSL has come. It says clearly that samples did not have sperm. It makes clear that there was no rape or gang rape," Kumar said.

"Even the woman in her statement to police did not mention about rape but talked about 'marpeet' (beating) only," he said.

Last week, Hathras ASP Prakash Kumar had told mediapersons that initially the accused were booked for attempt to murder under Section 307 of the IPC. — PTI

condoled her death.

"The family members were assured that the accused will be given a strict punishment in accordance with law. A letter sanctioning a financial assistance of ₹6,18,450 was handed over to them by the mahant. The amount will be sent to the victim's mother's bank account by the afternoon," a statement issued here said.

The mother has demanded a compensation of ₹25 lakh and a government job for her son.

"My daughter wanted to become a lawyer but she was killed. The same fate should await the culprits. We want justice. My son should be given a government job and we should get at least ₹25 lakh as compensation," she said. — PTI



Tibetans in exile stage a protest against China on the 71st founding anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party in Dharamshala on Thursday. — PTI

'Air tickets booked in lockdown to be refunded full'

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

The Supreme Court on Thursday said that airlines will have to give full refund of the air tickets that were booked for domestic and international travel during the lockdown period for travel within that period — March 25 to May 24 — within three weeks of the cancellation of such tickets.

The refund will be either in cash or through a credit shell with a little enhanced value of the fare paid by the passenger.

Similarly, the court said that passengers are entitled to full refund of the tickers booked on foreign carriers for overseas travel during the lockdown period for travel within the lockdown period. This will apply to tickets booked ex-India and the refund will be made within three weeks of the cancellation of the tickets.

In both the cases, if tickets are booked through travel agents, the

■ **AIRLINES WILL** have to give full refund of the air tickets that were booked for domestic and international travel during the lockdown period for travel within that period — March 25 to May 24 — within three weeks of the cancellation of such tickets

refund will be routed through the agent, who in turn would immediately pass on the refunded amount to the passenger.

In a slew of directions, a bench comprising Justice Ashok Bhushan, Justice R. Subhash Reddy and Justice M.R. Shah said that if on account of "financial distress" airlines are not able to make cash refund, they will issue transferable credit shell to the passenger which have to be consumed by the passenger or the person to whom it has been transferred by March 31, 2021.

The person holding the credit shell will have the liberty to choose the routes/he wants to take while availing the credit shell.

2 senior mantris out in Meghalaya Cabinet reshuffle

Shillong: NPP legislator Dasakhlat Lamare and HSPDP's Renikton Tongkhar were sworn-in as new ministers in the Meghalaya government on Thursday, dropping two senior politicians from the Cabinet, with chief ministers Conrad Sangma announcing that there will be a reshuffle in portfolios.

Lamare and Tongkhar were administered the oath of office by governor Satya Pal Malik at a function attended by the chief minister, his deputy Prestone Tynsong, their cabinet colleagues and officials. Fisheries and PWD (building) minister Comingone Ymbon, a three-time MLA, was replaced by Lamare, the nephew of transport minister Sniawbhalang Dhar.

PHE minister Samlin Mahngiang of the HSPDP was replaced by his party colleague Tongkhar. — PTI

Naxals kill 2 political leaders in Bastar, 10 dead in 1 month

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, OCT. 1

Suspected Maoists on Thursday brutally killed a local BJP leader and a Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (JCC) worker in two separate incidents in south Bastar district of Bijapur in Chhattisgarh.

According to the Bastar police, around a dozen armed Maoists barged into the house of Dhaniram (42), a local BJP leader and ex-sarpanch, in the village of Korsa Bardela under Jangala police station and dragged him out.

They then attacked him with sharp weapons even as his family members pleaded for mercy.

They accused the slain leader of spying for

■ **ACCORDING TO** a senior police officer posted in Bastar, at least 10 people including an assistant inspector of police (ASI) were killed by Naxals in different parts of Bijapur district in the last one month

police.

Dhaniram died on the spot.

The ultras later fled the village.

In another incident, a group of armed rebels entered into the house of local JCC leader Gopal Kodiyam (26) in the village of Gangala under Jangala police station early on Thursday morning.

They attacked him with axes and other sharp weapons, even as his family members watched the

gruesome killing helplessly.

The tribal was accused of being a police informer by the ultras.

He died on the spot. According to a senior police officer posted in Bastar, at least 10 people including an assistant inspector of police (ASI) were killed by Naxals in different parts of Bijapur district in the last one month.

ASI Nagayya Kosa (59) was abducted by Maoists while he was on his way to his home in Dantewada in Bastar division from Bijapur on August 31.

His body was found at a place nearly 15 km from district headquarters of Bijapur the next day.

A Maoist leaflet, owning up the killing, was found near the body.

Indigenous anti-tank missile test-fired



The indigenously-developed Laser-Guided Anti Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) was successfully test-fired defeating a target located at a longer range at KK ranges, Ahmednagar, on Thursday. It was the second such successful test firing of the missile. The ATGM has been developed with a capability to launch from multiple platforms. — PTI

Rise in cases of molestation: Opp. targets Naveen govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 1

The opposition parties in Odisha on Thursday launched a no-holds-barred tirade against the Naveen Patnaik government in the State Assembly saying it had failed to protect the women and girl children in the province.

Citing National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports, the BJP and Congress lawmakers said the state had emerged as one of the most unsafe places for women and children as they were being subjected to increasing incidence of sexual offences.

"Crime against women has increased significantly in Odisha as the National Crime Records Bureau in its "Crime in India-2019" report placed the state at second spot after UP in terms of cases relating to molestation of women. A total of 20,274 cases of crime against women were registered in 2018 while the figure increased to 23,183 in 2019 in the state. As many as 11,318 molestation cases were registered in the state last year. It included 2818 victims who were assaulted with the intent to disrobe," Leader of the Opposition, Pradipta Nayak, said.

Bhushan seeks review of verdict in contempt case

Also wants open court hearing of petition
PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 1



Prashant Bhushan

Activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan on Thursday filed a petition seeking reconsideration of the top court's August 14, and August 31, 2020, judgment holding him guilty of contempt of court and imposing a token fine of ₹1 for his two tweets in June, including one on Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde relating to lockdown of the top court in the wake of Covid pandemic.

Seeking an open court hearing of his review petition and a reference to the larger question of the constitutional importance pertaining to the contempt of court, Bhushan in his review petition has said that the possibility of being barred from practising in the top court was not raised during the hearing, but while imposing the token fine of Re 1, the court had held that he will be barred for a specific period of time.

"At no point was the petitioner put to notice that the court was contemplating such a drastic action against him," says the petition, though the contingency of default does not arise since the fine stands

paid. The review petition has been filed by lawyer Kamini Jaiswal.

He has sought a bench of an appropriate strength to decide on three questions arising from the case whether the power under Article 129 is subject to the rigours of fundamental rights and the rights under Articles 19(1)(a), 20, 21, 22 and 32. He has further sought the adjudication of the question whether a summary procedure in cases of criminal contempt which is not ex facie curiae is compatible with Part III of the Constitution on fundamental rights.

Seeking an intra-court appeal against conviction for contempt of top court, he has sought the adjudication of the question whether in the suo motu proceedings for contempt of the top court, can the court act both as aggrieved and adjudicator as well.

SC rejects plea for probe into handling of Covid by govt

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

The Supreme Court on Thursday rejected a PIL by some former bureaucrats seeking inquiry into the mismanagement in the handling of the Covid pandemic including delayed response, defiance of government's own order on social distancing during Namaste Trump event at Ahmedabad in March this year and declaration of lockdown without any planning and preparation.

Dismissing the PIL, Justice L. Nageswara Rao heading a bench also comprising Justice Ajay Rastogi said, "Latitude has to be given to the government (in the handling of the Covid). This is a matter for public debate and not for the court to intervene."

Bhushan told the court that there was no "planning and preparation" before the announcement of "unilateral lockdown" resulting in two-crore salaried people losing their jobs, migrant workers walking back their home, leading to the spread of coronavirus, GDP shrinking by 24% impacting all sectors of economy particularly those in small and medium segment.

Bhushan said that purpose of inquiry is not apportioning blame on any one but to ascertain what went wrong. However, Justice Nageswara Rao told Bhushan, "There will always be a difference of opinion on the matters of public health. You and me may differ. No body knew the shape Covid will take six months ago."

■ **86,821 new infections** were detected in the last 24 hours

Covid cases rise to 63L, recovery 83%

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 1

India's overall cases of novel coronavirus reached 63.12 lakh on Thursday after 86,821 new infections were detected in the last 24 hours. The total deaths due to the virus reached 98,678 with 1,181 fresh fatalities. According to the Union health ministry, so far 52.73 lakh persons have recovered taking the country's Recovery Rate to 83.53 per cent.

Health ministry officials said India has sustained its trend of maintaining the active cases below the 10 lakh mark as for the 10th

successive day, the active cases were less than 10 lakh. They added with a high number of Covid-19 patients recovering every single day, India's steady trend of posting high level of daily recoveries also continued and 85,376 recoveries were registered in the last 24 hours.

"The rise in total recovered cases has been steep. The last 10 lakh recoveries were added in just 12 days," officials said adding 77% of the total recovered cases are recorded in 10 states/UTs. Maharashtra has contributed the highest number to the total recovered cases followed

■ **THE TOTAL DEATHS** due to the virus reached 98,678 with 1,181 fresh fatalities. According to the Union health ministry, so far 52.73 lakh persons have recovered taking the country's Recovery Rate to 83.53 per cent

by Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

The active cases in India are 9.40 lakh and 76% of the active cases are in 10 States/UTs. "As on date, the active cases contribute only 14.90% to the positive caseload of the country," officials said. 76% of the new cases are concentrated

in ten states. Maharashtra contributed more than 18,000 to the new cases. Karnataka and Kerala, both contributed more than 8,000.

India, which trails the US in the list of nations hit worst by coronavirus, has been recording the world's highest daily Covid spike since August 8.

While announcing the next phase of lifting of coronavirus-related restrictions, the Centre said schools and colleges, shut since March as lockdown was announced across the country, will be allowed to re-open from October 15.

THE ASIAN AGE

2 OCTOBER 2020

Babri verdict ignores breach of rule of law

The verdict of the CBI special court in Lucknow acquitting all the 32 accused in the conspiracy case that led to the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, has dealt a more grievous injury to the citizens' trust in the idea of rule of law than the razing of the very mosque.

The special judge has decided after assessing the evidence presented before him by the premier investigating agency, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), that the 16-century structure was brought down by a "group of hooligan *kar sevaks*" who "suddenly got agitated" and brought down the structure though the Justice Liberhan Commission had reported that they did the job with "pickaxes, hammers, iron rods and shovels". The special judge also found that the leaders, including former Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani and former Union minister M.M. Joshi, also leaders of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, shared no common intent with the vandals. The judge points to the innocence of the leaders saying Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Ashok Singhal tried to stop the *kar sevaks* from assaulting the place of worship as it housed the Ram idol. Justice Liberhan, however, notes that "they (the *kar sevaks*) first entered the sanctum sanctorum and carefully took the idols and cash box, etc to a safe place."

The judgment will now cause the patriarchs of the Hindutva movement who worked tirelessly and toured extensively towards instigating people into shouting "*mandir waheen banayenge* (will construct the temple on the spot where Babri Masjid once stood)" to walk free, but force those who watched the "egregious violation of the rule of law", as the highest court of the land called the criminal act, to look for reasons to believe that this nation remains a democracy bound by the rule of law. That some of the perpetrators had later taken credit for their role in the act makes their pain acute.

While the judiciary was a hapless onlooker when the Babri Masjid was bought down against an order of the Supreme Court to maintain the status quo, it was not so when the culprits were brought before it. It had the power to assess the chargesheet and see if it has verifiable proof in a case on which the highest court in the land had made a comment. That the court made no effort towards it adds to the disappointment.

It is now up the CBI to salvage its image as well as the people's trust in the institutions of democracy by going in appeal and argue its case. That the court has trashed the pieces of evidence such as photographs, videos and voice samples as inadmissible tells on the professionalism of the agency, an aspect its controllers in the government must look into.

When the dust dies down in Ayodhya and the haze disappears, the picture becomes clear: the majoritarian thought has seeped into all the arms of the government. And rule of law, the primary offer of democracy, has become the first casualty. Constitution alone cannot protect it; rather, it will be next in the line, unless its believers rose to defend it.

Disruptor in White House

The curious case of an anarchist sitting in the White House has become the biggest challenge to the American democratic election system that goes back to 1788. This is also a unique affront to the orderly manner of electing a US President once in four years, a tradition that has managed to overcome a civil war, two World Wars and myriad natural calamities. Sustaining freedom in the very country that has been a model to the rest of the free world in the post-modern era is under threat thanks to a truculent President who seems consumed by a morbid fear that he is not going to be re-elected.

Donald Trump's obstruction of the first 2020 presidential debate, which has been looked up to as a model platform for contestants to air their views on everything considered worthwhile under the sun, was clearly not "presidential". And that is a respectable description of the behaviour of an obstreperous businessman who seems to mock at every opportunity the very country that gave him a fair opportunity to go for the highest office. So frustrated was his opponent, the former Vice-President Joseph R. Biden, that the elder statesman lost his cool to say — "Why don't you shut up, man." The badgering by Mr Trump got worse to the extent Mr Biden freely used various other epithets to counter someone clearly out of line.

It was not only the traditional decorum of the debate that Mr Trump hit for six with his harrying tactics mere in keeping with a boxing ring, his lies and the sneering derision he aimed at Mr Biden. Members of his own Republican Party members are now aiming to distance themselves from him because their President failed to rein in white supremacist groups. In casting doubts on postal ballots and other inflammatory pronouncements on the legitimacy of the election, Mr Trump may be opening it up to interference from outside elements, mainly from Russia. Right thinking people will agree that the only way out may be for the American people to vote overwhelmingly against a beneficiary of an honest democratic system.

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T. VENKATRAM REDDY
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M.J. Warsi

How Gandhiji used silence as a weapon to ensure peace

Martin Luther King Jr once said: "If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought, acted, and inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of peace and harmony."

Mahatma Gandhi's life followed a path of profound dedication and achievement in correcting the plight of the common man that catapulted him onto the world stage, surrounded by both enmity and adulation. He attracted attention to the problem by sacrificing his own physical self. He had faith in religion and always used the art of his words to make an impact and be acknowledged by people. Gandhi, in his own unique way, depicted how messages could be communicated without the use of physical violence and lives could be remembered.

"Gandhi's reading of religious books started with *Bhagavad Gita*, which became an unfailing source of strength and solace for him and there is an interesting story related to how he was introduced to the

book," said Prof. Madhav Deshpande of the University of Michigan, USA, in a recently organised lecture series on Gandhi's thought and philosophy by Aligarh Muslim University. Prof. Deshpande said that Gandhi found the core of non-violence in *Gita* and other religious books. Even his community prayers had recitation of verses of religious books of various faiths. Gandhi unflinchingly adhered to these philosophies and inspired generations across the world. His thoughts and ideas were not only central to the Indian freedom movement but became the bedrock of civil rights movements waged against oppressive regimes in various nations.

Gandhi's movement of peace is recognised worldwide. It can be argued that treaties of peace arise only after war and that non-violent methods are useless. Through a hunger strike, a famous speech, and establishing of an international coordination, he, however, left an extraordinary mark on society. In a world of constant crime and fear of war,

Gandhi shows that there are several ways to express the desire and determination for peace.

Gandhi's ideas influence both, those who admire him and those who do not. Yet his opponents, too, depend on fasts, marches and satyagraha. Prof Faisal Devji, an eminent historian of the University of Oxford, while delivering the lecture on "Thought and Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi" at AMU, commemorating his 150th birth anniversary, said that "through a meaningful silence, Gandhi could touch the forms of speech, thought, feeling and awareness that were often drowned out through other forms of speech". He added, "Gandhi became uncompromising in keeping his weekly day of silence. The entire world became aware that it was on Monday. The peace gained from the silence-day used to comfort him a lot and he used to finish the week's pending work on that day." "Gandhi was critical of the legal profession, especially in a colonial society, because he saw it as legitimising and easing the way for

brute force. Lawyers, he thought, made their clients depend upon an illegitimate state by making it a neutral third party, it's very foreignness allowing it to decide disputes among Indians," said Prof. Devji.

AMU vice-chancellor Prof. Tariq Mansoor said, "Mahatma Gandhi never wanted to become the head of the state and as a devout Hindu, he wanted people of all religions to live in harmony and this makes him one of the greatest leaders to have ever lived." Gandhi spoke less and acted more, said Prof. Mansoor, further quoting Prophet Muhammad and some distinguished philosophers on the importance of good speech and maintaining silence. The non-cooperation movement saw the combined efforts of Hindus and Muslims. Prof. Mansoor added that people around the world associate India with Gandhi.

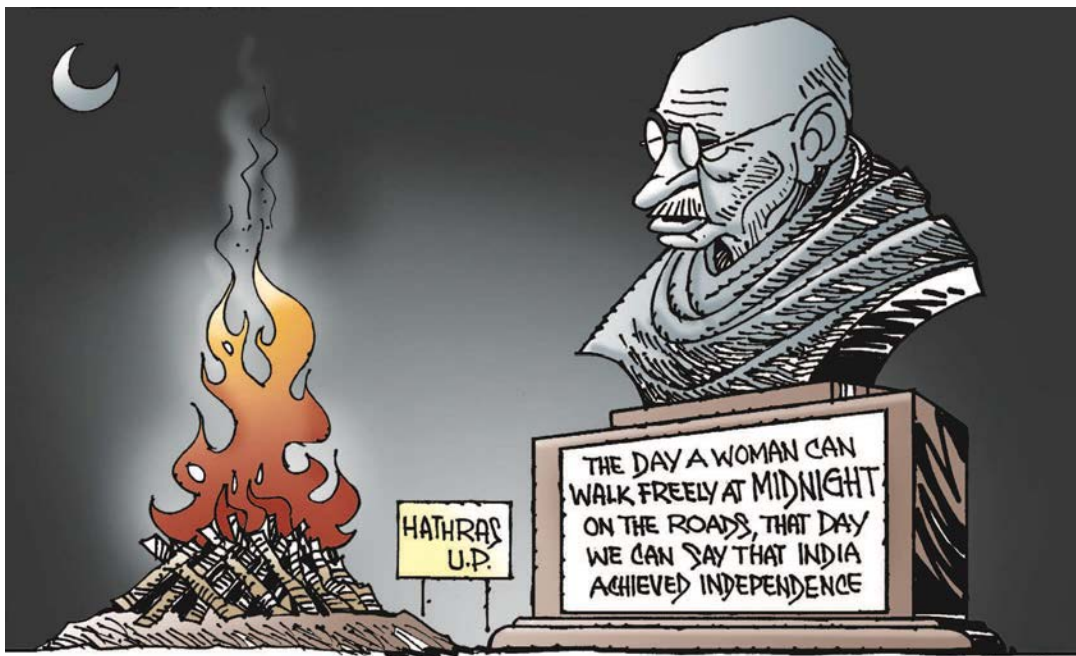
Gandhi left a mark on society by changing minds rather than instilling fear. His non-violent approach to peace, though not instantaneous, is effective in bringing the world closer

to a cooperative and friendly society. Barack Obama, former President of the United States, once said: "It was Gandhi's understanding of India's stories and traditions and his attention to the marginalised voices in Africa that helped him gather a movement that drove out the world's most successful empire."

Gandhi is widely recognised as one of the 20th century's greatest leaders whose civil disobedience movement impacted millions of people worldwide. He has been credited by many world leaders as being a source of their inspiration. He espoused human rights, worked for Hindu-Muslim unity, and launched a campaign to eliminate untouchability. He was harassed and imprisoned, but his struggle gained momentum and helped India gain Independence. Surely, the ideology of Gandhi will influence and inspire minds for generations to come.

The writer is chairperson, department of linguistics, at Aligarh Muslim University

Subhani



JASWANT SINGH (1938-2020)

A gentleman politician and an astute strategist



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

Jaswant Singh, who passed away last Sunday after being in a coma for nearly six years, was an aristocrat by birth which gave him a broad conservative outlook of which gentlemanliness — in his day — was an essential part. By training he was a soldier, which was common enough in his native Rajasthan. But in his personal inclinations, he was a man of books, which is far from common in that state or anywhere else for someone of his background.

This unusual mix, which was on a straightforward view in his personality, set him apart from any politician of my acquaintance — and his tenure in Parliament as an MP and this writer's as a journalist ran almost in parallel.

Contemplating the life he lived after he is gone, it is hard to see him in any role other than that of a politician at an exalted level. This is because, at heart, he was a strategic ruminator who was happiest being in action at the junction of political grappling, and military and international affairs calculations.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee saw this straight off. In his first, very brief 13-day term as leader of the government, Singh was named finance minister, surprising everyone since the former Army major had had little to do with economics or finance in his life.

But there could be no question about his integrity, a critical requirement for anyone in public office, especially for the holder of the finance portfolio at the highest level. The finance minister also needs to have a strategic view of the society and the politics of the

country. Jaswant Singh summoned this, unlike most politicians, though it was evident that handing over Dabhol to Enron, without doing due diligence, was a serious error. It raised the spectre of corruption, and this would be easy to believe if the minister in question weren't Jaswant Singh.

It is probable that the Vajpayee government saw the courting of Enron as a way of taking the first — seemingly harmless — steps toward courting America, with which India's ties had been without warmth practically from the start of the Indian republic. If so, it turned out to be poor judgment. But the late PM's judgment in subsequently making Singh his external affairs minister bore the country prof.

Jaswant Singh was new to diplomacy on the world stage but he proved more than equal to the task. He courted America but was not recklessly, or foolishly, right-wing in doing so, as a less sophisticated first-time external affairs minister from the right side of politics might have been.

Singh was never craven. He always appeared mindful of his own and his government's and his country's dignity, without being chauvinistically awkward or stiff-backed, as he went about choreographing the score for India-America relations in the post-Cold War setting.

This was evident in his numerous interactions over several years with Strobe Talbott, then US deputy secretary of state and President Bill Clinton's pointman for India. These two laid the scaffolding of India-US ties in a new era. Many

had feared the rise of a Hindu nativist boor in the foreign office and heaved a sigh of relief as Singh went about his business.

When Vajpayee went for the Pokhran-2 thermonuclear test in May 1998, codenamed "Smiling Buddha", the only political colleague who was in on the super-secret was Jaswant Singh, and not deputy PM L.K. Advani, Vajpayee's buddy in politics over the decades and a BJP leader of the first rank who could himself have been Prime Minister.

This spoke of Vajpayee's political trust in Jaswant Singh as much as his awareness of Singh's astuteness in matters of high politics, although the external affairs minister had not come through the RSS; indeed among many of whom he was sought to be reviled as a "CIA agent".

But perhaps there was more to Vajpayee's almost subliminal alignment with Jaswant Singh. One rose up the RSS stream, and in its political front the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (later BJP) on the strength of his many remarkable attributes as a person and as a politician. The other first veered toward the Swatantra Party — that attracted many former feudal elements who were not of a communal bent — and later moved towards the Jan Sangh as the Swatantra had no political future and would die.

Both Vajpayee and Singh had a larger vision of India than the RSS or Jan Sangh allowed, though for obvious reasons they could hardly repudiate the Hindu

right-wing in public. At the top tier of the Jan Sangh (and BJP), perhaps there was also Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, the former vice-president of India and a mass leader from Rajasthan who had once been the state chief minister.

This writer once had the rare privilege of being in a private conversation with them in which Singh and Shekhawat (Singh treated Shekhawat as his elder and accorded him enormous respect) lamented the lack of vision and openness in the foundational precepts and the actions of the organised Hindu right-wing.

There was a phase in the BJP when Mr Advani thought in a somewhat similar way without abandoning the core political moorings of Hindutva. This was a time when he sometimes spoke of his wish that the BJP could evolve into a party like Germany's Christian Democrats, but he never spelt this out for the public record, perhaps fearing that the RSS would fry him if he did. But Mr Advani did defend Jaswant Singh when the chips were down and the BJP was in the process of hounding the latter, eventually expelling him.

After Singh passed away, Prime Minister Narendra Modi did issue some lukewarm words in tribute, but the BJP largely ignored his contribution. Between the Jan Sangh's founding in 1951 and the start of Mr Modi's tenure as PM in 2014, there was an interregnum of about two decades in which the BJP had the potential to transform into a normal rightist party, and being spiritually in tune with the Constitution.

Jaswant Singh was a product of that milieu. But the thought of such change was probably just wishful thinking by a few at the top. The urge had no roots at the mass level in the RSS-BJP, which continues to see the vision of Golwalkar's India.

Both Singh and Shekhawat once lamented the lack of vision and openness in the foundational precepts and the actions of the organised Hindu right-wing

LETTERS

MUMBAI LESS SAFE

It is bad news that a city widely known for women's safety has now ranked second in terms of crimes against them. Lawmakers, police, courts and the media should make a concerted effort to curtail this rate. The commercial capital topped the lists in cyber crimes. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh has seized from Delhi the dubious tag of "rape capital". This is only to be expected in the wake of the Unnao, Balrampur and Hathras rapes.

C.K.S. Maniam
Navi Mumbai

SEXIST MINDSET

FOLLOWING THE HASTY cremation of the Hathras rape victim against the wishes of her family, the UP police is claiming that she had not been raped and that the matter is being "twisted" to "stir caste tension". My question to the reader is this: How is the incident less of a crime and less of a caste crime even in those circumstances? The girl's injuries were permanent and her young life was about to be changed for the worse. Now she is dead. So much promise gone to waste. Don't the cops value that?

Priyanka Mathur
Kolkata

NO PM, NO FLY

THE FIRST OF THE TWO VVIP aircraft Air India One for President, Vice-President, and Prime Minister will arrive in India on Thursday. It seems a wasteful expenditure at a time the country's GDP is dipping to its lowest and farmers protesting on streets amidst the pandemic. Can't the government reassess its priorities?

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

TEACH ISLAM

EDUCATED PEOPLE prefer modern schools to madrasas, but unfortunately no importance is given to religious education there. The number of students in madrasas is very less, and with every passing day, it is getting lower. Fifty eight per cent Muslims in cities study in private schools. Governments should pay attention to this matter.

Abdussalam
Mumbai

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

SHORT TAKES

SUICIDE BOMBER
KILLS NINE IN
KABUL CHECKPOST

Kabul, Oct. 1: An Afghan official says at least nine people including four civilians were killed when a suicide car bomber attacked a military checkpoint in southern Afghanistan.

Omer Zwak, a spokesman for the provincial governor in Helmand, said Thursday a small child and three security personnel were wounded in the late Wednesday night attack in Nahr Sarah district.

Zwak said civilians were in a vehicle passing by when the attacker targeted the checkpoint. Two women were among those killed. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but Taliban insurgents are in control of most part of Helmand province.

BURJ KHALIFA
BUILDER PJSC TO
BE LIQUIDATED

Dubai, Oct. 1: The Dubai-based construction company that helped build the world's tallest building and other engineering marvels in the United Arab Emirates announced Thursday it would enter liquidation, the final step in a long collapse from the country's economic crisis a decade ago hastened by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Arabtec Holding PJSC made the announcement after emails circulated on Wednesday among developers suggesting the firm's end had come. Despite trying to claw its way out of the chaos left by Dubai's 2009 financial crisis, the firm ended last year with hundreds of millions of dollars in debt and losses.

Arabtec chairman, Waleed al-Muhairi, said in a statement published by Abu Dhabi's state-linked newspaper The National that after years of setbacks, Arabtec's projects were severely hit by the economic fallout of the pandemic.

"Despite efforts to pursue legal and commercial entitlements and a restructuring of the company's finances and operations, the situation in which Arabtec finds itself today is untenable," he said.

UN FINDS GENDER
EQUALITY STILL A
FAR CRY IN WORLD

United Nations, Oct. 1: Twenty-five years ago, the world's nations came together to make sure that half of Earth's population gained the rights, power and status of the other half.

It hasn't happened yet. And it won't anytime soon. In today's more divided, conservative and still very male-dominated world, top UN officials say the hope of achieving equality for women remains a distant goal.

"Gender inequality is the overwhelming injustice of our age and the biggest human rights challenge we face," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said. Last week, in his address at the virtual meeting of world leaders at the General Assembly, he said the Covid-19 pandemic has hit women and girls the hardest.

"Unless we act now," he said, "gender equality could be set back by decades."

Ahead of Thursday's high-level meeting to commemorate the landmark 1995 UN women's conference in Beijing, the head of the UN agency charged with promoting gender equality lamented the "slow, terribly uneven" progress, "pushback" and even regression in reaching the goals in the 150-page platform adopted by the 189 nations that met in China's capital. While there has been progress since Beijing, UN Women's Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka told The Associated Press on Tuesday that gains have been modest.

EU takes legal action
against UK Brexit Bill

Johnson's govt had described UK Bill as 'safety net'

Brussels, Oct. 1: The European Union launched legal proceedings on Thursday in response to the British government's attempt to overturn parts of the Brexit withdrawal agreement.

The infringement procedure, which could come before European courts, has not yet derailed post-Brexit trade talks, but reflects the pessimistic mood in Brussels as time runs short for a deal.

"This morning, the Commission has decided to send a letter of formal notice to the UK Government. This is the first step in an infringe-

ment procedure," EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said. "The letter invites the UK Government to send its observations within a month," said von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, the EU executive.

On Tuesday, British lawmakers adopted a bill to regulate the UK's internal market from January 1, when Britain will complete its post-Brexit transition period and leave the EU single market and customs union.

The proposed law, by London's own admission, overwrites parts of the withdrawal treaty that Prime Minister Boris Johnson signed with EU leaders last year, resulting in a breach of international law.

Johnson's government has described this bill as a "safety net" in case post-Brexit trade talks fail and the EU tries to impose a customs border between Great Britain

and Northern Ireland.

But EU capitals — including Dublin — see these provisions as key to preventing a return of a hard border with Ireland and preserving the good relations underpinned by the Good Friday peace deal in Northern Ireland.

"As you know, we had invited our British friends to remove the problematic parts of their draft internal market bill by the end of September," von der Leyen said.

"This draft bill is by its very nature, a breach of the obligation of good faith laid down in the withdrawal agreement."

— AFP



A Chinese policeman walks before Chinese children posing for a photo in front of Tiananmen Gate during National Day in Beijing on Thursday.

— AP

Hong Kong's leader hails
'peace' under China

Hong Kong, Oct. 1: Hong Kong's leader on Thursday hailed her city's "return to peace" after China imposed a security law that helped suppress a pro-democracy movement, as just a handful of people defied a heavy police presence and protested during National Day celebrations.

The People's Republic of China celebrates its founding on October 1 with a holiday and carefully choreographed festivities. But in Hong Kong, it has become a day of grievance for those worried about authoritarian Beijing's intensifying crackdown against its opponents.

Protest has been effectively outlawed for most of this year and Beijing also imposed a strict national security law on the semi-autonomous business hub in June.

Helicopters flying the Chinese and Hong Kong flags buzzed over the harbour on Thursday morning as Chief Executive Carrie Lam and senior mainland officials attended a ceremony ringed by police and security barriers.

— AFP

MILLIONS ON THE MOVE AS CHINA
EYES GOLDEN WEEK HOLIDAY BOUNCE

Beijing, Oct. 1: Hundreds of millions in China hustled to enjoy their first major national holiday since the country beat its Coronavirus outbreak, filling airports and train stations on Thursday.

The Golden Week holiday marks the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and sees an astonishing annual

movement of people trying to get home or take holidays.

But this year has added significance, with the crowds filling the concourses pointing to a country rebounding from the outbreak and paradoxing the freedom to travel as a contrast to the rolling lockdowns hitting much of the world.

— AFP

JAISHANKAR GREETES CHINESE
PEOPLE, GOVT ON FOUNDING DAY

New Delhi, Oct. 1: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Thursday greeted his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi as well as the government and the people of China on the occasion of the 71st anniversary of the founding of the country.

"Extend my felicitations to State Councillor & FM Wang Yi and the Government and People of PRC on the 71st anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China," Jaishankar tweeted.

On October 1, 1949, Chairman Mao Zedong proclaimed founding of People's Republic of China after Communist forces won a 20-year civil war.

India and China are locked in a five-month-long bitter border standoff in eastern Ladakh that has significantly strained their ties.

— PTI

US seeks decisive action against China

Washington, Oct. 1: A US Congressional report has sought decisive action against China, accusing Beijing of increasing military buildup, violating other nations' sovereignty and engaging in fatal skirmishes to conduct a land-grab on the Indian border.

In its report unveiled on Wednesday, the China Task Force of the House Republicans also support-

ed the proposal of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson for the creation of a new D-10 group of leading democracies, including India, for addressing both 5G mobile communications and vulnerable supply chains.

In just the past year alone, the China Communist Party (CCP) has violated an international treaty and dismantled Hong Kong's civil liberties;

continued its oppression of ethnic minorities, including Uyghurs and Tibetans; increased its military buildup, conducted increasingly belligerent provocations, and violated other nations' sovereignty at sea; engaged in fatal skirmishes to conduct a land-grab on the Indian border; and asserted new territorial claims over Bhutan, the report said.

India and China are locked in a nearly five-month-long border standoff in eastern Ladakh. China unsuccessfully attempted to occupy Indian territory in the southern bank of Pangong lake in the last week of August. China has been fast expanding military and economic influence in the Indo-Pacific region, triggering concern in various countries of the region and beyond.

— PTI

Trump signs Bill averting
US government shutdown

Washington, Oct. 1: President Donald Trump has signed a bill to fund the government through December 11, averting the possibility of a government shutdown when the new fiscal year starts on Thursday.

Trump signed the bill, which was approved by sweeping bipartisan agreement on Wednesday, into law early Thursday morning shortly after returning from campaigning in Minnesota.

The temporary extension will set the stage for a lame-duck session of Congress later this year, where the agenda will be largely determined by the outcome of the presidential election. The measure would keep the government running through December 11 and passed by a 84-10 vote. The House passed the bill last week.

The stopgap spending bill is required because the GOP-controlled Senate has not acted on any of the 12 annual spending bills that fund the 30 per cent of the government's budget that is passed by Congress each year.

If Democratic nominee

DON 'ENJOYS' DEBATE WITH BIDEN,
IGNORES CRITICISM ON UGLY OUTCOME

Washington, Oct. 1: President Donald Trump says he "enjoyed" debating former Vice President Joe Biden, but he is falsely claiming that Biden is trying to get of the next two debates.

Trump spoke at a campaign rally in Duluth, Minnesota, on Wednesday. He gloated about the television ratings the debate generated and ignored how contentious and unruly the debate quickly became, in large part thanks to his refusal to adhere to the moderator's requests and the debate's rules.

He made no mention of the Commission on Presidential Debates' prom-

ise earlier Wednesday to implement "additional structure ... to ensure a more orderly discussion of the issues" going forward.

Trump suggested Biden was trying to get out of the next two debates, but the vice president's campaign said earlier Wednesday that the Democratic nominee remained committed to taking part in them.

— AP

Joe Biden wins the White House in November, it's likely that another stopgap measure would fund the government into next year and that the next administration and Congress would deal with the leftover business.

The measure is the bare minimum accomplishment for Capitol Hill's powerful Appropriations committees, who pride themselves on their deal-making abilities despite gridlock in other corners of Congress.

— AP

VATICAN RELEASES
BUDGET DATA
AMID SCANDAL

Rome, Oct. 1: The Vatican released a detailed budget, balance sheet and earning statement for the first time on Thursday as it sought to reassure Catholics that it's serious about cleaning up its financial act following a corruption scandal that has exposed shoddy fiscal management.

The data marked the first time since 2016 that the Vatican has released any information about its finances, despite pledges by Pope Francis from the start of his pontificate in 2013 to be more transparent and accountable with the Holy See's money.

The data showed that the Vatican bureaucracy had narrowed its deficit to 11 million euros last year from 75 million euros in 2018, even taking into account a 25 million-euro drop in donations from dioceses and individuals alike.

But more than the earnings statement, the consolidated report provided the first-known publicly released information about the Vatican's net equity — estimated at 1.4 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) for the Holy See Curia, or bureaucracy.

The Vatican's overall patrimony blooms to 4 billion euros (\$4.7 billion) when taking into account the cash-cow of the Vatican Museums, the Vatican bank and other sources of assets and funds. The report also marked the first time the Vatican has made public how its operating budget is divided among the various Holy See offices, which serve as the central government of the 1.2-billion strong Catholic Church.

Astonishingly, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — in recent decades perhaps the best-known Vatican office because it processes all clergy sex abuse cases — operates on an annual budget of 3.36 million euros. That represents 1% of the Curia's budget for its apostolic work, far less than what is budgeted for the Vatican's Apostolic Library or Archives.

— AP

World leaders urge
'immediate' halt in
Karabakh fighting

Paris, Oct. 1: The presidents of Russia, the United States and France called Thursday for a ceasefire in the Nagorno Karabakh region, urging Armenia and Azerbaijan to commit to talks without delay or preconditions.

"We call for an immediate cessation of hostilities between the relevant military forces," French President Emmanuel Macron, Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump of the US said in a statement released by the Elysee.

"We also call on the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to commit without delay to resuming substantive negotiations," said the leaders, whose countries are the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk group that has sought a solution to the conflict since the 1990s.

The statement said such talks should be "in good faith and without preconditions" and be held under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs.

The Minsk group, which was created by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 1992, has on occa-

— AP

tion overseen summits between Armenian and Azeri leaders but has failed to find any lasting resolution to the conflict.

The fiercest clashes between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in years over the region erupted last Sunday. The number of confirmed deaths neared 130 as fighting raged for a fifth day. The rival Caucasus nations have been locked in a bitter stalemate over the Karabakh region since the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the ethnic Armenian region broke away from Azerbaijan.

Karabakh's declaration of independence from Azerbaijan sparked a war in the early 1990s that claimed 30,000 lives. Controlled by ethnic Armenians, the region is still not recognised as independent by any country, including Armenia.

— AFP

Judge's order affects
US visa aspirants

San Diego, Oct. 1: A federal judge on Wednesday ordered the Trump administration to save more than 9,000 US slots for visa lottery winners affected by the government's freeze on green cards earlier this year. But tens of thousands of other visa lottery winners will be out of luck.

US District Court Judge Amit Mehta acknowledged that his order will mean only about half of the so-called diversity visas issued normally each year will be used. He said in his ruling that he gave the State Department leniency due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Mehta rejected a request by lawyers to order 30,000 slots be saved for people who won the lottery but hadn't yet been vetted. With about 15,400 visas issued so far in the 2020 fiscal year that ended on Wednesday, the additional 30,000 sought by advocates for the lottery winners would have brought the total close to the annual average of 47,404 over the previous 18 years.

The judge said that the impact of Covid-19 on the State Department's processing capacity needed to be taken into account, bringing him to order a total of 9,085 slots be saved.

"The problem with Plaintiffs' proposed number is that it asks the court to treat FY 2020 as if it were an 'average' year. But, to state the obvious, it has been anything but average," Mehta wrote in his ruling.

— PTI

US SHOULD EXPAND
VISA FOR STEM
TALENT: REPORT

Washington, Oct. 1: A new US Congressional report on defence has urged the Trump administration to aggressively expand visa for the foreign STEM talent, emphasising that America must ensure people with critical knowledge and capacity stay in the country.

The Future of Defense Task Force report, 2020, which was released by the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday, highlights that every time a foreign-born student returns to their home country from the US, they take with them critical knowledge and capacity.

"The United States must increase its retention of foreign talent US. When these foreign-born students return to their home countries, they take with them critical knowledge and capacity. And while some want to return to their home countries, many choose to stay in the United States if allowed. The US must recognise this immigration shortfall by aggressively expanding visas for STEM talent," said the report. In 2017, foreign-born students accounted for 54 per cent of master's degrees and 44 per cent of doctorate degrees awarded in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields in the US.

— PTI

RACING | TRACK Pandemic restrictions lead to event with just fraction of its usual tourist crowd

Covid no bar for Thailand's buffalo festival

Chon Buri, Thailand, Oct. 1: Thailand's annual water buffalo racing festival ploughed ahead on Thursday despite Coronavirus travel restrictions leaving the event with a fraction of its usual tourist crowds.

The sturdy bovines were used as draught animals in farms across the kingdom until they were largely replaced by tractors and modern machinery just a few decades ago.

But farmers in Chonburi

province near Bangkok have kept up traditional buffalo racing as a way to mark the start of the annual rice planting season and the end of Buddhist Lent.

Prized buffaloes pulling carts joined festive floats decorated with mythical naga serpents, while dancers in traditional golden costumes marched in a parade before the competition began.

The beasts thundered down the 100-metre track

with jockeys balanced precariously on their rumps before leaping off at the finish line.

The course is typically caked in shin-deep mud

but was bone dry for this year's event after a stretch of sweltering heat, and fire trucks were on hand to cool off the four-legged competitors.

This year's festival was capped off with a "beauty pageant" to judge the most attractive buffalo.

"They were so well-decorated in (costumes) and flowers it took me a while to realise there were buffaloes underneath," British expatriate Robert Owen said.

— AFP



A jockey jumps off a buffalo at the finish line during the annual Chonburi Buffalo Race in Chonburi on Thursday.

— AFP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
aSensex	38,697.05	1.65
Nifty 50	11,416.95	1.51
S&P 500*	3,379.41	0.49
Dollar (₹)	73.15	0.83
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.15	0.50
Euro (₹)	85.81	0.79
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,389▼37	0.07
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.04	-2.26
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.996	-0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.717	0.040

* As of 9:30 PM IST

NSE fined ₹6 cr for taking stakes in Cams, PXIL

Markets regulator Sebi imposed Rs 6 crore penalty on NSE for picking up stakes in six entities, including Cams and Power Exchange India Ltd, without obtaining the regulator's approval. Apart from Cams and PXIL, the exchange acquired stakes in NSEIT Ltd, NSDL E-Governance Infrastructure Ltd, Market Simplified India Ltd and Receivables Exchange of India Ltd.

Apurva Chandra takes over as labour secretary



Senior IAS officer Apurva Chandra assumed charge as labour secretary. Chandra, who holds a master's degree in engineering, belongs to the 1988 batch of the Maharashtra Cadre. Prior to this, he was special director general, defence acquisition, Ministry of Defence, where he played a key role in contributing towards AatmaNirbhar Bharat. He had spent over seven years in the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

Vaghela takes Trai charge, Aparna is new pharma secy

The newly appointed chairman of Trai, P. D. Vaghela took charge from R. S. Sharma, who completed his tenure on Wednesday. A 1986-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre, Vaghela on Wednesday retired as secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, where he has been replaced by another Gujarat cadre officer of 1988 batch, S. Aparna. From 2017, Aparna is executive director, World Bank.

‘SBI now stresses on corporate relationship’

SBI has changed its approach of serving corporate clients to one extending beyond supply of credit, its chairman Rajnish Kumar said. SBI has created a "corporate solutions group" to support big-ticket clients with their banking and finance needs Kumar. He said the new approach involves giving solutions to a variety of needs of the corporates and their stakeholders like supply chain vendors, distributors and staff.

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Rise in factory activity, GST mopup, electricity & petrol consumption Sept. sees surprise upswing

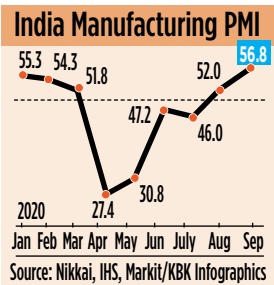
MADHUSUDAN SAHOO & SANGEETHA G. NEW DELHI/CHENNAI, OCT. 1

September has seen some evident signs of recovery. Factory activity expanded at its fastest pace in over eight years last month. GST collections in September also recorded a positive growth for the time in this fiscal. Similarly, power generation and consumption as well as petrol sales returned to pre-Covid levels. However, diesel consumption is still lagging.

The Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, or PMI, compiled by IHS Markit, jumped to 56.8 in September from 52.0 in August, above the 50-level separating growth from contraction for a second straight month. "It was the highest reading since January 2012 and the increase was sharp and the third-quickest in the history of the survey. Similarly, there were back-to-back increases in new business inflows as well," IHS Markit said.

Commenting on the findings, Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit, said, "Indian manufacturing industry continued to move in the right direction, with PMI data for September highlighting many positives. Due to loosened Covid19 restrictions, factories went full steam ahead for production, supported by a surge in new work."

The gross GST revenue collected in September stood at Rs 95,480 crore against Rs 91,916 crore in the same month last year, a growth of 3.87 per cent.



RAILWAY FREIGHT REVENUE JUMPS

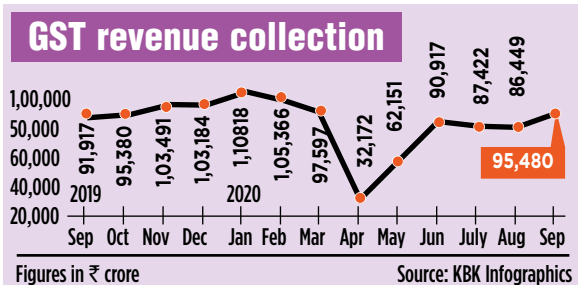
New Delhi, Oct. 1: Indian Railways said on Thursday it has made a "remarkable turnaround" of 13.54 per cent growth in its freight revenue earnings in September compared to the same month last year despite Covid-related challenges. It said freight loading increased to 102.12 million tonnes in September this year from 88.53 mt in the same month last year, a rise of 15.35 per cent.

GST collection also rose sequentially from Rs 86,449 crore in August, up 10.4 per cent.

While the sequential growth clearly shows a recovery from the lows seen post the pandemic, the year-on-year growth was supported by a low base of the year-ago month. In September 2019, collections were lower at Rs 91,916 crore against Rs 98,202 crore in August 2019.

Of the gross collections, CGST stood at Rs 17,741 crore, SGST Rs 23,131 crore, IGST Rs 47,484 crore and cess Rs 7,124 crore. There has been sequential growth in all the taxes, except cess.

Among the larger states,



Resultantly, the Railways earned Rs 9,896.86 crore in September this year, an increase of Rs 1,180.57 crore compared to year-ago earnings. The increase in freight revenue is 13.54 per cent, it said. "In a remarkable turnaround, Indian Railways has earned more revenue in the month of September as compared to last year," it said in a statement.

—PTI

Maharashtra and UP recorded flat growth, while Karnataka collections declined by 5 per cent. Tamil Nadu saw an impressive growth of 15 per cent and Gujarat, 6 per cent.

"With a significant part of the economy resuming operations and international trade as well resuming pace, the collections have shown decent growth. The increased revenues indicate reinstatement of normalcy in business operations and provide a general optimistic outlook," said Abhishek Jain, tax partner, EY.

Power consumption reported a growth of 5.6 per cent in September, the first growth since March.

Fewer ships from China hurt Indian exporters

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 1

Shrinking imports, especially from China, have become a cause of worry for exporters. Just when exports have started picking up, shortage of containers and additional charges levied by shipping firms due to lesser imports are hurting exporters.

Exporters have been facing a shortage of shipping containers to different destinations. Almost all the ports across the country are facing the problem, says the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India.

According to the EEPC, shipping companies are reluctant to provide containers even to regular shippers despite Annual Freight Contracts signed by them. The availability would have come down by at least 20 per cent in recent times.

They are levying extra freight charges ranging between \$400 and \$1,000 per container, depending upon the size. The increased rates would be 25 to 50 per cent higher than the earlier charges.

"Such increase in freight

charges is impacting the competitiveness of exporters," the EEPC India said.

As imports into India, especially from China, are coming down in the past few months, shipping companies are reluctant to provide containers for exports alone. Some exporters have been told that freight charges have to be increased as there is less inward traffic.

Shipping companies calculate the costs to move a container on a return-trip basis. Outward traffic alone is not profitable in the shipping business.

"However, the increased freight charges at time are much higher than what needs to be levied in such a situation. The shipping lines, most of them being foreign companies, are functioning in an arbitrary manner. The shortages as well as increase in charges are sometimes artificial," said Arun Gardodia, vice chairman of EEPC. Also, delay in providing containers is affecting the delivery of goods on time, he added.

The EEPC wants the government to constitute a shipping regulator to check arbitrary increases in freight charges.

Fiscal deficit of 18 states at 40.7% in Q1

Mumbai, Oct. 1: Steeply falling revenues and central grants amidst rising expenditure to fight the pandemic led to 18 of the largest states reporting a collective revenue deficit of 285 per cent of budget estimates in April-June as against 12.9 per cent a year ago, a report by India Ratings said.

The collective fiscal deficit of the 18 states stood at 40.7 per cent of budget estimates (BE) in Q1 against 13.4 per cent a year ago.

The lockdowns, resultant loss of business and fall in tax collections have forced states to borrow at almost 10 per cent. While their revenues have plunged, expenses have only gone up. The Centre's refusal to pay GST dues on time further aggravated the pain of the states.

The collective revenue expenditure of the 18 states grew 11.7 per cent in Q1, the report said.

—PTI

Singapore plans to allow cruises to nowhere

AMEYA KARVE OCT. 1

Singapore is planning to allow so-called cruises to nowhere in what could be among the first of measures to reopen leisure travel in the city-state, the Straits Times reported.

The country's tourism board appointed Norway-based risk management company DNV GL to create a health and safety framework for cruise lines that want to restart sailings from Singapore, the newspaper said, citing tender documents related to the plan. The company will also develop a certi-

fication programme and a framework for non-compliance with safety measures, the paper said.

The move could give some relief to cruise operators as the city-state has halted dock-ins since March following the global outbreak of Covid-19. Earlier this week, Singapore Airlines Ltd scrapped a similar plan to operate short flights to nowhere on environmental concerns and instead will open one of its Airbus SE A380 superjumbos as a temporary restaurant.

Cruises to nowhere will be allowed with a maximum occupation of 50 per

cent of a ship's original capacity for the first three months. No date was given for when this programme might start. All cruise lines must be audited and receive Singapore's certification to sail out of its ports.

The tourism board said the certification aims to assure passengers that a cruise has met safety and hygiene requirements.

The cruise industry has been eager to restart operations, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Wednesday extended a no-sail ban in the US by a month, to Oct. 31.

—Bloomberg

Mazagon IPO subscribed 157 times

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 1

Listing premium of Chemcon Speciality Chemicals and Cams withered as their market entry coincided with the closing of initial public offerings of UTI Asset Management Company and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders.

Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Rs 400-crore-plus IPO got subscribed 157.41 times while UTI Asset Management's Rs 2,160-crore IPO was subscribed 2.31 times.

However, oil and gas pipeline infrastructure service provider Likhitha Infrastructure's IPO has been extended till October 7 and the price band has also been revised lower to Rs 116-120 per share. The Rs 61-crore issue was slated to close on Thursday. The offer received bids for 4.29,86,000 shares against 51,00,000 shares on offer, translating into 8.43 times subscription. Qualified institutional buyers portion was subscribed 45 per cent, non-institutional investors 5.39 times and retail individual investors 21.13 times.

Computer Age Management Services (Cams) shares listed on the BSE at



a 23 per cent premium after a successful IPO of Rs 2,242 crore, which got subscribed 46.93 times.

Cams shares listed at Rs 1,518 and touched a high of Rs 1,550 and finally closed

at Rs 1401.60. The market capitalization of CAMS Thursday's closing price stands at Rs 6,837.96 crore.

"Cams is well-positioned to capitalise on the mutual fund industry growth backed by its diverse portfolio of services, pan-India physical network, domain expertise and comprehensive risk management system," said Hemang Jani, head-equity strategy, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Chemcon Speciality

EXPECT NO GAINS FOR NIFTY OVER THE NEXT YEAR: CITI

NUPUR ACHARYA OCT. 1

India's major stocks are unlikely to gain much over the next year as the inflow of funds amid global coronavirus-related stimulus and easy money policies have made them too expensive for now, according to Citigroup Inc.

"Foreign flows are supportive but on the domestic side, we have seen things slowing down a bit," Surendra Goyal, Citi's head of India research, said in an interview this week.

"Liquidity does act as a support to the market but valuations are on the higher side, particularly in the backdrop of the pandemic."

The brokerage has a September 2021 target of 11,000 for the NSE Nifty 50 Index, about 2 per cent lower than Wednesday's close. The gauge has surged 48 per cent from its March low in one of the world's best equity rebounds this year. That's made shares pricey, with the Nifty trading at an all-time high of over 20 times estimated 12-month earnings.

Chemical shares also listed on Thursday on the bourses with 115 per cent premium at Rs 731 on the NSE against the public issue price of Rs 340 per share.

However, the stock soon corrected after touching an intra-day high of Rs 743.80 on the BSE and Rs 731.25 on the NSE. Chemcon shares closed at Rs 584.80 on both NSE and BSE, still up 72 per cent from the public issue price.

The rebound has been helped by foreign investors, who have bought a net \$4 billion worth of Indian stocks this year despite the nation's record economic contraction in the latest quarter.

Barring any big negative shocks, Citi expects India's economy to "normalise" in the January-March quarter as the country gradually emerges from strict lockdown measures.

Consumer staples are the broker's biggest underweight equity position among industries.

—Bloomberg

MINI CONVERTIBLE SIDEWALK AT ₹45L

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 1

BMW on Thursday introduced a special edition of its best-selling Convertible, the new MINI Convertible Sidewalk Edition in India priced at Rs 44.90 lakh. The company has allotted to import and sell only 15 units in India. It is powered by a 2-litre four-cylinder engine with twinpower turbo technology, delivering 192 hp and 280 Nm of torque. The car can sprint from 0-100 km in 7.1 seconds and has a top speed of 230 km.



Auto sales in fast gear

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 1



Automobile wholesales in Asia's third biggest economy continued to rise in September as companies pushed up stocks at dealerships anticipating higher demand ahead of the festive season and on low base.

Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest car maker, on Thursday posted sales growth of 34 per cent to 147,912 cars, up from 110,454 units it sold in the same month last year.

Rival Hyundai Motor, India's second largest car maker, sold 50,313 units last month, up from 40,705 units sold last year, a growth of 23.6 per cent and 45,809 units sold in August 2020.

"In the changing business environment, the green shoots are clearly visible with sales improving on a month-on-month as well as year-on-year basis," Tarun Garg, director, sales, marketing and service at Hyundai Motor India, said.

In the SUV segment, new entrant Kia Sonet sold a record 9,266 units within 12 days of its launch on September 18. Kia Sonet has emerged as number one in the compact SUV segment, selling more units than entrenched rivals. Speaking to Financial Chronicle,

Manohar Bhatt, head-sales and marketing at Kia Motors India, described Kia Sonet as "a game-changer" brand. Kia Seltos sold 9,079 units in September.

Sales at Tata Motors, India's biggest automaker by revenue, jumped 162 per cent at 21,199 units last month, up from 8,097 units it sold last year.

"PV industry witnessed recovery in Q2FY21, supported by festive sales in some regions and continued benefit from pent-up demand across the country," Shailesh Chandra, president-passenger vehicles at Tata Motors, said.

Mahindra and Mahindra too registered a 4 per cent growth in passenger vehicles at 14,857 units.

Sales at Honda Cars also jumped 10 per cent at 10,199 units.

Skoda also retailed 1,328 units last month, registering 7 per cent growth.

However, MG and Toyota registered 2.7 per cent and 20.45 per cent year-on-year drop, respectively.

Abu Dhabi's Mubadala picks 1.4% in Reliance Retail

New Delhi, Oct. 1: Abu Dhabi-based sovereign wealth fund Mubadala Investment Co. will invest Rs 6,247.5 crore to buy a 1.4 per cent stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's retail arm—the Mukesh Ambani-led firm's third such deal in less than two days.

Mubadala will be the fourth investor in Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL). Mubadala's Rs 6,247.5 crore investment "values Reliance Retail at a pre-money equity value of Rs 4.285 lakh crore," the Indian firm said in a statement.

"Mubadala's investment will translate into a 1.40 per cent equity stake in RRVL on a fully diluted basis," it added.

On Wednesday, global private equity firm General Atlantic picked up a 0.84 per cent stake in the company for Rs 3,675 crore. Also, US PE investor Silver Lake made a second investment of Rs 1,875 crore, taking its total fund infusion in Reliance Retail to Rs 9,375 crore for a 2.13 per cent stake.

KKR had previously taken a 1.28 per cent stake in the firm for Rs 5,550 crore.

Reliance has since September raised Rs 24,847.5 crore by selling 5.65 per cent in its retail arm. Reliance Retail Ltd, a RRVL subsidiary, operates India's largest, retail business spanning supermarkets, electronics chain, wholesale business, fashion outlets and online grocery store JioMart.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Player banned for 4 yrs for betting

London: Spanish tennis player Gerard Joseph Platero Rodriguez has been suspended for four years and fined \$15,000 after being convicted of courtding, the first player to be charged with the offense. The Tennis Integrity Unit said Wednesday that six months of the ban were suspended on condition that no further breaches of the Tennis Anti-Corruption Program were committed. It said an investigation established that Rodriguez, who has no ranking, had acted as a courtsider at an ITF tournament held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in July 2019. Court-siding is a prohibited practice which involves transmission of live scoring data from a match to a third party for betting purposes. — AP

Cyclist roots for Trump, suspended

Geneva: American cyclist Quinn Simmons was suspended by the Trek-Segafredo team on Thursday after posting antagonistic comments on social media in support of President Donald Trump. Quinn replied to a journalist from the Netherlands who had criticized Trump on *Twitter*. "Regrettably, team rider Quinn Simmons made statements online that we feel are divisive, incendiary, and detrimental to the team, professional cycling, its fans, and the positive future we hope to help create for the sport," Trek-Segafredo said in a statement. Quinn reacted Wednesday when Dutch journalist Jos Been posted on *Twitter* that she hoped for her American friends that "this horrible presidency ends for you," adding "if you follow me and support Trump, you can go." — AP

Junior scores as Real Madrid win

Madrid: Vincius Junior scored after coming off the bench as Real Madrid defeated Valladolid 1-0 for its second win in a row in the Spanish league, while Atletico Madrid was held to a scoreless draw against promoted Huesca in a disappointing first start for Luis Suarez. Vincius Jnior netted the winner midway through the second half on Wednesday after Madrid's forwards struggled again in attack. He broke the deadlock from close range after a defensive mistake by Valladolid defenders inside the area. He had been on the field for less than 10 minutes after replacing striker Luka Jovic, who missed another chance to impress as a starter. Jovic had two of the best scoring opportunities of the game but couldn't capitalize on them. — AP

Bayern lift Super Cup in Germany

Munich: Joshua Kimmich scored the winning goal as Bayern Munich shrugged off concerns about fixture congestion to beat Borussia Dortmund 3-2 and lift the German Super Cup. Dortmund fought back from 2-0 down to level the score on Wednesday, before Kimmich and the two goalkeepers made the difference. Bayern's Manuel Neuer showed superb reactions to palm away Erling Haaland's shot when one-on-one with the Norwegian striker. — AP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Chennai Super Kings vs Sunrisers Hyderabad from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

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

FOOTBALL

Italian League: Fiorentina vs Sampdoria from 12.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

WWE SMACKDOWN

Bouts from 5.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

BASKETBALL

NBA Finals (Game 2 of best-of-7): Los Angeles Lakers vs Miami Heat from 6.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Six, HD

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Hit-man show

Quick guns Rohit, Pollard take Mumbai past Punjab

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 1: Rohit Sharma's elegance mingled with the belligerence of his two six-hitting lieutenants as Mumbai Indians humbled Kings XI Punjab by 48 runs in an IPL match here on Thursday.

Invited to bat, the classy Rohit laid the foundation with a 45-ball 70, lacing his innings with eight fours and three sixes.

Then, the duo of Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya smashed fours and sixes at will, scoring 67 runs in 23 balls to lift MI to 191 for 4 from 83 for 3 in the 14th over.

Chasing a stiff target of 192, Kings XI Punjab were stopped at 143 for 8, with Nicholas Pooran making 44 off 27 balls.

Earlier, Pollard walked out unbeaten on a 20-ball 47, while Hardik remained not out on 30 off 11 balls, the two hitting six sixes and as many fours between them.

MI got 25 runs in the final over with Pollard sending Krishnappa Gowtham's last three balls into the stands of the Sheikh Zayed Stadium, scored 19 off the penultimate over and 18 in the 18th.

A total of 104 runs came in the last 36 balls despite one excellent over in between by Mohammed Shami.

MI were 87 for 3 at the end of the 14th over but upped the ante with Pollard and Rohit hitting a six each off leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi to collect 15 runs from the 15th over.

— PTI



Rohit Sharma of Mumbai Indians plays a shot during the Indian Premier League match against Kings XI Punjab at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Thursday. — BCCI

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	4	2	2	0	4	+1.094
Delhi Capitals	3	2	1	0	4	+0.483
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	2	1	0	4	+0.117
Rajasthan Royals	3	2	1	0	4	-0.219
Royal Challengers Bangalore	3	2	1	0	4	-1.450
Kings XI Punjab	4	1	3	0	2	+0.521
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	0	2	-0.228
Chennai Super Kings	3	1	2	0	2	-0.840

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

SCORECARD

Mumbai Indians: Quinton de Kock b Cottrell 0, Rohit Sharma c Neesham b Shami 70, Suryakumar Yadav run out 10, Ishan Kishan c Nair b K. Gowtham 28, Kieron Pollard (not out) 47, Hardik Pandya (not out) 30; **Extras:** (LB-1, W-5) 6; **Total:** (for 4 wickets, in 20 overs) 191.

FoW: 0-1, 21-2, 83-3, 124-4. **Bowling:** Sheldon Cottrell 4-1-20-1, Mohammed Shami 4-0-36-1, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-37-0, K. Gowtham 4-0-45-1, James Neesham 4-0-52-0.

Kings XI Punjab: K. L. Rahul b Rahul Chahar 17, Mayank Agarwal b Bumrah 25, Karun

Nayar b Hardik Pandya 0, Nicholas Pooran c de Kock b Pattinson 44, Glen Maxwell c Trent Boult b Rahul Chahar 11, James Neesham c S. Yadav b Bumrah 7, Sarfaraz Khan lbw b Pattinson 7, K. Gowtham (not out) 22, Ravi Bishnoi c S. Yadav b Boult 1, Mohammed Shami (not out) 2. **Extras:** (LB-2, W-5) 7. **Total:** (for 8 wickets, in 20 overs) 143. **FoW:** 1-38, 2-39, 3-60, 4-101, 5-107, 6-112, 7-121, 8-124.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-42-1, James Pattinson 4-0-28-2, Hardik Pandya 4-0-27-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-18-2, Rahul Chahar 4-0-26-2.

Robin shines ball with saliva in tie Dhoni's Chennai look to start afresh against SRH

Dubai, Oct. 1: In a violation of the ICC's Covid-19 protocol, India and Rajasthan Royals batsman Robin Uthappa was seen applying saliva on the ball while fielding against KKR in an IPL match here.

The incident happened right after Uthappa dropped a Sunil Narine skier in the fifth ball of the third over here on Wednesday. He was seen applying saliva after collecting the ball at the mid-on region. The IPL has not issued any statement on the incident so far.

"If a player does apply saliva to the ball, the

umpires will manage the situation with some leniency during an initial period of adjustment, but subsequent instances will result in the team receiving a warning," it had stated in its Standard Operating Procedure for the game.

"A team can be issued up to two warnings per innings but repeated use of saliva will result in a 5-run penalty to the batting side. Whenever saliva is applied to the ball, the umpires will clean the ball before play recommenced," the ICC notification read.

— PTI



Robin Uthappa of RR applies saliva on the ball during an IPL match against KKR which was played on Wednesday.

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

- OVERALL:
- Matches: 12
- Chennai won: 9
- Hyderabad won: 3

MEETING IN 2019

- Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Chennai Super Kings by 6 wickets at Hyderabad.
- Chennai Super Kings beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 6 wickets at Chennai.

FOR THE RECORD

- Mahendra Singh Dhoni,

who smashed 298 sixes in 286 innings of 320 matches, needs just two sixes to become the 21st batsman to complete a triple century of sixes in Twenty-20 cricket.

- David Warner has scored 445 runs at an average of 31.78 and a strike rate of 139.49 with six fifties in 14 innings of as many matches against Chennai Super Kings in IPL.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

will replace an out-of-form Murali Vijay at the top alongside Shane Watson.

For Hyderabad, the presence of Kane Williamson made a fragile middle-order full of Indian rookies, look more solid. Both Jonny Bairstow and David Warner also got their share of runs. For SRH to succeed, they need to find that one dependable Indian big-hitter in the middle order in case their top three — Bairstow, Warner and Williamson fail in unison.

Kashmiri lad Abdul Samad has shows promise while both Priyam Garg and Abhishek Sharma need to up their game.

The bowling line-up is pretty even for both teams. While Deepak Chahar, Hazlewood, Curran, Ravindra Jadeja and Piyush Chawla can be more than a handful on slow a Dubai track, SRH have found their death overs specialist in T. Natarajan, who can be an ideal foil to world's No.1 T20 bowler Rashid Khan.

— PTI

Ostapenko sends Pliskova packing

Paris, Oct. 1: Former champion Jelena Ostapenko swept second seed Karolina Pliskova out of Roland Garros on Thursday as world number one Novak Djokovic took another confident stride closer to an 18th Grand Slam title with his 70th win at the French Open on Thursday.

Djokovic completed a 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 demolition of Lithuania's Ricardas Berankis.

In a women's tournament reeling from the injury-enforced withdrawal of Serena Williams, and the absence of World No.1 and defending champion Ashleigh Barty as well as US Open winner Naomi Osaka, Latvia's Ostapenko pressed her case for a second Paris title after her shock 2017 breakthrough.

The World No.43 fired 27 winners to just nine for Pliskova in a 6-4, 6-2 victory which gave her a third round match against either Sloane Stephens, the 2017 US Open winner and runner-up in Paris in 2018, or Spain's Paula Badosa.

Pliskova, 28, made the semifinals in 2017 but has

now failed to get beyond the third round in her eight other appearances at the French Open. The defeat completed a miserable year at the Slams for Czech star Pliskova who only made the third round at the Australian Open and second at the US Open.

However, she arrived in Paris having retired from the Italian Open final against Simona Halep with a thigh injury.

Ostapenko was joined in the last 32 Petra Kvitova who got better of Italy's 94th-ranked Jasmine Paolini with a 6-3, 6-3 scoreline to register her 25th French Open win.

DIVIJ-SOON BOW OUT OF FRENCH OPEN

India's Divij Sharan and his South Korean partner Kwon Soon-woo were ousted from the French Open following a hard-fought opening-round loss in the men's doubles event here.

The unseeded Sharan and Kwon Soon-woo lost 2-6, 6-4, 4-6 to the 16th seeded Croatian-American pair of Franko Skugor and Austin Krajicek on Wednesday.

— Agencies

SEBASTIAN SHOCKS ISNER, CONTINUES KORDA LEGACY

Paris, Oct. 1: When Sebastian Korda reached the Roland Garros last 32 on Wednesday, the first calls of congratulation came from four people who all know about winning.

On the line were father Petr, a former world number two who won the Australian Open in 1998 and was a runner-up in Paris six years earlier. His mother Regina Rajchrtova, a former top 30 WTA player, also took the phone from their home in Florida. Then there were his golf pro sisters Nelly and Jessica, respectively the World No.2 and 22 on the LPGA rankings.

"They watched the whole match. My sisters, as well. "Everybody is pretty hyped up right now," said the 6-foot-5-inch 20-year-old Korda after knocking out 21st-seeded compatriot John Isner 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4.

Until this week, Korda had never won a main draw match at the Slams but after coming through qualifying he went on to knock out Italian veteran Andreas Seppi in his opener in Paris. "My dad is a really big help, he oversees everything. He doesn't really travel with me that much, but we're always in contact and whenever I'm home we're always on the court together," Korda, who took up tennis at the age of eight having watched his parents play the game, said.

— AFP



Anthony Davis (left) of Los Angeles Lakers drives past Jae Crowder of Miami Heat during Game One of the NBA Finals at AdventHealth Arena at the ESPN Wide World Of Sports Complex in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, on Wednesday. Lakers won 116-98. — AFP

Lakers are off to flying start

Miami, Oct. 1: The Los Angeles Lakers manhandled the Miami Heat 116-98 in game one of the NBA Finals on Wednesday in a dominant start to their quest for a 17th championship.

After a 10-year absence from the championship series, the Lakers returned with a vengeance in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida.

Anthony Davis, in the best-of-seven title series for the first time after years of frustration in New Orleans, scored 34 points to lead the Lakers.

"I felt good. A little nervous, but when the ball was tipped up, I just went out there and played basketball. This is a moment I've waited for my entire career and I want to make sure I take the opportunity, because it doesn't come around too often," Davis said.

LeBron James was just shy of a triple double with 25 points, 13 rebounds and

nine assists. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 13 points and Danny Green contributed 11 for the Lakers, who led by as many as 32 points.

The Heat, the Eastern Conference fifth seeds who swept the Indiana Pacers before topping the top-seeded Milwaukee Bucks and the Boston Celtics on the way to the Finals, showed no sign of nerves in an energetic start against the Western Conference top seeds, racing to a 13-point lead midway through the first quarter. But the Lakers inexorably seized control and the Heat's dream start devolved into a nightmare with key contributors Goran Dragic and Bam Adebayo exiting with injuries and star forward Jimmy Butler hobbled by a twisted ankle.

Butler still scored 23 points to lead the Heat, who will try to bounce back in game two on Friday.

— AFP